

# play!

z i n e

No.89 | November 2015



GAME OF THE MONTH:

## ASSASSIN'S CREED SYNDICATE

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Author: Borislav Lalović

REVIEW

play!

# ASSASSIN'S CREED SYNDICATE



## A missed shot?

Filling the gap left behind by Ezio Auditore was obviously one of the hardest issues that the Assassin's Creed series has to face. The fact that neither Connor, nor Edward, and especially Arno have managed to do that could be considered alarming. And while the AC3 was a miss when we consider the barely used setting and it's mild protagonist, here the situation is much more complex. We have reached the point in which AC looks less like it should, and more like a generic action adventure that Ubisoft cranks out every 12 months. That trend of yearly releases is obviously taking it's toll. The different attempts to spice up the AC formula seem more and more forced and bring nothing innovative into the series, but rather feel like changes for the sake of changes.

So, what has Ubisoft cooked for us this year? The setting for Syndicate is 19th century London, in the time of the industrial revolution. We follow the actions of Jacob and Evie Frye, twin brother and sister and members of the order of assassins. For the first time in the series we have the protagonists that are members of the sect right away and we don't get to witness their initiation. Let's get this out of the way early – Ubisoft has abandoned the idea of a co-op mode, so you'll be playing as either Jacob or Evie. Which one of them depends on your play style or specific situations. Jacob is a tough guy who prefers to solve problems with his fists or weapons, while Evie is much more subtle and her specialty is to stealthily complete her tasks and remove targets.







At the start of the game we have two introductory missions, one for each assassin, in which we get acquainted with their basic capabilities and glimpse the game's mechanics. After the intro, the pair heads to London where their main assignment awaits: to free the city from Templar tyranny and find the Precursor box that's hidden there. The brother and sister are diametrically opposite when it comes to their priorities. Jacob aims to create his own gang (and thus fulfill the boyhood dream of being a gang leader), while Evie is much more assassin-conscious and her priority is to find the artifact before the Templars do in hopes of it helping them in freeing the city.

The open world that we get to explore in this game, embodied in London undergoing an industrial revolution, is faithfully and well presented. There's everything, from the Big Ben, Edward's house, to Westminster Palace. The city center is a personification of wealth and bourgeoisie, while on the other hand the ghetto is a faithful copy of what's described in, for example, Oliver Twist. So when looked at from the perspective of presentation of the game's setting, Syndicate is brilliant, like all other AC titles for that matter. However, the main quality and focal point of every AC game was the main character and a well thought out and complete story. Here we have neither, or rather not to the extent that we would have preferred, and ultimately expected. Syndicate is an ok game, but it doesn't warrant a bigger compliment than that. And that could be the worst possible category for an AAA title to be put in. There are no bugs to ruin the gameplay like in Unity, but there's no real story either. Or a real story at least, one with an intriguing plot and interesting characters. Even the main protagonists aren't especially interesting, with Evie being sort of an exception. Besides, here we have perhaps the least interesting set of historical figures to meet in game. In comparison to the Borgias, the Medicis, Leonardo da Vinci, to Washington or to captain Blackbeard, the characters that we meet in London such as Darwin, Bell and Queen Victoria, are mild at best, not to say even boring.

When it comes to the missions and the basic game mechanics and story development, during gameplay you'll get the feeling that the enemies aren't doing anything to stop you. Therefore the missions become relatively boring after a while. How much the core of the assassin-experience is dulled down is best illustrated with a new gadget you have at your disposal. It's a grappling hook with which you can climb anywhere without much trouble. When we consider that a vast portion of the player base enjoyed climbing towers and buildings around them, the

**“BROTHER AND  
SISTER IN A  
FIGHT AGAINST  
CORRUPTED  
LONDON”**





“ENGAGE IN STREET GANG WARS OR SIMPLY TAKE A COACH RIDE THROUGH THE CENTER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE”



implementation of this gadget to us seems to be a mistake. It may be useful and it speeds up the gameplay, but all the charm of climbing tall buildings is lost with it.

On the technical side of things, Syndicate has fulfilled the expectations. Unlike Unity, this game is almost bug-free, with the exception of FPS loss in certain points. London has been recreated in great detail and the developers have taken care of even the smallest elements. The music has a Victorian vibe to it and you may possibly get sick of hearing the violin, as it can get irritating at times. The faces look a bit washed out and are not very expressive, which slightly spoils the overall visual impression. The most brilliant visual point (along with the Big Ben) is the train on which you can ride through London. As well as looking excellent, it will also serve as your main hub, with all the requirements of an assassin's headquarters.

Another point at which Syndicate failed to impress is combat. There are two sets of moves, one for each main character, as well as two sets of abilities to upgrade. The combat is fluid, but the controls often lead to the action being reduced to simply mashing the buttons. That might have been fine if we didn't feel like we were fighting the air. The execution is not nearly as interesting as it was in Black Flag or AC2. And to add insult to injury, there are the completely overdone kill-combos which look like they came from the World Wrestling Entertainment. Another objection would be aimed at the control layout on the joy pad where the multifunctional buttons often complicate gameplay.

So, what to conclude here? Before us is a game that's not as plagued by serious technical issues like its predecessor. But it's also a game suffering from an identity crisis. When it comes to the Assassin's Creed series, Syndicate serves as a reminder that AC hurts from being a yearly

release. On the other hand, as an AAA title for this holiday season, this year Ubisoft at least managed to deliver a decent game that can serve as a fun single playthrough. If you're a fan of the series, you probably don't want to miss Syndicate. If you simply want to play an AAA title near the end of the year, this game can serve you as well. But if you're someone who's passionate about video games and expects more from a title into whose development went a lot of money, then unfortunately you won't find that here.



GAME PROVIDED BY:



UBISOFT

**PLATFORMS:**  
PS4, Xbox One

**PUBLISHED BY:**  
Ubisoft

**PRICE:**  
60 €

**DEVELOPED BY:**  
Ubisoft Quebec

**TESTED ON:**  
PS4

RATING

7

- ✓ Good atmosphere of the industrial revolution period London
- ✓ Technically polished game

- ✗ Mellow story
- ✗ Uninspiring and often boring missions and characters
- ✗ Uninteresting combat system







Author: Milan Živković

REVIEW

## WE'LL IRON OUT YOUR RELICS AT A LOW PRICE

Since the launch of this console generation, we've witnessed a huge increase in remastered editions of old games and it's certain that developers and publishers won't give up on 'reselling' their famous and even not-so-famous titles. Sometimes that's something that gets past all radars, but at other times those are the games that we eagerly wait to play once more in a new guise. The Uncharted trilogy, a flagship product of the Sony gaming industry, is one of those games we couldn't wait to play on the new system, refreshed and aesthetically modified, and even nicely packaged as a compact trilogy of the legendary classic. Uncharted: The Nathan Drake Collection is before us, so let's see what it has to offer...



What you're going to notice on first glance is that as far as extra materials go, this collection brings next to nothing. You won't have videos of making of the game at your disposal, or any other bonuses such as artwork and similar collection bonuses. But what you will have is all three games packed in a single menu through which you switch from one to another quickly and simply. While the control settings and similar preferences are applied to all games at the same time, they still remain their own separate entities.

When the first Uncharted came out at the time when the Playstation 3 was still in its infancy, it was a spectacular achievement which seized the attention

of a large number of players with its visuals and style. Now on Playstation 4, shown in 1080p resolution at 60 fps you can see its full potential. The game may seem time-worn, but if you go back to the time when it first came out only for a moment, you'll once again be amazed with what you had the chance to play such a long time ago.

Just like the leap that the quality of the first Uncharted brought to its generation of games, so too was the leap from Uncharted to Uncharted 2 nothing less. Probably the most popular game of the series, it now looks better than ever. The textures are softly redefined, and the enhanced resolution only serves to bring

out the maximum of this fast and excellent game. The game in which Drake may have been 'the quickest to pull the trigger' will surely bring you enjoyment and new challenges now that you can react in a significantly more fluid frame rate.

As an epilogue, Uncharted 3 stands as the cinematic climax of the trilogy, which logically looks the best, but doesn't go much farther than the second game. The cinematic experience that it achieved when it came out now reaches the top of its limits and it's safe to say, once again amazes with nostalgia in this new guise. On the other hand, this way of remastering has its negative side. The flaws and shortcomings of these three



**"DRAKE IS SUCH A GUY, HE HASN'T AGED A DAY!"**

DRAKE'S FORTUNE • AMONG THIEVES • DRAKE'S DECEPTION

# UNCHARTED

## THE NATHAN DRAKE COLLECTION



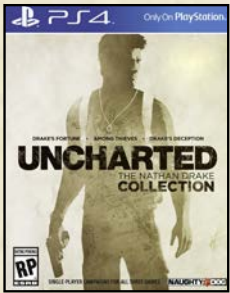
“YOU CAN’T TELL IF THE GAME LOOKS BETTER IN 1080P OR WORSE BECAUSE NOW YOU CAN SEE ALL IT’S DEFECTS”



games are now made very visible. Under the higher resolution it's easier to spot the flawed textures or facial animations, as well as the details in effects. And since games now run much smoother, you'll realise that once awesome transitions and other animations now seem a bit outdated. And while the games work in 1080p resolution, the animations remain in the original or slightly better resolution, making the distinction between gameplay and videos very obvious, which may spoil the overall experience.

Lastly, when we put together all the pros and cons of a remaster, we will unmistakably reach the conclusion that

if you loved the Uncharted series before, or never had the chance to try it out and it seems interesting to you, this may be the best opportunity you'll ever have. This nicely packed trilogy makes a retrospective leap at the threshold of the upcoming fourth instalment. The lack of any kind of bonus materials and multiplayer leaves the impression that this isn't a 'must have' collection even if you own the originals. But even with that said the Nathan Drake Collection has something to offer - at least giving you a video game history lesson, and showing you the progression of quality from the very begging up until the end of one gaming console's generation.



GAME PROVIDED BY  
**SONY**

**PLATFORMS:**  
PS4

**PUBLISHED BY:**  
Sony Computer Entertainment

**PRICE:**  
60€

**DEVELOPED BY:**  
Bluepoint games

**TESTED ON:**  
PS4

**RATING** **8.5**

- ✓ An excellent collection of three games in one place
- ✓ The original technically pushed to the max
- ✓ Still looks very good
- ✗ Lack of bonus material
- ✗ No multiplayer

# PLAY BEAUTIFUL

**EA SPORTS**

**FIFA 16**

**FIFA**  
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Author: Aleksandar Ilić

REVIEW



# TRANSFORMERS DEVASTATION

“IF YOU’VE EVER PLAYED A PLATINUM GAME, YOU’LL KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT”

Servicing the fans or trully adding to the original series?

Activision is one of those publishers that has churned out an impressive amount of licensed games over the years. From the excellent earlier titles such as Spider-Man, X-Men Legends and Ultimate Alliance, to abysmal entries like the more recent The WalkingDead: SurvivallnInstinct, AmazingSpider-Man, etc.

There's a fair number of Transformers games among those, including a few hits and a few misses. Some of the older TF games had their moments, and probably the best of those were with the release of War for Cybertron and Fall of Cybertron. However, over the years there were also the awful releases that were produced as shovelware to go along with Michael Bay's movie abortions. Unfortunately, it all culminated last year when someone from Activision decided to cut the budget, remove High Moon Studio from the Cybertron games and merge them with current TF: Michael Bay games, resulting in Rise of the Dark Spark. Although canon to both the Cybertron and Michael Bay games because of them merging in this game, that game was a complete bomb. It disappointed both because it had recycled content from the previous Cybertron titles, but also because of it's overall low quality – it's retarded story, graphics and optimization.

Why is it important to mention all of this when this is a Transformers: Devastation review? It's important to illustrate everything that has led up to this game, all of the previous highs and lows. Yes, the Cybertron games were great, but that still wasn't "it". Although PS2 and the older consoles had a few solid games, the Transformers never got the game worthy of Generation 1, i.e. that cartoon that we all remember and love. Someone, somewhere, has somehow decided to change all of that, and got Platinum Games (Vanquish, Bayonetta, Revengeance) to create it and Activision to publish it.

Basically – this is the game that we've been waiting for, that one game that would have blown everyone's minds had it existed back when G1 was current. Of course, back then that was impossible, so we just had to be patient. As you might have heard from the announcements, the game uses cellshaded graphics in the style of Generation 1 and the original Transformers. And it looks good.

And it looks believable. And most of cellshaded games, by some unwritten rule, don't require you to have a beastly machine to run them, because they tend to rely on their visual style instead of demanding graphics. We haven't noticed a single graphics bug during gameplay, everything's as it should be, so there's no fault there. Ok, there's a slight fault, although it's not necessarily a graphics problem as much as it's a level design issue. It's an issue that's endemic to many of these quick hack'n'slash titles, such as Revengeance – the issue of many of their battle zones looking kind of empty. In this case, that can be best observed while in the city, where you're surrounded by

Right alongside weapons, it bears mentioning that during the game you can play as five different characters (Optimus Prime, Bumblebee, Wheeljack, Grimlock and Sideswipe), who you can advance

generic buildings, there's no people, a few cars with 2-3 different skins, a tree or a shrubbery, and that's it. Fortunately, the gameplay is very active with many things to collect, so the background monotony doesn't affect the overall experience.

We have to briefly mention that the sound effects and music are completely authentic. Most of the voice acting was done by the original actors, primarily Peter Cullen as Optimus Prime and Frank Welker as Megatron. The only objection would be that instead of those cool tunes that were so good in the original series, the music has somewhat slipped into some random metal, as is usual for most Platinum games. Still, it's a plus that the music was composed by Vince DiCola, who also worked on the music for Transformers: The Movie from 1986. And also bearing in mind that this is a predominately fast-paced action game that doesn't let up, maybe this choice of music isn't such a bad thing.

with XP points, which are also used to upgrade your weapons, craft modifiers, or buy new moves. We would advise you to chose one or two characters as your mains and work towards maxing them out, because unless you manage to collect absolutely every bit of XP and finish every fight with SS rank, you won't be able to level them all even close to max. Unfortunately, unlike the Cybertron games, here you won't be able to play as the Decepticons, which isn't necessarily a minus, but is worth mentioning.

The controls are solid and there's not much to be said about them If you're a masochist you'll play on a keyboard, while for the best experience we recommend that you play on a joypad.

Transformers: Devastation is a sold, well-rounded game without any major issues, and as such it certainly deserves a 7. And when you add to it that it finally fulfills the wishes of the fan base and that it's a very well put together game brimming with respect and love for the original series, then that 7 turns into an 8 for all the effort, care and perseverance. As just another action game, it's a passable 7, but as a game for TF G1 fans, well... for us it's an 8.

**RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:**  
OS: Windows 7  
CPU: Dual Core  
GPU: AMD Radeon HD 7870  
RAM: 4GB  
HDD: 10GB



GAME CODE PROVIDED BY  
**COMPUTERLAND**



“YOU’LL PLAY WITH 5 DIFFERENT CHARACTERS”



<b>PLATFORMS:</b> PC, Xbox One, Xbox 360, PS3, PS4  <b>PUBLISHED BY:</b> Activision  <b>PRICE:</b> 40 €	<b>DEVELOPED BY:</b> Platinum Games  <b>TESTED ON:</b> PC
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**RATING**

8

- ✓ Appealing Cell shaded graphics
- ✓ The Transformers game we were looking for all these years
- ✓ Not too hardware demanding
- ✗ Level design
- ✗ Menus could have been a bit more practical





Author: Stefan Starović

REVIEW

# Pro Evolution Soccer 2016

Back on the throne?

FIFA and PES have waged a battle for the title of best football simulation video game for years now. Even though PES reigned supreme for over a decade, in the last couple of years FIFA came dangerously close and even surpassed Konami's hit title. Konami might have 'helped' them by making some bad decisions and with not the best realization of their version for the previous seasons. But, it all seems to change once more with Pro Evolution Soccer 2016.

PES 2016 is a football simulation that simultaneously marks 20 years since the creation of the first Pro Evolution Soccer, i.e. Winning Eleven as the game was called in the past (and still is in Japan). Konami has successfully extended their license until the year 2018 for the UEFA Champions League, UEFA Europa League, and UEFA Super Cup, meaning that these competitions are a part of PES 2016. It's especially interesting to note that Konami has 'seized' the UEFA Euro 2016,

a competition traditional for EA, i.e. FIFA until now, and which should release in some form during next year - whether as a stand-alone game or as an add-on for PES 2016 remains to be seen.

When it comes to the teams, stadiums and leagues, this year's release is a mixed bag. Ligue 1 and La Liga are licensed, but Serie A and the Premier League are not, with Manchester United being the only team licensed from it, along with Bayern, Wolfsburg and Borussia Monchengladbach from the Bundesliga. Serie B is not, just like the Primera, Ligue 2, Segunda and Campeonato Brasileiro Serie A. Among the 21 stadiums in game, only 11 of them are licensed, Allianz Arena, Juventus, Maracana, Old Trafford, and San Siro, to name a few, while the others are unlicensed.

Also, Peter Drury and Jim Beglin replace Jon Champton as commentators and we have to say that this is one of the biggest gripes we have about the game. The comments are repetitive and not particularly interesting, but at the same time that is the only major criticism that we can have about this year's edition. Everything else is done in accordance to the good old PES quality standard that we were used to.



It's been a long time since we were drawn like this to a PES game by it's gameplay and quality. Physics model is great, the game commands react well, the gameplay is dynamic and always challenging... Simply put, everything in PES 2016 gives off a sense of a great game that will surely bring hours upon hours of good entertainment to a crowd that loves to "play some PES" in their spare time.

Beside the physics model and the dynamic physics engine that has a new collision system, and an improved AI that encompasses dozens of smart individual decisions and enables all players to seem 'as

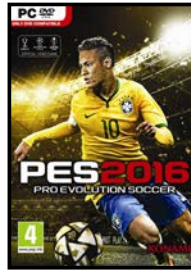
one', the graphical aspect deserves praise as well. The animations are excellent, as are the fluidity and control, player's movement without ball... The defense players are great at defending their goal, they get stuck in and steal the ball, the attackers position themselves well to receive your passes - everything is as it should be.

If we have to try to find another bad characteristic of this game, then we could probably mention the behavior of referees, who from time to time make a complete miss with their decisions, but beside that, the Pro Evolution Soccer 2016 is probably the best PES we've seen since the Playstation 2 era.

## RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:

OS: Windows 7  
CPU: Core i3-530 2.9GHz  
GPU: GeForce 7800 GS  
RAM: 2 GB  
HDD: 8 GB

GAME PROVIDED BY



PLATFORMS:  
PC, PS3, PS4, Xbox 360, Xbox One

DEVELOPED BY:  
PES Productions

PUBLISHED BY:  
Konami

TESTED ON:  
PS4

PRICE:  
50€

RATING **8.5**

- ✓ Realism, physics
- ✓ Fluidity of movement
- ✓ AI

- ✗ Repetitive comentating
- ✗ Problematic referees
- ✗ Still has much fewer licences than it's competition





Author: Marko Narandžić

REVIEW

# Tearaway Unfolded

Paperology

You probably know that the Media Molecule development team became famous with their Little Big Planet games. Almost nobody felt indifferent towards the charming Sack people, and this franchise, in a way, became a trademark of the whole PlayStation brand of the previous generation. As LBP grew and became a 'must have' game for each Sony platform, the team was looking for a new challenge - and Sony gave them a chance to work

on something completely new for their exciting new platform called PlayStation Vita. As a result of their work, at the end of 2013 we got the game named Tearaway, which to this day remains one of the brightest points of this hand-held console which, sadly, didn't become even remotely as popular as Sony hoped it would. Tearaway uses all of Vita's possibilities like no other game before, and no game after as well. Playing this game that is unfortunately shorter than I hoped it would

be, I've gained an impression that Vita is a truly special system with an incredible potential which will regrettably remain almost completely unutilized. Tearaway remarkably shows just how much a single good game can do to expose a system's potential. And why the other developers didn't attempt to dive into this sea of possibilities is a different topic entirely.

Tearaway could have easily remained the jewel of PS Vita, but realizing that a very small number of people had the chance to experience this top quality creation of their first party studio, Sony decided to develop the game for PS4 as well, and therefore present the opportunity to see all the wonders of this title to a wider audience.

Of course, as a game that completely relied on the possibilities of PS Vita's hardware, front and back touch through motion sensors and a very charming use of camera, the game couldn't simply be transferred to a home console. It necessitated the development of equally innovative ways of control which would rely on unique possibilities of the Dualshock 4 controller, and that is exactly what Media Molecule did.

You are once again 'the You', that is, some kind of supreme being of this charming world made entirely out of paper. Although the player controls a cute male or female 'envelope-like' character, you are actually also the game's protagonists in sense that your face (if you have a PS camera) appears in the sky as a godly figure and everyone bows to it. Your finger movements bring wind to the game, light from the Dualshock controller removes the evil which threatens to consume this adorable world, and there's even an interesting mechanic where your in-game character throws you a piece of paper from his world 'straight into the screen' so you can hurl it back with much more power into some of the objects in the game. All this looks very adorable and while you're playing you'll be under

the impression that you're really a part of this world.

Graphics and the overall art style are one of the game's major highlights. The world really looks like it's made out of paper, and of course, greater hardware possibilities of the PS4 compared to Vita complete the experience.

What we could single out as a flaw is that the game in some moments may seem a bit too easy. The obvious tasks before you may sometimes seem a bit tiring. Don't expect a standard platform that requires you to accurately jump and move. Tearaway is a game that completely relies on the interesting use of a wide range of controls, so the traditional movement, jumping and general navigation in space,

is entrusted to controls whose main goal is to entertain you with their variety, and not their precision.

Regardless, it's undisputable that Tearaway Unfolded is a beautiful, charming game. We'd highly recommend it to younger players as a mandatory experience, and to the older ones, as a relaxed, charming and creative pastime. Sony made a good move by making a PS4 version of the game, and thus making it available to a larger number of players.



GAME PROVIDED BY:  
**SONY**

"WE NOW HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PLAY ONE OF THE BEST GAMES FROM THE PS VITA ON PS4"



**PLATFORMS:**  
PlayStation 4

**PUBLISHED BY:**  
Sony Computer Entertainment

**PRICE:**  
40€

**DEVELOPED BY:**  
Tarsier Studios, Media Molecule

**TESTED ON:**  
PS4

**RATING** **7.5**

- ✓ Visually beautifully executed
- ✓ Charming world and characters
- ✓ Fun use of the Dualshock controller's capabilities
- ✗ Too easy at times, monotonous even
- ✗ Controls can sometimes feel clunky
- ✗ Better experienced with a PS camera, which not everyone has





Author: Petar Vojinović

REVIEW

## WARHAMMER THE END TIMES

# VERMINTIDE

## RAT BUSINESS

If you're not a fan of co-op survival games this should be the first and last sentence of interest to you in this text about the new game from Fatshark development studio, Warhammer End Times - Vermintide, so you can simply remain in the corner and contemplate your life.

Joking aside, the likeable Swedes have treated us with a new game, a mix of Left 4 Dead and Chivalry: Medieval Combat, i.e. you and three friends against hordes of computer-controlled enemies who you'll get to "beautify" with various tools, such as hammers, axes, swords, arrows and fire spells, as well as a grenade or two. Vermintide takes place in the world of Warhammer, at the time when the armies of Chaos Undivided have swept southwards in an unprecedented campaign against the kingdoms and empires of men, the vampire counts of Sylvania have grown strong once more, and the hordes of rat-like Skaven have poured over the surface world under the guidance of the Council of Thirteen. That's where you come in, taking on the role of one of the five heroes that have found themselves in the town of Ubersreik, where the game's story takes place, with the sole purpose to return the rats where they belong - below ground.

Unlike the game that inspired it, Vermintide possesses a cast of 5 different characters: a Bright Wizard, Witch Hunter, Dwarf Ranger, Waywatcher and Empire Soldier; who differ not only visually, but mechanically as well. Even though each of them is able to battle his opponents from range or in melee, their efficiency at each may greatly differ. For example - the Bright Wizard, Sienna Fuegonasus, is tailor made to destroy enemies in bulk from range using her fire spells, but would struggle against



just two "regular" Skaven up close. On the other hand, the Empire Soldier, Markus Kruber, is born to fight face-to-face using a wide variety of weapons that he carries - a warhammer, two-handed sword or a sword/mace and shield combo, while using a gun only when needed.

The combat is fantastically executed and every weapon has two modes of attack - normal and charged. Normal melee swings are quicker and mostly efficient against single opponents, while charged attacks have the potential to kill multiple opponents at once, but could leave you vulnerable while you charge up your warhammer, because every hit you receive will cancel the attack and leave you in an unenviable position, which spells certain death in situations in which you're surrounded by hordes of enemies - which is modus operandi for Vermintide. Similarly, with ranged weapons spamming left-click while drawing your bow will make you feel like Legolas. Along with two types of attack, the combat includes blocking and evading blows. Each melee weapon

possesses a certain durability stat, which in practice represents the number of hits it can block in short succession (for example, two-handed hammer has three, while a combination of mace and shield has five), and the number of blocks it can take replenishes over time. On the other hand, evading blows does not constitute simply running around and hoping that your head does not meet an opponent's spear, instead it represents a leap to one of three sides - left, right and back - and thus evading a blow, something that you'll utilize quite often when playing a squishy class, such as the Waywatcher or Wizard.

There are currently thirteen well designed maps available, even though they all follow the same principle: you start at point A, do the mission at point B, and evacuate at point C, while being assailed by loads and loads of enemies at all times. The usual enemies that you'll face most often are the regular Skaven rank-and-file infantry troops that die from a single hit and whose strength lies in their numbers (and irresistible urge to encircle you), but from time to time you'll chance upon







the more dangerous opponents, such as Rattling Gunners - rats with Gatling guns; or Gutter Runners - enormously fast opponents that tend to jump on you from the dark and stab you to death while you lie helplessly on the ground; or some other variety. We don't want to spoil it for you, hehe. What makes Vermintide difficult yet interesting, even on Normal difficulty setting, is that in 15-20 minutes that it usually takes to finish a map, that whenever you hear the trumpets and the Witch Hunter's zesty comment of "Get ready! The pack is here." there is that ominous feeling that it happened at the worst possible moment - and trust us, it will happen often. On higher difficulty settings it's virtually impossible to finish a level without tactical team play, which is certainly one of the most important elements in a co-op multiplayer game.

After finishing a mission and closing the statistics screen, you'll get the opportunity to roll seven dice at once for a new piece of equipment. On the right side is a column that lists the items (showing their type and quality: from normal, white items, to exotic, orange

ones; but not their characteristics), and the number of "hits" rolled determines how high you'll get on that scale and which item you'll receive. The standard dice have only two "good sides", but most missions have side objectives that can be done to replace the normal dice with those with better success chance. Since this system guarantees that you'll end up with loads of unwanted gear, you can "smelt" those on a ratio of five unwanted items of same quality in exchange for one of higher quality, or disenchant them for crystals that can be used to unlock additional abilities on other items.

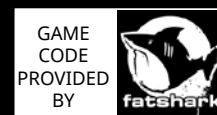
The one criticism we have is aimed at the game's graphical options. Don't misunderstand - the graphics are excellent, but the number of options and settings is miserable. That shouldn't concern you if you have a beastly setup with a new generation graphics card, but for the rest of us, the ability to tweak the settings to reach as many frames as possible is of vital importance. For 99% of the time, the game performs more than solidly on a low-to-medium laptop on medium settings, but certain maps have

dragged the author through hell. You don't get it? Well, you'll eventually have to climb the wizard's tower.

All in all, Warhammer End Time - Vermintide is an excellent game that can be enjoyed by the casual players who will spend a couple of hours on easiest difficulty, as well as the hardcore groups that won't accept nothing less than Cataclysm mode. Fatshark has opened the rat-hunting season!

#### RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:

OS: Windows 7 64-bit  
CPU: Core i7-4790 4-Core 3.6GHz / FX-9590  
GPU: GeForce GTX 770 / Radeon R9 290  
RAM: 8 GB  
HDD: 30 GB



#### PLATFORMS:

PC

#### PUBLISHED BY:

Fatshark

#### PRICE:

28 €

#### DEVELOPED BY:

Fatshark

#### TESTED ON:

PC

## RATING

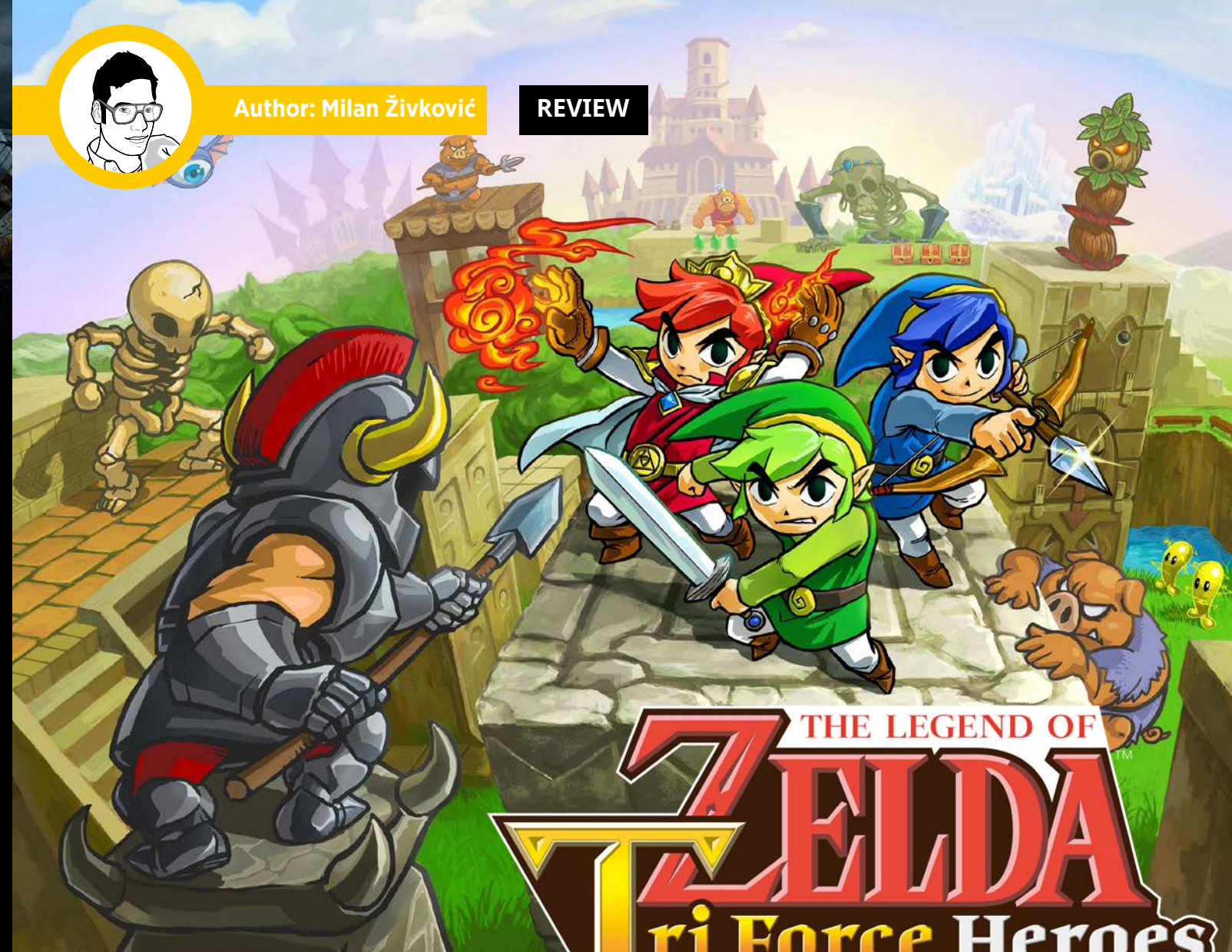
# 8

- ✓ Excellent team-based gameplay
- ✓ Diverse classes, weapons, maps
- ✓ World of Warhammer
- ✗ Basic graphics options
- ✗ Optimization issues still only half-solved



Author: Milan Živković

REVIEW



## Link, Link & Link > Atos, Aramis & Portos

I don't know how long you've been waiting for this, but if you are as big of a Zelda fan as I am, surely you couldn't resist the urge to play this title as soon as possible. And if you haven't yet, worry not - you'll now have an opportunity to perceive a new different Zelda through the following text. Excited? Well, let's just say you have a good reason to be, because however each upcoming Zelda title is, it shouldn't simply leave you indifferent.

Before we begin, I must point out two important things. First - no, Tri Force Heroes isn't a recycled Four Swords Adventures. The difference is greater than simply having three instead of four heroes. Unlike the old title, here the heroes work together instead of

competing with each other. True, the point of Four Swords Adventures was also working together, but seeing how here all players share the same energy pool, you'll be hard pressed not to help out your comrades, because sabotaging them would be like tripping yourself. Second - no, this is not something that could be called a sequel to A Link Between Worlds. No matter how similar the game looks, it's something entirely different.

Tri Force Heroes is first and foremost a multiplayer game. Yes, you can play it as just a single player, but don't be fooled - those are two completely different experiences. If the single player is like a plain, pale earth, then the multiplayer is like a heavenly bliss that is bound to amaze



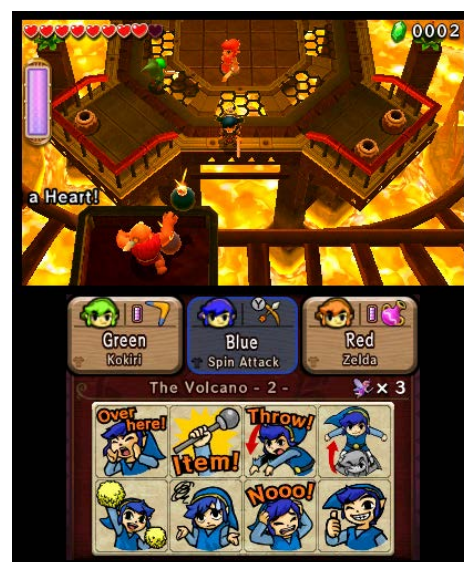


you. If you've started playing unprepared, and if you didn't know what to expect, then your reaction after entering the single player mode would probably be to instantly exit the game while quickly drinking a glass of sweetened water. To clarify: in single player mode, you still have three characters. And it's true, you control all three of them. But how? By alternating between them. You have two Doppels at your disposal (literally dead Link-dummies) and you can take control of them to help yourself get past obstacles. Quick gameplay? Nope. Boring, painful, strategically tormenting gameplay? You bet! Juggling between three characters will certainly give you a headache. And if I add that there's even the possibility to sacrifice one of your lives to skip a segment of a level, I think you'll start to get the picture of just how frustrating the single player mode can be. The people from Nintendo immediately jumped to defend it by claiming that some of their team members preferred playing the single player mode EXCLUSIVELY. The fact that there are masochists in Nintendo isn't very reassuring to hear. Jokes aside, playing this mode isn't really (too) big of a catastrophe, but it definitely isn't something you're going to enjoy a lot, or for a long time. So let's get to the brighter aspect of the game right away. The multiplayer!

The multiplayer is available in a few different variants. In the first one, you need to have two friends who also own their own copies of the game, so you

can play together locally or over the internet. In the second one, your two friends don't need to have their own games - they'll be able to play with you through DownloadPlay. The third option is to play with complete strangers or people from your friend list over the internet. And lastly, the fourth option is to play with a friend who's with you with his copy and a 3DS, and you all play together with another person on the internet. If you thought that you and a friend could play together with just one copy of the game while the third player is a Doppel or somebody on the internet, you'd be wrong, because that unfortunately isn't possible. Disappointing, I know, but once you dive into the multiplayer with practically anyone at all, you'll forget these disadvantages because multiplayer really is an amazing experience!

The game's plot is somewhat mild but funny enough not to warrant a reproach. The kingdom is looking for heroes to help an unfortunate princess of a fashion-crazed kingdom. An evil witch has cursed her by dressing her up in hilarious black skin suit, similar to a diving suit, and therefore ruined the only thing worth living for - her ability



to look trendy and wear chic clothes. To get this grotesque piece of clothing off, the princess needs help from three heroes who are the only ones who can track down the evil witch and teach her a lesson. That's where you and your two friends come in. You arrive the probably the smallest 'Zelda-town' you've ever seen, and you won't be able to do much there, so it won't be long before you set off to your first mission. The game consists of 32 levels, and each one is a genuine small Zelda dungeon. But unlike nonlinear dungeons you're used to, these are very linear and completely based on solving very imaginative riddles. They may be linear and won't strain your brain as much as an average Zelda title, but it's truly unexpectedly fun to play with other people while communicating through eight adorable emotion signals that include cheering, disapproval, and calling forward. You'll solve riddles by syncing actions and climbing on top of each other, forming a so-called 'totem'. Irresistible? You could say so. Each level consists of four segments

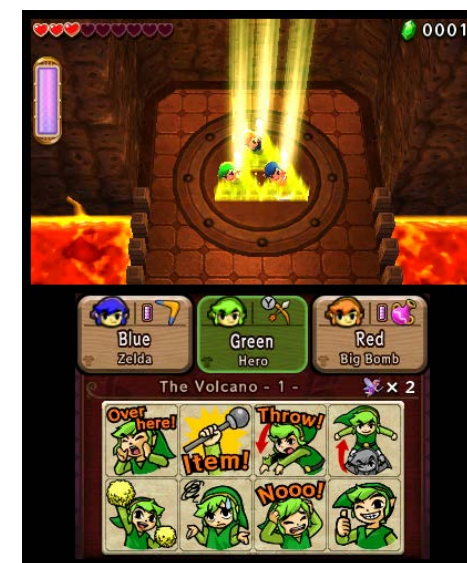
plus a boss fight, and defeating them unlocks bonus challenges, which make the game more difficult. It's worth mentioning that there's also an arena in the game, in which you can play against other players, but you'll probably soon forget about it, because classically going through levels is far more fulfilling.

In this game, Link won't have any equipment, not counting just one item per level, plus the sword. And the only reason to collect rupees will be the costumes. Each newly gained costume will provide Link with a new ability, such as firing three arrows at the same time or swimming in lava, or to improve the use of items that you pick up on the level. The costumes are purchased by collecting materials in levels, which you donate to the famous royal fashion designer, and she in return makes Link's new suit. But given that the materials for the costume which is useful in a level will only be collected after that level is finished, you generally won't be overly enthusiastic about finding them. In any case, the costumes are a fairly charming feature of this Zelda adventure and they will at least put a smile on your face.

Zelda games are known for their fantastic music, and this game doesn't lack at all. I'd even take the liberty of saying that even if it's a shorter soundtrack, it can easily make the top 5 most beautiful, or at least most cheerful. Even if there's not as much of it, the music's quality is certainly not lacking when compared to A Link Between Worlds. The cheerful accordion followed by a violin will definitely boost your mood.

## "NO WONDER IT'S A SHORT GAME WHEN IT'S PLAYED BY 3 LINKS"

To sum it all up, this truly isn't a Zelda game like we're used to. It's not an epic adventure of 60+ hours with satisfying wandering and solving difficult puzzles. We won't have the vast landscapes and lots of characters and definitely none of that long-ascending feeling of a blood boiling adventure with a glorious climax. What we have here is a compact, well-balanced, cheerful and refreshing multiplayer experience to go. True, this is not the Zelda sequel you were expecting, but if you take a better look at it and accept it as it is, it will definitely be worth your time. Even though it may not be easy to find two more friends to play with, playing online can bridge that gap fairly well. Communicating with and understanding your comrades with only eight 'emoticons' is incredibly fun. Although much more simple, this is one of those Zelda games that is much more likely to make you pass a level again and enjoy it once more. If you're a hardcore Zelda fan, this might not be a game for you. If you're a fan of the spirit of Zelda and multiplayer, be sure not to miss it!



**PLATFORMS:**  
Nintendo 3DS

**PUBLISHED BY:**  
Nintendo

**PRICE:**  
50 €

**DEVELOPED BY:**  
Nintendo EPD, Grezzo

**TESTED ON:**  
Nintendo 3DS

**RATING** 8.5

- ✓ Undisputably addictive and fun multiplayer
- ✓ Excellent revitalizing music
- ✓ Great "replay value", if you play with different people
- ✗ A much emptier Zelda experience
- ✗ Much worse as a single player game
- ✗ Too pricey for what you're getting. Nintendo...



"DON'T COMPARE THIS GAME TO THE OTHER ZELDAS. THIS IS AN EXPERIENCE OF IT'S OWN"







Author: Bojan Jovanović

REVIEW



## By the ferris wheel at 5

Non-violent adventures with little interactivity usually in a short format, the so called “walking simulators”, are used more and more by the developers who want to make an interactive story. After Dear Esther, this subgenre gained a lot of popularity, but also a lot of criticism that “it’s not a real game” because there’s usually no real danger for the main character or no way to get stuck. Beside the story, another major attribute of this approach is the atmosphere, and it’s exactly what the Funcom studio made the most of with The Park.

Like a large number of horror movies, this adventure starts in a seemingly cheerful manner - playing as Loraine, you took your son Calum to the amusement park. Colourful, cheerful

place where you can have a great time? Oh no, no way, because as soon as you step through the park gates, the true menacing face of this place is revealed, wrapped up in darkness and shadows within which nightmares lurk.

The story changes over time from searching for a child lost in a haunted amusement park to a darker analysis of the human psyche. It also touches some serious subjects, such as depression. Sadly the quality of the written and spoken sentences is so uneven that a certain monologue



made us roll our eyes. There is also a certain dose of naivety in it, so there’s a good chance you’ll guess what the final twist is very early on.

Gameplay is more or less what we’d expect from this genre. You’ll walk slowly (veeeeery slowly) through the park, and occasionally run as well, although the game will often take that possibility away from you; you’ll listen to narration, read various articles dispersed all over the place.... You can press the right mouse button at any time to call for your son (‘Press X to Jason’ from Heavy Rain) which makes interactive objects stand out. Since the game is after all set in an amusement park, you’ll also be able to ride on a few rides, which we’d highly recommend you do if you want to completely absorb the atmosphere. It may be questionable why would a woman in a rush to find her son suddenly decide to take a rollercoaster ride, but we won’t hold it against her. The atmosphere is amazing. The ominous feeling of being watched all the time establishes itself quickly. The texts that you’ll read which follow a few disturbing stories about the park and people who used to work there also add a lot to the overall experience. The finale is certainly the most morbid part of the game, but it leaves a bitter taste in your mouth because it’s incomplete.

Considering the subjects it deals with and the world it’s trying to show us, The Park is too short of an experience. Only ninety minutes is enough to visit all locations, try out all the rides, read every article you come across, and maybe even complete all achievements too. The end comes too soon and it doesn’t leave enough space for the



“THE GAME TOUCHES ON VERY SERIOUS AND DARK THEMES”

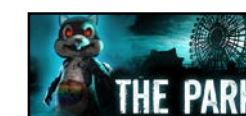
game to narratively grow, or for any character development apart from yelling after Calum, of which you will certainly have quite enough of after ten minutes. Locations, however bizarre and aesthetically interesting, are very few and the rest of the game seems like an interactive loading screen between key points. The game itself is based on an MMO title ‘The Secret World’ from which it borrows the Atlantic Island park location, and the game is filled with small references to its ‘older brother’. Being acquainted with this source material isn’t necessary because it’s a separate story, but it will certainly help to understand the potential explanation of the entire adventure.

The Park is a game that only had enough ‘strength’ for one run. Not only because of the awkwardly written scenario or the lack of mystery and suspense throughout the run, but also because you’ll get to see everything there is to the game during its short duration. This is

another adventure where the player is mostly a passive observer, with a few interesting ideas that made us want to explore every nook and find out all we can about the universe it’s set in. On a few occasions it reminded us of the movie Babadook and the game PT, but how and why - we’ll leave that up to you to find out if you decide to take a walk in the park yourself.

### RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:

OS: Windows 7  
CPU: Intel Core i5  
GPU: Geforce GTX 760 / AMD Radeon R9 270  
RAM: 8GB  
HDD: 4GB



PLATFORMS:  
PC  
PUBLISHED BY:  
Funcom  
PRICE:  
13€

DEVELOPED BY:  
Funcom  
TESTED ON:  
PC

RATING

6

- ✓ Atmosphere and locations in the park
- ✓ References that will delight the players of The Secret World...
- ✗ ...while being meaningless to others
- ✗ Unbelievable and naive story
- ✗ Too short, incomplete





Author: Bojan Jovanović

REVIEW

“COOPERATIVE BOMB DISARMING IN WHICH ONLY ONE PLAYER CAN SEE THE SCREEN”

# KEEP TALKING and NOBODY EXPLODES

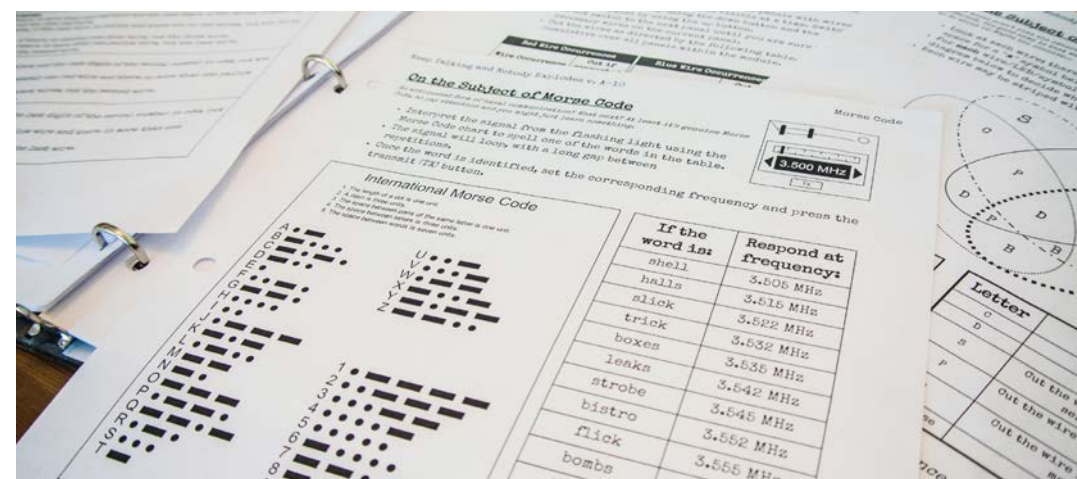
## RED... NO, BLUE WIRE!



Good ideas don't necessarily have to be created in some laboratory or a huge studio. They don't require a tremendous amount of money and time spent. Sometimes all it takes is a weekend and a huge coffee supply. For Steel Crate Games that weekend was last year's Global Game Jam, where they made a concept for an Oculus Rift game where only one player sees what's happening on screen.

Luckily, the final version of Keep Talking and Nobody Explodes doesn't require any kind of virtual reality set, but it still needs

one very important component – co-players. The game is impossible to play solo and you'll need at least one more person in the same room, or the next room if shouting across the apartment is ok with you, or if all else fails, an online co-player who you can talk to through a VOIP service. The goal of the game is to dismantle a bomb. However, only one of the players can actually see the bomb. The rest of the players help by looking up his interpretations of the bomb elements in the manual (bombmanual.com) and talk him through the procedure. To complicate matters, the bomb has a timer



which speeds up every time you make a mistake. If you make too many mistakes, or allow time to run out - you're blown to pieces (figuratively of course). You either win or lose as a team, and every player actively participates and influences the final outcome, just as it should be in any good co-op game.

The bombs you are defusing are always set in a small suitcase with square segments containing mini games and puzzles. Considering that the tasks are generated, the only thing you'll know upon starting the game is how much time and chances for mistakes you have and how many segments the bomb has. The key is in the physical part of the game, that is, in the manual that's supposed

to be printed out. However, even those instructions aren't direct, but a sequence of 'if'-s and 'in case that...'-s, with a significant number of possible solutions and ways to get to them. The whole ingenuity of this game lies within those 20 pages, the way it becomes gradually more and more challenging as well as the sheer amount of material you'll have to process during a single, usually 5 minute session. Your group will in time find ways to communicate and share information faster so you'll almost end up having your own slang while you play.

Best of all is how the game has minimum requirements, and not just hardware-wise. If you have a mouse with two buttons or a gamepad, you're ready to play.

Even if you've never before played any type of video games, Keep Talking will instantaneously be apprehensive. When we consider the difficulty of later levels, it gets clear why the authors have designed the game and its interface as they did. Some of the tasks require coordination of a few players, multitasking, all that amidst a general racket. No matter how fun it is, this game can also be very stressful, especially if you're playing with a competitive team in long sessions. Also, we would recommend playing with at least two other players, while the upper limit of players is non-existent (the authors, however, advise playing with up to six players).

Keep Talking and Nobody Explodes is a game you simply must try out, it's both a video game and a social game, and simultaneously a test for reflexes and concentration. No video in the world can possibly convey the exact feeling you get while playing - frantically going through pages with schemes and directions or waiting for your co-players to come up with a solution while there's only seconds left on the timer. Get your copy, call your friends, neighbours and colleagues, print out the manual and dig into one of the most exciting co-op experiences of all time. And keep talking, never stop talking. Because if you keep talking nobody will explode.

### RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:

OS: Windows 7  
CPU: Intel/AMD Dualcore 2GHz  
GPU: DirectX 9  
RAM: 2GB  
HDD: 600MB

GAME CODE PROVIDED BY:



Steel Crate Games

PLATFORMS:  
PC

PUBLISHED BY:  
Steel Crate Games

PRICE:  
15€

DEVELOPED BY:  
Steel Crate Games

TESTED ON:  
PC

## RATING 8.5

- ✓ Original concept
- ✓ Excellent difficulty curve
- ✓ Many players can play with just one copy
- ✗ Too stressful for some players
- ✗ The difficulty of some tasks

“YOU'LL FRANTICALLY SEARCH THE MANUAL AS THE CLOCK KEEPS TICKING”







Author: Luka Zlatić

REVIEW

# Go! Go! Nippon! 2015

Big in Japan

Travelling to Japan is sort of a pilgrimage to many people. The wish to visit the country that brought us anime, manga, specific video games, as well as the otaku subculture, connects people from all over the globe. With the development of the internet, better data flow and cheaper plane tickets, many lived their dream and got to visit Tokyo, Kyoto, Kamakura and many other places throughout the Land of Rising Sun. But, many still remorsefully gaze into the distance and wait for the day to finally make the trip. In the meantime, they fill up their spare time enjoying the virtual images of this godly place, which includes the game Go! Go! Nippon! My First Trip to Japan, along with the add-on bearing the year 2015 in it's title.

The members of our staff who have spent some time in Japan have anxiously started

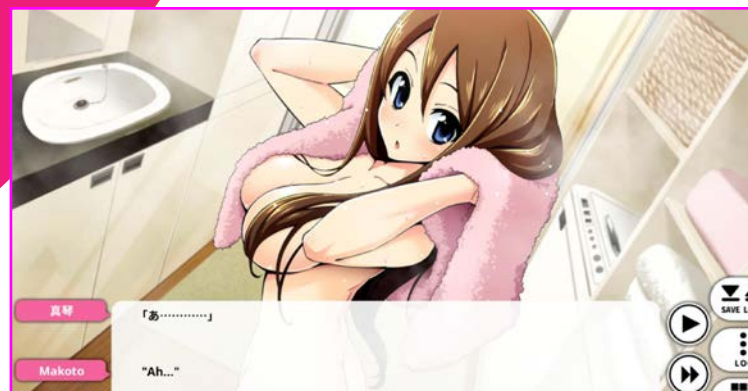
this cheerful title and let themselves be immersed in it with almost childlike curiosity and a sincere desire to be thrilled.

We were introduced to a seemingly classic visual novel with a bunch of introspective comments from the main character (who you can name, country of origin, and even set up the conversion of Yens to the currency that suits you, so you can know how much money you'd spend for a week in Japan). Everything begins after a sleepless flight in the aeroplane, while you're nearing the Narita airport. After you've collected your luggage you're off to find Makoto and Akira, the internet friends who you're visiting.

A magnificent surprise awaits you at the very beginning - even with the entire internet available, the main character had no clue Akira and Makoto are both girls,

sisters, and both cute in the standard manga-anime style, and Makoto, along with a cute face, is graced with a sizeable bust. We have already noticed that this game has a significant advantage compared to an actual trip to Japan. The first host the author had was also named Makoto, but he wasn't a teenage girl, but a nice balding man in his late thirties.

Alas, Makoto's bouncing (after the added animations in the 2015 DLC) breasts are the only advantage Go Go Tokyo has compared to the real thing. The game is divided into 7 days, which is how long the main character can stay in Japan, and during which you will choose locations you'd like to visit in a pattern, where one or both of the sisters will be your guide. After hiking on Takao Mountain, which was accompanied with comments like "I've climbed here! It was awesome!" or "It really is true that middle-



aged women happily chirp 'Konnichiwa, konnichiwa!' when you walk past them at the top of the mountain...", we've noticed the games' negatives.

Although the graphics are likable and images of the regions you're visiting authentically (apart for copyrighted materials which are avoided) represent reality (which can be checked by clicking the always visible 'show photo' option that takes you to the location's picture on Google maps), each day feels devoid of content. Tree to four pictures per location aren't enough to satisfy the player/traveller.

Even worse is the lack of interactions, which comes down to endless clicking trough not so funny dialogues, which often are nothing more than sighing or silence of too-quickly enamoured teenagers in half-embarrassing situations. Even those situations aren't embarrassing enough for the game to take a full swing and motivate the hidden pervert to play, i.e. click, all the way through it.

Still, though mostly common knowledge, the information you can find about significant locations near Tokyo, as well

as sundries about the life in Japan are really nicely presented and they definitely make for the game's best point. Since it's impossible to visit all in the limited time the game gives you, you may want to start over a few times to explore all the places you can visit, or maybe start a romance with the other charming hostess.

Again, it's possible that due to the lack of quality in the game itself, you may completely give up on it after a single run and start saving up money for the actual trip to Japan to hang out with some other Makoto and Akira. Which would be our recommendation as well.

## RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:

OS: Windows XP  
CPU: 1.4 GHz  
GPU: bilo šta sa 64 MB RAM-a  
RAM: 256 MB  
HDD: 400 MB



PLATFORMS:  
PC  
PUBLISHED BY:  
MangaGamer  
PRICE:  
15 €  
DEVELOPED BY:  
Overdrive  
TESTED ON:  
PC

RATING 6.5

- ✓ A bunch of charming info about Japan
- ✓ Some very pretty pictures
- ✓ The possibility to see the locations you're at in game on Google Maps
- ✗ The info is pretty readily available
- ✗ Very little interaction
- ✗ Too many filler images





Author: Petar Vojinović

REVIEW



# Sword Coast Legends

## Dungeons and Dragons with no dice

There was a salvo of excitement among the die-hard fans when the guys from N-Space announced a new game set in the world of Dungeons and Dragons. The game has been advertised everywhere as an heir to the great game series Baldur's Gate and Neverwinter Nights, and will have a DM module for the creation of custom campaigns, dungeons, quests, a broad class system, an infinite number of monsters from the Dungeon Master's Guide, as well as faithfully translated rules from the latest, fifth edition. Sadly, upon its release, salvos of excitement were replaced with disbelief and dismay, and great expectations were replaced by great disappointment. So what is it all about?

Sword Coast Legends has a single player campaign as well as a multiplayer option that you can use either as a player or as a Dungeon Master, of which we'll talk more later on. The single player campaign puts you in the role of one of the knights of the Order of the Burning Dawn which happens to be under an attack from the other knights under the suspicion of conspiring with demons – a suspicion that can easily be proven to be true, because lately all of the knights, including you, have been suffering from

very grim nightmares. Throughout the campaign you're going to lead a group of adventurers in search of answers to who is attacking you and what you can do about it, and if you manage to get your hands on some quality equipment, such as bonus damage weapons or magic resistance armor, it won't be too hard to finish. Even though the campaign is stale, clichéd and shallow, it serves only as an introduction to what should have been the game's strongest point – multiplayer, and that's exactly where it bombed the most.

In a multiplayer campaign you create your character out of a selection of available races: Human, Elf, Half-Elf, and Halfling; and classes: Fighter, Paladin, Wizard, Cleric and Rogue; and it's disappointing that some of the standard D&D races and classes were omitted, so forget about playing a Half-Orc or a Gnome, as well as a Barbarian, Druid and Monk. We just can't understand why the guys from N-Space shot themselves in the foot by promising a "faithful translation of a D&D experience to a PC" and forgetting to incorporate some of the standard races and classes. But wait, there's more! The game lacks a multiclass system, spellcasters don't have to 'rest' to replenish their spellbooks, abilities and

spells work on a cooldown system, and dying isn't penalized in any way and all it takes is for another player to 'raise' you so you can fight on.

Even the combat itself seems more like a hack'n'slashfest and tactically reminds more of Diablo than Baldur's Gate. Most of them can simply be won by mindlessly swinging your sword or whatever else you're using until all the enemies are dead, and the battle strategy will at most end up being a discussion with other players about the positioning of the tank or who will pull the next wave of enemies. When we add the fact that the enemies' strength is determined by the average level of your party, we get strange situations like an undergeared level 15 Paladin having more trouble dispatching the same group of skeletons than when he faced them at level 1. Additionally, there's the issue of the questionable loot mechanic, or lack thereof. Namely, every piece of equipment, weapon and money that drops from a killed opponent can without limit be picked up by any player, which often leads to nasty situations that favor melee classes, especially when we consider that many players habitually collect even the unusable pieces of loot, without regard that their comrades might use some of it.



“STUPID DRAGON!”

The other way to play in multiplayer is the Dungeon Master mode. It puts you into the role of the “narrator” with tools to create dungeons, quests and even campaigns, at your disposal. Even though this sounds fantastic on paper, those tools however are terribly limited. For instance, it's not possible to create the dungeons filed-by-field, or room-by-room, instead they're pre-generated based on given parameters, such as size, complexity and type, and it's only possible to manipulate the already set “encounter tokens” by adding new opponents, traps, etc. It's possible to change the monsters or adjust them by adding new spells and available abilities, but the situation becomes tragicomical when you find out that it's possible to, for instance, give a two-handed sword to a Dark Elf priestess, but not to change her armor out of cloth type. Oh yes – Lolth, the primary goddess of the Dark Elves is absent from the game. Whyyy? It's possible to connect different dungeons into a campaign by adding quests to

guide the players to the various locations in search for specific objects or to kill a named villain. However, to add to dismay, the quests are limited in scope and there is no way for them to branch out, hence any chance for complexity is lost, because everything comes down to „Yes, we accept.“ and „No, we don't accept.“

Sword Coast Legends is a half-decent game with pretty good graphics that will remind you of old isometric RPG hits, but that doesn't fulfill any of it's promises. If you are a patient DM or have a group of friends to share the experience with, then you may expect some good entertainment, but anything more than that is doubtful. Unless N-Space puts in the effort and fixes loads of illogicalities in it, Sword Coast Legends will quickly fall into oblivion. Because whoever wishes to play D&D will pick the pen & paper version in which the imagination is the only limit, over SCL, because why waste time on a Dungeons and Dragons game that's so half done that only the

Dungeons part remained. No, I'm not kidding – there's not a single dragon in this game. For shame.

RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:

OS: Windows 7 64-bit  
CPU: Core i5-2500K 3.3GHz  
Phenom II X6 1100T  
GPU: GeForce GTX 760  
Radeon R9 270X  
RAM: 8 GB  
HDD: 20 GB



**PLATFORMS:**  
PC

**PUBLISHED BY:**  
Digital Extremes

**PRICE:**  
40€

**DEVELOPED BY:**  
N-Space

**TESTED ON:**  
PC

**RATING**

**5.5**

✓ Pleasant graphics and voice acting

✓ The availability of the DM module

✗ The unavailability of basic elements of D&D

✗ DM module is too limited







Author: Luka Zlatić

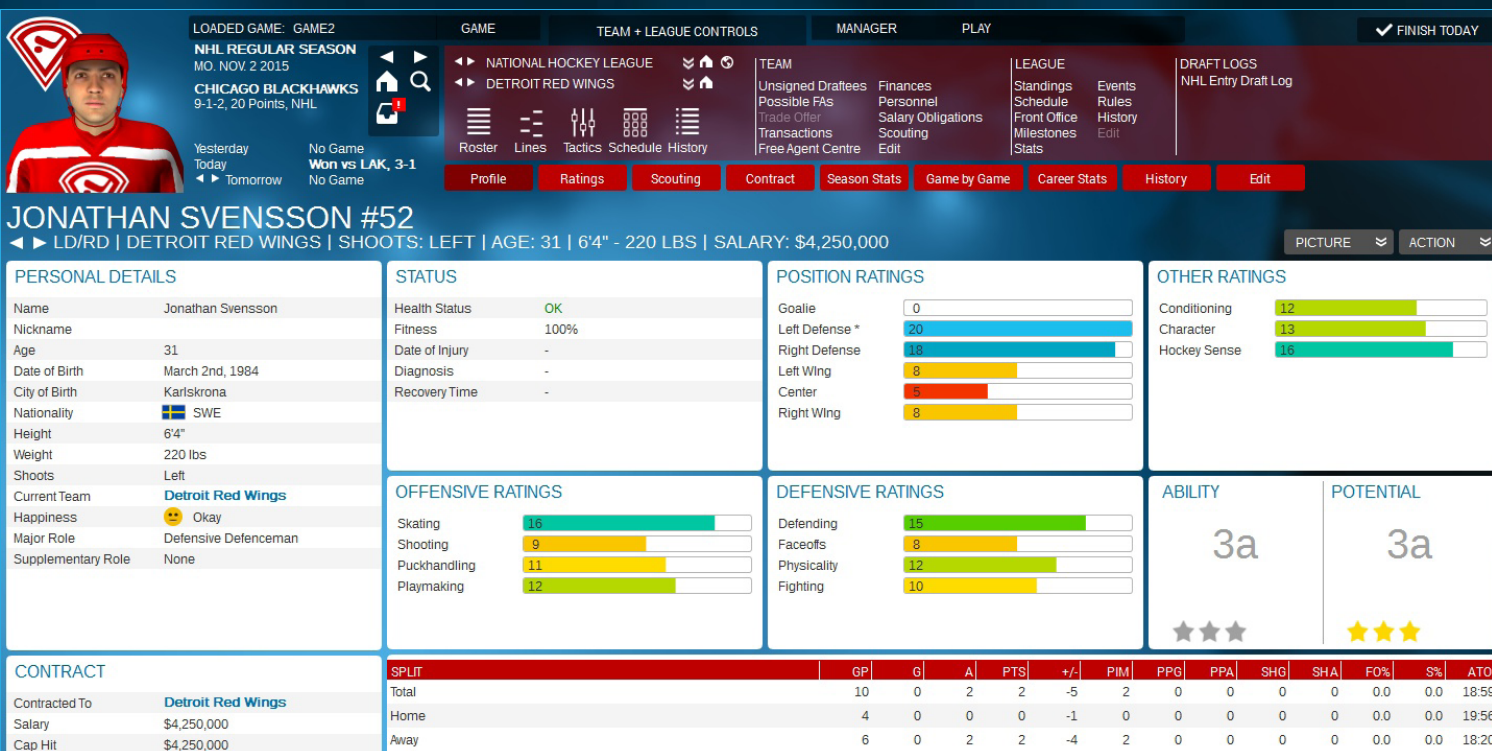
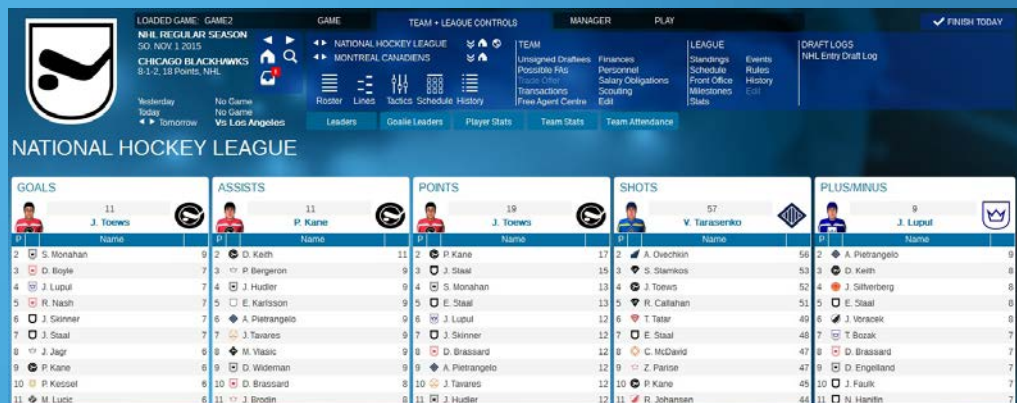
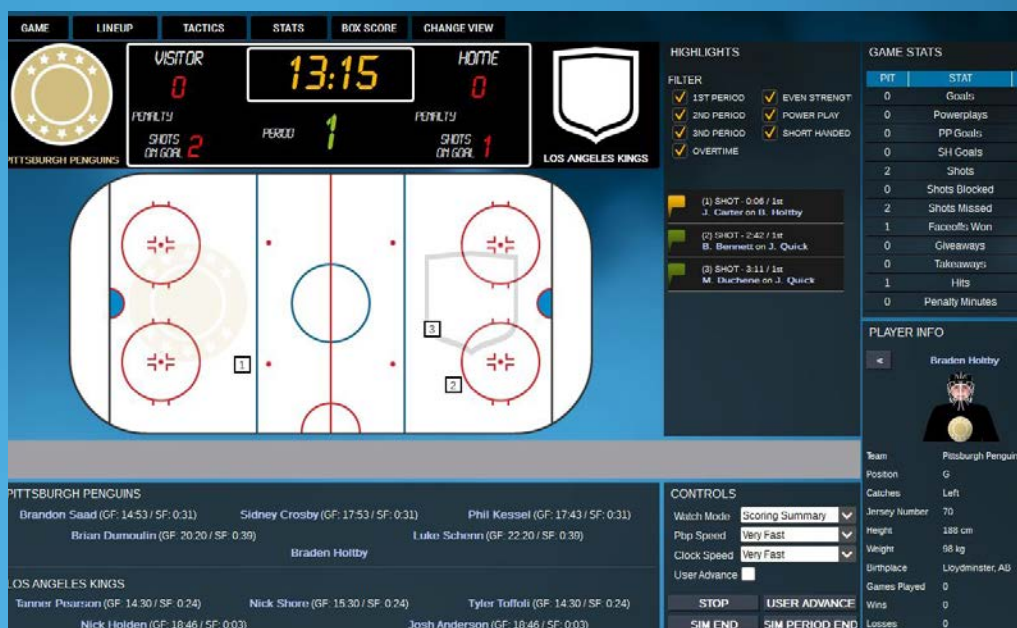
REVIEW



## Players are coming back on ice, and the manager to the lodge

For years now, we (a few dozen of us in Serbia) have longed for a good hockey manager, and then in space of one year we've gotten three excellent ones. And now we'll explain why the latest being one is the best yet. For a couple of years, in certain circles, Out of the Park Development has been considered the creators of the best manager simulation. No, not the great Football Manager, but Out of the Park Baseball. Last year they expanded to another sport that's not too popular in our country, and again succeeded in making a top-notch game. Franchise Hockey Manager 2014 had the depth, addictiveness and that 'something' which makes a game great. But it also had some growing pains.

Franchise Hockey Manager 2 alleviates many of those, while keeping everything that made it's predecessor a cult hit and gets out on the ice ready to enthuse both hockey and simulation fans alike. Already upon first starting the game we were promptly bodychecked by the game's interface – instead of the amateur look from last year, this time we have a polished, professional version before us, which reminds us of the one in OOTP Baseball. Although there's a short adjustment period, anyone who's remotely familiar with manager simulations will even before his first match easily grasp the full control of their hockey team from one of the many world leagues.



As is tradition, we set out on a task of leading the Pittsburgh Penguins, growing them from their many playoff disappointments of last few years into a true hockey dynasty that's winning the Stanley Cup for a few years in a row. The first step was to set the budget straight, i.e. sending away a few spent but overpaid players, and bringing in some young talent to support Crosby and Malkin. Fortunately, that wasn't as easy to do as in the previous game (although still easier done than in reality), so the desired trades have cost us many picks from a couple of future drafts. And additionally, we have failed to one up Edmonton by snatching Connor MacDavid from them.

Finally, satisfied with our first team and somewhat satisfied by the state of the farm at Wilkes-Barre, we thundered through the pre-season, and we scheduled all possible tactics and training – which isn't an easy job, because there's a lot of options, so we're still not 100% sure that we're doing everything that we should. It isn't easy being a young manager on such a responsible position...

And it's finally time for our first NHL match. The first small disappointment



is the looks of the match itself, which resembles last year's FHM more than OOTPB, i.e. it lacks the presentation that we enjoyed in it. Still, although it's not visually outstanding, it manages to provide all desired information and leaves ample room for us to react to what's happening on the ice with a multitude of options. The legendary descriptive text that has kept us glued to our monitors since the Championship Manager is present here as well in all it's glory, and it has helped us enjoy our first match and many more after.

The OOTP crew is hard at work day after day, working on providing small fixes and ironing out the bugs that are still present. Although we haven't encountered anything that might ruin a career run, we did have issues that had caused the game to crash and forced us to load a saved game. Those small issues are also the game's biggest flaw, but we can at least expect that the biggest of them will be resolved.

After being thrilled with FHM14, everything that we hoped for has come true, and perhaps was even surpassed. FHM2 is the best hockey manager yet (and in a fierce competition), even though it still has room to grow and progress. Alas, many of our readers who aren't hockey fans will now shake their heads in disbelief and think "Is there anything that these whack jobs from Play won't play?", but if they'd only try Franchise Hockey Manager 2, there's every chance that they might join us on a bench or a lodge of one of legendary NHL franchises.



### RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:

OS: Windows XP  
CPU: 1 GHz  
GPU: 1024x768 display  
RAM: 2 GB  
HDD: 5 GB



**PLATFORMS:**  
PC

**PUBLISHED BY:**  
Out of the Park Developments

**DEVELOPED BY:**  
Out of the Park Developments

**TESTED ON:**  
PC

**PRICE:**  
37 €

## RATING 8

- ✓ Many improvements when compared to the previous version
- ✓ Functional and good looking interface, speed and complexity
- ✗ Trades can still be pretty unrealistic
- ✗ Small bugs





Author: Ivan Danojlić

REVIEW

# RENOWNED EXPLORERS

Dr. Livingston, I presume

**R**enowned Explorers: International Society is a turn-based strategy game that comes from a small studio in Holland which released a game called Reus earlier this year for which it received good reviews from players and critics alike. Whether this game will be as successful remains to be seen, and we'll try to persuade you to try it out, because we liked it a lot.

The game places you in the thrilling world of explorers who discover various hidden dig sites all over the world, while gaining fame and prestige that goes along with it. Many different obstacles and dangers await on this journey, and it's up to you to get past them all and become the best in business.

At the start you'll have to choose between two playing modes, Discovery and Adventure. The first one is easier and allows the player to re-try a sector in case they failed in their first try. The latter mode however is for those without fear, who play for all or nothing, because once you make a mistake, that's the end of the line. We must also emphasize that the default game difficulty is set to 'hard', which we don't encounter that often, so if you don't want to start pulling your hair out and lingering on one mission for a long time straight away, take this into consideration when starting the game.

After this the game takes you to the Explorers' headquarters where you get

to pick out your team. Possible members are split into four categories: Scientist, Scout, Fighter and Speaker; and every category has its own advantages. Your team consists of three members, the leader and two followers. When you first play the game there won't be many options for the leader, but you will unlock more characters as you play. The game doesn't restrict you when it comes to building your team, so you can have three Fighters or three Scientists in your team – that's completely up to you. Also, when choosing a character, his advantages and disadvantages will be displayed on the side, as well as whom he's compatible with, all of which can inform your choice.

Once you've made your team, it's time to start the adventure and go treasure hunting. You may choose to play a short tutorial first or you can learn while playing. Since the game mechanics are reminiscent of HoM&M and Stratego, you'll have to pay attention to a few things while you explore. First, moving around the map is limited by food supply and every move from point A to point B has a requirement of a certain amount of food to make the journey, so you'll have to carefully plan out every step to your mission goal. During the journey you'll encounter many things - from food and other resources to hidden treasures and digs, or forgotten civilisations. But



**“ALREADY IN THE GAME'S FIRST MONTH THE DEVELOPERS HAVE RELEASED 5 PATCHES, SHOWING THAT THEY LISTEN TO THE PLAYERS AND THEIR DEMANDS”**

the road can also lead you to danger, so you can get attacked by bandits, or get discovered by a tribe that you've been monitoring and they don't take kindly to your presence at all. Beside all that, there will be situations where you'll need special skills associated to all follower classes, which will open up options for new adventures, and which will make you play the game again and again with different teams. In these situations the game will tell you which one of your team members has the best chance to complete the task, and if the success chance is less than 100%, a slot machine will appear and it will decide on whether you're lucky and successful.

What makes this game stand out is its combat system. Every battle can be executed in many different ways depending on your team composition and their individual virtues. The combat is based on a so-called rock-paper-scissors system, where one style is stronger than the other, but weaker than another one and so on. The three battle styles are Aggressive, Friendly and Devious. The first one, as the name suggests, is based on pure strength and physical power. Friendly takes a completely different approach, in which your character tries to dissuade the enemy from attacking with

compliments and praises - sometimes even making them an ally. And lastly Devious, with which you'll try to enrage your opponent using insults, fear, and cunning, so that they lose themselves in anger, thus weakening them and winning the battle. Each way of winning has its advantages, and so you can befriend the bandits that are trying to rob you, while taking the risk of getting stabbed, but if you succeed they might even leave you some of the treasure that they stole from somebody else. Or maybe a little old granny can charm a huge gorilla and weaken it, while a soldier attacks it from the other side with brute strength. The huge number of combinations and ways to win will make the strategist in you come out and make you really think about how to best use your team.

After each mission is completed you'll get to see the news of your journey in the papers, as well as your current rank on the world's greatest explorers list (you, of course, start at the bottom). Also all discoveries and treasures will be placed into your inventory, where you can spend them on further character upgrades, as well as their equipment and followers. So you can go to Berlin, where you will hold a lecture at the university and earn skill points to spend on

acquiring new knowledge. Or maybe go to Stockholm to hire new followers who will give you more bonuses. Or take a trip to Moscow, where you can spend your gold and equip your team for future adventures, and therefore reach the title of the world's greatest explorer.

The game is set in the past, and it's well visualized with colourful cartoon graphics, that resembles a mix of The Curse of the Monkey Island and Deponia. Your team will look like marching ants while travelling on the map from point A to point B, while the battlefield will be zoomed in and divided into hexagonal fields on which you can move your characters. And the fighting itself gets zoomed further in, so you can see the actions and reactions of the two participating characters. The music and sound effects are nicely composed and it's interesting to see that in a game where you fight using words, none of the characters actually speaks, instead the praises and insults are shown in clouds with pictures, like in a comic book.

Renowned Explorers: International Society is an excellent game, which will either impress you and make you want to play it over and over again, or it will make you pull your hair out because you can't befriend the wolves who eat you every time you get too close. In any case, even one run is enough to see that this is a really interesting game which will drive you to think and explore while having fun.

## RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:

OS: Windows 7 64-bit  
CPU: AMD Triple-Core / Intel Dual-Core 3.2 GHz  
GPU: AMD Radeon HD4850, NVIDIA GeForce GTS 250  
RAM: 4 GB RAM  
HDD: 1 GB



GAME CODE PROVIDED BY:  
Abbey Games

**PLATFORMS:**  
PC  
**PUBLISHED BY:**  
Abbey Games  
**PRICE:**  
20 €

**DEVELOPED BY:**  
Abbey Games  
**TESTED ON:**  
PC

RATING

8

- ✓ Beautiful cartoon graphics
- ✓ Interesting combat system
- ✓ Humor

✗ Very challenging, sometimes too hard even







Author: Bojan Jovanović

REVIEW

# ARMIKROG

For a fistful of playdough



**A**rmikrog starts with a bombastic, hyperactive animation, followed by a theme song similar to the ones from the '80s and '90s cartoons. Before you get a chance to come around after this epic blow to all your senses (or in our case, nostalgia) comes another amazing animation, this time in a stop-motion technique in the sumptuous claymation style from the rest of the game. The visual style is definitely the main selling point of this game, and a large number of models and locations were really made from plasticine/clay and other materials and later the photos were incorporated into scenes that we see in the final product. As a spiritual successor to the almost two decades old game, The Neverhood, Armikrog also places the player in a weird world full of mysteries that invite you to investigate. It's a pity that the rest of the game's quality does not follow up to the one it starts with.

After the intro song in which you find out that the home planet of our heroes Tommynaut and Beak Beak has started to die and that is why they went to the mysterious planet Spiro 5 to find a new type of fuel. And this is basically all you'll know as far as the story is concerned while you're wandering about the titular fortress. There is no story development until the very end when suddenly a new important character appears and that's when the game pours exposition on you like an avalanche. And even then you're not discovering it by playing, but mostly through cinematics, which are at least very well animated.

So, if the story is rushed, at least the gameplay must be good, right? Unfortunately, we have many criticisms for that too - even more than for the narrative side of the game. Armikrog is a point & click adventure in a very traditional sense and, like Neverhood, it doesn't show you an



object in your inventory but your character automatically uses it when you click on the appropriate location. This means that there are no inventory puzzles and that you'll also have to carefully monitor everything you pick up, especially if you make pauses while you play. We can understand that Neverhood can't be faulted for this approach, but it has been 19 years since and the genre has advanced in the meantime. Also, designers seem to have forgotten to read their copies of "Basic Game Design", because you will encounter a lot of objects and buttons whose purpose is impossible to determine or if they're just a part of the scenery or they'll become interactive later in the game. The problem lays in the fact that if, for example, a button cannot be activated at one time because there is no electricity, then none of your characters will be able to press it - they'll simply walk to that part of the screen. Only when you enable the electricity in that part of the scene will the button become interactive, and even then you'll have to figure out which one of the characters is supposed to press it. The characters don't comment on their surroundings and give you exactly 0% hints on what is supposed to be done in a scene, and even the mouse cursor won't change its shape from the standard Windows pointer, which makes the whole thing seem way less interactive than it really is.

Problematic design of the puzzles and bad communication with the player make Armikrog much more difficult than it really is. Here you won't be opening dungeon doors with a bottle of grog or make false moustache in order to make a fake ID card, but you'll encounter recycled puzzles who rather belong in some free to play mobile game than in a million-dollar project. During the game you will have to repeat the task of lining up stuffed animals 3 times, a

“THE EFFORT THAT WENT INTO MAKING AND ANIMATION OF ALL THE MODELS IS TREMENDOUS”



“A SPIRITUAL SUCCESSOR TO THE 19 YEAR OLD NEVERHOOD, ARMIKROG SHARES THE SAME ART STYLE, BUT NOT THE BRILLIANCE OF THE ORIGINAL”



very slow and tedious task because that sequence controls the melody playing in the background and a single mistake means you'll have to listen to the whole melody all over again since you have to start making the combination again from the beginning. Even worse than this are the puzzles involving moving blocks which form a picture to open up a path. These tasks are testing the players' nerves instead of their cleverness and attention to subtle hints and details. In our case we got stuck twice, at two spots that have been complained about by the majority of other players on the Steam forums. We'll reveal one of these places to you, because it serves as a perfect example of the catastrophic game design and we don't consider it to be much of a spoiler since it is plainly a big oversight – Beak Beak can talk to the octopus-elevators. This wasn't even hinted at previously at any given moment in the game because, while you're playing as a dog-like creature, all interactive objects are specially highlighted apart from, you guessed it, exactly those octopi, which even completely blend into the background

due to the temporary palette change to a high-contrast black and white.

Ever since it came out, Armikrog was said to be a bug-filled game, and the forums were overflowing with various complaints, from the completely empty main menu because the game didn't recognize the system language to skipping whole parts because the game's logic 'snapped' so you magically end up having every necessary item. This is really devastating considering that the game's release was postponed twice at the last moment. During our run we didn't encounter any major bugs before the last third of the game where we managed to completely confound the game. In one room there is a button that Beak Beak can stand on, allowing you to control Tommy from then on. If you go a bit further and get to a vertical pipe, it will suck in your character and the game gets stuck there, so the only solution is

to load a previously saved game. The problem here is that you're supposed to have both of your characters present for that scene, but that's not even hinted at before, like with the majority of puzzles as we mentioned before. The game also has trouble with the sound, mostly with music which sometimes turns it's volume down for about ten minutes, but also with interrupting dialogues which leaves to the player watching a subtitled pantomime.

Armikrog would have easily been discarded as an amateur half-product if it didn't look so lovely and unusual. It's a great shame that because of programmers' and designers' incompetence all this hard work is gone to waste, all those stunning landscapes and objects which someone's been building for months and carefully animated picture by picture is now in the same boat with some of the most irritating puzzles we've seen in the last few years. Considering that it doesn't take more than 3-4 hours to finish the game, the price of 25€ is an insult. Just like Broken Age before it, Armikrog is a million-worth Kickstarter project that fails to justify it's pedigree and unsuccessfully relies on the good will and nostalgia of fans. Patches will correct the problem in the code, but the puzzles which once gave the adventure games a bad reputation will remain. Also, the last cinematic ends with a hint for a sequel. We doubt it will ever be made.



GAME CODE  
PROVIDED BY:  
**VERSUS | EVIL**

**RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:**  
OS: Windows XP  
CPU: Intel Pentium 4  
GPU: DirectX 9.0  
RAM: 2GB  
HDD: 2GB

<b>PLATFORMS:</b> PC	<b>DEVELOPED BY:</b> Pencil Test Studios
<b>PUBLISHED BY:</b> Versus Evil	<b>TESTED ON:</b> PC
<b>PRICE:</b> 25€	

**RATING** **5.5**

- ✓ Beautifully animated, unique visual tyle
- ✓ Voice acting... when it's present
- ✓ The atmosphere
- ✗ Buggy and too short
- ✗ Occasional sound problems
- ✗ Illogicalities in the interface and logic puzzles

“SOME PUZZLES  
REPEAT  
THROUGHOUT  
THE GAME AND  
WILL GET ON  
YOUR NERVES”

