

You are William H Gates III!

Ever dreamed of getting to the top of the computer industry's totem pole? Does world domination take your fancy? Would you like to see Phillipe Khan, John Sculley, Jim Manzi, John Akers et al cowering in your shadow or scurrying around your heels vying for the slightest advantage? If the answer to any of these questions is 'yes', then here's your chance! Your mission – should you choose to accept it – is to assume the mantle of the chairman of Microsoft and pit your cunning against your rivals in the computer industry and see if you can survive long enough to achieve the status of Supreme Being. Royalties to Tony Smith

The Rules

Start off at Paragraph One (below) and then move on to the next, listed at the end of the section. Sometimes more than one option is available – then you must choose the one that will get you closer to your ultimate goal: *world domination!*

GOOD LUCK!

1 It's a fine morning in Redmond, Washington. The sun is shining, the birds are singing and the police are locking away poor people. Windows 3.1 is on schedule even. You are at peace with yourself and the world. Things are going your way. Suddenly your reverie is broken by your personal assistant arriving with a letter bearing a Boca Raton, Florida postmark. You may open the letter (turn to 41) or study Microsoft's share performance in the *Wall Street Journal* (turn to 22).

2 You lash out a few times, but fail to bring fists and jaws into contact. Then they charge at you, and in a huge mass you and the others fall backwards down the lift shaft. Think of a number between one and ten, write it down, then turn to 29.

3 You follow Reg, who leads you down many dark, tortuous passages, crammed with grumbling pipes and ageing wiring. Strangely, the words 'hello Cleveland' spring to mind, but you don't speak. Eventually, you emerge into a large room and suddenly you are surrounded by seven shaggy figures, grunting and groaning. Could this be your worst nightmare come true? Held hostage by the UK Windows User Group? Will you wait and see what happens (turn to 60) or make a dash for the exit (turn to 58)?

4 Arriving at Heathrow, you are accosted by a swarthy figure in a duffle-coat, bearing a large piece of cardboard evidently produced from an old Cornflake packet. On the sign is written: "Bill Goats". Will you introduce yourself to this unsavoury character (turn to 19) or head straight for the taxi rank (turn to 54)?

5 Arriving at the interview venue, you are led by a PR oppo into a small room

containing just a plain wooden desk and two plain wooden chairs. The PR person says nothing and then leaves – they seem a bit plain and wooden too, not quite genuine. For a moment, a frisson of fear flickers through you: could this be a trap? Turn to 23 to leave discreetly. Turn to 53 to wait and see what happens next.

6 Industrial espionage isn't a dirty word – it's two dirty words. But no matter, if you need information quick, there's no better way to get it. A quick call to Snoop and Gnabbit Inc and the cloak and dagger people are on the case. The following day brings the data you need: Fix is hiding its true financial state from the authorities – things are much worse than they appear. A purchase would be suicidal. You're so shocked that you nearly fell for it that you have to lay off work for a few days. Word gets out, and speculation about your health causes a share-price drop. Will you open that mysterious letter from Boca Raton, Florida (turn to 41) or see what's in your diary (turn to 8)?

7 Your enemies move closer, their eyes shining with hate. Action is required. Turn to 33 and make an attempt to grab a hostage. Turn to 2 to swing a few well-aimed punches.

8 Who cares about Fix? Your expertise is easily up to getting a genuine Microsoft database to market – you don't need to buy any old rubbish in... Pride warms your heart, and you turn to your appointments diary. Today's entry reveals you are scheduled to talk at a UK show tomorrow. All the details are arranged. Leisurely, you set off for your private jet. Turn to 4.

9 At the hotel lobby, a car is waiting to carry you off to the conference centre. Once at the site, a PR operative leads you via a side entrance (to avoid the crowds, she says) and indicates a lift nearby. You are to take it to the second floor. Will you do as she asks? Select the floor you want to go up to:

Floor	1	2	3	4	5
Turn to	25	59	18	36	39

10 It's the following morning, and the day of your speech. After an



ILLUSTRATIONS: NICK DAVIES

excellent breakfast, you make ready to head off for the conference centre. As you are about to leave, the phone rings. It's Microsoft's UK public relations outfit and it has set you up with an immediate interview with a well-known journalist. Will you accept (turn to 5), or decline the offer (turn to 9)?

11 Back at Microsoft Towers, your secretary informs you that you are due to visit the UK. Everything is prepared, and you begin your journey. Turn to 4.

12 You turn to your enemies and beg them to let you go, to spare your miserable existence, but to no avail. They all reach out and push you backwards. Down you go, into the pit, and then sand is pouring down on top of you. There is no escape. You will never achieve *world domination*. You have failed.

13 The audience is overwhelmed: at last a new line from the Microsoft Supremo! Rapt, they hang on your every word, as you reveal plans for new alliances with Big Blue, Apple and most of the industry majors. Such a good feeling for Microsoft is generated, that around the world its share price rockets. Despite the new deals made, your company races to the top and soon, unintentionally, the competition is reduced to an ineffectual bunch of computer has-beens. Congratulations – you have attained *world domination!*

14 Nothing seems to work, you just can't get past the glacial Big Blue facade. Turn to 20 if you think taking the piss out of Apple is the only way forward. Turn to 45 if you decide to pull out of the talks.

15 Despite your selection, the lift immediately shoots up to floor 20, the roof of the building. Outside, you find yourself facing your greatest rivals in the computer

business: John Sculley, Phillipe Khan and Jim Manzi. Will you dash back for the lift (turn to 31) or face your enemies (turn to 24)?

16 A few well-aimed punches and the Apple team is felled. Reg attempts to escape, but you catch up and force him to lead you out of this hellish place. Eventually you reach the airport terminal, and you release your captive, who immediately yells: "For Apple!" and dives under a passing 747. You leave, to find a taxi. Turn to 54.

17 You manage to get up to the front door, unnoticed. So far so good, but as you grasp the handle and push, the hinges give out a cry like a London Underground escalator *in extremis*. The guard turns around, grabs you and leads you back to the interview cell. You must await your fate. Turn to 53.

18 Turn to 15.

19 "Cor, 'ello, Mr Goats, sir. I'm Reg from Text, yer PR people over 'ere. If you'll foller me, I'll show yer to a motor ta take yer to yer 'otel." Turn to 3 to accompany Reg. Turn to 54 to dash round him and grab a taxi.

20 Erm, what do you get if you cross a Mac with a dog turd? Er, a GUI mess on your shoe. Ha, um, ha."



The stoney faces turn to look at each other, then back at you. No flicker of emotion passes across their granite-like visages. Then one speaks.

"The decision of this committee is that that joke was amusing."

The discussion continues in a similar vein for several hours. There is obviously scope for a renewal of the relationship between your two companies – which would certainly be to your advantage – but one stumbling block remains: what ACE stands for. What will you say:

Advanced Computing Environment (Turn to 45)

Awful Compaq Element (Turn to 38)

21 Reaching out, you grab hold of the ledge and manage to hang on while Sculley, Khan and Manzi plummet to their doom. Eventually, you clamber back through the lift's threshold, onto the roof. From there you cross the tiles to a second lift. You enter and descend. Turn to 26.

22 The *Journal* reveals two pieces of information, both of which send little tickles of delight through your body. First, your share price has climbed by a hefty margin. Second, database specialist Fix Software is up for grabs. A Windows database is just the product you need to complete Microsoft's product line, and would bring you several steps closer to *world domination*.

Do you want to buy a Fix (turn to 27) or not bother (turn to 8)?

23 Opening the door, you creep quietly the way you came. Guarding the building's front door, however, is your wooden guide. He's looking away from the door, but make any sound and he'll hear you for sure. Pick a number between one and ten, write it down, then turn to 50.

24 You must act quickly to save yourself from your deadly rivals. Will you take the initiative and step forward to punch Phillipe Khan on the nose (turn to 33), or wait and see what happens (turn to 7)?

25 Turn to 56.

26 The lift doors open and you find yourself in a small room with a door in the far wall. The muffled sound of a great many people reaches your ears. After a couple of moments you open the door.

In front of you is a vast auditorium, choc-a-bloc with conference attendees. The roar of the crowd dies like a second-hand PC clone. You begin your speech.

Will you tell them about your glorious vision of Windows as the only major computing environment, the usefulness of OLE and DDE, and why NT is better than Unix (turn to 49), or announce that the 90s will herald a new era of inter-company co-operation to make a better industry (turn to 13)?

27 Excited by the thought of a Fix deal, the words 'buy, buy, buy' appear before you. You tremble with anticipation. Can you resist a snapping up the company?

Turn to 37 to call Fix and make a bid.

Turn to 42 to exercise caution.

28 Success – you are free. You make your way quickly back to the hotel. Turn to 9.

29 If you picked one, five or ten, turn to 21. Otherwise turn to 43.

30 "Ha, ha," you cry. "Now the boot's on the other foot! You thought you could do away with me, Bill Gates, the greatest single figure in computing history! Many assassins have tried before and they've all failed, as you have. I'm invincible!"

A simple signal to your new followers and a large heap of sand and gravel is pushed into the pit. Your rivals will never escape. No one can stop you now. You have achieved *world domination!*

31 You spin round and leap into the lift.

Unfortunately, it has departed for the basement, and you now have too! Bad luck – you have failed in your quest for *world domination*.

32 Before your eyes, the cabbie reaches up to his face, grabs his cheek and pulls hard. To your astonishment, he is wearing a mask, and in the rear view mirror you see the face of Jim Manzi, your deadly rival! You try the doors but they are locked, and you are forced to wait for the ride to end.

Soon the cab turns into a disused gravel pit and heads for a group of people standing alongside a large hole. The cab stops, and Manzi drags you out. Before you stand Phillippe Khan, Eckhard Pfeiffer and several other industry bigwigs.

Khan speaks: "At last we've got you in our power, Bill. We can't afford to countenance a rival like you, so you have to go. Today, the end of Microsoft, tomorrow ze world! Ha, ha, ha!"

You see nothing before you but a sandy end. Will you plead for your life (turn to 12) or damn them all and tell them to get on with it – you're not afraid to die, you're head of the greatest company in the world, etc. etc. (turn to 46)?

33 As you reach forward, you trip on one of your shoelaces which has come undone and fall forward. Your fall is blocked by Khan's body, but the transfer of momentum sends him staggering back towards the edge of the roof. Both Sculley and Manzi, cowering behind Khan's bulk, are forced back too. There is a cry (in triplicate) and all three are gone – over the edge.

With the guiding lights gone from most of the major computer companies, it won't be long before you reach *world domination*. Congratulations!

34 Despite their attempt on your life, you can't bear to wipe out your rivals. You turn and head back to the cab, get in and set off back the

way you came. As you leave the immediate area, you look back and see your enemies climb out of the pit. "We'll get you yet, Gates," Khan shrieks, and then you're out of earshot, and on your way to London. Turn to 40.

35 The following day, the story breaks: Fix was far worse off than it had admitted. It's debt is so colossal, that it has dragged down even mighty Microsoft. Your share price plummets to zero, and not even Chapter 11 can save you now!

In fact, Fix was a fake. Secretly set up by Phillippe Khan and Jim Manzi, it has done its foul work and trapped you right in it.

You will now never attain *world domination*. You have failed.

36 Turn to 26.

37 One phone call is all it takes! Your bid is welcomed by the Fix management, and accepted straight away. The company is yours!

But as you put the phone down, you're sure you can hear laughing at the other end...

Turn to 35

38 If there's one thing the Blue suits hate, it's Compaq – and you know it. Your response is just what they want to hear, and soon you are signing deal after deal. When the industry hears about this, your market standing can't fail to grow. Turn to 11.

39 Turn to 15.

40 Soon you arrive at your hotel. You check in and head straight for your room. After a large meal and a good night's sleep, you are ready to face the UK computer industry. Turn to 10.



41 The letter has Big Blue written all over it – which tends to obscure the writing. Even so, you manage to discover that it's an invitation to secret talks with John Akers. Could be just the thing to heal the great rift opened by your decision to drop OS/2 – and stitch up those buggers at Apple into the bargain!

Turn to 48 to accept the offer. Turn to 52 to ignore it.

42 Despite your pleasure at Fix's floundering, some sixth sense causes you to pause. Maybe you shouldn't just rush in. Perhaps you need more information first. Will you go ahead anyway (turn to 37) or do some checking (turn to 6)?

43 Reaching out, grab hold of the ledge. The only trouble is, the other three won't let go. You can hang on no longer and with a cry you plummet 20 stories to your doom. You have failed.

44 You look around at the seven grim faces. You realise there is really no escape. You will never gain the *world domination* you seek. You have failed.

45 It's no good, you just can't come to any kind of agreement. With a heavy heart you head back to Microsoft HQ.

Your secretary informs you that you are due to visit the UK. Everything is prepared, and you begin your journey.

Turn to 4.

46 There is a pause, and among the group there are mutterings of approval. Suddenly, the three ringleaders, Khan, Pfeiffer and Manzi, are shoved by their acolytes into the pit they prepared for you! The tables are turned, but will you be merciful (turn to 34), or not (turn to 30)?

47 It's no use, no matter where you turn, you can't find the way out. You are doomed to spend the rest of your life wandering these gloomy passages. You have failed.

48 One long-distance phone call and two days later you are winging your way down south to Florida,

drops OS/2 (turn to 57) or crack a joke about John Sculley's company (turn to 20)

49 Five minutes into your text and you realise the audience is getting restless. After another five minutes, most have left the hall. It's your speech – they've heard it all before. It's all the same old stuff, nothing new. At the end of the allotted hour, you're glad it's all over. You realise you're going to have to offer something better if you want to achieve *world domination*. Still, you can give yourself a pat on the back for surviving this far.

50 What number did you select? If it was 1, 4, 7 or 9, turn to 17. Otherwise turn to 28.

51 Today's entry reveals you are scheduled to talk at a UK show tomorrow. All the details are arranged. Leisurely, you set off for your private jet.

Turn to 4.

52 Will you check your appointments for the day (turn to 51), or take a peek at the morning's *Wall Street Journal* (turn to 22)?

53 Five minutes pass and then the PR operative shows a grey-haired man with a dagger-like gaze into the room. His face seems frighteningly familiar, but you just can't place it. Then he speaks: "Good morning, Mr Gates. My name's Bidmead, Chris Bidmead. I'm here to speak to you on behalf of *MicroScope* magazine."

When you hear the name, memories come flooding back: Bidmead is the demon of debate – he will tear your arguments proposition from proposition, any flaws in what you say will be set upon and justly ridiculed. Changes in policy you hoped no one would notice will be brought to the fore



54 At the taxi rank, you find a rank taxi. You direct the driver to the Hilton Hotel, and off he goes. You curse yourself for not getting in first, but are more successful on your second attempt.

On the way, the cabbie engages you in conversation. He praises the quality of Windows and the relevance to computing in the 90s of DDE and OLE. You are pleased by the driver's comments – obviously a man of distinction. Will you commend his judgement and reveal who you are (turn to 32) or keep quiet (turn to 40)?

55 As you enter a large room, you realise too late that you have made a wrong turn: you are back at Apple's dark demesne. Turn to 60.

56 Despite your selection, the lift immediately shoots up to floor 20, the top of the building. Before you can leave, the elevator drops back down, its speed increasing by the second. You desperately hope for it to stop. It does – on the basement floor. You do not survive. Your quest for *world domination* has ended in failure.

57 The temperature in the room drops several degrees, and looks of disapproval pass across the stern faces of the Blue suits in front of you. They are not amused. Will you try to break the ice with an Apple joke (turn to 20) or try something else (turn to 14)?

58 Catching Reg by surprise, you manage to tear yourself free from his grip. You turn and dash down the tunnel the way you have come. Soon you reach a junction – you turn left. More crossroads emerge, and after half an hour, you are out of breath and utterly lost!

After pausing to recover, you carry on and eventually come to a T-junction.

To take the right-hand passage, turn to 47.

To take the left fork, turn to 55.

59 Turn to 26.

60 The seven beings form a circle around you, preventing your escape. One speaks: "Welcome to the headquarters of Apple UK. We cannot allow Microsoft to succeed – that would mean our end. Macintosh must defeat Windows 3, and to do that you must die!"

Turn to 16 to try to fight your way out.

Turn to 44 if you want to submit to the terrible seven.