FEW games have had the effect on as many people as the Doom series. The original game, released over a decade ago, heralded the 3D shooter genre and its sequel established it as a true great. Doom 3 is here after a long hiatus. It is a standout among the smorgasbord of great-looking, intensely engrossing 3D shooters we have these days. You are doing yourself a disservice if you don't give it a try. The game keeps with tradition and has you playing as a lowly space marine who finds he is investigating a portal that has opened up on Mars and connected our world with Hell. The introduction is in some ways reminiscent of the great Half Life in the way you are guided into the research facility on Mars. Many of the game's characters explain the basics of the gameworld. This is graphically very impressive even if, at first, it also seems like it will be a mundane security mission. However, before long the relatively peaceful routine has given way to chaos as the station is attacked and you find yourself fighting for your life. You are stalked by some of the most menacing and cunningly crafted critters to ever set foot in a videogame. The creatures in Doom 3 are its stars. They are repulsive and seeing them in all of their gory glory is preferable to not being able to find them, as many of the demons in the game will hunt you using the darkness and gloom that pervades the game levels as an all-too-effective source of cover. Wandering about in Doom 3 is going to get the hair standing on the back of your neck and your adrenalin pumping. While the first two games relied on a great number of enemies, this opus is more about being stalked by a small number of very capable, stealthy demons, as you bumble about with, at times, only a torch to guide you. Gameplay is punctuated by pin-drop silences followed by intense action as all Hell breaks loose – literally. All of this is magnified many times over if you have a good 3D sound card as the audio is a key part of the games arsenal. The moans, shufflings growls and screams you'll hear are nothing short of blood curdling. The levels are masterfully designed with choke points, brilliant ambush areas and set-piece battles that have been masterfully scripted. Many of the familiar weapons from the pervious Doom games have also received a modern revamp, and the game lets you play with what is the most satisfying virtual shotgun available. There is also a chain gun, pistol and the ever-faithful BFG (big f***ing gun) as well as other weapons. Doom 3 isn't for everyone, but those of you who enjoyed the first games, or think you are made of stern enough stuff to send the demons in the game back to their plane will love what is on offer. **DOOM 3 Format:** PC  **Distributor:** Activision  **Web:** www.activision.com  **Price:** $79.95  **Rating:** MA15+  **Score:** 5/5