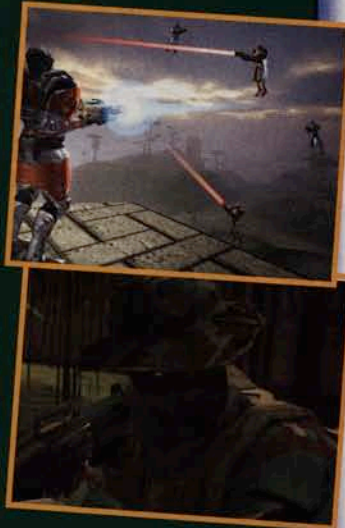


THE FIGHTING GETS INTENSE

The battle between Sony PlayStation2, Microsoft Xbox and Nintendo GameCube is moving from the living room to the online realm. The PS2 will be the first system online. This month, Sony will introduce its \$40 Network Adapter, a plug-in module for the back of the PS2 that houses two jacks: one for dial-up modems and an Ethernet port for high-speed gaming. Gamers can use their existing Internet service providers or the bundled CD, which includes software for AOL and Earthlink. Sony's efforts will be on multiplayer gaming, but in the future users will be able to use the adapter to access web content, e-mail and instant messaging. Coinciding with the launch is *Socom: U.S. Navy Seals* (pictured bottom right), Sony's first Internet-ready action game. As elite Navy Seals, players dismantle terrorist infrastructures around the globe. The real fun of *Socom* is in the online cooperative or competitive modes, which support up to 16 players per match. Other online-ready games include Tony Hawk's *ProSkater 3*, *Tribes: Aerial Assault* (pictured at top right) and *EverQuest Online Adventures*. Watch for online initiatives from Microsoft and Nintendo to launch before the end of the year. Microsoft has announced that Xbox owners won't need an adapter for online play (it's built into the system), but they will need to purchase a \$50 one-year subscription to Xbox Live that includes a voice-chat headset and *ReVolt*, an online racing game.



—MARC SALTZMAN

the afternoon. Napping after four may inhibit sleep later at night. —LAZLOW

HANG UP ON PHONE TAG

Instant messaging has eliminated the problem of phone tag by allowing computer users to see who's online before typing a hello. Known as presence technology, the innovation may appear in cell phones, PDAs, pagers and other devices before the end of the year. If all goes as planned, you'll be able to see who's connected, where they are and whether they're in the mood to take a call. User-set preferences determine whether to route incoming calls to a cell phone or work phone and can be set to deliver personal information. Commuters, for example, may receive a call that alerts them to traffic problems and offers an alternate route by using global positioning system technology. As helpful as all this sounds, there are potential pitfalls. Currently, no single standard connects different IM networks from companies such as Yahoo, AOL and Microsoft. Far more alarming is the idea that stores will be able to call as you approach and beg you to come inside and spend money. To avoid this, users can set up privacy-control filters that provide time, date and content restrictions on incoming calls.

—JAMES OLIVER CURY

LET'S ALL NAP

Even though the three-martini lunch and subsequent snooze have gone the way of the leisure suit, sleep researchers say an afternoon nap makes employees more alert and productive. Workers in cultures where afternoon naps are commonplace score better on stress tests than do Americans. However, there is an

art to napping: Sleep too long and you could wake up more fatigued than before. That's because after 30 to 45 minutes of napping you enter deep sleep, which is essentially a physiological shutdown. NASA studies show that naps



NOAH WOODS

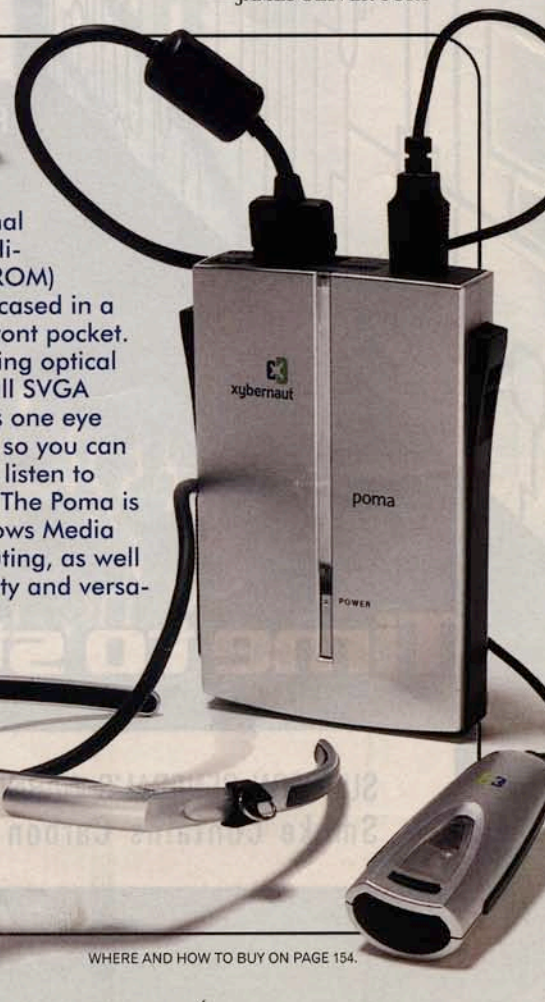
of up to 40 minutes are particularly helpful during long nighttime flights. In conjunction with research from NASA on pilot fatigue, the Jetlog 24x7 PowerNap (\$50) was developed to rouse you before dreams begin. The PowerNapping Module fits in the back of the Handspring Visor PDA and includes a touch sensor. When it's naptime, you curl up with your thumb on your PDA and fall asleep. The PowerNapper monitors the body's muscle tension. Right

before deep sleep occurs (or 40 minutes passes) an alarm sounds. When is the best time for a nap? According to researchers, it's between one and four in

Wild Thing

Xybernaut's Poma (\$1500) is the first truly wearable computer. The "personal multimedia appliance" consists of a Hitachi processor (32 MB RAM, 32 MB ROM) with CompactFlash and USB ports encased in a sleek 11-ounce box that fits in your front pocket. The mouse is a cylindrical, blue-glowing optical device controlled by your thumb. A full SVGA 1"x1" head-mount display that covers one eye serves as a monitor. It's transmissive, so you can see through it to tend to your e-mail, listen to music and play games while on foot. The Poma is bundled with Windows CE and Windows Media Player 6.4 for productivity and computing, as well as PDA functions. Look for functionality and versatility to expand to include wireless and two-way communication capabilities and such accessories as a one-gigabyte micro-drive.—BUZZ

MCCLAIN



WHERE AND HOW TO BUY ON PAGE 154.