



Test Drive



Aptitude with an attitude

Title: *You Don't Know Jack*
Publisher: Berkeley Systems Inc.
Format: CD-ROM, Windows and Mac
Price: \$90

DON'T LIKE COMPUTER games, so when my friend tried to get me to play Berkeley Systems' *You Don't Know Jack*, I wasn't very interested.

But I didn't know *Jack*.

Jack is a new kind of game for computers, but a familiar concept for anybody who has ever watched a television quiz show. One to three contestants answer outrageous questions about popular culture, current events, history, science and more for prizes. What's different between *Jack* and such board games as *Trivial Pursuit* are the action-packed animated graphics, the spectacular sound effects, the singing chorus and the wisecracking announcer, "Cook," who reads all of the questions.

You'll need both knowledge and fast-reactions to play *Jack*. Consider the category, A Most Unusual Pet. The question: "Who would be most likely to work with a 'petcock.'" Think fast and hit your buzzer if you can guess the right answer from the four choices presented. (It's a number). *Jack* doesn't need special hardware; each player uses a different key on the computer's keyboard. To keep you on your toes, players periodically get hammered with the Gibberish Question, in which you have to make sense from the seemingly nonsensical phrase displayed on the computer's screen. And then there is the *Jack Attack*, in which words flash on the screen and you must correctly pick the ones that match - or suffer the consequences.

Berkeley warns that because of *Jack's* suggestive sexual references and language, the product might not be suitable for children. "Besides, they won't get it anyway," reads a label on the box. Probably true. Still, the game isn't worse than anything I've seen at the typical PG-13 movie.

The biggest problem for youngsters will be the requirement that players have an almost encyclopedic knowledge of 1960s and '70s TV sit-

Jack runs on both PCs and Macs. For PCs, count on 8MB of RAM and a 486/33 or better microprocessor; on the Mac side, you can squeak by with 5MB of RAM, but you'll need a 66040 or PowerPC microprocessor. Both systems require a double-speed CD-ROM drive, which the program keeps pretty busy.

Somehow, Berkeley has managed to squeeze more than 800 questions, with 20 hours of fast-paced banter, onto the game's CD-ROM. It's both technically and artistically impressive.

An even larger version with 1,200 questions (\$40) as well as a 400-question upgrade pack for the original program (\$20) are due out this week.

Jack is a great deal of fun to play with one or two friends, and it's not too addictive.

It's interactive entertainment at its finest.

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