

Fill in these particulars.

Full name of Centre

Centre Number

Galashiels Academy

5619734

Forename(s)

Surname

Michael

Inglis

Date of Birth

Scottish Candidate Number

04.11.93

062657774

Title of Computer-Aided Graphic Presentation

NYAN Magazine

NOTE: The Student Record has been designed to record the work of your Computer-Aided Graphic Presentation. It should also help to ensure that your Computer-Aided Graphic Presentation meets the assessment requirements. Teacher/ lecturers **must** refer to "Guidance on Assessment - Computer-Aided Graphic Presentation" (Diet 2011/ 2012) **before** attempting to complete this form.

Assessment Requirements

- 1 The Computer-Aided Graphic Presentation, which is worth 30% of the total marks for the Advanced Higher Graphic Communication Course assessment, must be your own work.
- 2 The Computer-Aided Graphic Presentation should consist of **16 to 27 pages of work**. A3, A4, or a mixture of A3 and A4 page formats may be used. Additionally Section 3 allows for A5 format.
- 3 In completing the Student Record, **all** photocopied, scanned, captured, or clip art images used **must** be acknowledged. A description of any work carried out to enhanced, photocopied, scanned, captured, or clip art images must also be declared; as well as acknowledging the source of all other images.
- 4 All DTP, Illustration or computer graphic work produced by following a directed approach, such as by step-by-step guide or wizard is **not valid** for assessment purposes.
- 5 The candidate declaration must be completed for a submission to be valid.

I have read and understood the assessment requirements of the Computer-Aided Graphic Presentation and acknowledge that this, depersonalised, work may be used as exemplification for learning and teaching purposes.

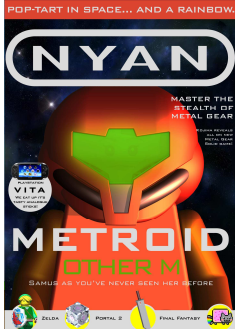
Signature of Candidate _____

Date _____

Graphic Communication Advanced Higher – Computer-Aided Graphic Presentation

The Student Record is used by candidates to provide a detailed description of their evaluation and suggested modification(s) in relation to each of the graphic items they have produced. In evaluating and modifying their presentation, candidates must make reference to the principles and elements of design and to layout detail. As well as highlighting aspects of the presentation that require amendment, alternation, or modification; candidates should also comment on positive aspects of their presentation and parts they consider particularly effective.

Evaluation & Modification

Page(s): NYAN Front Cover	
	
Elements:	
Lines and Shapes:	There are no lines on the cover. A circular shape was added to make a Playstation Vita image along with it's text to stand out on it's own.
Size and Texture:	The head of Samus was reduced to reduce focus on that single image add more attention to the surrounding text and images.
Colour:	More white text was used for the headings and subheadings. This contrasts with the dark space background. Green was also used for a heading. This contrasts the orange of Samus and harmonizes with the green visor.
Value:	The contrasting colours allow for every element to stand out, thus creating a dynamic, eye catching cover.
Mass / Weight:	The large amount of mass used in the picture of Samus allows her to be the main focus of the page.
Principles:	
Balance:	Page remains balanced with symmetrical layout. Harmonizing text colours have however been removed to add contrast.
Contrast:	Text used has been changed to contrast image of Samus more. The white and gray text has been used to contrast the dark space background. The Green used in 'Other M' contrasts the orange on the page. If also however harmonies with the visor.
Alignment:	All image and text are centred. Symmetrical layout complements the image
Proportion:	The image has been shrunk slightly to add more attention to the surrounding text. However the still oversized image causes page to be over proportioned. This allows for it to be high detail, thus adding excitement.
Rhythm:	The rhythm is started at Samus' head and is drawn to the text below. This however wasn't the case in the visuals. After looking at Samus, the gaze would be drawn to the text by her head.
Proximity / Unity:	Large amount of text was added below Samus to ensure no confusion was brought up by what was on the cover. Smaller images and their subject were also added to the bottom and text relating to them beside. This also adds more clarity to the content of the magazine.
White Space:	Asymmetric whitespace was added either side of Samus. This reduced the amount of clutter on the page and added clarity.

Evaluation & Modification

Page(s): NYAN Editor's Note



Elements:	
Lines and Shapes:	There are still no lines on the cover. A square behind the first letter remained. This adds clarity as to where the text starts.
Size and Texture:	The large text of 'Editor's Note' at the top confirms what the page is about.
Colour:	The light blue colours were replaced with a gray tone. This adds more harmony with the picture of Boba Fett and looks more professional. It also harmonizes with the bar used along the bottom of the picture of the front cover.
Value:	The image of the front cover beside the editor's note adds excitement to the page which adds a dynamic value, thus making the page exciting.
Mass / Weight:	A large amount of the page's mass is taken up with the body of text which is the editor's note. This is also balanced by the images which are scattered around it. The large text and Mandalorian symbol at the top of the page cause it to be top heavy.

Principles:	
Balance:	The asymmetrical layout adds excitement to the page. The large text and Mandalorian symbol at the top of the page cause it to be top heavy. The contrasting gray and black tones add excitement to the page. This contrasts more with the image of the front cover, allowing it to stand out even more.
Contrast:	The contrasting gray and black tones add excitement to the page. This contrasts with the image of the front cover, allowing it to stand out even more. The
Alignment:	Images are placed in same columns as text. These are aligned to look very neat and professional, reflecting on the content stated by the Editor. The large editors note heading however is not in any column. This adds a level of excitement to the page.
Proportion:	The proportion of the page used up by images slightly exceeds that of text.
Rhythm:	The reader's eye is caught by the contrasting colours of the image of the front page. It then is carried over to the square indicating the start of text, and finally to the Editor's Note itself.
Proximity / Unity:	There is no confusion as to what everything is. The Editor's Note is represented by the Mandalorian symbol both at the top and bottom. The image of Boba Fett is also relative to the Mandalorian symbol. The image of the cover is also relative to the whole magazine.
White Space:	A large amount of whitespace is used to give a minimalistic, slick look.

Evaluation & Modification

Page(s): NYAN Final Fantasy Review



Elements:

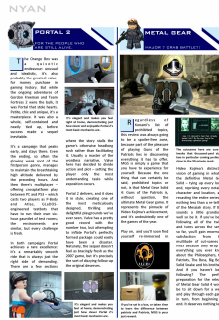
Lines and Shapes:	Lines and shapes are used to split up different sections of the page. Rectangles and lines are used to give clarity on what is the main body of text and what is a caption. The Triangles, rectangles and squares are used to make the title stand out. A circle was drawn around 'Editor's Choice' to allow it to stand out.
Size and Texture:	The size of the picture at the bottom with the bleed was decreased so it looked more proportional with the size of the columns. The text in the titles, subtitles and the first letter of the review is larger to stand out more.
Colour:	Images were changed to harmonize with the general colour of the page. The light and dark blue remained the same as it contributes to the general colours scheme set throughout the whole magazine. These two colours slightly contrast each other and stand out against the white background, thus creating excitement.
Value:	The slick design made up of colours and shapes on the page attributes to the high quality of the opinion passed through on the review.
Mass / Weight:	The page remains 'middle heavy' with a large amount of text in the middle, surrounded by images on both to top and bottom.

Principles:

Balance:	The page is almost symmetrical both horizontally and vertically. There is an almost 50:50 text to image ratio which balances nicely.
Contrast:	A slight contrast is created by the dark blue shapes. This is used to allow for the white text seen over these boxes to stand out. The dark blue also contrasts the light blue. This change in tone adds excitement to the page.
Alignment:	All images and text remain in column. This makes it neat, again reflecting on the professional article in question.
Proportion:	The page is well proportioned as there are well sized images in relation to the amount of text.
Rhythm:	The eye is initially drawn to the title box, then to the images on the top, followed by the article and bottom images.
Proximity / Unity:	Captions are displayed directly below and overlapping images. This avoids confusion as to what the image is about.
White Space:	Adequate whitespace was used at the top of the page to make the title box stand out. This however appeared to be too much on the visual, so the name of the magazine was added in the top corner.

Evaluation & Modification

Page(s): NYAN Portal 2/Metal Gear Review



Elements:

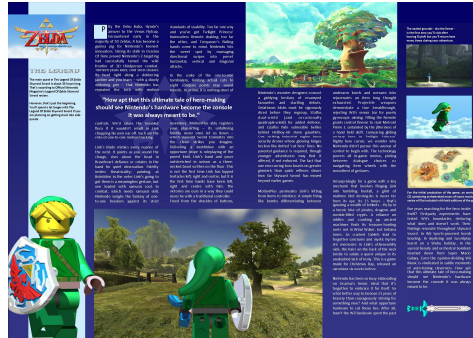
Lines and Shapes:	Lines and shapes are used to split up different sections of the page. Rectangles and lines are used to give clarity on what is the main body of text and what is a caption. The Triangles, rectangles and squares are used to make the title stand out. A line was drawn down the middle gutter to split the page in half, allowing for two reviews.
Size and Texture:	The text in the titles, subtitles and the first letter of the review is larger to stand out more.
Colour:	The light and dark blue remained the same as it contributes to the general colours scheme set throughout the whole magazine. These two colours slightly contrast each other and stand out against the white background, thus creating excitement.
Value:	The slick design made up of colours and shapes on the page attributes to the high quality of the opinion passed through on the review.
Mass / Weight:	The page remains 'middle heavy' with a large amount of text in the middle, surrounded by images on both to top and bottom.

Principles:

Balance:	The page is almost symmetrical. There is an almost 50:50 text to image ratio which balances nicely.
Contrast:	A slight contrast is created by the dark blue shapes. This is used to allow for the white text seen over these boxes to stand out. The dark blue also contrasts the light blue. This change in tone adds excitement to the page.
Alignment:	Images and text remain in column. This makes it neat, again reflecting on the professional article in question. There is one image which overlaps a column and is overlapped by another image. This creates depth and adds dynamics to the page.
Proportion:	The page is well proportioned as there are well sized images in relation to the amount of text. There is a large picture of Raiden however. This adds excitement to the page and allows us to appreciate for a moment how cool a Japanese cyborg ninja really is.
Rhythm:	The eye is initially drawn to the title box, then to the images on the top, followed by the article and bottom images. This is repeated again as the eye follows onto the review on the right half of the page.
Proximity / Unity:	Captions are displayed directly below and overlapping images. This avoids confusion as to what the image is about.
White Space:	Adequate whitespace was used at the top of the page to make the title box stand out. This however appeared to be too much on the visual, so the name of the magazine was added in the top corner.

Evaluation & Modification

Page(s): NYAN Legend of Zelda Skyward Sword Review



Elements:

Lines and Shapes:	A flash bar is along the left side of the double page spread. The shape of the Hylian Royal Crest was added behind the text. This adds dynamics to the page and allows the quote in front to stand out more.
Size and Texture:	Large text is used on the heading and the quote. This allows them to stand out.
Colour:	The two tones of blue which appear throughout the magazine are used. These contrast each other and are used to make elements stand out. The newly added white text also stands out very well on the dark blue background.
Value:	The slick design made up of colours and shapes on the page attributes to the high quality of the opinion passed through on the review.
Mass / Weight:	A high amount of the page's mass is used up in large high quality screenshots of the game. This helps the page visually portray the beautiful graphics mentioned in the review.

Principles:

Balance:	The page is balanced with most of the mass in opposite corners of the double page spread.
Contrast:	The dark blue background contrasts the white text. This makes it easier to read as it stands out. The light blue bar with the black text also stands out against the blue background.
Alignment:	Images and text remain in column. This makes it neat, again reflecting on the professional article in question
Proportion:	Oversized image causes page to be over proportioned. This allows for it to be high detail, thus adding excitement.
Rhythm:	The reader's gaze is caught by the large flashbar. This progresses into the 'summary' under the heading and then to the article itself. Captions are displayed directly below and overlapping images. This avoids confusion as to what the image is about. A caption was added at the top to ensure the reader knew the relevance of the really cool Zelda image. Another was removed which originally overlapped the middle bottom image. This is because the back is actually a colour gradient and due to Publisher's extremely limited capacity for doing any impressive visuals, I was unable to get an overlapping vector to be the same colour at that point in the gradient.
Proximity / Unity:	The white space above Link's head makes the flashbar more obvious and stand out. Link was shrunk from what he was in the visual to allow for this. A little bit of whitespace and a picture of a sword was added at the end of the article. This allows for a more obvious finishing point.
White Space:	

Graphic Communication Advanced Higher – Computer-Aided Graphic Presentation

Candidates are advised to label each item/ page number for each feature and a description of the graphic should be given for each feature. The detailed description of how the item was produced and the software used should indicate what has been your own work **and** any work you have carried out on **any** enhanced, scanned, captured, or clip art images.

Computer Platform used:

Microsoft Windows

Software used:

Microsoft Publisher

Software used:

Adobe Photoshop/Autodesk Inventor

Any other relevant information: (including source images and any alterations and enhancements you have made to them)

Many images were found on the interwebs which acted as a background to the final images seen on the pages. These high quality backgrounds were edited in Adobe Photoshop with renders of 3D models of LEGO which were made on Autodesk Inventor in my leisure time. This was incredibly time consuming and I regretted doing it after the first page. To save me excessive time, the models I felt I couldn't economically exploit on online 3D printing services weren't designed and some photos of REAL LEGO were used.

Graphic Communication Advanced Higher Teacher/ Lecturer Assessment of Computer-Aided Graphic Presentation

Teacher/ lecturers must refer to "Guidance on Assessment – Computer-Aided Graphic Presentation" (Diet 2011/ 2012) before attempting to complete this form.

Candidate

M INGLIS

Item No.(s)	Assessment Criteria	Max. Marks	Mark Awarded	Official Use
	Section 1. Analysis			
	(i) Grid structure/ type specification	4	4	
	(ii) Design elements	4	4	
	(iii) Design principles	4	4	
	Section 2. Planning & Development			
	(a) Outline specification	2	2	
	(b) Annotated thumbnails	6	6	
	(c) Visuals			
	(i) Layout detail	4	4	
	(ii) Graphic items and text	6	6	
	Section 3. Implementation and Presentation			
	(a) Implementation			
	(i) Hard copy of electronic templates/ master page	2	2	
	(ii) Integration of text and graphics	6	6	
	(iii) Effective use of design elements	6	6	
	(iv) Creative & effective use of design principles	6	6	
	(b) Presentation			
	(i) Evaluation and modification	6	6	
	(ii) Production of final hard copy/ presentation to client	4	4	
	Total Marks	60	60	

Computer Aided Graphic Presentation: Outline Specification

Magazine Title: NYAN

Target Audience: The target audience of this magazine is teenage to young adult nerds. The magazine covers a variety of gaming related news, speculation, reviews of titles and comics and is intended to interest avid gamers and casual ones alike.

Purpose: The purpose of this magazine is to cover the latest game industry news and reviews of games. It contains detailed information involving the release dates and what to expect with the latest games. It is also intended to provide a certain entertainment factor which is closely tied in with the topics in question.

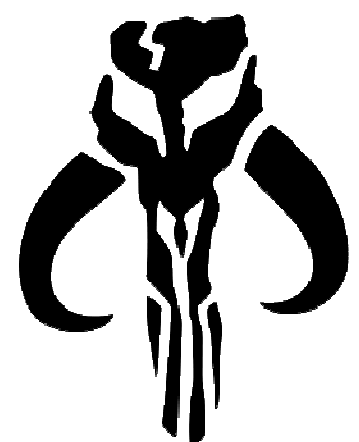
Message: The message of this magazine is to create an easy, informative and positive view of the games industry. It is expected to interest people with current generation titles and allow them to speculate on what is to come in the future.

Design Features: The design features included in my magazine include:

- Headers and Footers
- A three and four column structure
- Screenshots relative to the titles in articles
- Page layouts that use borders and white space
- Image Bleeds
- Orphan Text

I will create 8 different pages. These will include a front cover, an advertisement, an editor's note, a double page spread, review pages and a comic strip.

I will create an informative and fun magazine for people to read.

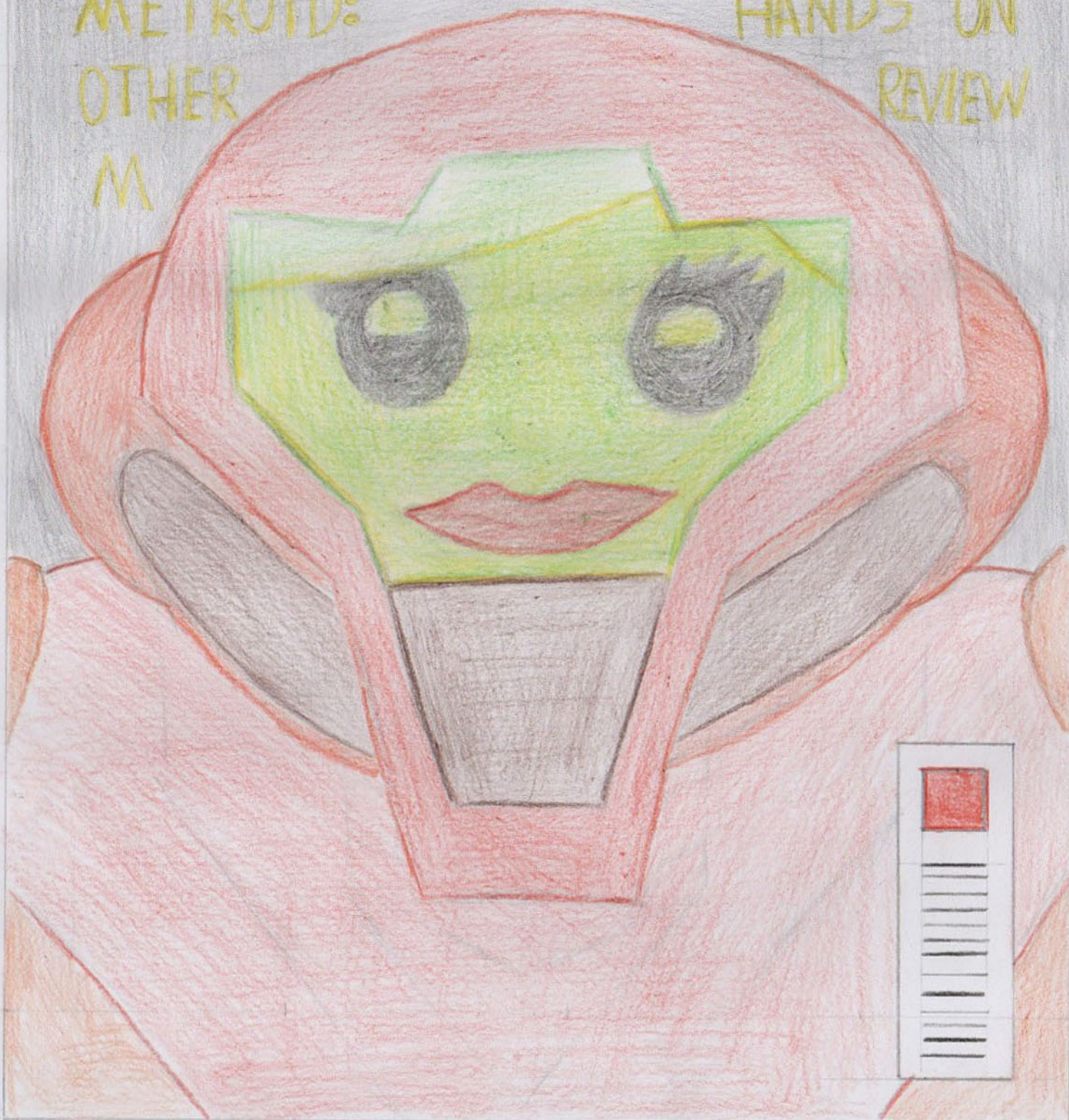


NOVEMBER 2011

NYNAN

METROID:
OTHER
M

HANDS ON
REVIEW



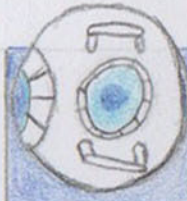
EDITOR'S NOTE



A dventure, excitement, a Jedi
craves not these things

A series of horizontal lines for writing, intended for the editor's note.

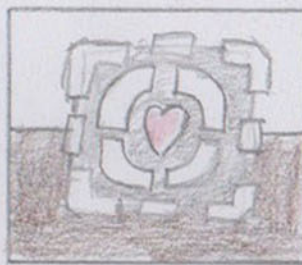
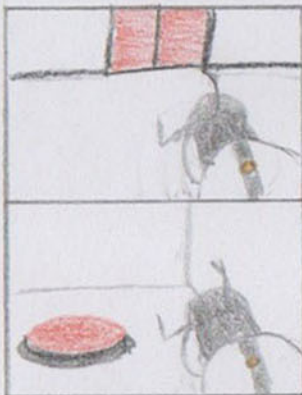




PORTAL 2

'For the people who are...'

I I'm doing science
and I'm still alive



We do what must
because we can

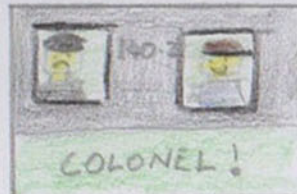


METAL GEAR

'Crab battle?!'



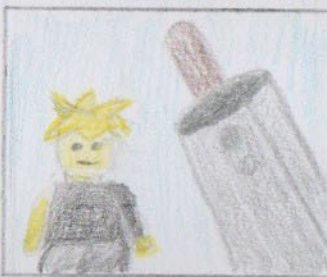
C olonel, this is
Snake





FINAL FANTASY

'Need more materia?!!'



Veni, veni, Venias, ne me
mori facias

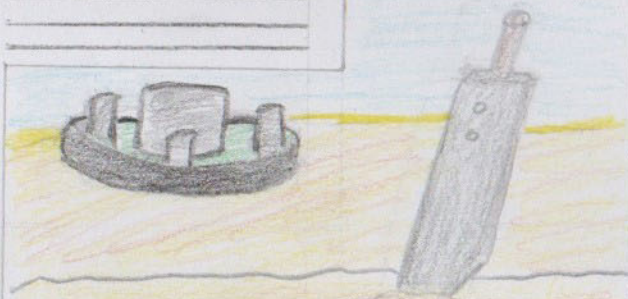


Boba Fett is really cool.

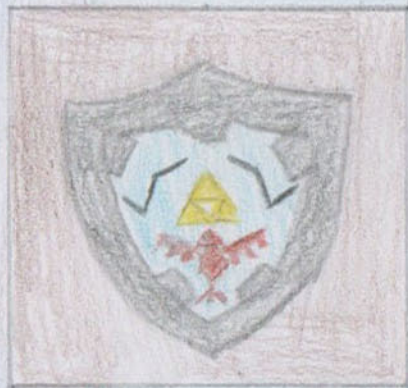
Tell me what
you cherish
Most. Give me
the pleasure of taking
it away...



Size matters not



Good to see you..
Cloud.



THE LEGEND

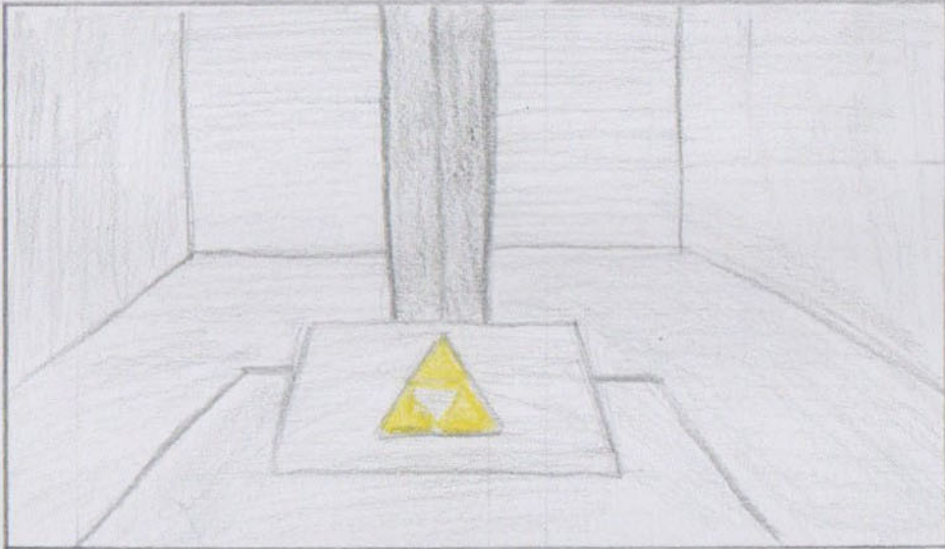
CONTINUES...

Take this, it's dangerous
to go alone —

The critically acclaimed
Prequel, Sequel Sword

"NO, RIGHT YOU SEE, THE
GRAPHICS ARE LIKE REAL
LIFE"





Game of the decade

Fully orchestrated soundtrack





New SUPER
MARIO BROS.

NINTENDO DS.



POP-TART IN SPACE... AND A RAINBOW.

NYAN

MASTER THE
STEALTH OF
METAL GEAR

KOJIMA REVEALS
ALL ON NEW
METAL GEAR
SOLID GAME!



PLAYSTATION

VITA

WE EAT UP IT'S
TASTY ANALOGUE
STICKS!

METROID
OTHER M

SAMUS AS YOU'VE NEVER SEEN HER BEFORE



ZELDA



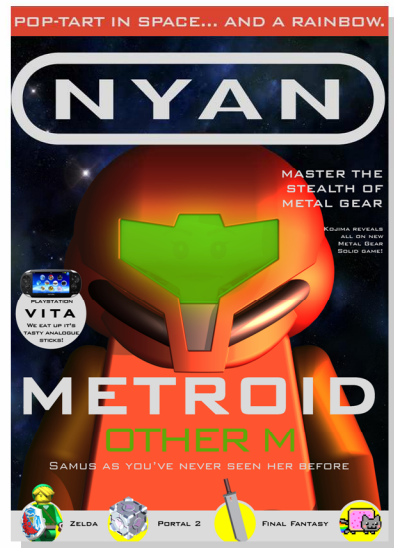
PORTAL 2



FINAL FANTASY

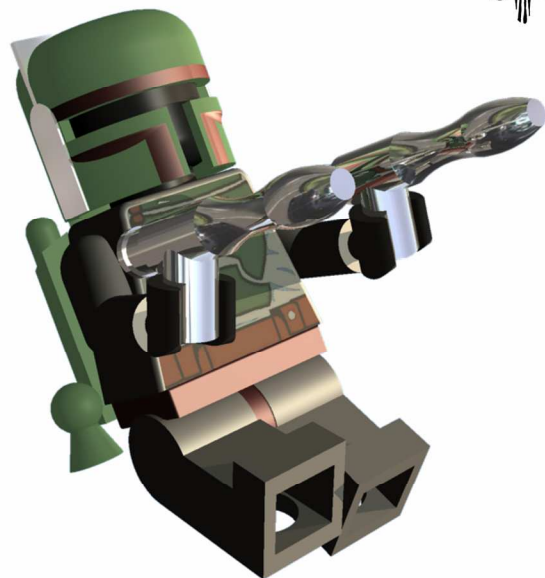


EDITORS NOTE



People who play games and people who write about games have a number of shared vices, but the most common is anthropomorphism — especially when we're grumpy. So Sony, despite having a complex commercial entity formed of tens of thousands of people, making thousands of products in 100 odd countries, is 'arrogant'. Microsoft, despite being embodied by Bill Gates, the most extravagant philanthropist the world has ever known is 'greedy'. But sometimes there's no escaping it, and for the last 12 months there's only been one word to describe Nintendo: tease.

Since the announcement of Skyward Sword, the company has been fobbing off players with a bland demo area, constructed purely to illustrate the uses of the controller. But this month we had our way with the real thing, and had time to explore its subtleties and secrets, time to adjust to the controller, and time to make up our minds. And so, starting on page 3, you can read the real Legend of Zelda, as we examined the history of the series, its significance for Nintendo, and the implications of its future. The waiting is nearly over.



NYAN



Yo Cid, park this turkey!



Final Fantasy VII was the first Final Fantasy title with entirely 3D (polygonal) character models, although the majority of environments were two-dimensional pre-rendered maps (except the World Map and battle screens, which were rendered in full 3D). Final Fantasy VII is also the first incarnation of the series to have a more modern/futuristic setting, although other games in the series prior to it made sparse uses of advanced technology here and there, such as traveling underground and to the moon in Final Fantasy IV, traveling underwater in Final Fantasy V, or utilizing steampower, coal, gunpowder, and Magitek in Final Fantasy VI.



When the SNES RPG Final Fantasy III topped the US charts some three years ago, receiving rave reviews from every magazine in the process, the Japanese-styled RPG looked all set for great things in the west. Ultimately that success never really happened, and despite the odd sporadic translation and a hardcore following, it's taken FFIII's successor, now on the PlayStation, to make the gaming world comprehensively aware of RPGs again.

For all its slickness, Final Fantasy VII still follows the golden rule of all Japanese console role-playing games: the player works through a pre-ordained storyline which is punctuated with frequent battles fought via a menu system. Many characters and a wealth of cleverly designed subplots and quests which the player can potentially opt to undertake may all help to disguise the game's linear nature, but ultimately, once the final boss has been defeated and the tale is resolved, there is very little to bring anyone but the die-hard fanatic back for another go.

Leading the way, initially, are a seemingly endless array of

The buster sword. Laid to rust against a ruined Midgar; variations of this shot appear in multiple games.



At the Sony E3, Square Enix showed a Demo depicting the opening sequence to the original Final Fantasy VII.

had the surprise attacks wisely toned down for its western release.

The highly complex story and excellently orchestrated chip music really do combine to make players feel real empathy with the characters. This is hardly the easiest of feats and a task usually shied away from by the action/comedy-orientated western graphic adventures. Anyone prepared to commit the admittedly lengthy time it takes to play Final Fantasy VII through to its conclusion will be well rewarded by what is most probably the most wholly entertaining title the PlayStation has to yet to offer. The only problem seems to be that even if its success does start a console-RPG avalanche, players will probably have to wait until Final Fantasy VIII to experience the genre on this mighty scale again.

While most non-RPG fans will cite the frequent random-battle encounters and stop-start combat system as common Japanese RPG problems, FFVII builds on Square's patented Active Time Battle system and has



The world of final fantasy is the home of many animals. Some may aid your travels.



THE LEGEND

The main quest in The Legend Of Zelda Skyward Sword is about 35 hours long. That's according to Official Nintendo Magazine's Legend Of Zelda Skyward Sword review.

However, that's just the beginning. You'll spend a lot longer with The Legend Of Zelda Skyward Sword if you are planning on getting stuck into side-quests.



ity the Deku Baba, Hyrule's answer to the Venus Flytrap. Encountered early in the majority of 3D Zeldas, it has become a guinea pig for Nintendo's keenest innovators. Slicing its stalk in Ocarina Of Time proved Nintendo's Z-targeting had successfully tamed the wild frontier of 3D thirdperson combat. Thirteen years later, cold steel cleaves its head right along a slobbering jawline and you learn – with a slowly widening grin – that Nintendo has repeated the trick with motion

"How apt that this ultimate tale of hero-making should see Nintendo's hardware become the console it was always meant to be."

controls. We'd salute the troubled flora if it wouldn't result in Link chopping his own ear off. Such are the risks of one-to-one motion tracking.

Link's blade mimics every nuance of the wrist. It points as you sound the charge, rises above the head in Braveheart defiance or rotates in the hand for quiet observation. Fidelity invites theatricality; pointing at Bokoblins in the order Link's going to gut them is a meaningless gesture, but one loaded with samurai cool. In combat, which needs samurai skill, Nintendo weighs the fantasy of one-to-one freedom against its strict

standards of usability. Too far one way and you've got Twilight Princess' humourless Remote shaking; too far the other, and Trespasser's flailing hands come to mind. Nintendo hits the sweet spot by massaging directional swipes into preset horizontal, vertical and diagonal attacks.

In the wake of the one-to-one tomfoolery, limiting actual cuts to eight compass points may sound robotic. In action, it is nothing short of

revelatory. MotionPlus ably registers your play-acting – its unfaltering fidelity never once let us down – which Skyward Sword translates into the clean strikes you imagine. Delivering a deathblow with an opportune swipe is roleplaying of the purest kind, Link's hand and yours outstretched in unison as a three-necked beast writhes on the floor. This is not the first time Link has lopped tentacles left, right and centre, but it is the first time hands have been left, right and centre with him. The victories are ours in a way they could never be with a traditional controller. Freed from the shackles of buttons,



Nintendo's monster designers concoct a giddyding bestiary of revamped favourites and startling debuts. Gelatinous blobs must be vigorously diced before they regroup, Stalfos dual-wield (and occasionally quadruple-wield) for added defence, and Lizalfos hide vulnerable bellies behind Hellboy-ish stone gauntlets. One striking industrial region hosts security drones whose glowing hinges beckon like dotted 'cut here' lines. No parental guidance is required, though younger adventurers may find it offered, if not enforced. The fact that one reoccurring boss boasts no greater gimmick than quick reflexes shows how far Skyward Sword has moved beyond earlier games.

MotionPlus permeates Link's kitbag from items to interface. A simple thing like bombs differentiating between

underarm bowls and overarm lobs rejuvenates an item long thought exhausted. Projectile weapons demonstrate a true breakthrough, rejecting Wii's sensor bar for purely gyroscopic aiming. Tilting the Remote grants control finesse to rival Metroid Prime 3, untainted by the jitteriness of a hand held aloft. Comparing gliding archery here to Twilight Princess' flighty bow cursor, we wonder why Nintendo didn't pursue this avenue of control to begin with. The technology powers all in-game menus, picking between dialogue choices or navigating item wheels with the smoothest of gestures.

Unsurprisingly for a game with a key mechanic that involves flinging Link into tumbling freefall, a glint of matinee idol derring-do is never far from its eye. Its 35 hours – that's ignoring a wealth of trinkets – fly by in a heroic blur of pirates, dragons and zombie-filled crypts. A reliance on riddles and cranking up ancient machines finds its treasure-hunting roots not in Wind Waker, but Indiana Jones. As cracked tablets lead to forgotten sanctums and mystic hymns stir memories in Link's otherworldly aide, the hairs on the back of the neck bristle to salute a quest unique in its unabashed lack of irony. This is a game made for Christmas Day, released an agonising six weeks before.

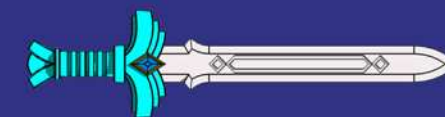
Nintendo has been so busy elaborating on Ocarina's heroic ideal that it's forgotten to embrace it for itself. So what better way to honour 25 years of bravery than courageously striving for something new? And what opportune hardware to cut those ties. After all, hasn't the Wii hardware spent the past

The sealed grounds - aka the forest - is the first area you'll visit after leaving Skyloft but you'll return here many times during your adventure.



For the initial production of the game, an anniversary CD containing orchestrated music of iconic music of the series will be included with both editions of the game.

five years searching for the hero inside itself? Firstparty experiments have tested Wii's boundaries, deducing what does and doesn't work. Their findings resonate throughout Skyward Sword. In Wii Sports-powered bomb bowling. In skydiving and swordplay learnt on a Wuhu holiday. In the surreal beauty and orchestral bombast beamed down from Super Mario Galaxy. Even the opinion-dividing Wii Music is vindicated in subtle moments of auto-tuning cleverness. How apt that this ultimate tale of hero-making should see Nintendo's hardware become the console it was always meant to be.

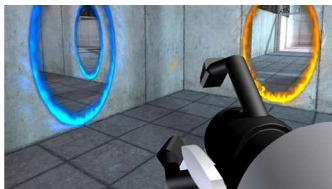




PORTAL 2

FOR THE PEOPLE WHO ARE STILL ALIVE.

The Orange Box was a quixotic endeavour: unusual and idealistic, it's also probably the greatest value-for money purchase in gaming history. But while the ongoing adventures of Gordon Freeman and Team Fortress 2 were the bulk, it was Portal that stole hearts. Petite, chic and unique, it's a masterpiece. It was also a whole, self-contained and neatly tied up, before success made a sequel inevitable.



It's elegant and makes you feel right at home, demonstrating just how clever and enjoyable Portal 2's most basic mechanics are.

where the story stalls the game's otherwise headlong rush rather than facilitating it. Usually a master of the wordless narrative, Valve here has decided to divide action and plot – setting the player only the most undemanding tasks while exposition occurs.

Portal 2 delivers, and it does it in style, creating one of the most meticulously designed, thrilling and delightful playgrounds we've ever seen. Valve has a pretty good record with the number two, but attempting to inflate Portal's perfectly formed package could easily have been a disaster. Naturally, the sequel doesn't feel as bracingly fresh as the 2007 game, but it's precisely the sort of dizzying follow-up the original deserves.

In both campaigns Portal achieves a rare excellence: it's a remarkably smooth ride that is always just the right side of demanding. There are a few sections



It's elegant and makes you feel at home, demonstrating just how clever Portal 2's most basic mechanics are.



METAL GEAR

MAJOR ? CRAB BATTLE?!



Regardless of Konami's list of prohibited topics, this review was always going to be a spoiler-free zone, because part of the pleasure of playing Guns of the Patriots lies in discovering everything it has to offer. MGS is simply a game that you have to experience for yourself. Because the one thing that can certainly be said, prohibited topics or not, is that Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots is, without question, the ultimate Metal Gear game. It represents the pinnacle of Hideo Kojima's achievement, and it's undoubtedly one of the games of the year.

Play on, and you'll soon find yourself re-immersed in



If you've sat in a box, or taken time to learn the difference between patriots and Patriots, MGS is your just reward.

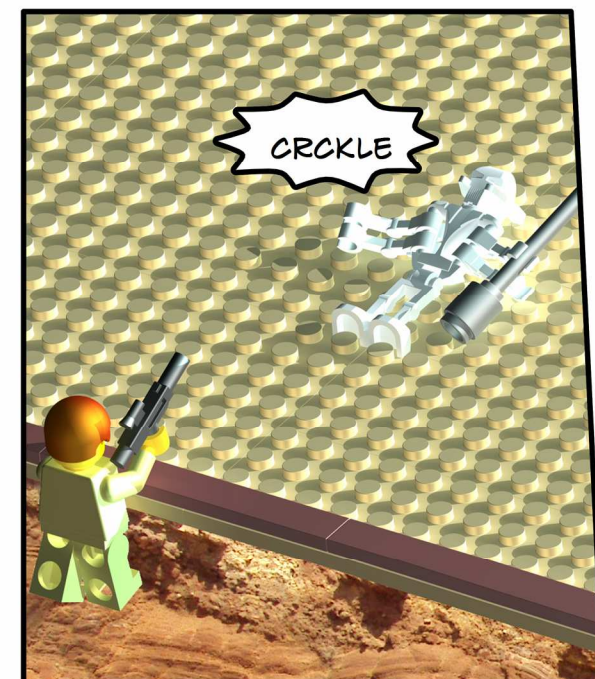
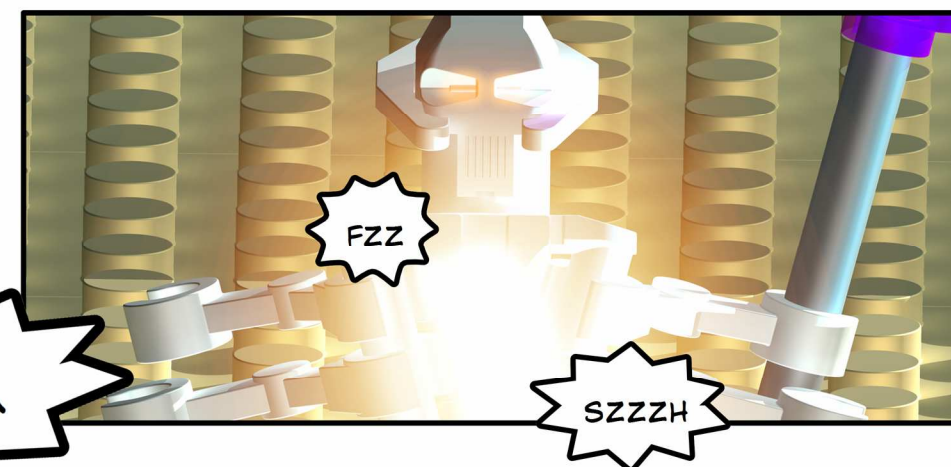
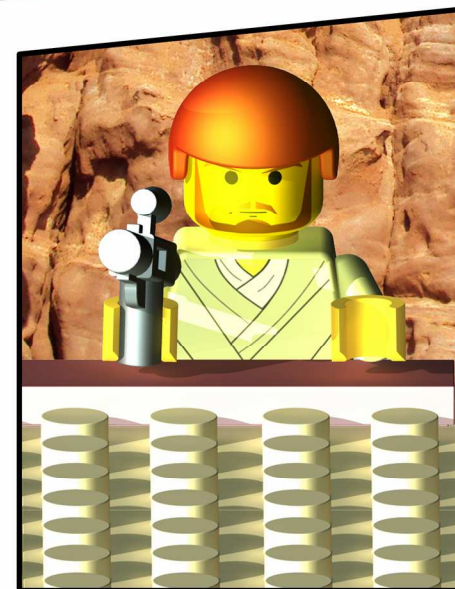
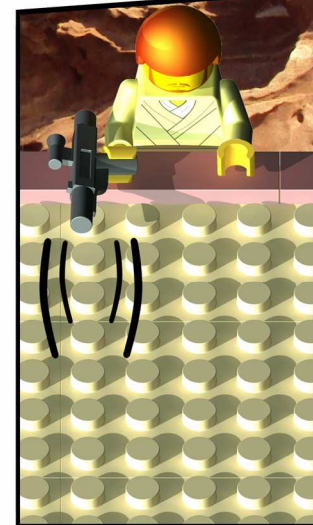
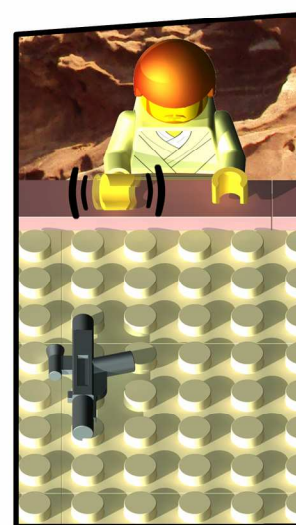


The cutscenes here are sure to invoke that thousand-yard stare, two in particular coming perilously close to the 90-minute mark.

Hideo Kojima's distinctive vision of gaming in what is the definitive Metal Gear Solid – tying up every loose end, reprising every notable character and location, and recasting the entire series as nothing less than a re-telling of the Messiah story. If that sounds a little grandiose, well so be it. If you've been following all of the twists and turns across the series so far, you'll gain enormous satisfaction from the multitude of cut-scenes in MGS because they wrap up everything you ever knew about the Philosophers, the Patriots, The Boss, Big Boss, Solid Snake and his brothers. And if you haven't been following? The perfect preparation for the release of Metal Gear Solid 4 would be to sit down for a week and play through each game in turn, from beginning to end. It deserves nothing less.



OBI WAN FINDS HIMSELF IN A STICKY SITUATION...



CONTINUED NEXT WEEK...