

Perfect Dark: Redefining gaming

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Sujet de l'article : Perfect Dark

Gaming perfection has finally arrived and Narayan is glued to the screen on his mission to deliver every juicy detail on Goldeneye's amazing sequel!

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GAMING PERFECTION HAS FINALLY ARRIVED AND NARAYAN IS GLUED TO THE JUICY DETAIL ON GOLDENEYE'S AMAZING SEQUEL!



PERFECT

REDEFINING GAMING

A little over two years ago a relatively unknown conversion of an aging James Bond movie appeared on the gaming scene. I had seen a few screenshots of the game and thought that a shooting game about being an international spy was worth a look. Two minutes after powering on the game I was in love. Skulking around military installations, popping unsuspecting soldiers in the butt with my silenced PP7 and completing ingenious mission objectives was so much fun that I wanted to jump on a plane and join up with MI6. Now that first person shooters are so common that they've all sort of melted together into an indistinguishable mess and it's hard to remember just how revolutionary Goldeneye was. When it was released there were not any amazing shooters on the console scene and state-of-the-art shooting on the PC was the first Quake game. All previous shooters consisted of simply killing all the enemies and

collecting the odd key to unlock doors. Goldeneye was the first shooter to incorporate mission objectives into the genre. It did such a good job of it that now no self-respecting shooter would even think about releasing itself without a bunch of clever puzzles to be solved. However, objectives weren't the only thing Goldeneye introduced to the genre. It was also the first game to feature enemies with clever AI that enabled them to chase you through doors and up stairs, enemies that could hear unsilenced weapons, in-game characters you could interact with to help you complete your objectives, different animations relating to specific body parts being shot and textured damage. We take all of these innovations for granted now because it's so hard to imagine shooters without them. Well, Perfect Dark is only a month away and, like Goldeneye, it's going to be packed with so many innovations that it will shape the genre for years to come. ►

↓ F E A T U R E

SCREEN ON HIS MISSION TO DELIVER EVERY

T O A R K



THE YEAR IS 2023...

Taking the role of the sexy heroine, Joanna Dark (code-named Perfect Dark), you are a secret operative working for the Carrington Institute. This mysterious government institution sends you on a mission to investigate DataDyne, a huge multi-national corporation that has been linked to illegal activity. As you delve deeper and deeper into the DataDyne corporation, you will find out that the sinister corporation is conducting illegal experiments on extraterrestrial beings.

Those of you wondering why Rare didn't make another James Bond movie as the sequel to Goldeneye should know that the designers actually turned down the licences to Tomorrow Never Dies and The World is Not Enough. While the design team enjoyed making a shooting game about their favourite movie character, they also felt that a licenced game placed too many restrictions on them. With Perfect Dark they are free to take all the best features from Goldeneye, improve upon them and incorporate all their other ideas that they couldn't do with the Bond character. The result is an amazing experience that surpasses Goldeneye in every way.



PLAYING THE GAME

Rather than start completely from scratch, Rare have used the existing graphics and gameplay engine from Goldeneye as the basis for Perfect Dark. Naturally the graphics side of things have been tweaked significantly but the only fundamental change in terms of the physics engine being used is in the way that you will no longer encounter invisible walls when you bump against the edges of platforms. Who hasn't seen someone below them in the Stack multiplayer level and wished they could just drop down next to them? Thankfully the training wheels have been removed and it is now possible to hop down to lower levels. This doesn't mean you can jump because Rare have wisely decided that making precarious jumps across platforms is something that detracts from, rather than adds to, a first person shooting experience.

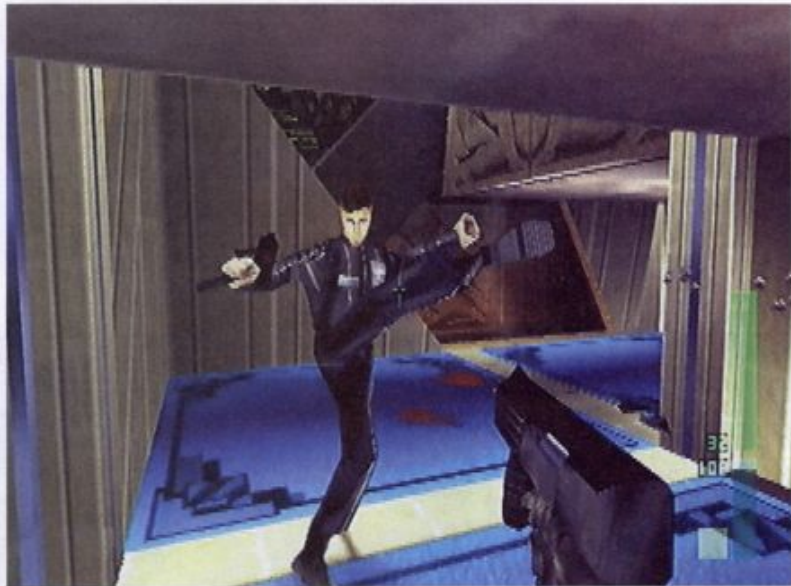




▲ The rifle is great for helping people over their fear of heights

It goes without saying that the objectives will be much bigger and better. In fact, everything about the game is much better, but I'll tell you about the objectives first. One of the mission objectives that I really liked took advantage of stunning people instead of just killing them. The familiar ability to slap enemies in Goldeneye has been modified into a nasty punch that knocks people unconscious. This is necessary in the first level because one of the DataDyne staff members has a biological key that is connected to her heartbeat. In order to use the key and obtain access to the rest of the level, you must render her unconscious and keep her alive, ensuring that the key still functions. Naturally stealth still plays a big role in the game and you will definitely need to be a lot sneakier if you want to defeat all of DataDyne's forces. You can even take advantage of the new mines to place on walls to blow holes clean through them, giving you the essential element of surprise.

The enemies themselves are, without a doubt, the most intelligent ever seen in a shooting game. They will assess threats, work as a team and communicate with each other to always keep the player wondering what is around the next corner. If you remember the classic scene in Star Wars where Han Solo foolishly chases a lone Storm Trooper through the Death Star into a room filled with hundreds of them, then you'll love the new features in Perfect Dark. Quite often I encountered

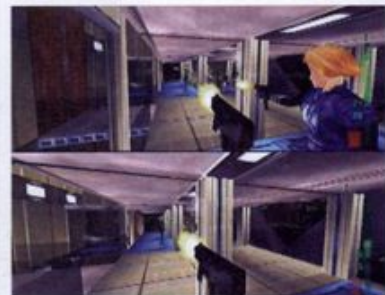


▲ The enemies will no longer shoot pointlessly if you're too close, they'll resort to their fancy Kung Fu moves

guards who would come up against my machinegun-toting bad-assedness and run away to grab a few of their mates so that they could attack me with superior numbers.

Another aspect of the game that has improved immensely is the different difficulty levels. Unlike the first game, they are all completely unique. In Goldeneye the three difficulty levels were only put in four months before the game was finished. This time around Rare have made a much more distinct difference between the levels. For example, Easy has almost no objectives and is simply a case of killing everyone. If you bump it up to hard then you're looking at some seriously brain-taxing puzzles and a huge adventure.

I know I'm getting repetitive but there are still tonnes of features that have been infinitely improved for this amazing sequel. I felt that Goldeneye man-



▲ The top screen shows the brilliant co-op mode in action

aged to create a great atmosphere as it was but it looks like a childish cut and paste job in comparison to the epic adventure that is created in this breathtaking future (all 32 Mb of it). To advance the storyline Rare have incorporated more than one and a half hours of real time cinematic scenes. They have employed professional voice actors and script writers to create each scene, and it shows. The first mission begins as Joanna Dark is flying towards the immense DataDyne skyscraper in her futuristic hovercraft, weaving amongst all the



other flying vehicles. You can even notice that the lights on the other buildings wash over the hovercraft as it flies past them. As her pilot parks it above the building's roof she exits through a panel in the floor of the craft and climbs down a rope as it thrashes about madly in the wind. As soon as she lands on the roof it's time for you to take control and kick some evil henchmen butt.

Perhaps the most exciting new feature is the co-operative mode of play. Naturally you can play co-operatively in the multiplayer mode by team-

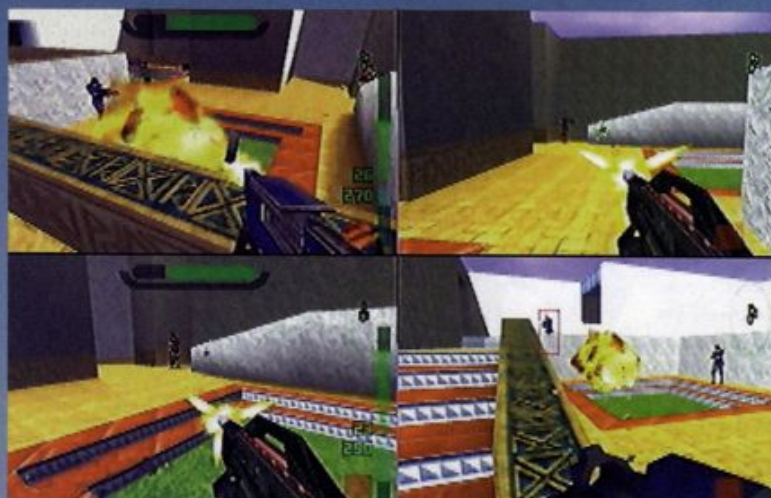
ing up with a friend against the computer opponents. However, the exciting news is that the main adventure will also feature a co-operative game in which you can play a split-screen mode with one of your friends controlling Joanna's sister. As if that wasn't mind-bending enough, you will also be able to enjoy an absolutely ingenious adversarial mode in which one player takes control of Joanna (who has to complete her normal missions) and the second player controls one of the guards who has to try and stop her.

Anyone who has played Goldeneye knows that it is one of the most amazing games ever created and is packed with so many brilliant features that it is possible to enjoy playing the game for years without getting bored. Well, all of you true believers can sleep very soundly for the next month as you wait for a game that is not only twice as long as Goldeneye but is bursting with so many incredible new innovations that you will be glued to your screen for years to come. Perfection awaits!

MULTIPLAYER HEAVEN



If I had to sum up, in one word, the difference between PD's multiplayer mode and Goldeneye's it would be 'bots'. Of course Rare have gone and come up with a cool name for them (Simulants) but anyone who's familiar with computer controlled opponents in deathmatch games will simply refer to them as bots. However, it doesn't matter what you call them, bots are an absolutely brilliant addition to any multiplayer game. No longer will you have to scream in frustration or ring your friends up and beg them to come over for another whooping. Whenever you want you can simply power up the game and have a blast by pitting yourself against up to 12 computer opponents. On top of that, each simulant will have a different personality that you can assign. For example, you can select a simulant that is always inclined to attack no matter how weak its weapon is, or you can pick a simulant that will always try to run and hide unless it has the advantage. You



can even use the simulants in games with friends. You can either have them running around in a free-for-all or you can have a couple of bots each and co-ordinate them against your mates.

When it comes to multiplayer levels, not only will you be able to select from a number of completely new levels but you will also find that Goldeneye's Temple and Complex levels have been retained. However, they have undergone slight architectural changes and the ability to drop off edges leads to a few new tactics.

It goes without saying that the sheer number of weapons is staggering but on top of the usual groups of weapons that you can select there is a

new 'customise weapons' option. This allows you to choose the five weapons that you want to be present. For people who hate the body armour, this will be even more important because if you don't select the armour on one of the five positions then it does not appear in the match.

However, the most important aspect of the multiplayer mode is not something that you can really list: it's that magical gameplay. The feel that Goldeneye has is still there. It has been tweaked in many small ways, but the fantastic control has been maintained and transplanted into this bigger and better game. What this means is pure multiplayer bliss that will rock your world.





▲ Plug the GB Camera into your pad and you're ready to go

THE GAME BOY CONNECTION

Rare must be big fans of Nintendo's pocket wonder because they've intertwined it brilliantly with the Perfect Dark phenomenon. Not only will there be a super spanking version of Perfect Dark designed specifically for the Game Boy Color but there will also be the nifty ability to take pictures of yourself with the Camera and use them in the game.

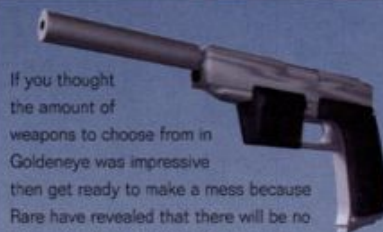
Minaturised Perfection

Instead of being a simple conversion of the N64 game, the Game Boy game will detail the adventures Joanna Dark experienced in her early missions. You will have to battle illegal cyborg manufacturers and other criminals with an explosive arsenal of weapons.

Just about every piece of new Game Boy Color technology is utilised. It will include Rumble Pak and GB Printer compatibility, infra-red transmission of data between machines (not to mention between GBC and the N64 via the GB64 Pak) and two-player link cable deathmatching.



FULLY LOADED



If you thought the amount of weapons to choose from in Goldeneye was impressive then get ready to make a mess because Rare have revealed that there will be no less than 40 weapons in the finished game. On top of that, all of Goldeneye's original weapons will also be available (I would imagine as a cheat though). Unlike the, often tricky, control method for the weapons in Goldeneye, Perfect Dark uses a control method similar to Turok 2's. You simply have a menu that flashes up with all of the weapons being able to be flicked to instantly. No more having to cycle through fifty weapons one at a time - Hurrah!

There are also a number of smaller changes like the way that instead of simply holding the gun in front of her, Joanna will stylishly hold the gun vertically (near her shoulder) or sideways (John Woo style). Each gun will come complete with a secondary fire mode and perhaps sniper capabilities (of different powers) for every gun.

Here's a few of the better weapons:

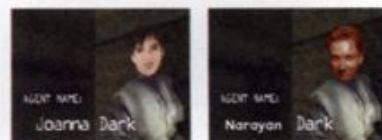
- **Falcon 2:** Your standard gun of the future, the Falcon comes with a red laser sight and a funky futuristic style (much cooler than the old PP7).
- **FarSight XR20:** This gun can see through walls (using infra-red to see enemies' heat), lock on and then shoot through walls (that's what is happening in the orangish screenshots).
- **AR34:** An advanced version of Goldeneye's AR33 Assault Rifle. Rapid firing and accurate.
- **Avenger:** This gun fires searing plasma and is capable of zooming in on targets.
- **Crossbow:** Maybe the designer's actually liked Turok. It takes ages to reload but it's very lethal.
- **Devastator:** Similar to a grenade launcher, this weapon fires orbs (weird spheres) which do a lot of damage.
- **Dragon:** With a firing rate of 10 bullets per second, this is a pretty powerful piece.
- **Slayer:** This rocket launcher packs missiles with jets. It's held over the left shoulder and has to reload after every shot.



▲ The Game Boy version of the game may not be a 3D shooter but it looks like a mighty fine translation anyhow

Step into the game

In a completely original move, Rare have allowed the GB64 Pak (originally intended to transfer information between the Game Boy and N64 versions of Pokemon) to interface with the Game Boy Camera. This means that by simply plugging the GB64 Pak and a Game Boy Camera into your N64 pad, you'll be able to instantly take pictures that can then be used in the game. Once the picture is taken you can add colour to the Game Boy's black and white picture and use it to place on one of the deathmatch characters. The



▲ You can put yourself in the game with the GB Camera

game also has an extensive character profile mode, meaning that there will be lots of other attributes you can customize about your in-game characters. Oh, and you don't even need a Game Boy to make this work. Brilliant stuff!