

## The Core: Promises, Promises

The other person who refused Crihfield's services was a teacher named Paul Oswood. In May 1998, Oswood announced that he was completing a game called The Core. Oswood explained on his web site in elaborate detail how he designed the game and how it was played. He even posted screenshots.

Oswood offered the game for only \$25, but there were two catches. The first was that the game hadn't been completed, although Oswood expected that the game would be available by August 1998. The second catch was that he needed the order paid in full up front so he could pay for his supplies.

There wasn't any reason to doubt Oswood's story. However when August came, Oswood posted a note saying that his daughter was sick and that was why the game wasn't finished. In 1999 the game still hadn't materialized, and his customers began posting doubting questions on Usenet. Oswood finally replied with an even more elaborate tale about his sick daughter, but by this time very few people believed him. Although he offered to return half of each deposit, he never went through with it. By now many people have forgotten about Paul Oswood, and unfortunately nothing has ever been done to reclaim the money he had collected. Oswood was contacted in preparation for this article, but he chose not to respond.



Paul Oswood's The Core  
(courtesy Paul Oswood's  
web site)

The Oswood fiasco made many collectors wary of purchasing new homebrew games from unknown sources. If an opportunity comes along, it's always a good idea to pay with a postal money order. The US Postal Service guarantees its money orders, so if you don't receive what you paid for, the post office will investigate.