

# We are all Masters of the Game

I am invincible, master of my game. And my game is, of course, *Graphic Doom Destroyer*. I'm sure you're all familiar with it.

I am in Time Warp 1, locked in the 1980s, where fontmonsters roam at will, searching out hapless designers and gobbling up their pages with cries of delight.

I creep down the first tunnel, dual-barreled desktop death ray bazooka in hand. I turn a corner, and the narrow passage opens up into a dank antechamber. Without warning, a multi-headed Compugraphic leaps at my throat! Ha! Two rounds from my trusty superweapon and it writhes in the dust, only to be swept off into the darkness by a swarm of Agfamites.

Cautiously I carry on into an alphabet-shaped maze. In the dim light, I can just make out a shape straight ahead...

Yes, there it is—an eight-armed Linotype. It spies my approach and reaches out with its octolimbs to grab me by the throat. I raise my gun, but before I can blast away, all Hell breaks loose and the monster is sucked into a vortex.

Just as well, I think. Rather save my ammo for more dangerous foes ahead.

Before I can take another step, I spot the beady eyes of a green-haired Berthold, staring at me like I'm his next meal. Two more quick rounds and he's just a pool of distorted serifs scattered all over the floor. I reload and proceed onward...

Light pours into the room, and an enchanting melody fills the air. I recognize the sound of the PostScript siren, a signal that I am entering Time Warp 2, the 1990s.

Here I must be even more on guard, for evil proprietary prepress system and color house ogres lurk in the shadows with their giant megascanners, waiting to blow

me away with one flip of a switch.

Look out! There's one now!

But my reflexes are too fast, and down goes the Crosfield Cyclops in a snarling heap of glass and metal.

Slowly I inch my way along the next hall. Suddenly a Linotype-Hellfire demon charges straight at me with fangs bared. But just as quickly, I take aim and fire—a direct hit! Blood sprays in all directions, but as I move in for the kill, down swoops a whirling Heidelberg and scoops up my mortally wounded enemy, vanishing into a cloud of process colors.

I enter a large strangely lit room where all the walls seem to angle away weirdly. At the farthest corner of the space I can make out a figure standing still and silent. As I get closer, I see the silhouette of a Four-eyed Screeenie—and as I do, the beast rises to its full height, wings fanned wide, spewing its long spiky tongue directly at my head!

I barely have time to pull the trigger, and my shots only crease its powder blue hide. I watch as it scurries away and dives into a nearby tunnel, licking its wounds.

I press on, down a long corridor. Rounding another corner, a door blocks my route. I debate whether to turn back or chance entering; hesitating for only a second, I decide to use my gutbuster to blast through, and it falls away like chipped foam. On the other side there is nothing but empty space—or so I think...

For above my head, hanging like a vampire bat, is the dreaded phantom Scitex, set to pounce!

I aim and prepare to fire, but at that very instant a whooshing sound overhead distracts us both. Before I can move a muscle, a Giant Creosaur appears out of the



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## PUBLISHER'S

### NOTES

gloom and swallows its prey whole, disappearing as fast it came. And I am left alone.

As I cross through another antechamber, I am aware that the light has changed again. Now it is so bright that I am almost blinded. I have reached Time Warp 3, the 2000s—the most difficult level. Here, my opposition will be unseen forces from a dimension beyond what went before. But now I may accept assistance from a team of able comrades, each with special powers. And it doesn't take long before I am in need of help.

Before I have taken another ten steps, the light of the antechamber begins to vibrate with colors, and I find myself bathed in a confusing rainbow of hues and saturations, with no idea which way to turn. My bazooka is useless, and as I strain my eyes for a clue, a voice booms out, "This way! Just keep *Hangin' with the Color Geeks* and you'll be safe!"

I recognize the distinctive inflection of color guru Michael Kieran, and I thank him wordlessly as I follow his advice.

But soon I am in a wide open area where I see no sign of a path. The air around me is filled with oscillating beams of light that look like twinkling fireflies. Even the ground beneath me seems to have magically disappeared. I am in cyberspace.

Which way next? I wonder. What half-crazed designer could have created a space this bewildering?

"Focus..." comes a voice inside my head, but it isn't mine. "Focus," it repeats. "Focus on *Why Larry is Correct and Bill Isn't...*"

With the words of e-strategist Lorne Cherry echoing in my brain, I focus hard. At last, one beam of light in the distance grows more intense than the rest, and I know the direction I should take.

Setting off in pursuit of my final target, I glance down, only to realize that my weapon of mass destruction has been transformed into a large portable computer screen. And not just any screen, but a Wacom interactive pen display!

How will I use this device to defend myself? I wonder aloud.

"It's just *A Change of Style*," comes the unseen reply from Lidka Schuch, queen of art and design. "Don't forget—the interactive pen is mightier than the sword..."

And so, Cintiq under one arm, I march toward the brightest beam of light—but will it be toward doom or triumph?

My destination grows nearer, yet the shining light still appears to be so far off. But I know I must reach it sometime. After all, it's only a game, and every game must end.

But what could be next? I have vanquished the graphics villains of the past, I have conquered the present...

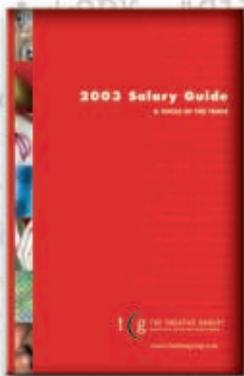
"What about *Predicting the Future*?" I hear.

I look down, and there on my portable screen is the beatific smile of video master Bob Connolly.

From somewhere in the distance I hear myself intone, "Our future is just the reflected image of our past and present..."

In a microFlash, I am bathed in an eerie glow from above that surrounds me like a luminescent cocoon...

...And the game is over. But the real battle has just begun... 



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