



What is scarier than an Alien movie, an episode of the X-files, or both together? No, it's not War of the Worlds. It's Midway's Area 51. Since last April, thousands of mature iGames players have rushed to their game center to experience the bone-chilling action of this new FPS set in the government's most secret facilities. With the option to showcase the game on Xbox or on PC, most centers picked the platform most popular among their players, or sometimes both of them.

That's what 28 iGames game centers decided to do when they read the game reviews. Among them was the very fittingly named game center AREA 51 LAN Gaming in Londonderry, New Hampshire, for which marketing this game was made easier by an ongoing culture and cultivation of the 'special zone' and 'restricted area' concept. Naturally we were curious to know what its owner, William Moore, had to say about the game and how it was received at his center. "Great game, awesome story line on both the PC and Xbox versions!," Moore commented. "[Players] love the game and say it is close to Halo. They also love the

Buttkicker Gamer Review

I wasn't sure what fate had in mind when I unpacked the Buttkicker and got it set up. I know that many of you think "buttkicker" and think of an older brother or cousin beating the tar out of you for no reason. No my friends, this is a device that enhances your overall "entertainment" experience by amplifying low frequency sounds and it connects to a chair.

My first impression while unpacking it was that this was something that looked pretty cool. The unit comes with a futuristic, black amplifier and a robot arm looking device to connect to your chair. Plenty of instruction is there for you, including a "quick start guide". Don't worry about the connections because they include both analog pin and RCA so you can go anywhere from stereo, to PC, or just to your console. With a 13.5' cable, you can almost place the setup anywhere in any room. As a matter of fact it was built for small areas like a small apartment, dorm room, or even the office.

In about seven minutes I had the unit connected using my XBOX for a source. I started out with the recommended settings (included in the guide) for video games. Halo2 was the game of choice due to both the music and action audio I wanted to test. When I booted the XBOX I knew something was quite different. There was a strong rumble and pulse directly under my seat that seemed to flow through me rather than just pounding like a regular subwoofer. The game play was also intense adding another dimension to my experience. Honestly, it made the game brand new again. The sound of guns firing, getting hit by bullets, grenades and other explosions will literally put you on the edge of your seat.

Next I decided to see how well it worked with music and movies. Dave Mathews and the soundtrack from Pirates Of The Caribbean have several ranges and were quite enjoyable. For a movie I went with Star Wars Episode II just for kicks. The hum of the light sabers matched the hum flowing through the Buttkicker placing you right in the movie. This was even more impressive than the game play. Even my THX sound system cannot duplicate the experience.

This device works by send low level frequencies to your chair and in turn through your body. You are able to hear and feel these waves as they pass through you. Unlike a standard subwoofer, this device allows for a direct type sound that does not really go out of the range of you body and chair. There are a variety of settings that can be used to change the level of the experience for just about any situation. I was very impressed with all the hardware and materials that were included with this device, it was truly made for someone who enjoys gaming, music, or movies.

by Michael "El Whappo" Gruich



graphics and sound," he added. Flattering adverbs and equally positive qualifiers were used by other game center owners and players as well.

At E-Warfare they thought the multiplayer mode was simply fantastic. Gamer's Underground (a name well suited to an active game center showcasing titles based on conspiracy-theories) from Albuquerque, New Mexico also put their PCs and Xboxes to good use during the showcase period, and their feedback was all the more enthusiastic. Center owner Kerry Bruce reported some fun facts, in particular the thrill around some of the game features: "The zombie jumping out at you from nowhere was scary!" Most others would not contradict him, like Gamerz Island's Micheal Gruich. "The horror story line adds some interesting features only found in a few games," Gruich pointed out with satisfaction.

Bruce's players also found that the "in-game problem solving was fun", whether it was in single or multiplayer mode.

So what's missing in this perfect horror picture show? The story was too short, thought several players. Well, if you pick that one up as your next challenge, at least you won't face the usual conundrum of hard core playing (translate: Get a life, dude!) versus hardly playing (translate: Has your girlfriend been locking you up without a PC/console?). So go check it out for yourself.

by Christine Goutaland

Game Facts:

Public launch date: April 25, 2005

Genre: FPS

Platform: Xbox and PC

iGames Top 20 ranking: #15 in June

Most compared to: A cross between Halo and Half Life

Favorites:

- Exciting horror story line
- Sound and graphics
- Multiplayer action with contagion/mutation concept

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