

WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

THE GHOSTBUSTERS ARE BACK IN BUSINESS BUT CAN THEY STILL MAKE YOU BELIEVE?

Lunchboxes! Toys! Books! Water pistols! Pencil cases! Slime-in-a-can! Ask anyone who was alive in the 1980s about the Ghostbusters and they'll tell you what a phenomenon it all was.

When lesser film licences limp their way onto PS2, the obvious question is: "Why?" With Ghostbusters, the question is: "Why's it taken so long?"

Well, very probably because earlier 'busters titles on a variety of formats were, without exception, pants.

This version of Ghostbusters has been in development for more than two years.

And the really good news is that Dan Ackroyd and Harold Ramis, who wrote both Ghostbusters films as well as starring as, respectively, Dr Raymond Stantz and Dr Egon Spengler, have taken on writing duties for the game.

They've been tinkering for years with a script for a Ghostbusters 3 movie, but now this game will form a semi-sequel to the first two films.

With dialogue that's faithful to the characters at the same time as being funny – "These readings are off the charts! Now I have to make new charts!" – things are looking good.

Their fusty government nemesis Walter Peck will be back, too, but whether Bill 'Venkman' Murray will be involved is... unresolved.

On PS2 the graphics are quite cartoony, and very atmospheric



You play in third-person as one of the famous Ghostbusting team



DAN ACKROYD AND HAROLD RAMIS HAVE TAKEN ON WRITING DUTIES FOR THE GAME

The game's being overseen on every format by movie studio Universal, but on the PS2 it's being developed by the relatively young Red Fly studios.

So, what's the story? Well, after saving New York at the end of Ghostbusters 2, the action jumps ahead to 1993 where the boys are still riding the wave of their popularity. Spectral activity's on the up, so they decide to make the business into a franchise – meaning more staff and more outlets. It's not going to be plain sailing, though...

PROTON POWER

It all happens in classic third-person shooter style. Early levels have you investigating spectral disturbances in classic Ghostbusters venues such as the New York library and the Astoria Hotel ballroom – classic setpieces, recreated with just enough of a twist to feel fresh.



Some ghosts must be reeled in with careful proton beam control

The PS2 version of *Ghostbusters* follows the same plot as the next-gen editions – albeit with a more cartoony, *Real Ghostbusters* look – so you won't miss out on any of the action.

You start out with the boys' famous Proton Packs, which are good enough to take down minor-league ghosts on their own.

Charged Shots and Proton Blasts – done by combining shoulder buttons – work on tougher ghosts, but these will also need catching.

To do that, you'll need to slide a trap along the floor, catch the ghost in



† Ghosts come in different sizes: these guys are comparatively tame



† The Art Gallery is still full of undesirable spectral activity

your beam and then haul it in, kind of like a fisherman trying to land a huge, spooky trout.

Ghosts come in different flavours, classified according to the ever-handy *Tobin's Spirit Guide*, through which you can flick between levels. Animators, for instance, can possess

YOU CAN WHIP GHOSTS AROUND AND INTO WALLS, SMASHING EVERYTHING IN SIGHT

things like books, chairs or tables to make them attack you.

SLIME TO DIE

Slimer, as film fans will doubtless remember, is a Class Three Free-Form Floating Apparition. Really tough ghosts like this need to be weakened before they're destroyed, and this is where the fun really starts.

You can whip them around and into walls with the Proton Pack,

smashing everything in sight and causing massive amounts of damage.

There are boss characters as well, at whom you must chug away, and they will usually shield themselves with objects from their surroundings.

Of course the *Ghostbusters* work as a team, and the other guys join in at key points, using fairly decent AI, so you can wreak even more havoc. They'll shout at you if you cross the streams, though.

Between missions, the boys hang out in *Ghostbusters HQ*, where you can upgrade your kit, buy new



† The game visits familiar places from the films and new locations, too

I AIN'T AFRAID OF NO GHOSTS

GHOSTBUSTERS FEATURES A MIX OF CLASSIC SPOOKS AND NEW ONES CREATED JUST FOR THE GAME...



LIBRARY WOMAN

IN THE FILM She scared the bejesus out of Dan Ackroyd and gave a generation of schoolchildren another reason to be afraid of libraries and old people.

IN THE GAME She's more powerful than the Ghostbusters had originally thought, and commands an army of sentient books in the catacombs under the city library.

MR STAY PUFT

IN THE FILM He's a harmless marshmallow mascot turned into the ultimate destroyer by baddie Gozer.

IN THE GAME He's got his own super-popular toy line but he still comes back to pull a King Kong-style rampage in New York.



THE SEA CAPTAIN

IN THE FILM Um, he isn't in the film.

IN THE GAME He's a salty dog who wears a rotting life-preserver and attacks our heroes with a cheery 'A-harr!' Reminds us of the bloke from The Simpsons.



OPERA LADY

IN THE FILM She isn't in the film either. Also: it appears the developers aren't too good at thinking up names.

IN THE GAME She attacks our heroes with blasts of foghorn-volume singing and can bring her surroundings to life.



SLIMER

IN THE FILM He's the first ghost the boys but — after he covers Bill Murray in goo.

IN THE GAME He's back, and appears as a playable character in co-op mode.



VIGO THE CARPATHIAN

IN THE FILM He's the scourge of Carpathia, inhabits an evil painting and tries to possess Dana's baby.

IN THE GAME He's still sitting in his painting, but doesn't get out much these days. He can't resist the temptation to fling a few choice profanities at the Ghostbusters as they explore the art gallery, though.

GADGETS

YOU CAN'T GO GHOSTBUSTING WITHOUT A PROPER SET OF KIT... AND HERE'S THE BEST OF THE EQUIPMENT THAT'LL BE AT YOUR DISPOSAL

ECTO GOGGLES



As originally worn by Stantz, the Ecto-Goggles are used to locate ghosts' hiding places or to find hidden areas, where there will be bonus objects to fill up Tobin's Spirit Guide.



GHOST TRAP



You need to use these against bigger ghosts and bosses, although you can also trap smaller ghosts to raise your prestige and funds, instead of just blasting them. If your fellow Ghostbusters are fighting alongside you, they will throw the traps out; if you're alone you'll have to do it yourself. Either way, you don't need to worry about them getting stuck under tables: they give off a laser blast that clears out anything above them. Oh, and all the destruction you cause goes on the insurance report at the end of the mission.

PROTON PACK



Ghostbusters doesn't have much in the way of energy bars. Instead, you're cleverly kept updated on how you're doing via the lights on the Proton Pack (the ghostbusting backpack). The ones at the top show how close the pack is to overloading – which will stop you using it for a few

seconds – and the ones at the bottom show how knackered your Ghostbuster is, if one of your buddies is taken down, you'll need to rescue him before you get slimed yourself. Oh, and the other thing to remember about Proton Packs: don't cross the streams...

PKE METER



PKE stands for Psycho Kinetic Energy, but to all intents and purposes what the PKE meter does is detect globules of slime in the air. In solo play, Egon will regularly dash off and use the PKE meter to show where ghosts can be found. In multiplayer, busters can use it like a not-very-advanced radar to work out where enemies are.



◆ Your Proton Pack offers a variety of outputs for different situations...



◆ ... which are controlled by using combinations of the shoulder buttons

equipment and even slide down the famous fireman's pole.

Egon frequently invents new bits of kit, such as the Electro Shocker that freezes ghosts or our personal favourite: the Tethergun.

The latter fires out sticky globules of goo that will glue objects together, so you can hold doors open or even (in extreme circumstances) glue cars to ceilings.

There will also, we're told, be scenes where you protect the Ghostbusters' car ECTO-1 although, sadly, you don't get to drive it.

Then there's the multiplayer mode. This is one of the big draws in the PS2 version and promises to be interesting.



◆ In multiplayer you become either a ghost or a 'buster'

FOUR-WAY MULTIPLAYER IS A CRAZY BLEND OF DOUBLE-TEAM SLIMINGS AND DISTRACTIONS

Featuring mismatched sides, it's more Splinter Cell than TimeSplitters – you're either a ghost or a 'buster' and the two have totally different powers.

It's based on a tag-of-war score meter in the middle of the screen; ghosts get points for sliming the environment and scaring 'busters', while 'busters' get points for cleaning up and catching ghosts.

Ghosts can fly and float through areas that are solid to the 'busters', but

'busters' can trash everything when their Proton Packs.

In two-player it looks okay, but four-way split-screen it's a crazy tactical blend of double-teaming and distractions.

ZUUL AND THE GANG

The PS2 code is early at the moment but it definitely feels very much like Ghostbusters. It has a genuinely eerie creepy haunted-house vibe, with shocks jumping out on every corner.

Yet at the same time, the banter between the lads lightens the mood and reminds you what you love about

BUSTING MAKES YOU FEEL GOOD

...BUT IT HASN'T ALWAYS BEEN THAT WAY

GHOSTBUSTERS (COMMODORE 64)

Mostly based on an old game called Car Wars, the first game of Ghostbusters took six weeks to make... and it showed.

GHOSTBUSTERS 2 (AMSTRAD)

Levels include dangling into the sewer with Ray Stanz and racing the Statue Of Liberty towards the New York Art Museum.

'NEW' GHOSTBUSTERS 2 (NES)

A side-scroller in which our boys dash towards the museum. Rather weirdly, that big-toothed bloke from Ally McBeal appears as the final boss.

GHOSTBUSTERS (GENESIS)

Side-scrolling run'n'gun action featuring super-deformed versions of Venkman, Spengler and Stanz. But not Zeddemore.

THE REAL GHOSTBUSTERS (GAME BOY)

A puzzle game starring Venkman, where you used your Proton Pack to bust blocks and bombs to bust ghosts. Yes, just as stupid as that sounds.

EXTREME GHOSTBUSTERS (GAME BOY COLOR)

A genero-buster starring new characters such as Kyle and Eduardo.

10 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT GHOSTBUSTERS



1 In Dan Ackroyd's original film script, the Ghostbusters travelled through time and fought on distant planets. Co-writer and co-star Harold Ramis was brought in to calm things down a bit.

2 The parts of Louis Tully and Winston Zeddemore were originally written for John Candy and Eddie Murphy. They had other commitments, so Rick Moranis and Ernie Hudson stepped in.

3 In deleted scenes, Bill Murray and Dan Ackroyd play several other characters, including a pair of Central Park bums.

4 The original trailer for the film included a phone number for the Ghostbusters. It got more than a million calls.

5 The Stay Puft explosion in the finale used thousands of pounds-worth of shaving foam. Walter Peck alone got hit with more than 50 gallons.

6 The joystick that the boys use to control Ray's descent into the New York sewers in Ghostbusters 2 is actually a NES controller.

7 The SFX team designed a version of the Librarian puppet that was even more part-scaring than the one in the film. They ended up using it in Fright Night instead.

8 The baby in Ghostbusters 2 was actually played by twin boys, William and Henry Duschendorf, nephews of singer John Denver.

9 The ECTO-1 was originally going to be black, like the A-Team van. It was painted white after someone pointed out that most scenes would take place at night and a black car would be difficult to see.

10 Dan Ackroyd's long-time chum John Belushi was meant to star in the first film as Venkman, but died of a drug overdose before filming began. It's rumoured that Slimer was jokingly referred to 'the ghost of John Belushi' on set.

the films in the first place. It'll be amazing if Bill Murray is involved, but as the Real Ghostbusters cartoon proved, they can do it without him.

Now, if they can just include some of that slime-in-a-can in the package, they'll have a surefire hit... Joel Snape

