FEAR for PC
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FIRST-person shooters are one of the mainstay genres on the PC, and deservedly so as they dish up an often visceral and frenetic style of gameplay. A new game in development looks like taking these two elements to new levels.

FEAR was one of the exceptional games on show at the recent E3 games expo in Los Angeles and it looks set to live up to its name as it delves into the paranormal while keeping you busy with lots of intense 3D gunplay.

In a world of acronyms you are part of the specialised FEAR military squad. FEAR stands for First Encounter Assault Recon group, and as a part of it you are called in by various governments when their special forces are beaten by an enemy.

This happens very early in the game, when you are flown to a research complex overrun by an unknown force.

Your squad-mates suspect terrorists, but nothing has been heard from within the walls for a couple of hours.

The SWAT team sent in to investigate the electronic alarm hasn't been seen or heard of either.

Developer Monolith has moved beyond its out-of-date Lith Tech 3D engine to create new 3D technology for FEAR, and the new engine has some impressive capabilities.

It will make use of all the latest Microsoft DirectX 9 rendering techniques and enable volumetric lighting and shadows as well as individual pixel-by-pixel lighting – techniques that go part of the way towards explaining why FEAR looks so good.

Indeed, FEAR is one of the best-looking 3D action games in development – even compared with other big games on the drawing board, such as Doom III and Half Life II.

With this new 3D technology, the level of realism has been upped considerably and many more objects in the game world are blown apart or affected by your weapon blasts.

Paintings fly off walls, doors are hurled open, curtains fly off their rods and glass shatters spectacularly.

The grenade effects are impressive, with visible sound shockwaves and lots of collateral damage.

The game will feature a good range of weapons. The more predictable toys such as machine guns and rocket launchers are supplemented by odd items such as the atomic particle accelerator, which has the power to reduce enemies to a pile of ash.

There will be infrared goggles and motion detectors to track foes, and you will get to drive about in patrol cars and fly in helicopters.

These ingredients all come together and make FEAR sound like a solid 3D shooter.
It is, however, the paranormal stuff, which came to the fore towards the end of the demonstration that was most interesting.

There was a weird child-like creature with the power to melt through walls and destroy people with mental shockwaves, and there were bizarre and inhuman shadow-like creatures that could cling to walls, attack very quickly and teleport themselves at will.

These paranormal beings, which leapt out from all angles and mauled those around them, seemingly at will, made the demonstration all the more interesting.

FEAR won't be released until next year, but at this early stage it like delivering spine-tingling fun.

**FEAR**  
**Distributor:** Vivendi  
**Web:** [www.lith.com](http://www.lith.com)

Matrix-based FEAR developing on site

FEAR developer Monolith has been around for a number of years and has released more than a few original and interesting titles.

You might remember some of its more recent successes, such as Tron 2.0 and No-one Lives Forever, but the company was also responsible for the creepy Blood and Blood 2 and the atmospheric Aliens versus Predator 2.

FEAR is only one of Monolith's projects, although it is also developing an unusual massively multiplayer online game based on the world of The Matrix.

If you want to look at this new project as it is being developed you can go to the Monolith web page or check out the game at its own page  
[thematrixonline.warnerbros.com/web/index.jsp](http://thematrixonline.warnerbros.com/web/index.jsp)