y Rafi Guroian

LucasArts Legacy

LucasArts has struck again with another Indy game, "Indiana Jones and his Desktop Adventures," set in 1930's Mexico. Recently, LA has been noted for its huge line of Star Wars games (including Dark Forces, X-Wing, Rebel Assault, and the upcoming X-Wing vs. Tie Fighter and Dark Forces II: Jedi Knight). But what seems to have been forgotten recently is the huge line of Indy games LucasArts has been a part of for years. The company has built a huge Indy following as well with games such as "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" and "Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis." Incidentally, this is the first Indy game since Atlantis, which, also coincidentally (by my count) was the last floppy disk-based game LucasArts released for the Mac (the game also made a CD migration).

A Surprise Approach

Don't expect an Indy game in the tradition of a typical LucasArts adventure, with the mouse-driven point and click approach, choosing different actions from a palette at the bottom of the screen. And don't expect an intricate, plot-twisting, cinematic adventure here either. Neither of these two points detract from the game, however. If anything, they make it better...

You'll know this isn't a typical LucasArts adventure the minute you see the packaging. What

you will get is a small cardboard folder basically (see box shot at the top of this review). It becomes apparent that LucasArts is not marketing this as a game they will make millions off of. What you will get when you open the "folder" up is a single High–Density Diskette.

Don't let this ancient wonder of a one diskette game fool you, though. I wouldn't have given it so high a rating, if it wasn't any good, now would I?

nstallation
The VISE installer on the diskette requires 5 MB of Hard Drive space to work with for installation, although the full game will only require at most 4 MB when all is said and done. In all, it's a cut-an-dry installation. You won't need to worry about doing any Custom Installs or any second guessing about a big Easy Install.

How Mac-inized is it?
I'm one of the harshest critics you'll find in this universe when it comes to a game "looking" like a Mac game. LucasArts has had a fairly good track record in the past in this department and Indy is no exception.

The fact that it will run on a 68030/25 was alone enough to make me say "Wow" in terms of being impressed. Unlike some other companies (gruntsierragrunt) out there whose minimum requirements are a 68040/33 no matter how simple the game is (coughshiverscough), it is apparent that Aaron Giles and the rest of the Mac development team put in some quality work to give those real low-enders a great game that is going to run well.

The first test I gave the game was simply to see if it would run on my computer. Believe me– that is a real test. I've got a Centris 660AV (68040/25) w/16 megs of RAM, System 7.1 (updated), and a 14" monitor. But that's just the beginning. That configuration simply tests the game for low-end savviness. In addition, I'm running upwards of oh, say 30 extensions

and control panels including a FAX manager, a phone messaging system, and Aaron. In addition, I always run in Thousands of Colors. If a game is going to have a glitch, it's going to be on my computer. Let's just leave it at that. I gave the hat and whip a double click and put the game through my gauntlet.

Pick a color–any color!
If a game wants to get on my bad side right from the start, color settings is where to do it. My computer is always running in Thousands of colors, and if a game is going to want 256, it had better deal with the color situation itself. It's sort of like a tip of the hat on the part of the programmers, you know?

Well, when Indy loads up it doesn't give you any notice of a need for 256 colors. This scared me at first, because Sierra games are known to do this and when you quit you'll find your resolution in an annoying 256 that you'll have to change back.

However, on the quit of Indy, you'll find your colors are still set in Thousands—no strings attached! Apparently, the game doesn't either bother changing them, as the engine is simple enough to deal with it. However, if you do switch to 256 colors, you'll find that speed is much improved, especially on machines lower than 68040/25 (you may also want to set your ram requirements higher as well to increase speed). This was a big plus for me.

In terms of interface, it's all pretty much Mac-savvy. The scroll bars are MacOS, as are the menus. The implementation of objects in the game is drag-based, which I'll get into later.

hip-Crackin' Gameplay
The gameplay is going to take you by surprise if you go into the game not knowing what to expect (like me). There are "literally billions of possible games" and no one game is going to be different. How is this possible? It's simply a matter of combinations. You always start in

the same town with a quest. There are like 15 or so quests that are given to you at random. The surrounding landscape is always randomly generated. However, there are certain "puzzle" screens that serve purposes. These screens are always the same, but because of the random factor, can be located in different parts of the map each game, and each game will use maybe 4 of a possible 20 or so of these puzzle screens. This is what creates the effect of a different adventure each time.

Yes, it's an easy cloak to see through, but this is what makes the game so fun. You can always go in and expect a new game that you're not necessarily going to know how to beat. Simply put, it's a great time killer—especially for those long downloads from the Internet. I've been known to hide Netscape many times and load up Indy to pass the time away during a long download.

In terms of difficulty, you're not going to know quite what to do at first. However, a quick skim over the online manual (a SimpleText document) will get you started. It's really very simple. To equip yourself, you just drag the icon to the "equip" box, and to use an item with something else, you just drag it to whatever you want. It couldn't be simpler. Firing your gun or cracking your whip is a Space Bar function. Enemy intelligence is adjustable through the options menu. Word of warning: if you set it to the hardest, enemies can get very cheap.

The game really does play like a great After Dark module or perhaps a very good action shareware game. This is apparent in the price. The game runs for $18.95, which is about what you would pay for a very good shareware game with an Indy license.

The Bottom Line
Indy's Desktop Adventures is definitely worth the $18.95 from the LucasArts Store if you're willing to spend it. Make sure you know what you're getting into, however (and if you've read the review, you do know) because I'm sure many have expected another adventure game and are disappointed. This is definitely going to be a long-term resident on my HD as it doesn't take up too much space and provides a great time killer.

Pros
• Excellent time killer (a rarity today)
• No glitches whatsoever
• Works very well on 68030's
• Not a lot of HD space
• Will run in thousands of colors without ANY fuss
• GREAT Price
• It's another Indy!

Cons
• Graphics could have been upgraded to high res
• No ingame music
• Enemies can be cheap, end bosses no harder than normal enemies

Publisher Info
LucasArts Entertainment Corporation
PO Box 10307
San Rafael, CA 94912
(415) 507-4545
BBS: (415) 507-0400

   http://www.lucasarts.com