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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Election simulation unleashes inner strategist

Vancouver, BC – December 12, 2005 – Voters can take Canadian political campaigns into their own hands this winter with Prime Minister Forever – Canada 2006, a realistic strategy game that uses sophisticated modelling to reproduce the federal election down to each riding.

The Canadian version of the game the Washington Post called “Part SimCity, part C-SPAN” has been thoroughly updated and improved. The new release includes election scenarios from 1993 through 2006, and enhanced features such as more parties, detailed advertising strategies and party-specific campaign goals.

“For political geeks, entertainment requires accuracy,” said Anthony Burgoyne, lead developer for Prime Minister Forever – Canada 2006. “We want users to have real-life precision in all aspects of the campaign while retaining the strategic, high-level view of the campaign you would have as a Karl Rove.”

Users can edit existing candidates and add new ones, meaning players can run an election as Pierre Trudeau, Pamela Anderson or even themselves. The detailed simulation allows players to control up to 16 parties at a time, each with its own platform and strategy on where and how to use limited political, financial and personal resources. Players must choose how much time, money and effort their candidate will allocate to advertising, fundraising, giving speeches, spinning the news and recruiting high-profile and grassroots supporters including newspapers and interest groups.

The game is available in Windows® 98/ME/2000/XP format for purchase online for \$18.95. New for this holiday season, gift downloads make Prime Minister Forever the perfect holiday option for election enthusiasts and armchair campaign strategists of all political stripes. A trial demonstration version is available at www.80soft.com.

About the publisher

80soft is a Vancouver-based software company specializing in political gaming. Founded in 2000, 80soft strives to bring the democratic process alive by creating engaging, realistic simulations of elections past and present.

A US version, President Forever, received critical acclaim and popular success during the 2004 presidential election. 80soft has also created British, German and Australian election simulations, as well as a BC edition, Premier Forever.

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For more information, please contact Anya Spethmann at anya@80soft.com or 778 895 4015 or visit www.80soft.com.

Backgrounder: Prime Minister Forever – Canada 2006

Release Date: December 8, 2005 | Publisher: 80soft.com

Platform: Windows® 98/ME/2000/XP | Price: \$18.95

About the Game

Prime Minister Forever – Canada 2006 is a sophisticated strategy simulation that delivers both gameplay and realism. Prime Minister Forever – Canada 2006, which has been completely rebuilt from the 2004 edition, includes all Canadian federal elections from 1993 through 2006. The default set-up covers the eight weeks of the 2006 Canadian election.

The goal is simple for parties like the Liberals and Conservatives: win enough seats to form the government. The latest release also allows candidates from smaller parties, such as the Bloc Quebecois and the Green Party, to achieve specific goals without winning the election. You are responsible for all aspects of your candidate's election strategy: planning and buying advertising, conducting fundraising, giving speeches, recruiting high-profile and grassroots supporters and spinning the news.

The main screen shows voter support broken down by region. The new release features nuanced shading to illustrate the extent of a party's support at a glance.

Candidates

Players select their election year, party and candidate. Prime Minister Forever – Canada 2006 has significantly more political parties, elections and candidates than the 2004 edition. Players can edit existing candidates or create new ones to add a historical or fictional figure or even themselves to the game. Candidates have varying levels of experience, issue familiarity and other attributes, which affect how they perform and how voters perceive them.

Above left: Players can edit existing candidates or add new ones such as historical figures or themselves. Sir John A McDonald's profile is shown.

Below left: Sophisticated riding-by-riding modelling of voter preferences can be displayed in at-a-glance summaries.

Provinces & Ridings

Canada is a big country, and a successful candidate must focus limited resources. Choose which provinces and ridings you will target, and decide how much of your candidate's resources to expend pursuing each one. New in the 2006 edition, users can divert campaign resources to target additional ridings. Then choose where to barnstorm, give policy speeches and raise funds.

Support & Momentum

Players can recruit new foot soldiers and big-name crusaders. Both can help spread your campaign message and drum up popular support. Foot soldiers work in their own ridings and can help get out the vote, while crusaders travel around according to your strategy. Special interest groups and news media can provide momentum-boosting endorsements – but gaining them may cost scarce political capital. The closer they are to your candidate on an issue, the more likely they are to provide an endorsement.

Above left: Players must choose where their candidates will go and which ridings they will target. Top right: Spin news stories to improve candidates' profiles or tarnish opponents. Bottom right: The new version allows custom-tailored advertising strategies.

Your Tools

Theme & Platform

Establish and tweak your candidate's key theme and beliefs on core issues. The issues change in each election year. Your candidate can change the party's platform, which will attract some voters while alienating others. While moving to the center can help attract voters, there is also a chance existing supporters will leave after a dramatic policy shift.

Polling

Polling numbers are released once per week and allow you to gauge public support and opinion on campaign issues. Positive poll numbers can help gain much-needed momentum and sway undecided voters. Public polls can be unreliable while private polls are expensive.

Advertising

Create ad campaigns to highlight your candidate's campaign themes and platform. Better ads take more time and cost more money. The more they run, the more they cost. Carefully tailored advertising can build a campaign, but ineffective ads may

waste valuable resources. Be careful – attack ads can tarnish opponents but can also backfire.

Media & Spin

News stories can be spun to improve your candidate's profile, for damage control and to turn the heat up on an opponent. From time to time, candidates are offered the chance to give interviews. These may help or hurt the campaign depending on attributes such as knowledge and charisma.

Dirty Tricks

You can dig up scandals on opponents or hire spies to infiltrate an enemy's headquarters. Be careful! This strategy can backfire if caught.

Outside Events

Throughout the game, as in real life, outside events will occur that affect the election. Your response, as well as your candidate's attributes and position on the issues, will determine whether events help or hurt your campaign.

Your Limited Resources

Money

Almost everything in an election costs money. Run out, and your campaign will grind to a halt. Increasing the time spent fundraising will divert your candidate's time from other aspects of the campaign, but will build up the campaign war chest.

Energy

Barnstorming, giving speeches and attending fundraisers deplete energy, which can only be restored by resting away from the campaign. Getting tired can lead to embarrassing gaffes.

Command Points

Command points are the strategic resources available on a day-to-day basis. They are replenished each turn, but are limited – there are never enough for all possible courses of action your campaign may wish to pursue. Making a policy speech, holding a fundraiser, spinning news stories and recruiting foot soldiers and crusaders all deplete your candidate's precious command points. You must ensure the maximum political value for each command point you expend.

Political Points

Candidates have a fixed number of political points, which are used to tailor a campaign to particular political interests. These help gain endorsements, which in turn build momentum.

Players must choose how to spend limited time, energy and attention.

Additional User Scenarios

All of 80soft's election software, including Prime Minister Forever – Canada 2006, allows users to create their own scenarios. Strategy games' fascination lies in the "What If?" factor. With these games, players' options are limited only by their imaginations.

An active community has grown up around the game series, and hundreds of user-created scenarios are available at 80soft.com. They cover elections past, present, future and fictional. Recreate the rise of Caesar circa 48 B.C., campaign for votes on Mars in 2148, or relive the Protestant Reformation as it would have been were it decided at the ballot box.

About the Publisher

Eighty Dimensional Software is a Vancouver-based company specializing in political gaming. Founded in 2000, 80soft strives to bring the democratic process alive by creating engaging, true-to-life simulations of elections.

The company was founded in 2000 by Anthony Burgoyne and Raven Kopelman. Burgoyne, lead developer for Prime Minister Forever – Canada 2006, says there is a natural affinity between strategy games and politics.

"You are battling over all-or-nothing territory with limited resources," he says. "Just like you would in Risk."

The company was prompted to create President 2000, the first title in the series, in response to a lack of realistic election strategy games. Burgoyne says believability is key to making political simulations entertaining.

"80soft is dedicated to providing political geeks with enough control and detail to replicate actual election conditions," he says. He notes that the company used the game in creating their successful prediction of the 2004 U.S. presidential election results.

The products are a natural fit for social studies, civics, history, geography and political science classrooms. 80soft's titles have been used in a range of educational settings from grade school to post-secondary.

In 2005, 80soft released Chancellor Forever in cooperation with the Deutsches Institut für Public Affairs, a non-profit organization dedicated to advanced studies in public affairs. The Institute uses the game, which is available in both English and German, in training post-graduate students. Teammates, moderated by an instructor, determine their candidate's election strategy. This allows students to experience what it is like to be part of a campaign team, forced to find agreement on priorities and strategies.

80soft also released Premier Forever in 2005, based on the British Columbia provincial election. The company has developed Australian, British and US election simulations. All have received positive press and popular support. The "Forever" games have developed a large user following, who enthusiastically trade customized scenarios ranging from history to fantasy to something in between.

Upcoming releases include Congress Forever and President Forever Primaries. The updated version of the popular US title will include the no-holds-barred world of presidential primaries.

80soft MEDIA COVERAGE

Globe and Mail | December 7, 2005

Dear diary ... Here's your big chance to strut your stuff | By Joan Ramsay

Political geeks of the country, relax.

You can get more than the average campaign fix, starting tomorrow, with the release of Prime Minister Forever -- Canada 2006, a political strategy game that reproduces the federal election down to each riding.

So if you've been sitting back in your armchair, grinding your teeth at how the various leaders are handling the hustings, you can find out whether you could do any better, either as a campaign manager or as a leader.

Why, you ask, would anybody want more election than they're already getting?

The core audience is "people who live for politics," explains Anthony Burgoyne, lead developer for the game by Vancouver-based software company 80soft.com. But high-school, university and college instructors are also using the game to teach political-science basics.

It's an update to the 2004 game, with some big changes: the number of parties you can manipulate is up to 12 (you, too, could lead the Marijuana Party) from four and historical scenarios from the past three elections are included. As well, there'll be occasional updates on polling and important events that could influence the outcome.

Your job is to figure out how much time, money and effort to allocate to advertising, fundraising, stumping, spinning the news and recruiting supporters. "You gain a new-found respect for the parties and what they're facing," Mr. Burgoyne says.

At the moment, the game is restricted to one computer. But 80soft.com, which started in the political gaming business in 2000 with a U.S. federal election version, is developing a prototype to allow play on-line or on a network.

"Unfortunately," Mr. Burgoyne says, "the election happened a little too soon." For all of us, I expect.

Prime Minister Forever -- Canada 2006 (\$18.95) can be downloaded at <http://www.80soft.com>.

Washington Post | January 31, 2004

Part SimCity, part C-SPAN, President Forever lets you play campaign manager in this year's race: You can try to guide George W. Bush to reelection, run the campaign of one of the Democratic challengers or opt for the frustrating life of a Green Party or Libertarian candidate. Or design your own candidate and use your own mug shot for him or her.

After picking a pol, you inspect this fellow's stance on 22 campaign themes -- 18 issues, ranging from affirmative action to terrorism, plus four intangibles of leadership, integrity, experience and issue knowledge -- plot an electoral strategy and swing into action. You can design advertisements, choosing from a menu of spots that tout your position or bash your opponent, organize grass-roots workers and lobby for high-profile endorsements.

If you like dirty tricks, you can do opposition research, run attack ads or plant a spy in an opponent's campaign headquarters -- all while keeping an eye on tracking polls, spinning the news and prepping for debates. When the election rolls around, watching the results come in may feel like a relief.

Gameplay is smooth and entertaining, with clean, simple graphics. The documentation, however, is a bit thin, and the version we tested said Sen. John Edwards (D-N.C.) hails from North Dakota (the developers say they've fixed that). It also starts both Republicans and Democrats with equal campaign cash -- as if that ever happens. For those who would prefer to rehash old elections, a free expansion pack covering such historical campaigns as Kennedy-Nixon and Clinton-Bush is due in mid-February.

Slate | October 15, 2004

Sim Shrum: Election games let you battle for the presidency | By Clive Thompson

President Forever (80soft.com, \$12) | This one is for C-SPAN junkies who dream of micromanaging every tiny facet of a campaign. Track 22 major issues (the war, health care, taxes) and check up on how you're rated on each one in every state. You can also give your candidate stances that aren't black or white by sliding a bar from left to right until you reach the perfect position. (Watch out if you change your position on the fly, though. I got nailed as a flip-flopper when I abruptly supported higher taxes for the rich. Hey, polls showed the public supported it!) One nice feature is that the game acknowledges the existence of the media. When headlines pop up--"Kerry makes gaffe on Integrity issue!"--there's a little "spin" button next to it that lets you expend some of your political energy to blunt the damage. It's also easy to construct fantasy scenarios. Fans have created games to simulate old elections like Hoover vs. Smith and Garfield vs. Hancock, where

Howard Dean is a powerful third-party candidate, and in which the Electoral College has been reformed. (Try these yourself by downloading the scenarios.) The downside is information overload. If you don't pay close attention to the blizzard of stats from each state, you won't notice when the battlegrounds are slipping away. Playing as Kerry, I lost every state but Washington and Maine. Ouch.

Realism: 8; Wonk Factor: 9; Fun: 7; Realpolitik: 7; Total: 31/40

Computer Gaming World | January 2005

Want to rewrite/re-create history? Look no further than *President Forever*, a deceptively deep strategy game that lets you campaign for the highest office in the country. Relive the 2004 election or participate in great campaigns of the past.

Gamespot.com | Nov 12, 2004 | By Brett Todd

Wondering how to occupy your time after the conclusion of one of the most hotly contested presidential elections in decades? Political junkies looking for a new diversion should check out *President Forever*, a simulation where the polls never close. Chances are that you'll never want them to, either, because this election simulation from Eighty Dimensional Software is very good. All the complexities of a grueling run for the presidency have been narrowed down to core themes, which make the daunting task of claiming the Oval Office addictive and playable while not sacrificing realism...

The bottom line is that you never have enough command points to do everything that you want to do. There are always a dozen or more ways to spend the command points every turn. In one game where we were playing Jimmy Carter in a down-to-the-wire election with Ronald Reagan, a late-game turn presented us with so many sensible options that we took 10 minutes to decide on a course of action. We could spin a Reagan scandal, hold a fundraiser to build enough cash to extend the integrity of our ad campaign into Wisconsin, give a policy speech on social security to hopefully firm our numbers in Florida, barnstorm New York, or try to pull the military funding endorsement away from Reagan. All these choices were out there and were viable, yet we had just five command points to spend. Almost every decision in the game is fraught with tension, in that you never know whether you made the right or wrong move until the polls close on election night. Replay value is tremendous because there are so many legitimate paths to election day.

Gamespy.com

President Forever is perfect for strategy game junkies. It eschews messy realism for clear-cut game mechanics. Which isn't to say it's not complicated. It is, but with neat numbers and directly drawn cause-and-effect relationships ...

Like any good strategy game built around gameplay rather than slavish devotion to realism, *President Forever* is very replayable. Furthermore, it's apparently got a mod-crazy player base. There are about 50 third-party mods available here, many with their own maps and unique rules. There are historical elections (post WWI, the wake of the Stock Market Crash of 1929), celebrities (pitting Mel Gibson and Michael Moore against each other), changes to the Electoral College, in Colin Powell as a third-party candidate, having an election during a Soviet invasion, and so on. There are even total conversions like the Protestant Reformation in Europe during the 16th century.

GameTunnel.com | May 15, 2004

It always amazes me how games can take something that might seem like a difficult concept to turn into a game and make it shine. Such is certainly the case with *President Forever: 2004*, a game that takes what might be considered a somewhat un-enjoyable subject and turns it into a tremendously fun simulation.

UKElect.co.uk

Political games software is rare, and high-quality political games software is rarer still. *Prime Minister Forever*, by 80soft.com, delivers on all counts.

It is a high quality product, providing a very good controllable simulation of the 2005 UK General Election Campaign, that is also excellent value for money at £7.95. Players can take charge of one or more of the major parties, change the leader if desired, and then run the campaign the way it should be run. The game contains most of the elements of a real-life campaign - frantic movement around the country, targeting of key seats, spin, research (if only designed to undermine opponents credibility), campaign themes, adverts, money, attempts to influence the media, etc. etc.