

DOS Gaming Revisited

The first DOS gaming article published here at MHW seems to have touched a retro gaming nerve and has since gone on to become the most read article in MHW history. In doing so it also has garnered a huge amount of reader feedback. A large amount of that can no doubt be attributed to our first-ever Slashdot link. Between those two factors--much like in Hollywood--a sequel was pretty much a sure thing.

In the first article I expressed my frustrations at the difficulty I was having running Duke 3D, the original Monkey Island as well as scores of other old DOS titles I have been getting an itch to revisit lately. The two titles above seem to have a rather satisfying fix that the readers clued me in to. With the suggestions below I have also played Duke 1, Duke 2, NFS 1, Tetris, LSL1 and a handful of others the past few weeks.

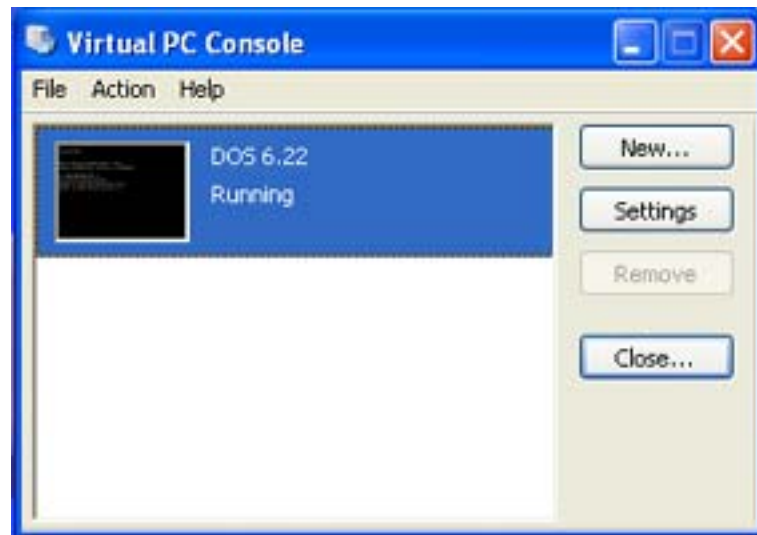
In the case of Duke Nukem, 3D Realms has recently released the source code and there are several ports now available. Jonathon Fowler makes perhaps the most popular one. [JonoF's Duke Nukem 3D port](#) is a free program that allows you to play Duke 3D in Windows XP at 32bit color with OpenGL acceleration at up to 1280 X 1024 resolution. Just as exciting, though, is the sweet new setup utility that allows you to set various game functions including the ability to finally re-map your keyboard and mouse configuration to fit your personal tastes.



For Monkey Island there is a program called [ScummVM](#). ScummVM is a GPL Virtual Machine specifically designed for games such as Monkey Island 1,2,3, Sam & Max Hit the Road, Day of the Tentacle, Full Throttle, as well as several others which use the Scumm engine. Monkey Island in particular, played under some of the enhanced graphics mode, actually looks like a whole new game. The sound also gets some much-needed tweaking, too.



The next stop here on the DOS gaming train is [Microsoft Virtual PC 2004](#), many of you may remember this title as Connectix Virtual PC, which it was called before being bought by Microsoft. I, for one, knew of the Connectix title, but thought they had shut down and didn't realize they had, in fact, sold Virtual PC to Microsoft. For those of you not familiar with Virtual PC, it strives to emulate an entire PC complete with its own OS. Virtual PC is a great program with many uses--from testing out a new OS to running that one application from your old OS that you just can't seem to replace. It is not, however, IMO ideally suited for gaming.



First off, since it emulates an entire PC it is slow for gaming purposes; sound quality is also mediocre at best, with midi playback in particular being quite poor. Most damning, though, is that a licensed copy of Microsoft Virtual PC 2004--unlike the 45 day trial version I am using for this article--will set you back 129 bucks usd. Considering that I only paid 83 bucks usd for my OEM copy of XP itself this is IMO an unacceptable expense for my gaming needs. Especially since every DOS game I played with Virtual PC was also playable with one of the other free methods listed, either here or in the first article.

In the first DOS gaming article I also received a lot of questions as to why I didn't just dual boot Win XP/98. Well, there are two reasons actually. To the best of my knowledge you can't dual boot Win XP/98 on a single NTFS partition. NTFS is one of the main reasons I upgraded to Win XP, and I am loath to give it up. Of course you could partition part of your drive to use NTFS, and load XP on that partition, and then partition the other part of your drive to use FAT32, and load Win 98 on that partition. But, when you are done you have two different OS, using two different FAT types, residing on two separate partitions with no easy way to transfer data between the two OS. If this sounds acceptable to you in your personal situation then by all means go for it, because as I learned in the first article at the moment there is no easy one size fits all solution available.

As for where we stand on the and my no EMS, with nForce2 chipset motherboards issue I have now tried everything I can think of to resolve this problem including turning off the USB legacy support as well as the NIC in the BIOS, the last of which caused me to have to re-activate windows one more time, which often means I then have to do this! none of these actions resolved my no EMS issue though.

So what have I learned through all of the research needed to pen these two short articles? Be patient, have a plan, pack a lot of tools in your tools box, and lastly cross your fingers and hope that somebody comes up with an easier way to do this in the future. I am not holding my breath that this will happen anytime soon though.

If you have read this far and are still unsure exactly where to start when trying to get your favorite DOS game running I have made a little list to follow of the steps that usually work for me. Naturally as you become more

advanced and get around to having your own system it will no doubt be different than mine, and that's OK too, whatever that works for you is fine. Before I forget also check out the Other Resources page which is page full of old dos gaming related links. Since I was something of a math nerd in school I have named my list...

Order Of Operation:

Application Specific (JonoF's Port, ScummVM, etc.)

VDMSound

Program Compatibility Wizard

DOSBox

Win XP/ 98 dual boot Real DOS

[Jim Adkins](#)

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