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Digital Times is a "for eCommerce newsletter reporting on the development and/or availability of interactive products and services."
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Did you get a PlayStation 2 or Xbox Game Cube for Christmas?

Reviewed:

Lord of the Rings - The Two Towers



The task of turning a popular movie or book into a successful video game is often a daunting goal that often results in failure. But in the case of "Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers" Electronic Arts has hit a homerun with their creation. Your thrilling adventure begins at the base of Mount Doom in the shoes of Isildur as you fend off hordes of enemies as they approach. For a short while you run around like a headless chicken not having a clue what to do, but once you make it through that, EA holds your hand through that first mission telling you certain moves and tips for playing. The player gets to feel like he is part of the J.R.R Tolkien experience by playing his characters in this game, as you help to decide the fate of Middle Earth. Playing the game from beginning to end allows to see many important and captivating scenes from the first two movies. (I hope you saw the second movie before playing this game!) EA does a fantastic job of splicing gameplay to scenes from the movie; cutscenes are throughout this whole game and enhance the story and the gameplay.

The gameplay and theme that EA chose to use makes a great game. The "pure hack n' slash" theme made the game a thrill ride from beginning to end. As you progress from a level 1 character to level 10 you get to buy moves and weapons that make your character more lethal then you could imagine. The parrying addition to this game make the game incredible to play, you must interweave your attacks with parries in order to stay alive. Many times you find yourself parrying an attack from afar while you're killing in a melee and you must find the time to take out that distant attacker.

I found a few shortcomings in this game. As a fan of multi-player games, I feel this game would have been awesome to play with a few friends. The camera is also a problem in many places in this game, as sometimes it becomes stationary from a distance and you get stuck behind something or find yourself jumping in and out of camera angles trying to kill something or get an item. But overall, this game has many features and thrills that more then make up for its shortcomings. This game makes a good addition to the J.R.R Tolkien legacy.

-by [Andy Smith](#), staff writer for Digital Times® and game designer for Progium Software.



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Digital Dollars

**\$13 Billion Spent
Online for Christmas
2002 ...**

Online retailers are regaining ground lost to traditional stores, in part, because of FREE shipping! Overstock.com reported sales of \$25.2 million between Nov. 29 and Dec. 25, up from \$9.5 million in 2001. eBags reported that holiday sales increased 101 percent from a year ago. Amazon.com has not yet released financial details about the holiday season, but said last week that consumers ordered 56 million items worldwide from Nov. 1 to Dec. 23, up from 37.9 million holiday orders last year. Full CNET Story [HERE](#):

VeriSign divorcing troublesome registrar, Network Solutions

Due to consumer complaints and a desire to do a little image clean-up, VeriSign is spinning Network Solutions off as a separate entity.

Last year, VeriSign agreed to stop sending false notices to customers of rival registrars that their domain names were soon to expire. The deceptive practice enabled VeriSign to transfer thousands of domains from other registrars, to themselves!

Digitally Cool!



VideoCamera's have come of age!

CES, otherwise known as the Consumer Electronics Show, will open here in Las Vegas in a few days. At Comdex [held in Las Vegas in late 2002], Video Camera's Ruled! They were everywhere. The most innovative and interesting were from the Taiwanese vendors looking to attract U.S. distributors.

The one in this photo had a flexible arm for easy adjustment and was as cute, portable and unobtrusive as a camera can be! Unfortunately, as with thousands of other products on display, the vendors were not allowed to sell product from the floor. Distributorship wasn't in place yet, so there was no way to know how much it cost, let alone buy it!

Next month's Digital Times will feature products from CES and expect more on VideoCam / WebCam products due to the popularity of capturing and sending digital images, so stay tuned...

-editor

How about adding personality to your high-tech life! Try a factory painted case using a patent-pending 3D painting process. The above photo is one I took at COMDEX of the very c-o-o-l **METALLIC HYDRAULIC** or **STEEL PLATE** texture-mapped designer computer cases and peripherals by **CaseArts.com** located in Houston, Texas, USA.

Ever thought of getting a tattoo for your Computer case? They also offer Etching, great for decorating the clear window, side panels, or any flat surfaces for a unique and professional etching look. There were several wood, metallics, bamboo, circuit, abstract and splatter patterned cases on view at Comdex. Not only does CaseArts [and their manufacturing partners] produce PC cases for high-performance machines, they offer a large number of color designs and patterns to produce exciting looking matching cases, keyboards, mice, and monitors. Other decorative items in their product line are case badges, window appliques, and fan grills as accessories to customize the cases. Goto their website to browse through their many style choices.

Can't find exactly what you want? They will do custom-designs for you, but be prepared to spend \$3,000 - \$4,000. One of their designers told me they have applied for a Patent to protect the exclusive process used to produce the amazing 3D look and feel of their quality cases. Not to be overlooked are their highly decorative Fan Grills and Filters in various sizes, multiple colors, and designs. They can produce these items from your custom designs, too!

Manufacturing partners for CaseArts are: Super Flower Computer, Inc, Taiwan and Chieftec Industrial Co., Ltd. with offices in Taiwan and factory in China.

Current Resellers: Directron.Com. CaseArts is currently **looking for resellers, distributors, and system builders in your area** and plan on adding more resellers, distributors, and system builders soon.

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