



Unit 2 Picture perfect

International cultural knowledge – Online entertainment

1 Write your answers to the following question.

If someone gave you these presents how would you react and why?

- tickets for a Formula 1 Grand Prix event
- a voucher for a driving experience day in a top racing car
- the latest video racing game

▶ WORD BOOSTER

Match the words and definitions.

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| 1 stints | a brought about |
| 2 exclusive | b involved |
| 3 yielded | c creating |
| 4 engrossed | d equivalents |
| 5 forging | e only for a few people |
| 6 counterparts | f turns/periods |

2 Read the article quickly and decide which of the three titles is best.

- a How video games are reaching new markets
- b How video games can improve your driving skills
- c How video games are benefiting from real-world racing

HORACIO PAGANI, founder of Pagani Motorbili and architect of the Zonda C12, is not a man you'd readily associate with video games. His small, extremely specialised plant in Modena has its work cut out hand-building some of the most desirable cars in the world, so you'd think the idea of relaxing on the sofa with joypad in hand would be the last thing on his mind. But Pagani's new Huayra supercar, one of the stars of the 2011 Geneva motor show, is about to appear in a video game.

We've come a long way since the days of *Pac Man* and *Space Invaders*. The past 10 years have yielded rapid rates of technological development – not just in the console under your television, but in the way things are being made. Racing games have reached a point where simulations of cars and racing circuits don't just bear a passing resemblance, but are picture-perfect, right down to the dashboard detail of a Lamborghini Gallardo.

Racing has also experienced its own technological evolution. Complex computer simulations provide teams with information to help optimise tuning, predict tyre wear and generate competitive lap-time targets. Such a deep level of development has given the two seemingly distant worlds of motorsport and racing games a number of common reference

points. Accurate simulation of cars and tracks requires precise data, so video game developers are working more closely than ever with the motorsport industry to access that data and achieve parity in terms of both look and feel.

The result is a range of games that make individual marques instantly recognisable, with handling and mechanical characteristics mapped from their real-world counterparts, and racing environments that are identical to the real thing. The ultimate aim is to bring us closer than ever to the sensation of speed, intensity and vehicle feel, from the comfort of our homes.

Steven Viljoen of Slightly Mad Games, creator of the racing titles *Need For Speed: Shift* and *Shift 2: Unleashed*, has spent recent years forging strong relationships within the motorsport industry to precisely this end. It's a process that has taken time and overcoming the prejudice that video games are nothing more than toys, as opposed to realistic simulations, has been a key challenge.

Drivers are benefiting, too. 'I remember when we were working on our previous game,' Viljoen says. 'We were at Spa-Francorchamps,

3 Read the article again and answer the questions in your own words.

- 1 What is the connection between Horacio Pagani and video games?
- 2 What difference has advanced technology made to video racing games today?
- 3 Why did it take a long time to persuade the motorsport industry to get involved?
- 4 What are the benefits to the motorsport industry of being involved?
- 5 What do Pagani's last words in the article 'We're speaking the same language' refer to?

4 If you had enough money to buy any car you wanted, what would you go for? Why?



in Belgium, and had the game set up and ready to play. We had some drivers in there. They were completing two- to three-hour shifts on the real track, but a lot of them played our game between stints. They were amazed that our virtual Spa was so accurate and it gave them a chance to practise. One team manager actually ran in – his driver was so engrossed in the game that he'd forgotten it was his turn to take over the car.'

And how does Pagani feel about his car appearing in a game? 'It's very exclusive. Not everyone has the chance to drive such a machine, but I've met so many people who say: "I have your car!" They talk as if they own the real thing. It's a passion for cars, which is also translated through the video game. We're speaking the same language.'