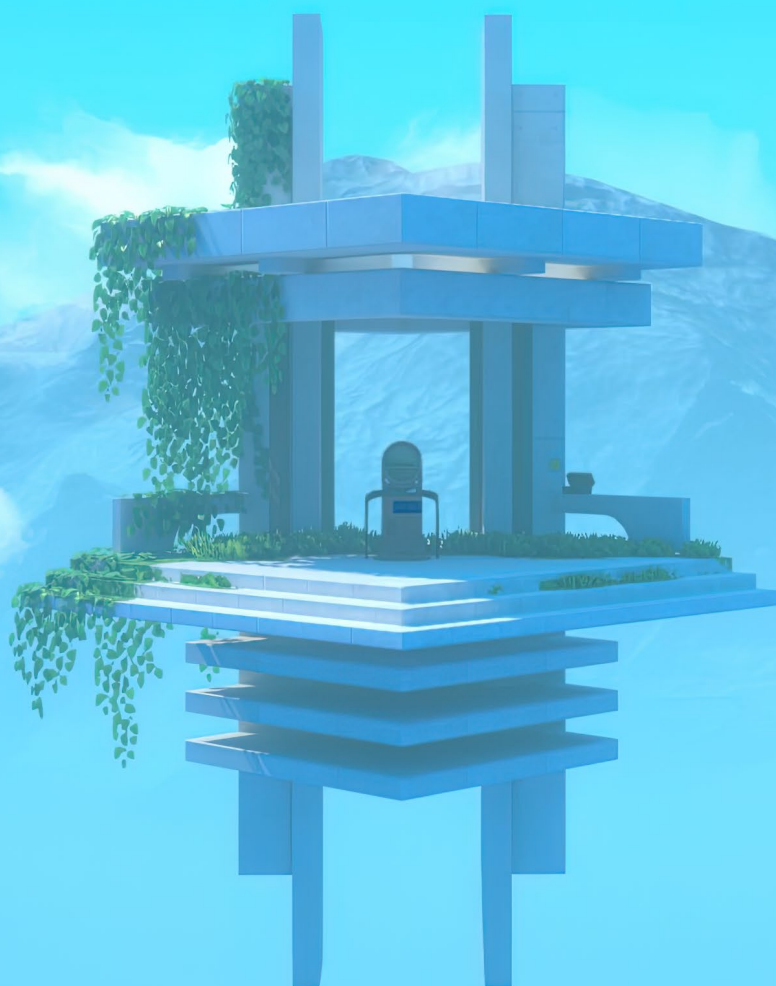


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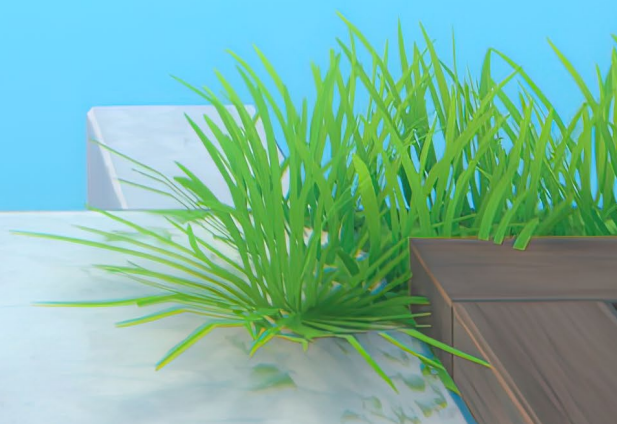
YOUR COMPLETE INDIE GAMING GUIDE

debut



VIEWFINDER. A FRESH PERSPECTIVE?

We point our lens at one of the most inventive and mind-bending puzzlers in years.



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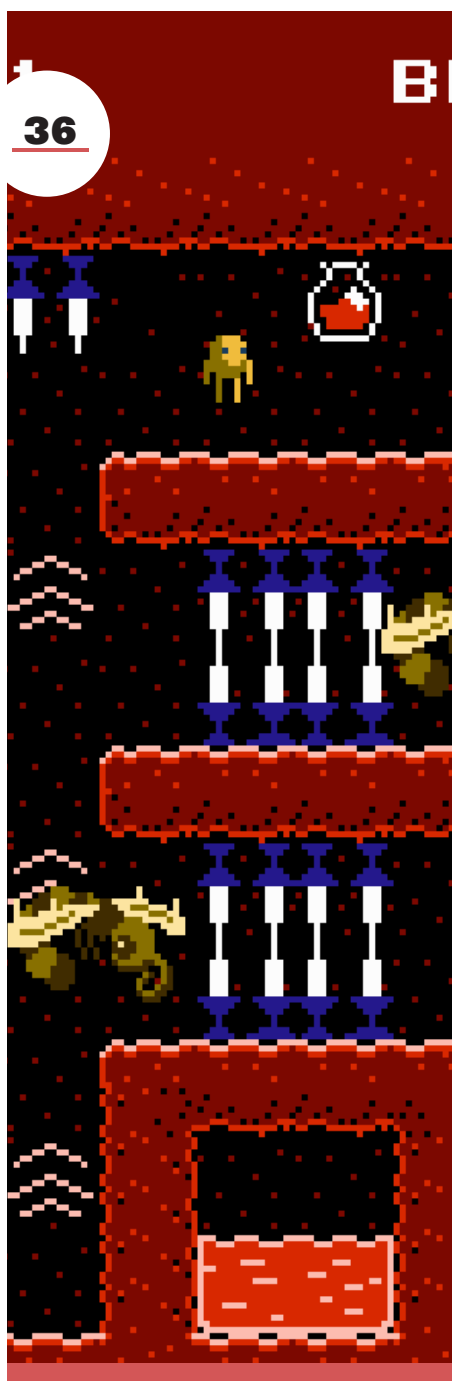
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MASSIVE ATTACK

ALIENS ARE INVADING AND WE NEED ANSWERS. OVER TO PLANET OF LANA

Undeniably one of the most anticipated games of the year, *Planet of Lana* immediately hits you with its visual flare, but then sticks around to reveal a natural charm and some smart gameplay mechanics to maintain the interest.

Channelling 2D classics like *Inside* and *Limbo*, with an art direction that could be straight out of the Ghibli playbook, *Planet of Lana* sees the world under invasion from an alien force. You control both a young girl and her animal companion as you work together to navigate the game's many ingenious and potentially lethal puzzles.

We can't wait to have a closer look at *Planet of Lana* in issue two, which should coincide with the game's release in the early summer. [U](#)

Dean Mortlock

INFO

Developer
Wishfully

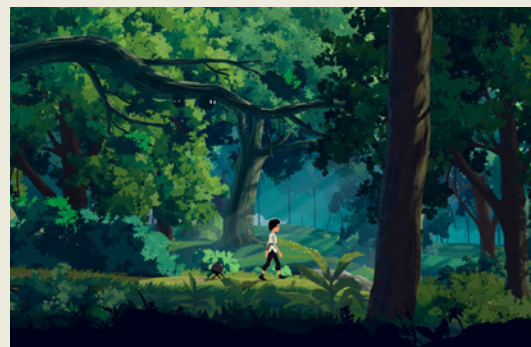
Publisher
Thunderful
Publishing

On
PC, Xbox Series

Released
Summer 2023



WATCH IT



RELEASED
27 APR

FUTURE SHOCKER

TIME TO RUN FOR YOUR LIFE IN CYBER-THRILLER **ARCRUNNER**

An AI has gone rogue in this brand-new Cyberpunk-fuelled roguelite actioner, and it's up to you – and potentially two others – to reset it. Sounds easy? It's not, as there are loads of things between it and you, and they all really, *really* hate you.

So that AI then. You've been brought in to stop it, and you can either play solo or online with up to two other people. Stopping it involves shooting your way through four different zones, each with around seven levels each.

Head out on your run, battle through the levels and collect pick-ups to update your weapons. When the run ends, you keep the upgrades, which is a nice touch.

There are three class types to choose from: Hacker, Soldier and Ninja, each with their own special skills. Want to go

in sneaky? Pick the Ninja. Want to blow everything up? The soldier's the one for you.

Watch the video for this one and you'll see that *ArcRunner* looks decent enough. Cyberpunk we've seen before, and the gameplay dynamic is also a familiar one, but as you'll see, it does look like an awful lot of fun. [📺](#)

Dean Mortlock



INFO

Developer
Trickjump Games

Publisher
PQube

On
PC, PS4/5, Xbox Series

Demo
PC

THE BACK CATALOGUE

The people who made this also made...

10 Ways to Safety

Outsmart the infected in this isometric shooter.



WATCH IT

READERS' CHOICE

We asked people on our Discord what they'd been playing. They said...

TYLER J. GRAHAM



FORGIVE ME FATHER PC

Forgive Me Father combines pulpy comic visuals with dark Lovecraftian atmosphere. And, above all else, it's a damn good shooter!

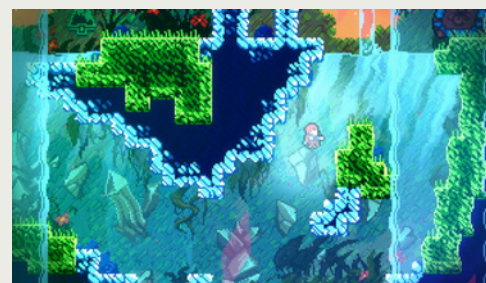
DAVEY SLOAN



BABY-MAN VS MAN-BABY Spectrum

Another original and beautifully presented game by the makers of *Lockdown Town*.

LEO HARRISON



CELESTE PC, PS4/5, Xbox Series, Switch


I know it's an older game but I keep coming back to it. It's so hard but I'm determined to complete it!

RELEASED
APRIL

WE WAITED 10 YEARS FOR A SEQUEL, BUT WE FINALLY HAVE TESLAGRAD 2

Far from being a straight sequel to 2013's *Teslagrad*, the developers of *Teslagrad 2*, Rain Games, have tweaked almost every aspect of it – including introducing a new protagonist in Lumina, a young Teslamancer.

As the name would suggest, *Teslagrad 2* is all about the electricity, and Lumina has to use her many powers to keep enemies at bay while at the same time traversing the levels.

The sequel is set in Scandinavia – which enables the developers to claim that this is the world's first Scandinavia, which just about sums up the gameplay perfectly. 

Dean Mortlock

INFO

Developer
Rain Games

Publisher
Modus Games

On
PC, PS4/5,
Xbox Series,
Switch



WATCH IT

A CURRENT AFFAIR




RELEASED
APR/MAY

WHAT'S UP DOC?

RABBITS AND GARDENING. COULD **BUNHOUSE** BE ANY MORE ZEN?

Equipped with a greenhouse and a patch of land, you spend your time tending to fruit and veg before selling it on for carrot currency. Plus there's also the requisite options for customising your little world, from gate colour to which irresistible hat to deck your bun in.

But that's not all. As decreed by the king of anthropomorphic sims, *Animal Crossing*, social stuff is a must. Expect yoga sessions, some fishing, plus general gambolling around the woodland, like all rabbits should.

Bunhouse could well be a relaxing antidote for the daily blues, and a great way to grab some alpha-wave chill. 

Neil Randall

INFO

Developer
Reky Studios

Publisher
Digerati

On
PC, PS4/5,
Xbox Series,
Switch



WATCH IT



Low Profile

We kick off what will be a regular Debug feature with a bit of a gem. Lowtek Games, which is based in Dundee, comprises of one full-time member of staff and a series of extremely talented freelancers. Alastair Low is that one full-time member of staff, and he very kindly spent some time with us to talk through his past projects as well as some of the stuff he's currently working on – and just before he was about to fly out for the Game Developers Conference (GDC) in San Francisco.

Alastair is probably best known for his hugely popular retro-flavoured duo of *Flea!* And *Tapeworm Disco Puzzle*, both of which were successfully Kickstarted and released on the NES. Keen to convert them to other formats, Lowtek actually coded two pieces of software (*NES to Dreamcast* and *NES to Steam*) to allow them to do just that. Better still, they then uploaded the code for free, enabling other developers to do the same.

That's a thread that runs through Lowtek's back catalogue, as their online pages are full of free plug-ins and programmes designed to help fellow developers get their games made – and also make them more accessible.

Alastair is dyslexic, so he's found playing any games with excessive amounts of text challenging. "The PS1/PS2 era was really bad for having voiced cut-scenes for say the first 10 minutes of a game and then everything else was just text, which for a dyslexic is hugely frustrating," says Alastair.

"More recently, with stuff like *The Last of Us 2*, there's proper text-to-speech – and just around the same time that I launched my text-to-speech plug in. Generally though we've been forgotten about, which is a shame as it's a really big market – around one in five people are dyslexic, so it affects more people than any other disability."



Alastair began coding at a young age. "I've been making games since primary school, using a piece of software called *The Game Factory* [1]," he said. "They weren't very good back then, but it got me into the mindset of being a programmer."

"Then I started working on 3D design when I was a little older. The *Blender* programme had a built-in game engine so I just continued using that to make loads of little games and demos – thankfully, the more experienced I got, the better the games became!"

"Then I went to Abertay [2] to do computer arts. I got a First-Class Honours degree, which I was really proud of, then walked straight into a job with Ninja Kiwi, who are famous for the *Bloons* mobile games [3]. I worked there for seven-and-a-half years, and then Covid hit and I really

felt that I was only really there for the pay cheque as I absolutely hated the work. So I quit my job and launched the Kickstarter for the NES version of *Flea!* pretty much straight away. I thought a career change during the pandemic would be perfectly timed, as I wouldn't be going out and spending any money!"

This was in February 2020, and over 200 backers secured funding for the game's development. But while *Flea!* was still in development, Alastair already had plans for Lowtek's second game...

Alastair says: "I met a NES programmer called Valdir, who was looking for an art designer, and I was just really lucky that he was so good at what he does. I pitched him a few ideas, and he liked the one we settled



"I THOUGHT A CAREER CHANGE DURING THE PANDEMIC WOULD BE PERFECTLY TIMED."



1 Released in 1996 by Empire Interactive, *The Games Factory* was a piece of software designed to enable its users to create their own games without any programming knowledge whatsoever. It was good fun but, as you'd expect, there were pretty strict limits on what you could do.



2 Abertay is based in Dundee, Scotland, and is a tech university with a strong focus on videogame creation. Interestingly, it was the first university in the UK to offer a 'Computer Games' degree back in 1997.



3 While Ninja Kiwi is a company primarily based in New Zealand, they also have an office in Dundee, too. They're famous for publishing the horrendously addictive games *Bloons* and *Bloons Tower Defense*.





debug GAME OF THE MONTH

HORACE

This much-loved platformer finally arrives on PlayStation and Xbox.

★☆☆☆☆ ROTTEN ★★☆☆☆ FLAWED ★★★☆☆ GOOD ★★★★★ WISHLIST ★★★★★ ESSENTIAL

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GUEST REVIEWER JUSTIN TOWELL

Justin worked on *GamesRadar* for 10 years from 2006, after which he became self-employed as a freelance writer, musician and 'digital creative'. He grew up reading *Sega Power* in the 1990s, so clearly has impeccable taste.

INFO

Developer

Mundfish

Publisher

Focus
Entertainment

Price

£54.99

Released

February 21

On

PC, PS4/5, Xbox
Series (tested)

★★★★☆



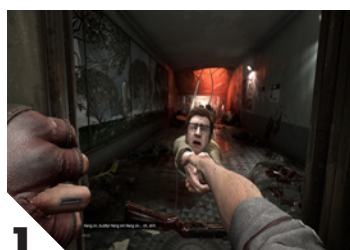
SECOND OPINION

Heard the controversy surrounding *Atomic Heart*? Yeah, me too. Not sure how much weight there is behind it, and ultimately I wouldn't want it tarnishing what it ultimately is a really nice story-based FPS.

There's little here that you haven't seen before, but equally, not every game has to be an original work of art. If you're attracted to story-based FPSs like *BioShock*, *Half-Life* or *Dishonored* then chances are you'll like this too.

James Oakwood

Reviewed on PS5



1



2



3

A SLICE OF BIOSHOCK INFUSED WITH A BIT OF FALLOUT, **ATOMIC HEART** ENTERS THE ARENA

On the surface this feels very much like *BioShock*, as you travel through a utopian world that has suddenly been taken over by robots who have gone rogue. With the help of your trusty sidekick Char-les (who you constantly ridicule), your mission is to reveal the sordid truth behind the utopian dream.

Starting with just a basic, trusty axe, you'll witness a lot of allies die horribly [1] as you watch on while tackling the odd robot. It doesn't take long before you are crafting new weapons (*Fallout* style) and upgrading existing ones, thanks to some rather horny vending machines. These interactions are horribly uncomfortable, but thankfully it isn't every single time.

You also gain access to an array of Plasmid-style weapons, such as electricity [2] and ice, à la *BioShock*.

HEART BROKEN

So that's the skinny, but what is one of the most talked about games of the last couple of months actually like? Graphically, *Atomic Heart* looks lovely for the most part, and at certain times absolutely gorgeous. While you're in the thick of the action [3], taking out multiple enemies and playing cat and mouse with others, the game is really satisfying.

Its main weakness though is the bits in between the action. You'll spend far too long aimlessly wandering around, going back and forth for items. This can quickly become tedious.

Atomic Heart does show promise though, so Mundfish is definitely a name I'll be keeping an eye on. [U](#)

Marc Jowett

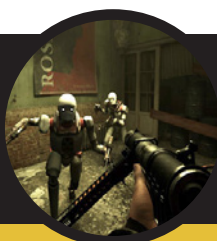


WATCH IT

LIKE THIS? TRY THIS...

Industria

Another sci-fi human versus machine first-person shooter.



THE BACK CATALOGUE

Soviet Lunapark VR – Released in 2018 on Steam early access, the game was ultimately shelved in favour of cracking on with *Atomic Heart*.



OVERLOOP EXPLORES THE VALUE OF LIFE IN A WORLD WHERE HUMANS ARE CLONED

This pixel art platform-puzzler has been out on PC since August, but has now hit consoles. Its two-hour story explores the ramifications of instant human cloning, which you can perform at will.

You then toggle between you and your clones, using them to carry you, trigger switches and disarm laser beams – often by sacrificing them, messily. Each clone is numbered, and the moral questions over the value of their short lives are powerfully highlighted.

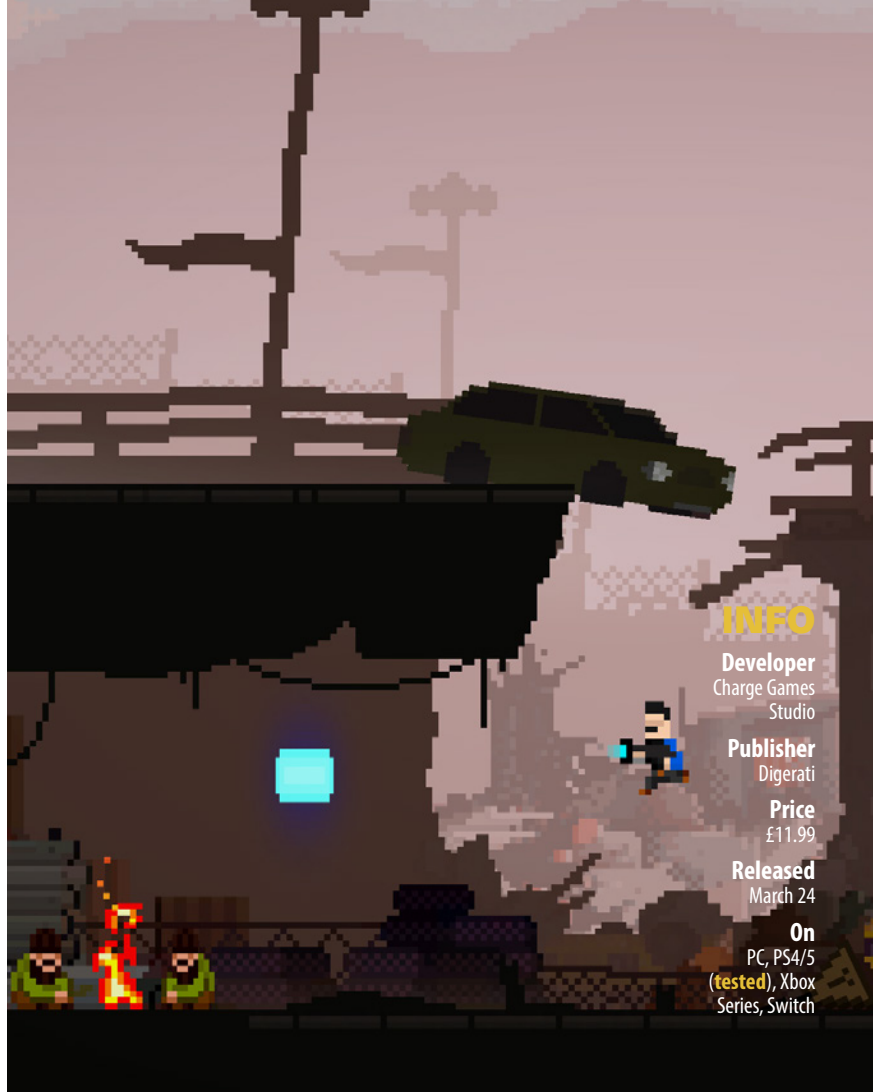
The second half is much more engrossing than the first, and the platforming becomes increasingly involved and expertly designed. While frequently tricky, it's never too challenging, and the required mix of brains and dexterity is welcome. The combat is basic, but trying to keep down your clone count is a nice challenge, as is finding all the hidden gems.

A well-delivered, harrowing tale with a poignant message, *Overloop* is a big success.

Justin Towell



WATCH IT



INFO

Developer
Charge Games Studio

Publisher
Digerati

Price
£11.99

Released
March 24

On
PC, PS4/5
(tested), Xbox Series, Switch



INFO

Developer
maitan69

Publisher
Whitethorn Games

Price
£16.75

Released
January 17

On
PC, Xbox Series, Switch



RE:CALL LETS YOU TINKER WITH YOUR RECOLLECTIONS TO ALTER THE PRESENT

Now this is a treat. Branching paths akin to a 'choose your own adventure' book alter characters' recollections until the outcome favourably fits your situation in the present.

This is achieved through top-down, RPG-esque explorations of the environments and beautiful pixel art character graphics. You may get shot dead, but you get to start over, still knowing what you learned before.

It works extremely well. The characters interact with intelligence and humour, and the puzzles are both creative and rewarding, especially when it comes to the chapter-ending payoff moments.

For those with short attention spans, constantly replaying the same events can become tedious, and typos and bugs detract from the overall slick production. But with great music, tense atmosphere and a deep, meticulously crafted plot, this is very classy indeed. Most definitely worth the price.

Justin Towell



WATCH IT

WANT MORE? READ ON

Thank you for checking out our sampler for *Debug* issue one, which has been compiled to give you a flavour of the magazine's content and style.

The full issue has 64 more packed pages containing previews, reviews and features of an incredibly varied selection of indie games. If you liked this sampler then trust us, you're really going to love the full magazine.



Debug is released quarterly, and you can find out more about the magazine by following us on Twitter ([HERE](#)), or signing up for our busy Discord server ([HERE](#)).

And to get your own copy of *Debug* issue one, head to our website ([HERE](#)), where you can either buy a digital or high-quality print version, or sign up for a digital or print subscription.

Thanks again for reading.

Dean Mortlock – Editor