



July 2011

Thank you for checking out the July issue of The CK Newsletter. Want to discuss this month's issue? Head over to the newsletter thread on the PCKF and be sure to let us know how we can improve future editions.

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Community News

- A Keen fan known as **Dr Colossus** has released a new **fan game**, a crossover between Commander Keen and **Megaman**.
http://www.shikadi.net/keenwiki/Commander_Keen_-_Robot_Invasion
- **Fleexy** returns to the community with his new Keen 2 mod, "**Keen -5: Nukes on Cromaj**"!
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=2058>
- **VikingBoyBilly** has released version 2 of his **Bananasaurus** Keen 1 mod!
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=2066>
- **_mr_m_** has released the first mp3, Spaced Out, for the upcoming **Battle of the Brain Soundtrack**.
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=2067>
- The **Netkeen Tournament** continues with round 2!
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=2029>
- New community member **Kraigose** has started a Commander Keen themed **ZDoom mod**!
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=2057>
- **EricMurhsroomWilson** (aka **elecdude33**) has started a **level design discussion** for **Keen 6**.
<http://www.keenmodding.org/viewtopic.php?t=1518>
- **Level design discussion** has resumed for **Keen 1**.
<http://www.keenmodding.org/viewtopic.php?t=1222>
- **Ceillick** has started a discussion on the various forms of progression found in **level design**.
<http://www.keenmodding.org/viewtopic.php?t=1527>
- **Bubbatom** has announced a Keen 4 levelpack/mod titled "Commander Keen 9.5 The Eight Accumulators".
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=2042>
- **Mink** is still accepting submissions for the **Keen Galaxy community levelpack** for Dead in the Desert!
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=1897>
- **Gridlock** has started a poll for the next **Keen Galaxy community levelpack**.
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=2061>
- **Stealthy71088** has proposed a **highscore competition** for Keen 1 using a patch to remove the points Keen collected in a level if he dies.
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=2056>
- **Keenfansite**, the webmaster of the **German Keen community** has started implementing new characters in the the **CKFSC fangame** which uses **K1n9_Duk3's KEENGINE**.
<http://ckfsc.webnwork.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=9>
- New **fan art** from **Bubbatom**!
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=15>
- **MortimerInBlack** has started a discussion on the **level design** in Keen 3's **Cave of Oblivion**.
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=2069>

Keen Game News

Here is a list of Keen Fan Games and Mods being developed. To be included in this list, projects must have either stated or demonstrated progress. Projects included in this list have been started or updated in the past 12 months.

- **Adventures in the Bean-with-Bacon Megarocket** by **GARGapplesauce** - A mod of Keen 4. Last updated June 10th, 2011 with the project's initial presentation and a demo release. GARGapplesauce has put the project on hold to work on The Second Biggest Sandwich I Ever Saw.
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=19>
- **Atroxian Realm** by **Gridlock** - A mod of Keen 4. A major progress report was posted on July 4th and another on July 30th. Level design, testing, and patching is underway. Gamebird has joined the project as soundtrack composer. Gridlock has requested ideas for developing the swamp environment in the game.
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=1812>
- **Botafloria is Out Of Flowers** by **Nospike** - A mod of Keen 1. Last updated December 2010 stating everything was nearly complete.
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=1415>
- **Commander Keen (unity engine)** by **Yamaha_ERG121** - A fan game using Unity3d. Last updated January 2011 stating slow progress: some model changes to Keen and some background art.
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=1533>
- **Commander Keen 4.5: Parallel World** by **Andy** - A fangame using Multimedia Fusion 2. Last updated December 2010 revealing a prealpha map editor for the project.
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=1181>
- **Commander Keen 64** by **Lava89** - A 3d fangame. Last updated February 2011 stating slow progress in level design.
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=116>
- **Commander Keen 9.5 The Eight Accumulators** by **Bubbatom** - A mod of Keen 4. This month Bubbatom has announced his Keen 4 levelpack which will feature new graphics and a new story line taking place after Battle of the Brains. Lots of screenshots to see!
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=2042>
- **Foray in the Forest** by **_mr_m_** - A mod of Keen 4. Last updated January 2011 stating slow progress but that level development was continuing.
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=823>
- **HAYRO** by **Eros** - A mod of keen 6. Last updated April 2011 stating most sprites and some tiles were complete but difficulty in assembling the mod parts into a playable whole.
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=1776>
- **Keen 4 Levelapck** by **MrBlack** - A levelpack for keen 4. Last updated June 08, 2011 stating that 8 levels remain to be made.
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=1896>

- **Keen Galaxy Community Levelpack** directed by **Mink** - A levelpack for Dead in the Desert. Last updated July 23 stating a deadline of two weeks. 11 out of 17 levels have been submitted.
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=1897>
- **Levellass' Valentines Mod** by **Levellass** - A mod of an unspecified episode. Last updated February 2011 with the initial presentation and a screenshot.
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=1848>
- **Martinez McMeyer 2: The World is in Trouble** by **Szemi** - A mod of an unspecified episode. Last updated June 2011 showing a screenshot of the world map.
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=1972>
- **New Commander Keen** by **wiivn** - A fangame using the Keengine by K1n9_Duk3. Last update was in October 2010 stating the project was on hold.
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=1437>
- **TBMEM: The best mod ever made by CKeen** - a levelpack/mod of Keen 2. Last updated December 2010 stating the project was on hold.
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=1279>
- **The Keys of Krodacia Revision** by **Ceilick** - A mod of keen 4. Last updated May 2011 stating it was on hold. Discussion continues, however.
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=1379>
- **The Mystery of Isis IIa** by **ckGeoff** - A fangame using PyGame. ckGeoff has posted the 8 song soundtrack to the game and a screenshot to accompany each composition. The music is composed by Gamebird.
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=1676>
- **The Second Biggest Sandwhich I Ever Saw!** by **GARGapplesauce** - A mod of keen 4. New screenshots for the world map and a platform have be released.
<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?t=1594>

Keen Game of the Month

Not this month.

Keen Game Reviews

Not this month.

Articles

Beginners Guide to Galaxy Modding Part 2

Authors: Gridlock and Ceilick

Many Keen fans have expressed interest in making a Keen Galaxy mod. In this ongoing article Gridlock and Ceilick will offer some advice and tips to improve the beginner's chance of success. This isn't a tutorial; we won't tell you how to use Keen Galaxy modding tools or provide specific technical information (we will refer primarily to Ceilick's Keen Galaxy Modding Tutorial for this). Our hope is that this will provide the advice and encouragement needed for beginners to take full advantage of the tutorials available.

Last issue we discussed the first vital step in modding Keen Galaxy: understanding and familiarizing yourself with Galaxy tilesets and how they are used to make levels. Now that you have some grasp of these concepts, we will discuss the actual planning for your Keen project.

First and foremost, know what you are responsible for. At a minimum you will need to write the story, draw the graphics, design the levels, and manage the tilesets and various files. Do not expect anyone to do these jobs for you. If you feel you are inadequate in these fields, plenty of community members are willing to provide advice on improving your work.

Writing the story may seem like the next logical step, however, beginners are encouraged to first plan ahead what kind of environments they want and how they will create them graphically.

What kind of environment will you place Keen in? Your choices have consequences. Outdoor environments usually require large, complex backgrounds. Interior environments will require many detail objects (such as vents, computer terminals, machinery, etc) in order to look interesting. Will you be able to meet the graphical needs of the environments of your choice? Will you be able to design levels for all the environments you have planned? Beginners are encouraged to not plan more than a few environments for their projects in order to ease the graphical and level design burden.

How will you supply graphics for your mod? Will you be ripping graphics from other games or using some of the original graphics from the episode you are modding? While it can be rewarding to use all original content, some mods for Keen Galaxy make heavy use of the original episode's graphics, such as Aliens Ate My Babysitter Again and Mink's Puzzle Pack. While these tend to resemble levelopacks, they can also feature all new stories and additional content so that they go above and beyond the levelopack status. Borrowing graphics like this, however, restricts your setting and the kind of story you can tell.

Designing your own graphics will allow you to take Keen anywhere you want, but it can be a bit intimidating for beginners. Not only will they have the challenge of creating their own content

but also the challenge of implementing their work into the tilesets. By now you've had some experience with what the tilesets look like and how they function, but creating your own may appear an intimidating task. One strategy for original content generation is to look for original Keen graphics, such as a platform or tree, and use that as a template for your new creation. By editing things in the tileset on a one for one basis like this you'll be assured your new content works.

After planning how to handle graphic design you'll want to either approach writing the story or choose an episode to mod. The order in which you do this is dependent on your needs: if the idea of turning Keen 5 into an outdoor mod or turning Keen 4 into a indoor mod sounds complicated, you will want to choose the episode you wish to mod at this point. Your choice is based on which original game has the most similar environment and general appearance as the setting you want to create for your mod. After you've chosen your episode you can plan a story which makes use of that episode's features.

If, however, you think you can handle turning Keen 5 into a jungle or some similar feat, you'll want to plan your story at this point. Once you have a story you can look over Keen 4, 5, and 6 and decide which best meets the needs of your story.

Each episode has its own unique features, victory conditions, and enemy behaviors that you should consider. Keen 4 provides the wetsuit, the oracle members, the foot, and princess Lindsey. Keen 5 provides world map features such as teleporters and elevators, four machines with messages, the QED machine, complex moving platform patterns, conveyor belts, and the security door. Keen 6 provides three collectible items needed for world map advancement, interactive world map features, world map teleporters, the saving Molly victory condition, conveyor belts, and complex moving platform patterns. While some things can be changed through patching, it's best to pick an episode that provides the features you need.

Having a complete story planned is a good idea; it will help establish how your levels will look, what graphics you need, and as we've mentioned, it'll allow you to discern which episode will meet your modding needs. It will also be a source of motivation: a story that you're excited to tell will make your mod fun to make.

Beware, however, that planning a story too big or that requires too many episodes to tell (even just a trilogy) can be a trap. Without yet understanding the work that one mod requires, you risk drowning yourself in long, time consuming workload. When planning your first mod don't succumb to the temptation of planning future episodes or other projects. Your goal should be to create one mod and to learn how its done. Let time and experience determine if your mod will have sequels or not.

Start planning! Figure out what kind of environment you want to place Keen in, plan how you will create that environment, create a story and choose which episode will best meet the needs of your story.

Nest issue we'll discuss turning your plans into reality.

Developing Keen Mod and Fan-Game Stories

Author: Ceilick

The story in a Keen mod or fan game is a necessary component for generating player excitement and enhancing their gameplay experience; it will subtly add to every level and situation in the game, motivating the player to see, play, and experience the game designer's work. For some players, gameplay and graphics are sufficient to a game experience, but even these players will benefit from how the story affects the game developer. The story serves the developer as a creative force in game design, lending to improved gameplay and visuals. Not just any story will work. It's easy to just slap on a few sentences or make something up in five minutes, but these kind of stories won't do much to benefit the developer or player. In order for a story to be successful it will need to give the player a reason to care about what's going on and how it will end, immerse the player in the events and action, and carefully pace how much information the player knows. Let's investigate how we as game developers can accomplish these things.

A story will attract excitement and interest if it contains events that matter to the player. Too often the stories in Keen projects fall short of anything exciting. We've all seen the "Commander Keen is on another adventure" plots, the ones where the story could essentially be anything and it just doesn't matter. While the graphics and gameplay alone in these games can be good, the games themselves will never be astounding or epic. They will never draw the player into the game to the same degree that a good story will do. How can we write stories that matter? *"Remember, the player is carrying out two roles: Commander Keen, and him/herself. Things that would fascinate Keen are likely to fascinate the player..."* (Commander Spleen, 2003). Keen should react to situations and information in the same way that the player is expected to. If Keen goes on the mission for different reasons than the player would if they were in the story, or if Keen's goal is something that would never be the goal of the player if they were in the same situation, the story has failed to draw the player into the game. If the motivations or actions of Keen or other characters in the story are there "just for the heck of it" or as an excuse for the rest of the story, the player will see right through it and lose interest. If a player is motivated to play a game because they want to find out what happens and how Keen (and they themselves) will overcome the problem at hand, that is a sign of an excellent story. Consider yourself in the same situation as Keen or run your story by a friend and question whether they would react the same way as Keen or go on the same mission or adventure themselves if given the chance.

More than a few mods have stories that begin with "One day while Keen was exploring space..." or "One day when Keen was searching for Mortimer...". These are excuse stories. Why is Keen exploring space? What recent dastardly deed has Mortimer done to warrant a search for him? Don't assume the player will provide their own answers. It's your job to have good answers for these kind questions in your stories, answers which the player can identify with and respond "I'd explore space for that reason" or "I'd search for Mortimer if he did that". When providing answers, keep in mind that while details can be fun, you're writing for a platformer game, not

a novel. Keep your explanations and information brief and within the context of your media. You're trying to grab your audience and get them hyped up for the actual game, not just providing them with reading material.

As important as it is to give the player information, don't reveal everything to the player. What the player doesn't know is just as important as what they do. *"The storyline is important. I want to feel like I'm part of something that's really happening, with an air of mystery... The original games didn't really mention the underlying villain until the end of each trilogy. If I'm told 'Mort's trying to destroy the Universe again--go destroy his hideout' it doesn't leave much to the imagination"* (Commander Spleen, 2006). Give the player real mysteries to experience. By 'real mystery' I mean, for example, whodunit plots in which Keen has more suspects than just Mortimer, plots where Keen doesn't even know there is a criminal mastermind, plots where Keen doesn't know the identity/motivations of his enemies, etc. Real mysteries don't need to be central to the plot either: what are the characteristics of the alien race, the characteristics of the location, etc. Carefully spoon feed information to the player, hint at and hold some information just out of reach, leave some unanswered and unexplained mysteries (you don't always need to explain everything). Unanswered and unexplained things can provide a level of complexity and immersion for players. These things encourage the player to be a part of the story and actively think about it and its connection to the rest of the game.

Whether to explain something to the player or not can be a difficult thing to judge. If you are uncertain you can always run the story by a friend (make sure your friend also cares about the game's story). Give them as little information as possible at first and see what questions they ask about the story and how they ask the questions. Are they only a little curious about something or really curious about how it will develop in the game? Are they bored because there isn't enough information or are they intrigued by the lack of information? Will answering their questions improve their experience or will it remove a mystery that otherwise would have been with them the whole game?

A friend's comments on your story can help you deal with another problem as well: unoriginality. Unoriginality is a form of anti-immersion which takes place if there aren't enough new and unique details and objectives. If players recognize plot points and similarities with other Keen games, fan or official, they aren't being absorbed into the story, they're analyzing and comparing it to those other games. Give the player new problems to deal with, new reasons for those problems, and new mysteries to solve. You can reference other stories, characters, places, and objects without recycling them as the same plot points they were in the past. Any repetition of plot points must be dealt with carefully, you run the risk of making the player withdraw, sigh with familiarity, and just not care.

A lot of the story telling in Keen fangames and mods takes place in a single document that the player reads before actually playing the game and an endgame sequence and/or document. A good story will do more than that. It will ingrain itself into all aspects of the game: the levels, the graphics, etc. *"The story can say things the levels can never say, and vice versa... Xky told*

me sometime around when I got keen6 that ... the bloogs built almost everything following the designs of the fleex. He said the bloogs were clumsy, so keen probably was only able to get through because the bloogs made errors. That little bit of information was in my mind the entire time I played the game, and made the game much more interesting" (Stleathy71088, 2006). As stealthy71088 points out in Keen 6, the story and the levels mesh with each other in just the right way to keep the player thinking about the story while playing the game (unfortunately Keen 6 does not do a good job of presenting this information since it lacks an in-game story document). The player should be able to take information with them from a game's story and think about it and apply it to the levels. Clues can be given in the story for solving a particular puzzle or information on certain level types or architecture that will affect how the player plays those levels. It works the other way around as well; you can give players information in levels, through messages or images, that they can relate back to the story. Perhaps some mysteries in the story can only be solved in the middle of the game, rather than at the end. As before, you don't always need to be explicit with what you give the player, but think about ways you can tie the story into the actual gameplay.

If you're working out ways to tie the story into your gameplay then your level design and graphics are going to be affected. In this way, the story is a unique source of inspiration for gameplay content. *"The more detailed and final your storyline is, the easier it will be to come up with ideas for tiles, sprites, levels, etc."* (Grelphy, 2005). The story will help dictate what kinds of tiles you need, what the enemies will look like, and where and how they will appear in levels. *"It's tempting for many Keen5 level packs to have a little Korath III native running around in the middle of the Omegamatic. But in the actual Keen5, those natives only appear in the secret level. That was a rule dictated by the plot of the game and the level designers. You can make your own rules dictated by plot for your own mod. In XkyKeen3, the Spadlings were never found away from the rocky mountain tiles"* (XkyRauh, 2006). Having a good story will help you organize your game's development. If you're having trouble designing interesting levels or graphics it might be time to close the level editor or drawing utility and instead review your story document and work out some details.

After Keen has completed the level objectives, the player will be subjected to the end story. The end story is more than just a chance to wrap up the loose ends of a game; it is the last chance to slap the player in the face with something awesome, something that will affect how they feel about every other aspect of the game. Because of this, end stories need to have an element of unpredictability, they should not just deliver what the player expects or an ending which more or less states "...and everything worked out". That said, too unpredictable is just as much of a problem; answers can wander only so far from the player's suspicions before the player feels like they were cheated out of their expectations. Some plots lead the player to suspect Mortimer is the villain but then throw in some random character who was behind everything. Don't do this! Introduce or give hints to the real villain, if Keen and the player suspect Mortimer, tie Mortimer into the plot somehow. Game developers need to be aware of what the player will expect and manipulate those expectations to create twists and surprise answers that work. Answers that are given need to be unique and intriguing and result in

consequences that are meaningful both to Keen and to the player. Answers can be stated explicitly or only hinted at, giving the player something to think about and opportunities to put two and two together. Not every mystery or question needs to be resolved; some questions should be prolonged or enhanced with new information. The mysteries that are left unsolved can be left for future games or simply remain unsolved; a cliff hanger ending does not always need to be continued.

In designing the end story, however, the game designer needs to avoid turning it into a development trap. A lofty story spread across several episodes can ensnare a developer in a game series that they have no desire to continue working on. Games take time to make, often years, and sometimes what looks like an awesome story for a trilogy will lose its charm as time passes. Prepare yourself for this. Unless you fully understand the time and commitment it takes to create a single game, let alone a trilogy, I highly recommend planning your stories in such a way that you can redirect the plot on the drop of a hat. Don't trap yourself with a plot for episode 2 or three of your series in your first episode. Don't conclude your game's story in a way that forces you to design episode 2 in a specific, restrictive way. This may hurt the story and how it affects the player, but in the long run it'll allow you to create your game without the weight of a whole series over your head. It'll also allow you to avoid feeling 'trapped' in a story you have no desire of completing. I encourage both beginners and experienced game makers to think about this when writing their game stories.

Not everyone cares about the story in a game. Some people just like to solve the puzzles, kill the baddies, look at the graphics, and call it a day. These people don't care if there is a good story or not. Everyone else does care. If a game's story is pointless, boring, or just mediocre, these people will notice and all the effort put into the puzzles and graphics will be lost on them. What could have been an awesome mod is now just another mod in their collection simply because it lacks the words to back up the gameplay, lacks the immersion to make the player actively think while playing, and lacks the information to make the player care about how everything fits together. As a game developer, if you want people to enjoy your game, play it the way you intended and have your work praised, you need to provide a good story.

Entertainment

Creature Feature

Author: Eros

Sparky (*Voltus Ohnslotts*)



Appears in: The Armageddon Machine

Threat Level: Low (3.5/10)

Sparkies are one of the primary defense mechanisms on board the Omegamatic. Whether they were built by the Shikadi or supplied with the ship from Vitacorp remains unknown.

Physiology and Behaviour

Their function appears to be to defend the Omegamatic and destroy any invaders. They are the most common creature found aboard the Omegamatic. They are sleek, grey, have two legs and a large Jacob's ladder-like arrangement on top of their heads. A Sparky will wander aimlessly about until it sees something to attack. It will then emit a high pitched whine and dart toward its victim, shocking them with the electric spark on their heads, only stopping when they reach a ledge or wall.

Dangers

The Sparky has many dangers to take into account, they have electrical antennae, they can sense intruders using their red ocular system, and they are able to charge quickly. Their eyes are able to see all 360° around them, making it difficult to hide from these robots when level with them.

Habitat

This creature is known to patrol the following areas aboard Omegamatic structures:

Location: Easy/Normal/Hard

Ion Ventilation System: 3/5/7

Security Center: 6/14/18

DT Vlook: 7/12/16

Energy Flow Systems: 8/9/13

DT Burrh: 7/12/12

Brownian Motion Machine: 7/10/15

Gravitational Damping Hub: 7/11/14

Korath III Base: 0/0/0

QED: 0/0/0

Total: 45/73/95

Related Creatures



Sparky Mk. II (Voltus Blitzcreegh)

Babobba (*Piedus Lessarius*)



Appears in: Aliens Ate My Baby Sitter!

Threat Level: Low (2/10)

The Babobba are baby Bobba, and call for little comment except for the fact that unlike their larger (and much rarer) parents, they are easily defeated and their fireballs are more like small embers, falling to the ground a short distance away and quickly extinguishing.

Physiology and Behaviour

Since they are quite young, they become tired after jumping around for a while and take frequent naps (although it is not known where they hide their blankets — perhaps they swallow them, but the less said about the other possibilities the better.) While napping, Babobbas are harmless. They are found in many places on Fribbulus Xax, but seem to prefer cool forests and places without too much sunlight. There are a few places where the Bloogs seem to have placed them in their own buildings, possibly as defense measures or as pets.

Dangers

Hot skin, the ability to jump short distances, and the power to deploy embers as an attack make the Babobba a small threat but a hazardous enemy all the less.

Habitat

This creature has been sighted in the following locations on Fribbulus Xax:

Location: Easy/Normal/Hard

Bloogwaters Crossing: 1/1/1

Guard Post 1: 2/3/3

Bloogton Manufacturing: 0/0/3

BloogBase Recreational District: 0/4/4

Related Creatures



Bobba (*Piedus Greatearius*)

In the Absence of Mortimer McMire

Author: Ceilick

Chapter 2.

Vreech has grown impatient by the time the Vitacorp representative returns his message. A blue, saucer shaped face of the Cobalti¹ fills the screen, teal dreadlocks hanging at his shoulders and the familiar Vitacorp logo displayed behind him.

"What's kept you?" Vreech demands.

"Business," the alien waves off, grinning widely, "What can Vitacorp do for the Shikadi?"

Vreech hesitates a moment, the severity of his request weighing on him, but decides there is no way around asking bluntly. "I require a second Omegamatic."

The representative blinks in surprise. "Surely one was sufficient? You did purchase the deluxe package, if I'm not mistaken."

"Yes yes," Vreech buzzes, "We had a...problem...with the previous model and I require a complete replacement."

"Mmm." The Cobalti's grin fades as he looks down, evidently going through some of Vitacorp's records. "I'm sure you're well aware of our no warranty policy. Our records show the Shikadi Alliance has yet to pay any subsequent installment of their debt for the first model since their initial investment. Are you prepared to meet your financial obligations?"

"We don't have that kind of money," Vreech rejects with irritation, "But no one denies the Gannalech. You will deliver a second device or pay for your insolence."

The representative's face loses some of its color but he counters defiantly, "The Gannalech is dead and your threats mean nothing without him."

Vreech scowls. "Surely we can work out a loan of some sort--"

"Vitacorp has already lost a fortune in the recent Intellin debacle². Don't contact us again unless you can pay upfront for your debt and anything else you require."

The Cobalti ends the communication.

Vreech is furious. Vitacorp is the only power in possession of the Quantum Explosion Dynamo. Kidnapping the designer of the QED and the Omegamatic, the insidious Gregarious Mink³, might work if it weren't for the fact that Mink dropped off the board after a long period of unproductivity. Vreech's plan to reattempt destroying the Milky Way and eliminate all the Shikadi's foes, including the Krodacians, in a single blow has ended before it could even begin.

Vreech's thoughts are interrupted when the messaging system lights up again. A transmission from Shikadus I⁴. He reads the report as it passes over the message screen, a device designed for corporeal beings which prevented the Shikadi from receiving messages into their bodies directly.

The situation with the Holo-Ghom has spread. With the Gannalech's death, the mysterious rebel Starfright's⁵ teachings, that the Shikadi should forgo their attempts to conquer the Milky Way and instead learn to adapt to their dwindling energy supplies, continues to stir up trouble and gain popularity. The Shikadi are in a state of panic in the face of their recent defeat by Commander Keen and the death of the Gannalech. They refuse to budge on any prospect of war until a successor to the Gannalech is chosen to lead them and to oppose Commander Keen. Despite Vreech's position as the leading Shikadi Master in the alliance, they demand the successor come from outside their own race.

Vreech sits in contemplation. Replacing the Gannalech has never even been conceived. Who could fill such a role?

Later, Vreech enters the conference room at Kossul's summoning. He finds the overlord standing near the window port encompassing the far wall, gazing into the starry depths.

"I'm aware of the situation on Shikadus I," Kossul states plainly.

Vreech halts at the conference table.

"Then you know the situation is nigh hopeless."

"Far from it." The Krodacian Overlord turns, holding his tentacled arms out and displaying a maniacal smugness that nearly sets Vreech into a shower of sparks. "I shall succeed the Gannalech."

Kossul creeps on tentacled feet to a chair at the conference table.

"And what makes you think the alliance will accept you?" Vreech demands, "You were equal in rank to me and just as responsible for our defeat."

"If not myself, then who? They have denied you, I am the next viable choice."

"The Shikadi will never accept a Krodacian, not after your race usurped our position."

"Of course, of course," Kossul admits, "But I did expect more support from a friend in this conflict. Under my direction you would have control of the alliance again."

The Shikadi Master shakes his head, "Any influence I have is insufficient. No, our best option for reuniting the alliance toward our purpose is to find a successor to the Gannalech outside our current bodies of power, ideally someone who has dealt with Commander Keen before."

"But none have succeeded against him. Will they accept someone who has been defeated by him?"

"They will. If we find a worthy person, they must."

"And if this person finds you and I...less that useful?"

Vreech smirks. "We are a necessary component to fulfilling the late Gannalech's purposes. Any successor must take us into consideration."

"This is agreeable," Kossul nods, the grip of pleasure on his lips, "We will find and send for all individuals who have personally opposed Commander Keen in the past. A successor to the Gannalech will be found."

To be continued...

Notes: Characters, races and story elements will be used from various mods and other Keen sources. Not all usage of these things will be completely accurate to the source material.

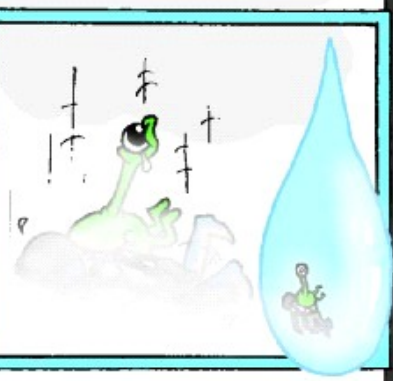
1. The Cobalti are the author's name for the blue humanoids found in Keenrush's *A New Dope*. They have no clear connection to Vitacorp in the mod's story other than possessing a device produced by them.
2. The "Intellin Debacle" is a reference to the plot of *A New Dope* in which blue humanoids use a device produced by Vitacorp to juice Keen's brain of it's intelligence and create an intellifying beverage. "Intellin" is the author's name for a product which Vitacorp hoped to market alongside Vitalin.
3. Mink is the author of the popular Keen Galaxy level editor, *The Omegamatic*.
4. Shikadus I is the home planet of the Shikadi in Ceilick's *Battle of the Brains*.
5. Starfright is a mysterious character from Shikadi's *Death to the Vorticons 3*, *Keen S*, and *Keen T* who seems to have inside information about the movements of the Shikadi and warns Keen about their plots.

Commander Keen in The Universe is Toast
 Author: TooMuchSpareTime (2002)





...OH, NO!
IS THE
VILLAINOUS
MORTIMER
McMIRE
GOING TO
SEND OUR
HERO FALLING
TO HIS
DOOM?

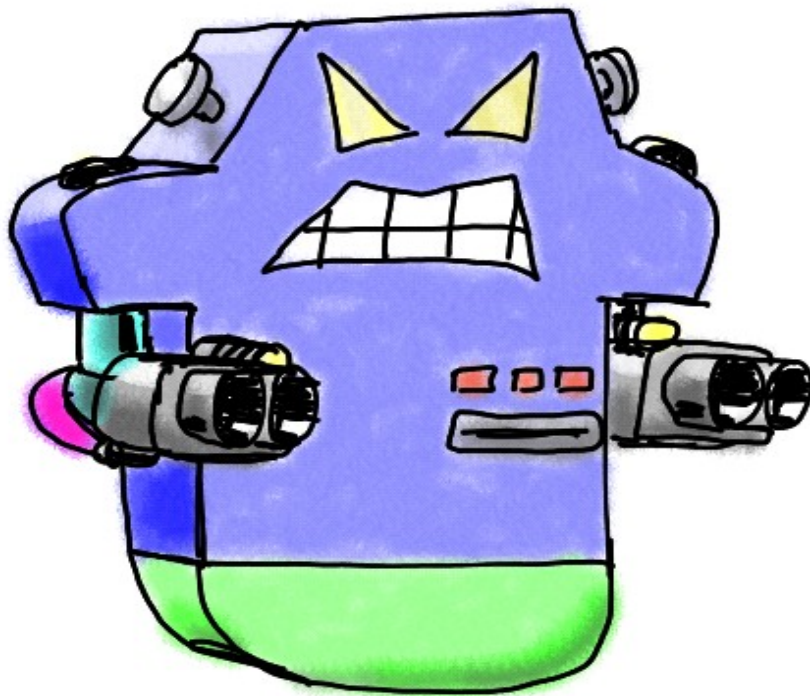


#1





Dukefish and **Keenfish** by **K1n9_Duk3**



Robo Blue by **StupidBunny**

Commander Kizzeen 7: Pimp my Galaxy

Author: Levellass and TooMuchSpareTime (2007)

We all know Commander Keen just isn't that popular these days. Why? Simple; it's not reaching the younger generation, today's kids, who follow trends and fads much different from those around when Keen was created.

The solution? We need a more 'hip' more 'cool' Keen that appeals to the kids of today. As such, I, with some help from TMST. (I was management, he was labor, I made the decisions, he just did everything.) provide for your scrutiny some concept art for the new Commander Keen series to be released this august: Commander Kizzeen 7: Pimp my Galaxy



First up, the Gargs need more 'bling bling' We call this the 'KeenRush' style.



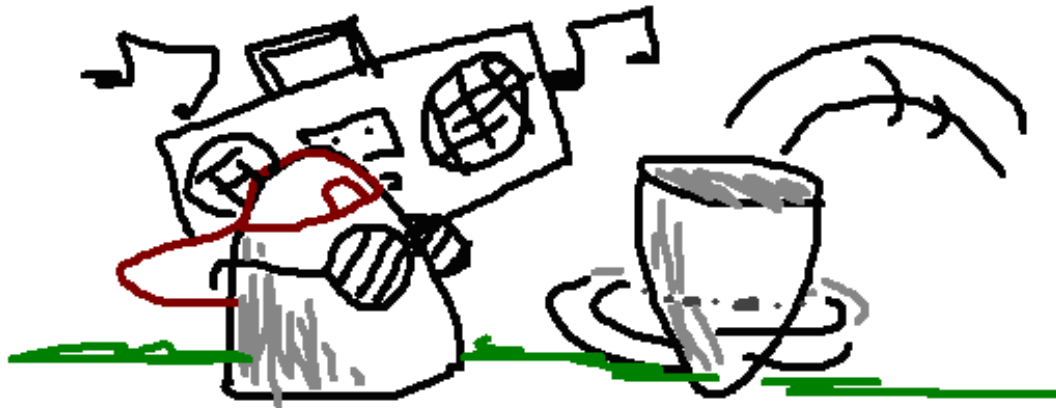
Yorps have their own look, modeled after recent Yorp rap celebrity, Smeeg.



Quote from the game: 'Thanks for pullin' mah a\$\$ outta dis shizz! time i was gettin' down wit' da o-chamber!'



This character will feature in a whole new level, The Pyramid of the Pimpsticene Ancients.



Combining both rap and Rock n' Roll.



This guy's a *real* dope fish!



The sprites rock hard with their white trash beatz, singing with the mullets & whatnot in the lake.



Slime Sluggy-slug, since the Vorticons refused to have anything to do with either Snoopy or dogs.



Kizzeen hisself.



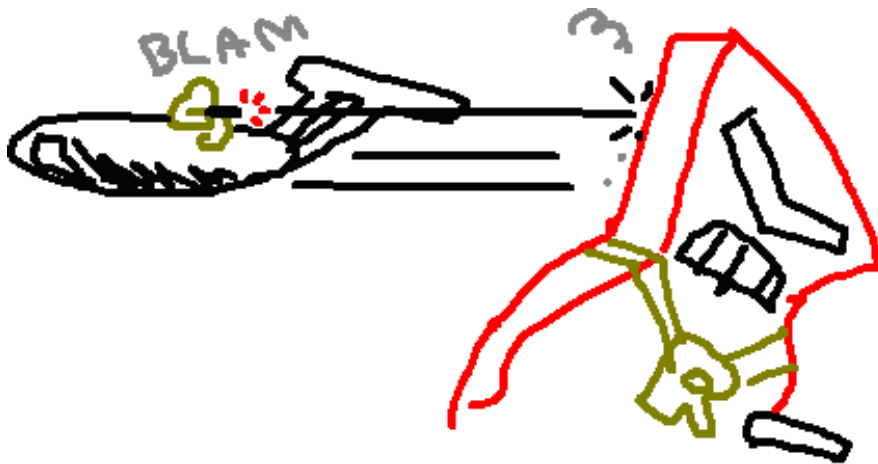
Mad mushrooms, actually, this is what I always imagined Commander Spleen to look like.



Some characters of course, were abandoned.



M.C. Mire...



New features will include being able to participate in fly-by shootings.



The *real* 12 inches! D Phoot, by the inchwormz posse.



Featuring a cameo by Britney Spears;



And Oprah.



WARNING: Contains adult scenes, violence and nudity.

And to finish where we started:



We hope you enjoyed this little presentation.

Keen Challenge Question By Gridlock

In **Keen 4** on **easy mode**, how many levels can you complete without collecting a single point? No cheats may be used. (The BWB does **not** count) (The island levels do not count unless you can get the wetsuit in Miragia without collecting any points) (The pyramid of the forbidden does not count unless you can reach it from the pyramid of moons without collecting any points)

Think you know the answer? Post your response here: <http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?p=46624>

Credits

Newsletter Managers: Ceilick and Gridlock

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Proofread by: Mink

Hosted by: ckguy and Mink

News Section: Ceilick

Game Reviews:

Articles: Ceilick, Gridlock

Entertainment: Ceilick, Eros, Gridlock, guynietoren, K1n9_Duk3, Levellass, Mort, StupidBunny, TooMuchSpareTime

If you want to discuss this month's issue or make suggestions for future issues, do so here:

<http://www.pckf.com/viewtopic.php?p=46624>



Commander Keen says:

"Hey, get involved with the CK Newsletter! No one is reviewing my mods and fan-games!"