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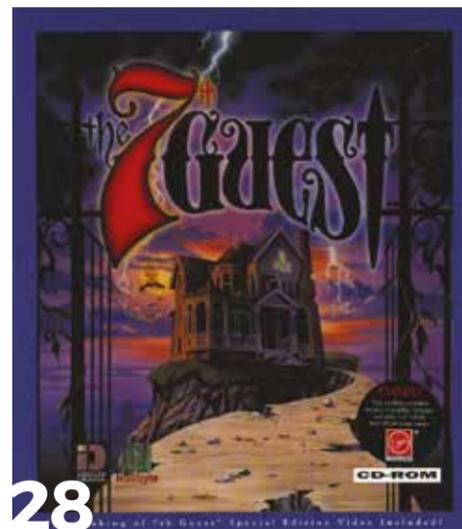
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## WELCOME

If you missed *Crucible*, Amazon's multiplayer shooter, then don't feel bad – it passed much of the rest of the world by, too. Launched in May, the game was online for just a few weeks before Amazon decided to drag it back into closed beta. In early October, Amazon Games announced that *Crucible* was being discontinued, with its servers scheduled for shut-down the following month.

It's a sad end for a game that started with big ambitions. But in an early sign of trouble behind the scenes, some of its more original ideas – such as a 'gamesmaster' player who can affect events – were soon dropped. We can only guess how many thousands of personnel hours went into *Crucible*, given that Amazon announced it in 2016 and work would have begun long before.

This got me thinking about what it must be like to work on a game like *Crucible*. Imagine being, say, an artist, diligently crafting characters, backgrounds or weapons, only to see your hard work vanish only weeks after launch. At their best, games allow artists and designers to create new worlds and tell stories in captivating new ways. On the downside, it's also a medium where months of work can vanish forever. In most other media, it's highly unusual for a project to be cancelled years after it was greenlit; instances of movies being withdrawn and vanishing into the archives shortly after release are incredibly rare. *Crucible's* fate is a reminder, then, of just how brutal the collision of art and commerce that is the game industry can be.

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