

REVIEWS:

Tom Clancy's The Division - Black Desert Online - Dying Light: The Following - EA Sports UFC 2 Mortal Kombat XL - Forced Showdown - Grim Dawn - Hitman Intro Pack - Superhot - Trackmania Turbo Last Door: Season 2 - Samorost 3 - Shardlight - Stardew Valley



No. 94 – APRIL 2016.

Published monthly • Price: Free

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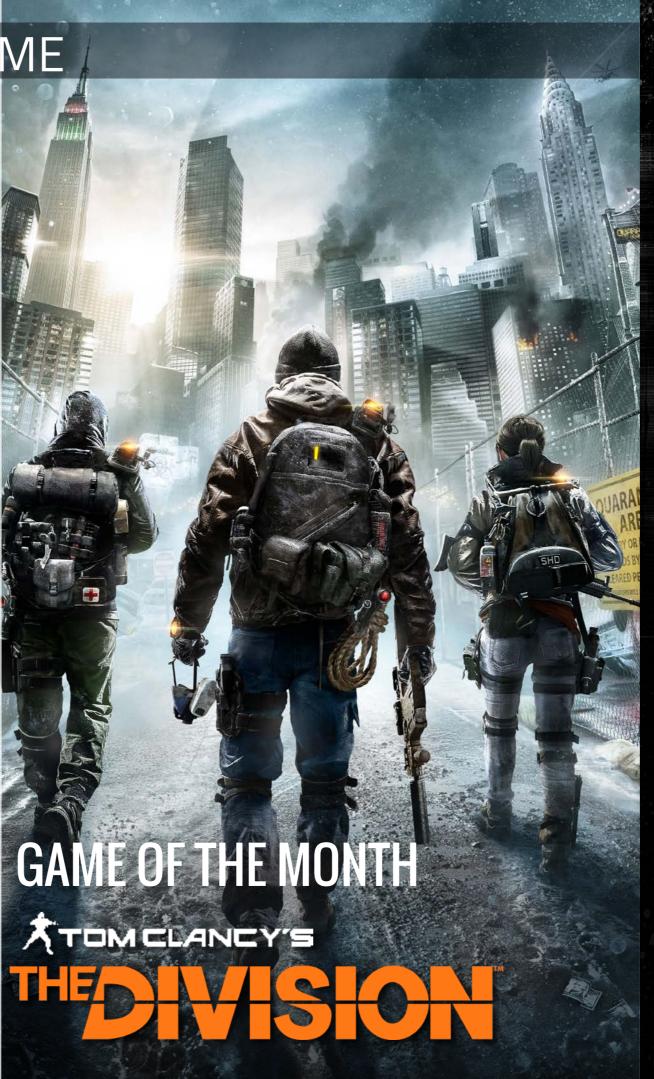












Hello everyone,

Well this month certainly took us by surprise. We expected a slow month, a few games here and there, but boy oh boy, were we wrong! And we're glad that we were, because this month featured some big hitters as well as some hidden gems, and you can read all about them on the pages of our magazine.

We didn't expect Tom Clancy's The Division to be as divisive to our staff as it turned out to be! And while some of them are still regular visitors to the Dark Zone, others are more reluctant to go back to it. Still, it was a game with high expectations, and as Ubisoft's first venture into the MMO genre, at the very least it turned many a head around. Another MMO hit the scene, well at least western scene, since it was available in the east for a while now. Black Desert Online is live and poised to take up hours and days of our time with its expansive world, various rich systems it has in place, and last and certainly not least - it's character creator, which will probably take up most of those hours, if some stories are to be believed. Hitman makes a return, this time in an episodic manner. I wonder if anyone is a fan of episodic releases? Well, fan of them or not, Agent 47 has a new mission and a new level for us to sneak through, with further missions to follow throughout the year. Mortal Kombat is re-released in an XL package, so make sure to check out our review to find out all of its features.

And what about those diamonds in the rough? I'm glad you asked, because this month we were SPOILED for choice with excellent indie or smaller studio games. Superhot is a game that was conceived in about a day as an experiment and now is finally released for everyone to enjoy. Featuring bullet-time action and deep philosophical realizations all in one polygonal experience. Then, for instance, we have Stardew Valley, a game fully conceived and created by a single person. If that wasn't a feat in itself, the game's premise is so simple, yet it's actually so entertaining that you're almost guaranteed to experience that famous "just one more turn" syndrome. And that's just naming a couple of them – there are more, many more! Read on and check out all of the games we tried out this month, we're sure there will be a recommendation for everyone's taste.

But it's not all just fun and games (well, sometimes it is). This month, we also managed to have a char with Daniel Vávra from Warhorse Studios about their upcoming unconventional RPG, Kingdom Come: Deliverance. It's described as "Dungeons" without Dragons", and he goes into much more detail about their thought process and vision. We also started a new column, "Around the Tube", in which we'll endeavor to bring you interviews with popular and web. Our premiere guest was Mrs. Shirley Curry who was kind enough to share her internet experiences with us. We also featured a couple of very diverse pieces of hardware – the extremely precise Razer Mamba Tournament Edition mouse and the wonderful ROG PG348Q, a gorgeous new curved monitor from Asus.

And those are just a few appetizers to get you started there is much more on the following pages, so make sure to dive in and enjoy the new issue of PLAY! Zine.

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fter many variations of multiplayer which Ubisoft tinkered with over the years on I their single player games, now we get to see how they fare in full MMO genre, or at least their approximation of it. Tom Clancy games were always permeated by a dose of realism while showing how a Special Forces unit operates - sometimes more, sometimes less, and that is the case with The Division, which has in most cases missed the point of realism by a mile

This scenario conceived from the nightmares of some conspiracy theorist, and which could easily fit into a season of the show "24", starts with a huge Black Friday sale during which huge amounts of bills enter the circulation, laced with a new synthetic and highly contagious virus. Fast forward a bit, and we can see the disease

"THE AMOUNT OF LOOT CAN BE COMPARED TO BORDERLANDS AND DIABLO GAMES"

spreading with no signs of slowing down, or of a cure in sight. New York City, the epicenter of it all, gets quarantined with most of its population left stuck inside. This is where you enter the picture, as a member of a clandestine organization known as the Division, formed to operate just in case something like this happens in an urban environment. Your mission is to check in with a safe house in Brooklyn and then move on to central Manhattan as soon as possible to join up with other agents in investigating the mysterious origin if this virus, as well as subdual or removal of any threat to citizens who are still in the quarantine zone.

During the tutorial mission in Brooklyn, you'll be introduced to the basic gameplay features, from weaponry, to interactions, to principles of each mission moving forward. After you arrive on Manhattan proper, you will get a base which will act as your command center. Furthermore, the gameplay can be broadly split into three unequal key elements. There's the 3rd person shooter, i.e. that which will be on the forefront when comparing



The Division to the other games from that genre. It featurés unavoidable view from your character's back, and intricate investigation of all small walls and covers in the game that could help you survive the fire fights which become more difficult as you progress and which will require constant maneuvering and tactical

positioning. There are main missions and side missions, as well as a number of collectible items which further portray the horrors of such a catastrophe and show the lines that people are willing to cross. The most important missions are split into Medical, Tech, and Security; the main missions will be tied to the storyline

of investigating the virus and securing the zones around Manhattan, while the side missions provide you with additional points to upgrade your base. This is where the RPG element comes into play, and although it's not the main focus, actually takes up most of the game. Namely, most of the systems featured in all RPG games, such as various skills (represented in the form of high-tech gadgets), talents and perks that you'll unlock and upgrade as you grow your base, the unavoidable crafting system that becomes valid only in end-game, and loot, i.e. the gear you'll constantly collect from fallen foes to further improve your character's stats. This particular system will reach uncontrolled quantities of random gear and give you flashbacks to games such as Borderlands and Diablo.

Although The Division is classified as a shooter, it kind of misses the point of it when your opponents are sponges that soak up full clips of bullets to the head without falling. The whole combat





"A SOLO GAME, AND EVEN BETTER WITH FRIENDS"

character. The biggest criticism to all of this has to be pointed at the character creation system, which provides you with bare few essentials – a few options for face, hair and details; you are bound to run into a few clones of yourself during gameplay. On the other hand, the sound quality provides a realistic addition to the game, and along with solid voice acting, the sounds of weapons and shots are on point, as well as a fairly functional voice communication system which is very serviceable after only a few tweaks.

When it comes to the end-game, or "what to do when you've completed all missions and reached level 30", that is when the grind in vein of Diablo 3 begins, as you look for the best combination of stats and gear to fit your play style so your character can be the toughest on the block. The best advice would be to collect all materials until max level, and salvage all gear for materials as well, so that your gameplay doesn't turn into a total grind fest or a boring hunt for materials later on.

While on the topic of grinding, let's mention a few negatives that might, or might not be fixed, first among them being the lack of a distinct PvP system. If

you rush into the game too voraciously, you could get burned out and the game might became super boring due to lack of variety in opponents and missions. Another big criticism is that the game actually draws a lot from the RPG genre when it comes to gear, so no matter how good or experienced you are as a player, if your gear is sub-par, you're going to struggle in combat. Conversely, when you reach max level and equip the best gear, you'll be able to tackle anything with minimum effort.

If you come in with the idea that The Division will be an online MMO version of Call of Duty that you can play nonstop, it's best to move on because this is definitely not it. However, if you want to discover what it would it be like if an epidemic catastrophe strikes Manhattan during the winter, and while at it also shoot, collect loot and have a great time with your friends, you're more than welcome to join The Division and we'll see you on the streets of New York.

RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:

CPU: Intel Core i7-3770 or AMD FX-8350
GPU: NVIDIA GeForce GTX 970 or AMD Radeon R9 29

RAM: 8GB





PLATFORMS: PC, PS4, XONE

PUBLISHED BY:

PRICE:

DEVELOPED BY:
Ubisoft Massive

TESTED ON: PC

RATING

- Excellent Co-Op experience
- Loot hoarder's heaven
- Exploration
- 💢 End-game material grind
- Lack of a true PvP mode

system comes down to increasing your own numbers to be able to use them to decrease the opponent's numbers and therefore emerge victorious. Of course, in the end there's the MMO part of the game. Although it's actually totally possible to go through the whole game solo as if you're playing a single player game - because as soon as you leave you base or safe zone, you're able to walk around New York by yourself, but it's a real treat and much more fun to have three of your friends join you for that walk. The Party and Co-Op systems are very well executed, from being able to gather random players to join you from the safe zone before each main mission, to the option to use ingame voice-comms for better positioning and tactics, to the ability to practically teleport to another teammate's location as long as you're not engaged in combat. You will definitely need a team if you plan to enter the Dark Zone, a purposefully cut off zone at the heart of the map, which is not only constantly patrolled by stronger and more numerous versions

of the enemy, but many other Division

agents as well. This other point would be helpful, if this zone wasn't open hunting grounds for everything, including other Division agents, the purpose of which is acquiring better and more valuable gear than is available in normal zones. This is where you'll experience some of the most challenging and rewarding moments in the game, while you sneak around deserted streets and cooperate with random players that suddenly appear in your vicinity. Also, as long as you're in DZ zones, the voice-comms are open to everyone and if they're close to you, they can hear you!

Although the game's graphically weaker than what was first shown on E3 a few years ago, it still holds up rather well. Along with a 1:1 representation of Manhattan, the graphics successfully convey the atmosphere of a an abandoned, lawless city, which is further accentuated by meticulously added details everywhere you turn, weather conditions, day/night cycle, as well as small details and changes on your



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Author: Stefan Mitov Radojičić

REVIEW



lack Desert Online is one of those MMOs that garnered heaps of attention long before the game itself could even be obtained, and not because it was lauded as the next WoW killer, but because of its extremely extensive character creator which promised us a crazy amount of possibilities. Were this first title from the Korean developer team Pearl Abyss and their character creator good enough to separate this fantasy MMO RPG from the sea of others, is there anything else hiding beneath the surface of its black desert we set out to explore and find out.

finished creating your character, you'll be greeted by the intro cinematic whose bombastic narrator will go on to explain the dramatic and cataclysmic event which happened to the port city of Goma Naru. However, you wake up in a small town called Olvia, with amnesia (of course), and attached to a small black cloud with two bright red eyes. Of course, said cloud

After a few hours, when you've finally

That brings us to gameplay, which is extensive to say the least - so much so, that even in first 15 hours of play time you won't be able to see and try everything. The first thing you'll encounter when starting the game is that you have to enter a "Family" name, i.e. the name which will be tied to your whole account and displayed above each of your characters; only after that you get to create your first

modify absolutely all parts of the body... Intriguing, right? Well, not really, when you consider that the choice of your race, sex and base look depends on your chosen class. So, if you want to play as a Wizard, you'll have to create your version of Gandalf, as a Witch or a Tamer you're a loligirl, and if you want to play as an Elf you have to be a Ranger, or a Berserker for the race of Half-Giants. Not to mention that this version lacks a good chunk of classes which are available in the Korean version. However, perhaps the most important part of an MMO is its combat system, seeing how you'll spend a lot of time killing droves

of weasels, foxes, wolves and goblins, you might at expect to have fun while doing it. Black Desert Online doesn't disappoint in this regard. Each class has a completely different fighting style, role and combos, i.e. combinations of moves which you can perform. You won't just smash your skill keybinds during combat; instead, you'll have to learn the combinations of buttons for every individual ability, which makes the game somewhat reminiscent of fighting games and it rewards your ability to block on time or dodge an opponent's attack and then use a combo to quickly take him down.

to offer, on the contrary - this is just the tip of a giant iceberg that lurks beneath the surface. There is the opportunity to collect all sorts of materials, ranging from ore, herbs, lumber, and even fish. You could process all of these materials at almost any time, and turning them into useful items by drying the meat, smelting the ore, and by cutting, frying, cooking, mixing... As soon as you stumble upon your first town you'll be able to lease houses and buildings, and turn them into your own home, as well as into special locations which can then increase your storage in town, add new places for your workers to sleep or craft gear for you. Yes, you're able to employ workers to, in a sense, grind for you, but you have to nourish them with beer so they have the strength to work. Later on, you could work exclusively in trade and ride around from town to town selling items, or build a ship and sail the seas. The map is truly huge, and you'll be stuck in just the first two towns for a while if you wish to do everything before moving on. Along all of this, yes there is a lot more, such as the guild system which is so detailed, that it reminds us of a company, especially since you'll have to literally employ your members, i.e. other players, with contracts and payments and all! Then there's the Knowledge system through which you're literally learning everything about

Of course, this isn't the only type of gameplay that Black Desert Online has



WHERE'S THAT **BLACK DESERT?**

> is called Black Spirit and isn't evil or the center of your adventures in any way. The problem arises right after you start the game, because you're more than likely to forget about the main story and that quest line after getting swamped by a huge amount of assignments which explain and teach you about the game's systems (rather poorly at that).

character. Now, imagine the character creation system from Fallout 4, but which isn't restricted to only creating the face of the character, but instead allows you to







the world, and not just the NPCs you encounter, but also the enemies you fight - you need at least the starting level of it to even see their health bar depleting, and to be able to talk with the NPC in detail, you have to know something about other characters or things.

The game's greatest fault comes in the form of an energy system, something similar to all those Facebook games, only not as severe. You'll be spending energy on everything that isn't fighting monsters, walking/running/riding, and basic interaction with NPCs. Everything else will spend your energy reserves, which you will increase over time by completing quests; also, 1 point of energy replenishes every 3 minutes. Another huge flaw of the game is the Cash Shop system of buying items for real money, which is extremely

> **ADVICE FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO PLAY: let your first** character be a trial, and don't be afraid of making mistakes; the game has tons of systems that are badly explained, so don't hesitate to look for help outside the game. Don't complete quests until you've spent some of your energy, because each quest will replenish it, so don't miss out on those bonuses.

overpriced, and has some sets of clothes which give minimal bonuses to stats - the game's not pay-to-win at the moment, but who knows what future might bring. The third negative is that even with loads of quests and help systems, you'll still have to look for explanations outside of the game to better understand and use all of the systems which the game has to offer.

If you're able to play the game on high settings, you're going to enjoy wonderful landscapes, huge amount of detail, special effects while fighting, and shifts in weather and light during your adventure. On the other hand, on low settings, you'll have to endure the graphics which is badly optimized for older machines and you'll feel like you're playing something from 10 years ago. Something unrelated to settings is the big pop-in problem -







objects in the game which are still loading after you've already bumped into them or passed them by. Another issue are the NPCs, who even with the game's vast detail when creating characters are simply copied, so you'll regularly meet clones during your sessions.

The music is fun and diverse, meaning that it'll change depending on what you're doing and where you are. The problem is that even with that said, it becomes boring and repetitive after a while, so we recommend that you bring your own

playlist. On the other hand, the voice acting ranges from "bearable" to "oh god, can it be this bad"; the lip-syncing is practically non-existent, and the NPC characters will use animations that are so repetitive, that you won't be able to bear to watch and listen to them, only wish for the conversation to be over.

The developer's inexperience is definitely showing, especially with the attempt to export the game to the western market. If this would be your first MMO, we recommend that you skip it and come back later. Otherwise, if you plan on it being your only MMO, Black Desert Online will offer you hours, days and weeks of gameplay. You will definitely need them to experience everything this game has to offer.

RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:

HDD: 4

"THE GAME IS A BIG MIXTURE OF AMAZEMENT AND DISAPPOINTMENT"

BLACK DESERT

GAME PROVIDED BY DAUM GAMES

PLATFORM:

PUBLISHED BY:

PRICE: 30€

DEVELOPED BY

TESTED ON:

RATING

Exciting combat system

You always have something to do

A long-term MMO

Quickly turns into grind

Very limiting energy system

The Cash Shop is too expensive

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Dying Light
The Following - Enhanced Edition

Buggy all night long

ately whenever we read that there is going to be a Redux, HD or EE version of a game, we tend to feel a mild fever, followed by a rash around the elbow of the left arm, and symptoms of bristling hair, because that usually means you'll need to spare a few dozen Euros again to enjoy... the same game. And when something like this is announced for a game that only came out last year... splendid! But, in Polish developers' genes must be some trace of kindness making them give EE versions of their games as a free update to their players, and in this case even the new DLC "The

Following" was given to the owners of the "Seasonal Pass" even if it wasn't announced as a part of it. A gesture worthy of praise and respect.

Dying Light EE brings a few novelties, a completely new skill tree, new weapons, new opponents, more polished graphics (although the original game is beautiful in itself) and the already mentioned, "The Following", as a highlight of this pack.

"The Following" takes place right after the events from the base game. That is, Kyle

"IT'S A BOLD DECISION TO HAVE PARKOUR AND FREE RUN TAKE A BACK SEAT AND OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE "

Crane and the crew hear from a local trader/smuggler that there's a small village near Harran in which people, under the protection of a mysterious cult called Children of the Sun, successfully resist the zombie plague - moreover, they seem to be immune to the disease and don't turn into the undead. Since the situation in Harran is extremely bad, worsened by the shortage of antizin, our hero has no other choice but to pack up and head out on a journey to see if the rumors are true.

It's a bold decision to have parkour and free run take a back seat and offer an alternative gameplay, which turned out to be a very profitable risk, because already in the first mission you acquire your new best friend/companion/weapon, its magnificence - the buggy! Buggy used as transportation is definitely the best thing in the game, the driving is done perfectly, the feel behind the wheel is great, and even if it seems simple it's not easy at all, because the roads are



often blocked by a variety of obstacles, all kinds and sizes of zombies, and it takes a bit of getting used to, but once you've learned the roads it becomes very fun and its quite possible to lose hours just driving around. We should also mention that the buggy is upgradeable. You can change literally everything - tires, engine, transmission, brakes, add weapons, strengthen the construction, but all of that can also get damaged and broken, so you need to take good care of your pet. When we add gasoline to all of that, which is also spent and is recommended that you have some in reserve, everything gets a whole new dimension. It doesn't feel nice at all if your engine breaks, or you run out of fuel in the middle of nowhere in the dark, while hordes of zombies are around you and the nearest safe house is a few kilometers away

The map is huge, maybe even bigger than in the base game, with a lot of interesting optional content. Besides plenty of side missions, there are races you can drive alone or race with your friends (there is a co-op mode just like in the base game), and the game gives you additional challenges while driving for even more fun. The locations in "The Following" aren't monotone: there are green meadows, fields, hills, mountains, and the road will take you along beaches, through various caves, there is even swimming and diving in some missions, and abandoned industry facilities as well as buildings, just to keep your parkour skills from getting rusty.

Maybe the greatest deficiency in the game is its slow beginning because, upon arriving Kyle must prove himself and help out the locals in order for them to accept him into the cult and reveal their secrets. At that moment the game literally forces you to do side missions, because the main ones are locked until a certain level of loyalty is reached, which is a bad design decision for many reasons. It's as clear as day why this was done - most of the players wouldn't pay enough attention to them, some of these side activities wouldn't even be looked

at, but if you're going to make an "open world", imagined as a huge theme park or a playground that offers the players a freedom to do whatever they want, whenever they want, explore or just walk around, let it really be so, and not "Ok, but only if it coincides with developers' wishes". Oh the irony! If we accentuate that the side missions are very well done and aren't at all boring, this decision seems even more unnecessary.

The storyline of the game is better than the one in the base game, it's not anything epochal or never seen before, but it's very well thought out and made, and it really shows, right after the intro when the game picks up the pace and shines in all its glory. It's all completed with a memorable ending, which rounds up Dying Light in a good way.

The gameplay didn't have any major changes besides the introduction of the buggy. Points are doubled at night and you can progress faster, but it's also much more dangerous, of course there is again 1001 ways to mutilate the undead (and just like in the base game, there tends to be too many of them) with various imaginative weapons The game isn't particularly hard in normal mode, so hard difficulty is a good challenge for beginners and more experienced players as well, and for the brave there's always the nightmare difficulty implemented in the EE version. There is more than enough content and while you can complete the main storyline in about 10 hours, completing the game would take around 20-30 hours of gameplay. An extraordinary number for

In the end, The Following has fully earned the title of an expansion, considering the volume of content, quality and effort put into it. You can say it represents a road sign pointing the right direction for other developers, regarding how additional content should look like, so it's, to some extent, a shame that "The Following" isn't a standalone game, since it has all necessary quality.

"BUGGY USED AS TRANSPORTATION IS DEFINITELY THE BEST THING IN THE GAME"



RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION

OS: Windows 7 64-bit CPU: Intel Core i5-4670K 3.4 GHz

GPU: GeForce GTX 780 / Radeon R9 29

RAM: 8 GB HDD: 40 GB



GAME PROVIDED By CD Media

TESTED ON:

PLATFORMS: PC, PS4, XONE

PUBLISHED BY:
Warner Bros. Home

PRICE: 50€

RATING





Beautiful graphics

X Slow start

 Side missions are a requirement for further progress

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Author: Borislav Lalović REVIEW

SUPERIO

Supreme excellence

game could be summed u wo words. This game is 5 d HOT at the same time t should be reason enough for an of hours and play it. t regret it, and they'll end up pla far more than just two hours.

The easiest way to des game is a mixture of 'The Stan e' and 'Darwinia'. If you've pla e titles you'll know what this i SUPERHOT is an FPS in which you the task of eliminating enemies certain ick up your area, but you have one sleeve. When you don' ime runs in suuuuuuper slooooow l giving you a few seconds of advanta an out your next move or two, dodg dly salvo or grab a weap e, great

"THE GAME BOASTS

So why compare this to Darv the graphics are kind of rem this RTS gem from the early white background with brig all packaged in stark polygo giving the game that cyber Darwinia had. And why Stan ask? SUPERHOT really has n common with this one at first Instead of following the famous line' and dying of laughter at you comments, here we have totally o yet similar priorities. You won't fo

ne but you'll certainly wise guy" but you'll hy are you doing what ou tricked, hooked on ng else entirely. expectations, d of Superhot raises m than it gives question







THE ORIGINS OF SUPERHOT

SUPERHOT was originally an experimental game. It was created in 2014 during the 7 day FPS jam in which the task was - you guessed it - to make a functional FPS in a week. The game's prototype momentarily gained a lot of popularity, so the authors decided to make a complete game and the project collected 250 thousand dollars through Kickstarter. Although the game went through some visual changes, the original worked very similarly to the way it does now. In case you're wondering what the first version of the game looked like, you can try it out for free at the official website.

in about two hours, th high replay value. Tr n a level unarmed, or o ana or just with the help rounding inventory ... The ours, and you have the free it any way you think is right. end you can upload the wh

Killstagram, where you can also see other players' solutions. Killstagram is an online service that works on the same principles as regular Instagram, only here you don't have Dan Bilzerian waiting for you around every corner, but action packed clips from yourself and other players. The service is still in beta and is pretty buggy, but that doesn't spoil the overall experience. Still the game has anotrher big fla..

MIND IS SOFTWARE BODIES ARE DISPOSABLE SUPER HOT; SUPER HOT; SUPER HOT

"THE TIME FLOWS ONLY WHILE YOU MOVE"

RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:

RAM:



GAME PROVIDED SUPERHOT TEAM

DEVELOPED BY:

TESTED ON:

PLATFORM:

PUBLISHED BY:

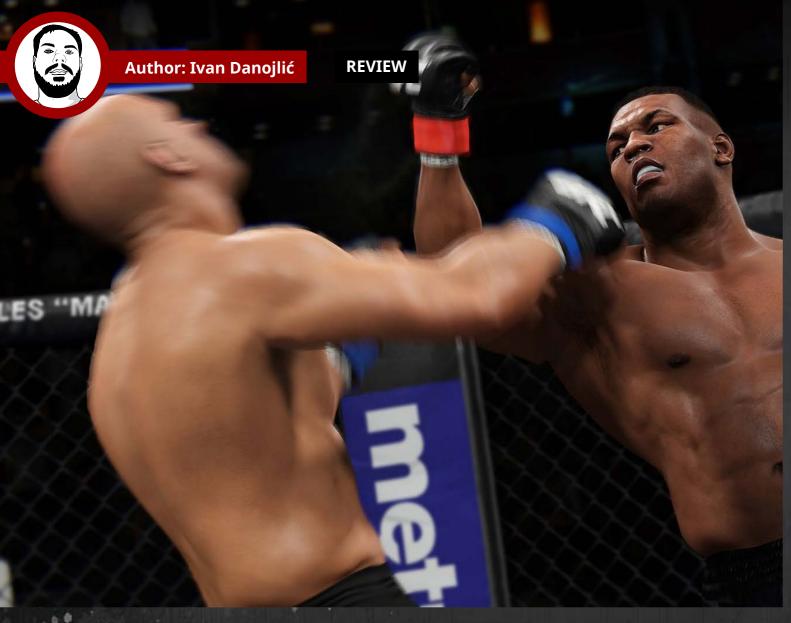
RATING

✓ SUPER

HOT

Bullet time perfection, philosophy, EVERYTHING!

"Short" main story



EA Sports UFC 2

Heavy-weight category

A Sports is back again this year with a new edition of their UFC franchise, which is slowly gaining game in regards to quality and popularity. The company overtook the license from THQ studio's previous game and it was immediately noticeable that they took a much more serious approach to the game which the players liked, because they've been waiting for an MMA simulation, not an arcade-fighter-styled game that THQ regularly used in all of their WWE games. Once they've seen the success the game had EA took the time to polish up the game, so now we can say that we have a

true MMA representatation in the gaming

pace and reaching the level of a FIFA The whole menu is similar to other EA Sports games, which will make managing the options much easier for players who play their other games. Everything is clearly written and explained; every mode from the previous installment is still here, plus a few new ones. Surely the greatest addition is the Ultimate Team mode, already familiar to many from the FIFA franchise. However, while in football this mode was created so that players can make their own dream team with all the stars they want, who they can unlock and buy as cards, in this game

that mode is something of a failure and will disappoint everyone who hoped they could make their own "dojo" and gather UFC's best of the best and dominate all categories. Here you have the possibility to create up to five fighters who will fight in various divisions in order to climb the ladder to the champion title. There is an option for online matches against other players (which, sadly, requires an Xbox subscription in order to play), as well as an offline mode in which you get to fight against the fighters created by other players and controlled by the Al. You'll earn points and money, which you'll spend on cards and fighter upgrades. Those cards





BONUS FIGHTERS COME IN MULTIPLE CATEGORIES

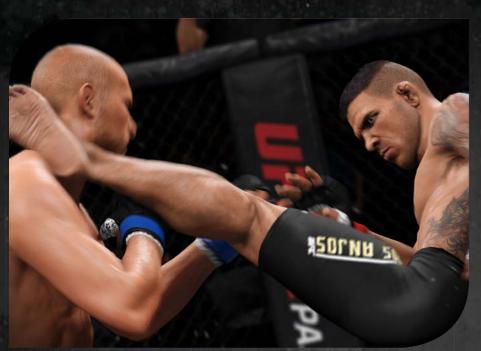
contain "special" moves that can broaden your fighter's arsenal, as well as "training" cards, which are used to recover your fighter from his last match and prepare him for next one. Once you've seen all of that, you'll realize that this mode should have been the Career mode and not Ultimate Team, which disappointed many fans, but we're hoping that EA will fix this in the sequel, if not in this game. Besides these, there is also the Knockout mode, which is mainly used for short and sweet brutal finishers. There's no floor techniques here, no grappling, no prolonged matches - just short bouts in which you attempt to make your opponent kiss the mat as painfully as

Perhaps the two most interesting modes are the Live Event and Custom Event. The first one literally skips to the next event in line and allows you to "bet" on the score, and if you guess right, you get rewarded, and you can also play each fight. If you manage to fulfill your prediction, you also get bonus points. Custom Event's there for you to create a whole event as you see fit. From the matches, to the background, referees, octagon girls, etc; you can create your dream event, which means that every fight can be a title match and you can participate in every one of them if you want. One of the things that would work really well in this mode, and which UFC's doesn't practice since the early days of the organization, are the so called "one night tournament" types of events, in which the whole tournament takes place over one night, and by the end the winner is proclaimed a champion in that category. The Career mode is also still here and it'll

take you through training, "The Ultimate Fighter" shows and houses, all the way to the UFC and the title of champion. How much they focused on realism can be seen in the fact that the creators now made it possible for your fighter to get injured during training and therefore disrupt his way to glory, which is another thing to be

The number of fighters is huge - over 250 of them, both active and non-active. UFC made an effort to get everyone who has ever gone through their organization and had their permission to put their character into the game. Alongside them, we have Bruce Lee as a bonus character from the previous sequel, as well as Mike Tyson and Bas Rutten, who are new additions to the line-up. You can also see CM Punk in the game, who some will recognize from the WWE, and who is expected to make a debut in UFC by the end of the year. It's a big remark that all of these characters can only be bought with real money, and can't be unlocked by playing or game points. This is especially irritating when it comes to Bruce Lee, who was in the previous game, but it seems that the publishers don't care, as long as they get as much extra income as they can. We hope that UFC adds more fighters to their game, considering that they have the rights to a few organizations that no longer exist, as well as cooperation with others who wouldn't mind getting some publicity through UFC games.

When it comes to the way the game looks, EA Sports made real effort to make everything look as realistic as possible. All fighters are faithfully depicted, tattoos and



haircuts included, the octagon is decorated with logos of all current sponsors, and the arenas are completely copied - lights, big screens and all. Along with the fighters and their coaches, we also have referees, Bruce Buffer as the announcer, as well as the octagon girls. The level of detial is so high that you can recognize a fighter or anyone else around the octagon at just the first glance. The gear for all fighters is the same, Reebok, which some may mind because they're used to a variety of equipment, but this is all due to contracts UFC made. The game may stutter only while the fighters are entering the ring, and that only at two places - while exiting the hallway and moving towards the ring, and while entering the ring itself. Luckily there's no stuttering during matches.

The fights themselves are spectacular and can look brutal sometimes, especially when you're finishing your opponent on the ground. Each blow to the head will make it bounce, adding to the over feeling of force in the impact. Even in the previous edition the fights looked amazing, and now it's almost like watching them on TV. We say "almost", because there are moments when it seems like your blows are just caressing your opponent rather than of hurting them, and it usually happens when the fighters are on the ground or near the fence. The grappling system in the game

is a bit slower and it lacks the fluidity that the other elements of the fighting have. Sure, now it'll be easier to cope due to the added mini-menu which shows the actions that your character will take if you move the corresponding analog stick in a certain direction. Also, the process of submission is now divided into five parts, and yes, we understand that EA wanted to ensure that both players have an equal chance this way, but it only slows the game and loses the feeling of realism they're trying to achieve. The injuries are visible during the match, and they look even better during breaks between rounds. Focusing on a certain region on the opponent can pay off because that may make it harder for him to move, or lower his stamina and stop him from making any huge combos. Two big things that really bothered us are the lack of quick finishes through knock-out, as wel as injuries through hitting. We've tried to break the balancing leg of our opponent many times, but we failed every single time, and we all know that this happens more and more often in real fights.

The sound is improved and there are no false sounds any more. Everything you hear in the game, every hit and fall, is a real recorded sound imported into the game. That means that someone had to go through all that torture to make the game sound real enough for everyone (or

IN THE LATEST UPDATE, EA SPORTS INTRODUCED A KONAMI CODE. WHEN YOU ENTER IT, YOU UNLOCK A SECRET FIGHTER - THE COMMENTATOR, JOE ROGAN

at least we like to think that way). As for the music, the library is filled with various genres. Some might object that the game's soundtrack isn't comprised of just the "hardcore" music as it used to be, but I think that UFC as an organization has been working hard on changing their image and that shows in this case. But don't worry - all songs you heard at the events are here.

Apart from all previously mentioned pros and cons to the game, there is still another big thing missing - the so-called "thrash talk" before the match. Throughout UFC's history, the fights were built by conflicts and verbal insults of the fighters; face to face, as well as over media, and that heated up the atmosphere and the viewers before the match. Lately there's been a lot of that with stars such as Chael Sonnen, Connor McGregor, Jon Jones and Dominik Cruz, to name just a few, who elevate the importance of their bouts and spectator inclusion through verbal wars against opponents. We hope that EA and UFC add this to the game in the near future to make it an even more faithful representation of events before the match and provide even more fun for the players.

UFC 2 is a great game and although it has certain oversights, it shows that the studio and the UFC are making an effort to translate this sport into the virtual world in the right way and make it possible for us, the players, to feel as if we're really in the octagon. Even though there are a few flaws this game is definitely worth your time and can entertain you a variety of ways, whether you give it an hour or much longer



GAME PROVIDED BY EWE

PLATFORMS:

PUBLISHED BY:

PRICE:

DEVELOPED BY:

TESTED ON:

RATING

- Excellent graphics
- Very broad cast of fighters
- Brutal finishers
- Ultimate Team mode
- Extra fighters can only be bought, and not unlocked





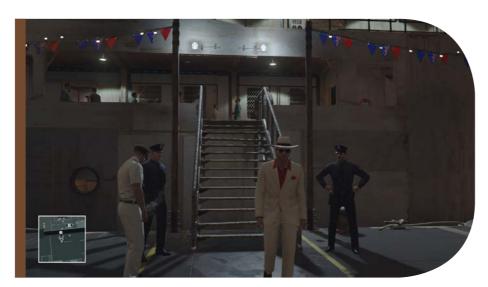
after Hitman: Absolution. Here you will already be amazed by the vibrancy and openness of the new game. You have a vast level before you, filled with over 300 computer controlled characters that will all "go about their business" and really bring the whole scene to life. You'll have only one task upon your shoulders - to eliminate your target, as quietly and efficiently as possible... No one is stopping you from showing off and killing as many people as you can, but that was never the point of Hitman games. Here you're asked to be a sophisticated and elegant wind of death. Brrrr....

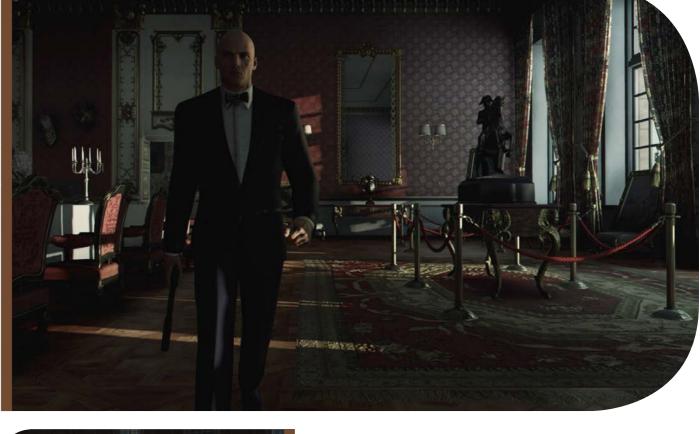
The longer you look around the level and listen to other characters' conversations, the more you'll see all the opportunities you can use to achieve your goal. Many windows of opportunities will reveal and disappear before Agent 42, and that's what makes this game not only fun, but replay-worthy. Even though you only have one level, you are certainly going to play it at least a few times again, if only to try and reach your goal in a faster, more efficient or fun way.

From the very beginning of the series, Hitman was guided by the phrase "The suit makes a man". Therefore, here you'll need

appropriate suits to disguise yourself and easily infiltrate certain, otherwise off limits, locations. But don't be fooled into believing that you'll always manage to outsmart your enemies this way. An assassin's way is a way of disguises, sneaking around and using the environment, all to be able to move as stealthily as possible, and reach your goal. If it were all that easy, Agent 42 wouldn't go bald from anguish.

If we put this game side by side with its predecessor Hitman: Absolution, graphicswise, unless you try very hard, you won't be able to tell there's any difference at all. Even though this isn't a big minus, a lot of this new sequel's faults lie in its technical incompleteness when it comes to game mechanics. You'll often complete a mission thanks to the stupefied AI that can't see you before him. At the same time, you'll







have to tackle a number of bugs that will sometime make the mission too easy, and sometimes make it hard as hell. With all this in consideration, we can't help but feel that the new Hitman is something already seen too many times to enthuse us the properly.

On the other hand, the possibility to immerse yourself into the intricacy of the level, which when combined with the "Contract" missions may distract you from the main goal for quite some time, certainly suggests that Hitman has a lot to offer. Additionally, you can create the "Contract" missions yourself, which definitely places the classic Hitman sandbox gameplay to the forefront.

Whether all of the episodes of the new Hitman game will be "The Magnificent Seven" or "The Seven Dwarves", remains to be seen. In any case, there's no doubt that they will have something to offer, even to players who aren't the hardcore fans of the series. But we won't even mention the hardcore fans, who welcome any form of continuation of

the Hitman saga. The recognizable style and charm are still there, well blended music and the tense atmosphere of the intruder in the open. Don't let the game pull you out of its carefully built atmosphere with its many bugs, and there's no doubt you'll have a lot

of fun. Otherwise, you'll probably end up as a disinterested child who can't even count to seven vet.

RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:



GAME PROVIDED COMPUTERLAND



"THE ROAD OF A HIRED KILLER IS FILLED WITH DISGUISING, SNEAKING, AND USING YOUR SURROUNDINGS"









The rest of the newcomers are licensed movie characters. If you were thrilled to have Freddy Krueger in MK9, you'll probably faint when you hear that now you can play as Alien, Predator, Jason Voorhees and Leatherface. In true MK style - only horror movie characters were included. And they really fit well with the rest of the fighters, something we were suspicious about when NetherRealm started announcing DLC packs. Of course, each has three variations, but no alternative skins, i.e. none of the eight DLC characters has any, which we don't mind, but getting MKX, because it's a great package is a missed opportunity.

Mortal Kombat XL is still that good fighting game we played last year, with no drastic

changes except for the mentioned new characters and cosmetics, and of course with all the patches and fixes that were introduced over the last year. Essentially, it's what is sometimes called "GOTY Edition", or "Complete - oops, "Komplete". This version is meant for those that still didn't get MKX, while it might be too pricey for active players (luckily, you can buy the upgrade for half the price), and is a meaningless purchase for those who kept up with the DLCs. Even in this XL edition, we still recommend that will provide you with tens of hours of brutal fun, however only on consoles since NetherRealm completely neglected the PC version. Namely, the PC version of MKX is

listed as "non-existent" because the studio officially gave up supporting this version of the game, and therefore neither the second pack of characters, nor the netcode patch saw the light of day on Steam.



GAME PROVIDED BY CD MEDIA



PLATFORMS: PS4. XONE

PUBLISHED BY: Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment

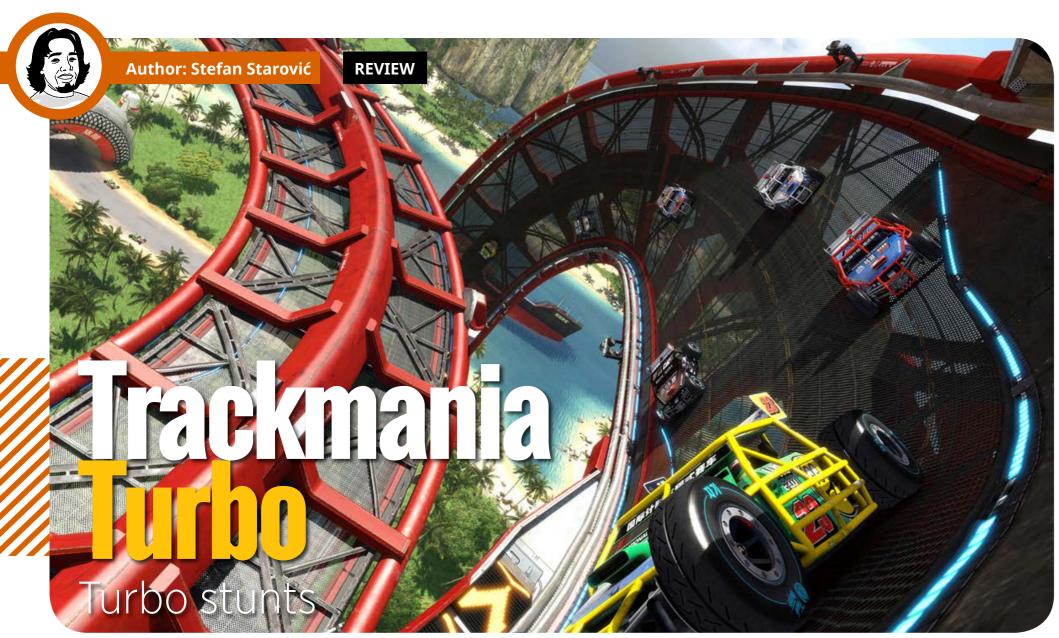
DEVELOPED BY:

TESTED ON:

RATING (3)

- Improved netcode
- Famous movie characters
- Besides characters, nothing's really new
- Abandoned PC version





adeo has a long history with Trackmania titles, and while some of them were successful, others were complete failures, like they were trying to find "their place under the sun" for years. They finally gave up on that, and thankfully turned to what they know best and what was the most logical solution for them - they used the "essence" of what makes Trackmania fun, then upgraded and published it.

And so Trackmania Turbo was created, a title that confirms that Nadeo discarded all "bells and whistles" and desire to be something it's not, and they published the best classic race of player against time, or other players' records. Time is constantly against you and



that is what Turbo is going for. The game doesn't try to please everyone anymore, and therefore not everyone will like it.

The good old race is divided into four segments: Canyon Drift, Valley Down and Dirty, Rollercoaster Lagoon and International Stadium. They are more or less the same, apart from the surroundings and the types of vehicles you control. Sometimes it's carting cars, sometimes it's buddies, and sometimes it's Formula 1 cars, or something resembling them. And the well known motives of Trackmania are back - crazy tracks created by the wackiest minds at Nadeo, divided into categories of different difficulties. All of them have their own wiles, curves, unpredictable segments and lots, and lots of fun.

The campaign has a total of five leagues, each having ten events divided onto different tracks, so you have to complete a total of 200 tracks to complete them all. Someone thought it was a good idea to add on an extra lap on the final track of each segment, which will be especially frustrating if you're after the best score. As if it weren't enough

to drive over a 1 minute track all over again, imagine what it's like on 3 or 5 minute tracks.

The driving itself is demanding, but fair, in keeping with Trackmania tradition. That means that you can certainly achieve the best score if you practice the map, but sometimes you can do it with some luck. But luck probably comes along once in a hundred re-runs of the same track, while knowledge and experience give you the best chance to constantly improve your score. Even the unpredictable parts of the track can be "tamed" over time, which is definitely one of Trackmania's advantages -there is always a chance to improve and overcome some seemingly impossible obstacle.

Beside the solo mode in which you progress through all tracks on your own, multiplayer is a much more interesting mode, especially in split screen, a.k.a. Hot Seat. Multiplayer clashes allow you to play with a vast number of other players worldwide,

ability to know who you're playing against, cheer for your favorites and compete between each other. In case you're not especially competitive, Trackmania offers a large number of fun modes you can try out, among which Double Driver is especially interesting - a mode that gives



but only local multiplayer gives you the

you the option to have one player control

"DRIVING IS DEMANDING, BUT FAIR" the acceleration and the other to turn left or

right. It demands coordination but also leads to hours upon hours of good fun.

Of course, when you get bored of tracks Nadeo has to offer, you may try some of the hundreds (and there will certainly be thousands) created by other players. You may try creating a track yourself, using a track creation tool that even features a "random" mode. It's important to state that you don't have to worry about unusable tracks being published in this manner before they are accepted all tracks must pass through player validation.

Visually, Trackmania Turbo is "previous generation" to a fault. If you're looking for awesome graphics, good effects and textures, you won't be able to find them here, but in that case Trackmania isn't a game for

> you. The more pressing issue is that Nadeo can't seem to fulfill the full potential of Trackmania, and that clock is ticking. When the game first appeared, it was something new and fresh, so not fulfilling it was something that could have been overlooked. This is furthered by the fact that tracks begin to look alike after playing for a while, and this raises the question of how long will Turbo remain interesting to the players.

But besides that, the latest Trackmania is a game that belongs in the budget end of gaming, so in that regard there isn't much to reproach them for. It offers enough entertainment for

RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:





PLATFORMS: **DEVELOPED BY:**

PC, PS4, XONE **PUBLISHED BY:**

PRICE:

TESTED ON:

RATING

Fun, especially in multiplayer

Going back to the roots and what made Trackmania good

Unfulfilled potential

It can become monotonous and generic over time

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excellent Titan Quest, the recipe for a great aRPG is more than simple: go to all forums that gather fans of the genre, go to Reddit, gather the core from defunct Iron Lore Entertainment, inspire them with the soul of Diablo, pepper with elements from the novels of legendary authors such as Lovecraft, Barker and King, and invest every last dime gathered through various crowdfunding campaigns. Ladies and gentleman, what we have before us is the spiritual successor to Diablo II - Grim Dawn.

By its very name the game points to the kind of world your character is going to inhabit. The character creation seems woefully simple at first glance. Grim Dawn let's you choose the level of difficulty and if you're a male or a female... and that's it. There are no additional options, no appearance customization, no

beauty of this game. Your character starts out as one of the "possessed" by mystical Aethers who, together with Ct'Thon's (C'Tun perhaps?) demons, are responsible for the post-apocalyptic surroundings with barely any people left, and those that have survived are absolutely paranoid. You'll be intimately introduced to how true that is, by starting the game strung high up from a tree with a rope around your neck. Luckily for you, the Aether who possessed you leaves your body, and the inhabitants of Devil's Crossing give you another chance, in the form of a sword and a shield, and a "plea" to redeem yourself in

You'll spend most of the game's beginning wielding all sorts of base weapons which are available to all classes. Classes? What classes? Although you start the game as nobody who was literally just scooped from

levels you'll unlock bonus points that you can invest into one of the six basic classes: Soldier, Demolitionist, Occultist, Nightblade, Arcanist and Shaman. Hitting level ten opens up the possibility of choosing a secondary class, which further influences the variety and number of ways to play Grim Dawn. The guys from Crate Entertainment made sure that wasn't all though, so the progression is complemented by the Devotion system, which reminds us of a simpler version of Path of Exile's skill system. Devotion system functions based on Devotion points which you collect by finding and interacting with various shrines that are scattered all over the world of Grim Dawn, and which you can invest into different "constellations" that provide additional bonuses if you completely unlock them. Finally, this great system features Spirit Guides who you will encounter from time to time, and who

"THE GAME WORLD IS FILLED WITH VARIOUS FACTIONS THAT PROVIDE YOU WITH VARIOUS BENEFITS"

without penalty, allowing you to try out different builds and combinations.

Each class is different, and Grim Dawn doesn't even allow you to think otherwise when it comes to gameplay, as well as with audio/visual representation. Casting spells and keeping the distance as an Arcanist is miles different than the reckless charging approach of the Soldier, who plows into the enemies with abandon, followed by them flying everywhere after the collision and a loud "boooom"

the story is mainly done through finding different journals which are scattered all over the world, so the player can choose to simply destroy all plant, animal and monstrous life forms, if he so chooses. Moreover, the world of Grim Dawn is populated by different factions that the player can gain reputation

with, and depending on their standing can reap various benefits, such as an offer of excellent gear, or an opportunity to encounter more difficult opponents, which includes Nemesis'. You'll be thrilled when you meet one, believe me *muahahahahaha*.

Excellent graphics, excellent sound, beautiful effects, efficient combat system, elegant

game progression system, huge variety of enemies and regions - certainly a "must have" for anyone itching for some Diablo II action, and we trust there are quite a few of



"THE CHANCE TO CHOOSE A

ON LEVEL TEN "

SECONDARY CLASS OPENS UP

more than well enough. Just like every hack'n'slash aRPG to date, Grim Dawn drowns you in unrealistically huge droves of enemies from the get go, who then drop tons of different items, equipment, armor and weapons. More enemies slain means higher level of your character and better equipment, which then leads to RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION: more difficult regions patrolled by even tougher enemies who drop even better loot, ad nauseam. On the other hand, learning HDD: 5 GB



GAME PROVIDED BY CRATE **ENTERTAINMENT**

PLATFORM:

PRICE:

PUBLISHED BY:

DEVELOPED BY: TESTED ON:

RATING

Appealing to all senses

Excellent combat and leveling

Sporadic stuttering for no apparent reason





hat to do when you're 25 years old, have a meaningless job in a huge corporation and you don't feel alive or fulfilled with your life? According to Stardew Valley, going

to the countryside is the perfect solution! Your character receives a letter from his late grandfather begging him to take over the farm in a rural village called Pelican Town, which he accepts with pleasure.

Describing a game like Stardew Valley is really difficult. At first glance it seems like a mixture of Harvest Moon and Animal Crossing, but if you scratch the surface a bit, you'll discover that here's much more to this game than being just a farm-life simulator. From the very beginning, you're going to be overwhelmed with the number of option you have on how to spend your day. You can plant, fertilise and water your garden, collect honey and maple syrup, make cheese and jam, or spend the day fishing or even killing creeps in the local mine. The activities are divided into different categories such as mining, gathering, gardening, fishing etc,

and by doing each of those you will slowly gain skill points in that category which will make you more efficient or unlock new recipes. The only two limiting factors are stamina and the in-game day's duration, which is about 15-20 minutes in real time. Every action you do, whether it is cutting down a tree or digging, uses up stamina and you may refill it by eating, drinking, or visiting spas that are so elegantly hidden that the author first saw one 6 hours into the game, or sleeping in a bed. Sleeping automatically saves your progress, and it's the only way to save your game, and it moves the in-game date one day forward. The game itself is divided into four seasons that each last for about thirty days and each has its benefits and limiting factors. For example, summer is an excellent time to grow blueberries while you can use winter to turn them into jam, considering nothing

The whole system of farming and other actions is complex by itself, but it's not the only thing Stardew Valley has to offer. After you've gotten the hang of things in first

few days, and learn how to do all necessary things without passing out from stamina loss, you may choose to go exploring Pelican Town and its surroundings. The town is scattered, maybe a bit more than it was really needed, and is inhabited by about 20 people and children. Every character you come across has their own habits, needs, wishes and routines, and before you know it you'll catch yourself thinking how Robyn isn't at her store on Monday because she's working out with her girlfriends, and that Abigail likes to spend her Wednesdays looking at the river from the northern bridge. You can make friends with the characters, and with some, even take the next step which leads to marriage, kids, divorce and the unavoidable loss of half of your hardearned belongings. Ok, ok, we're joking about the divorce and court settlement.

What's really impressive is that the whole game is a project of one single person. Yes, your read it right - Stardew Valley is completely done by one Eric Barone, who spent a few years of his life creating all graphic elements, sounds, and thousands

and thousands of lines of code that brought this game to life. What's even more impressive is that Eric responds to every bug report and tirelessly keeps polishing the game so much that he published four patches within first five days. That doesn't mean that Stardew Valley was buggy - all bugs were minor and you could play for tens of hours without encountering one, but it says a lot about how the author, beside his time, put his heart and soul into this game. Maybe that's why Stardew Valley caused such uproar, that pirate sites were filled with people who claim that they bought the game after trying out the downloaded version of it and advise other visitors to do the same.

"FROM THE VERY BEGINNING YOU'LL

BE OVERWHELMED BY OPTIONS AND

POSSIBILITES ON HOW TO SPEND A DAY"

If the phrase "just one more turn" became the trademark of one of the best series of PC games, Civilisation - Stardew Valley will certainly become famous for "just one more day" syndrome. It doesn't happen often that a one-man project has this much impact on the gaming community, and we hope Eric Barone will delight us with more games.

"THE WHOLE GAME WAS A PROJECT OF A SINGLE PERSON -ERIC BARONE" To put it simply, Stardew Valley is worth every penny!

RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:
OS: Windows 7
CPU: Core 2 Duo E4400 2.0GHz
GPU: GeForce GT 340 / Radeon X1900 GT

STARĎEW VALLEY

PLATFORM:
PC

PUBLISHED BY:
Chucklefish

PRICE:
13€

DEVELOPED BY:
Concerned Ape

TESTED ON:
PC

TESTED ON:
PC

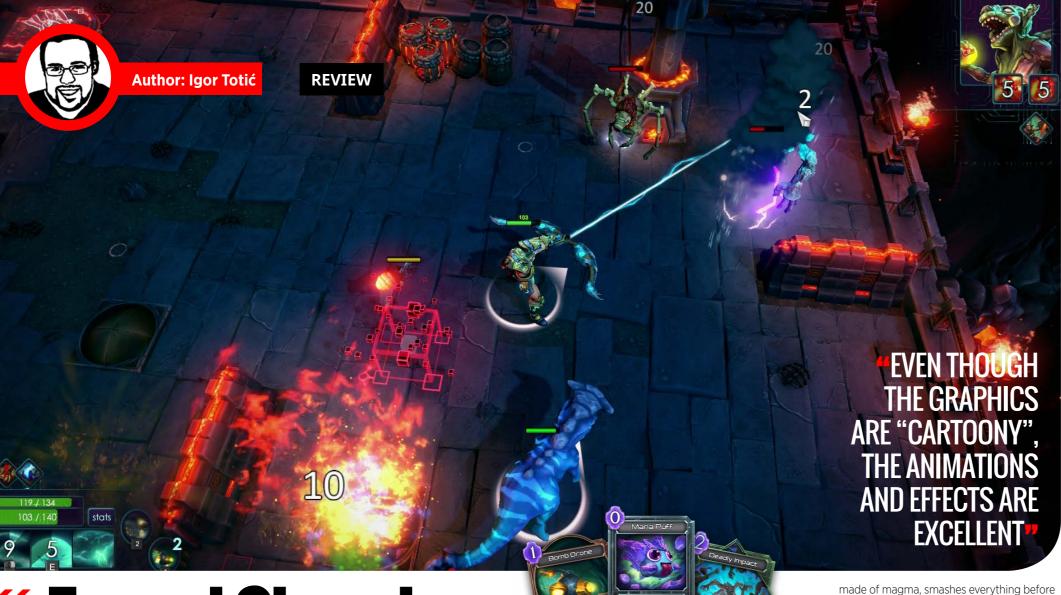
An extensive and above all interesting game

Well thought-out concept with an even better execution

Pelican Town is more scattered than it needed to be, so walking can become tedious

"STARDEW VALLEY WILL REMAIN KNOWN FOR "JUST ONE MORE DAY" SYNDROME"

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Forced Showdown

A forced showdown for a lone player

ately, one of the major controversies has been the cutting of games to just single or just multiplayer. This topic was commentated on by various critics, players and journalists, and everyone has an opinion on it, whether they're for or against it. For the rest of this article I'll be whining about how much this game needs multiplayer.

Forced Showdown is not the most original game in the world. Most of the game's elements were seen before. A twin-stick brawler with simple controls and card-playing elements is everything but an original idea.

"A GAME LIKE THIS NEEDS TO HAVE MULTIPLAYER"

So why can't I stop playing it? The perfect dose of humor with graphics that resemble a cartoon and constant action can keep a player captivated for hours on end... but there's no multiplayer.

The game's story is that there's a galactic tournament which brings fighters from throughout the universe together to brutally fight against arena champions and their expendable subjects. The plot is certainly not a new Mass Effect, but it at least introduces the player to the reason why they should slaughter everything that shines red. Whole "tournament" is followed by an Al

commentator called C-SAR or Caesar, who's witty and creates the atmosphere of a sports event well enough. My objection to this guy is that he doesn't commentate during the matches, like

for example, in the game MadWorld and of course, that there's NO multiplayer.

Each of the four heroes that are available in the game, and who you have to unlock through various quests which are actually achievements, has simple mechanics that can be tactical and more complicated when combined with the cards that we'll talk about later on. Heroes have a basic and special (left and right click) attack and two spells that are activated on E and R. In addition to these controls, cards offer items that you can activate during the game and they consist of additional comrades, bombs and so on. First champion offered, Squire of Light, is a mixture of mage and paladin. He is awesome for beginners and for getting the feel of game. The next one is a four-armed alien whose claws tear everything in sight. The third champion is the archer Stormbringer who I didn't like very much because isn't very original compared to any other archer definitely my favorite, is Volco. This knight

him with his fiery hammer. From an excellent basic attack, to a "spin-to-win" whirl, he can never get boring, especially when combined with good cards. Although diverse, just four champions aren't enough for this game... which has NO multiplayer.

Arenas that you fight in are small but detailed. Most consist of small mazes populated by a handful of enemies and your goal is to kill them all. Around the arena are the hovering stands in which the audience is seated and that creates that sports atmosphere, but slightly larger arenas would've left a much better impression. Each main arena must be unlocked by completing two smaller ones which have some kind of modifier. For example, you fight in an arena where you get an extra card at the start or where you get three mana per round, or you and your opponent begin with half health and then you heal yourself by using any card. These various modifiers are fun and varied, but also challenging and difficult. By completing each arena, you collect the points that you can spend on upgrading your champion's permanent passive traits such as increased health, additional mana in the first round, increased damage and so on. Each "tournament" consists of eight arenas and you fight the last battle against the boss of that arena. Depending on the championship (and

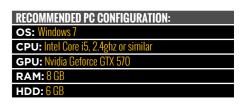
by bosses ranging from small trolls in huge mechanical monstrosities similar to those used by the Orks of Warhammer 40k universe, to various elementals that are hurling rocks and natural disasters at you. In these situations, the player's required to move well, avoid magic, and wait for the perfect opportunity to attack, and this is best reflected in the multiplayer that the game offers....oh, right.

The card system in this game is similar to

Hearthstone. Every champion has a starter deck of 30 cards. The deck can have two of the same card, and each costs mana. Since each arena has eight rounds, each round you get a single mana point. You start the arena with four cards which you can replace only at the start of the first arena, and after that all you can do is pray to RNGeesus. The cards are either passive improvements to your character, or the cards that are spent by activation. By completing each arena, you draw a new card and repeat the process for eight rounds. The health of your hero doesn't regenerate after each arena, so you have to be lucky to draw a healing card, or you'll just have to rely on your skills to avoid enemies and use "hit and run" tactics. The arena boss also has a deck that he'll use against you until you reach him. This is another flaw of not having a multiplayer, because these mechanics could have been used to play quasi-Dungeon Keeper with online players. Imagine a situation where you enter the arena and the other player plays a card that duplicates all of the enemies or crates various obstacles to disturb your progress. Not to mention the co-op where two players can clean out the arena while the other two play cards to prevent them, so that in the final arena they can face them two on two and decide who's the winner. Have you imagined it? Well, unfortunately, there's nothing like it and it's sorely missing.

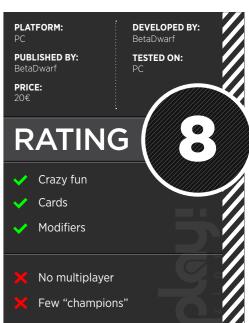
Forced Showdown is a game that I'll be happy to return to and I want it to get better in all aspects. I think that the development team has made an interesting concept - seen before, but polished. The graphic are nothing special, and quite reminiscent of Torchlight and similar games that use "cartoon" and you can feel the response of impacts from every champion, and subconsciously learn how to act in various situations, whether you go head-on, or in my case hammer-on, or strategically place and use each arena's traps against the enemies. Cards add depth to the game and they turn the twin-stick shooter into a game in which you have to think before each arena. I don't think I mentioned it before, but this game lacks multiplayer and if it gets implemented in the future, this game will be on my Steam Favorites list.





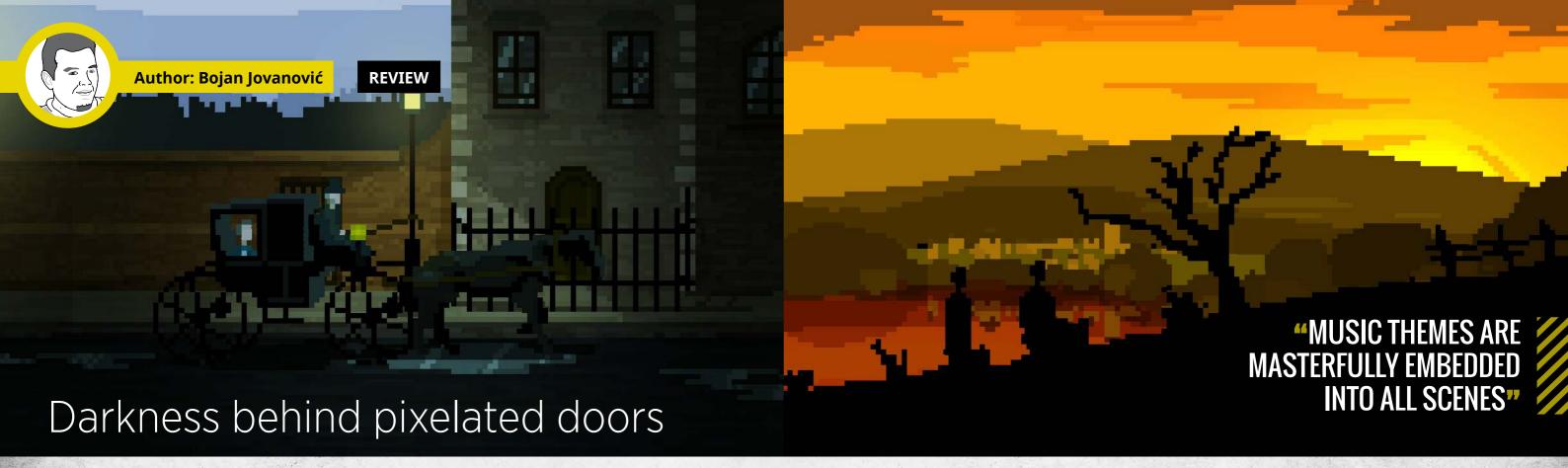






in this kind of games. The last champion, and

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The Last Door: Season 2

bout half a decade ago the horror genre was resuscitated, mostly thanks to Frictional Games, had shifted towards the more "substantial" horror with monsters and general panic

while you run in the dark. And there's nothing wrong with that. But sometimes horror doesn't have to be first-person, although the community's interests doesn't monsters jumping at you, and not even to be in high resolution. Sometimes, all that's required to make us turn on all the

lights around the house are a skilled writer and sound designer. Sometimes, all that's required is a game like Last Door.

First of all, we have to mention that, like with any "Season 2" game, you need to be acquainted with the story from the previous part to gain the full picture of the events. So, take a break and play the first season. Done? Good, let's proceed. The second season of Last Door casts you in the role of Jon Wakefield, the protagonist psychiatrist from Season 1 who disappeared somewhere in Victorian England, and is a direct continuation of the original game. Jon is resolved to find his client, and the road will lead him through a network of mysteries, cults, conspiracies, and teetering on the brink of madness. From the psychiatric institution on one end of the city, to dreary streets and opium dens, you will unravel the story over four episodes in a classic



THERE'S ENOUGH EDGAR ALAN POE AND H.P. LOVECRAFT TO SATIATE EVEN THE BIGGEST HORROR CONNOISSEURS"



point&click manner, with enough Edgar Alan Poe and H.P. Lovecraft to satiate even the biggest horror connoisseurs. The game features an inventory, item combining and other P&C hallmarks, but they are never designed to get you stuck. Perhaps some might fault the game for its slightly lower challenge difficulty ceiling, but it's something we commend it for because it avoids artificial obstacles and therefore allows the story to develop naturally.

At first glance (and second, third and fiftieth), the game doesn't seem like some spectacle. Trust us, it doesn't have to. Even if the shapes aren't very clear, it's more than well suggested what sort of horrors you're experiencing. In charge of hair-raising is actually the audio, which is masterfully interwoven with music themes. You'll be aware that you're somewhere you shouldn't. be as soon as you step there and the

soundtrack hums menacingly. As with every horror, this is a game that you have to play by yourself, with headphones or surround sound, and a clear path to the nearest light switch in case of panic. We are only sorry that this season as well lacks any sort of voice acting or at least narration, because the texts truly deserve to be dramatically read out in a raspy baritone. Also, if you decide to buy the game on Steam or GoG, you will receive the Collector's Edition that includes a few additional scenes and the soundtrack, ready to keep you company in those nights when there are no street lights and the branches of the nearby trees scrape against your windows.

Don't be dissuaded by the game's looks. Although the number of pixels on the screen rarely exceeds the one we saw on Commodore 64, the atmosphere built by the story and sound will freeze your blood as you click on, revealing more and more creepy bits of this Lovecraftian puzzle. While you're playing it alone in the dark, you'll want to think hard if you dare to open that last door and see what they hide. We recommend that you at least take a peek

through the keyhole. RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:



GAME PROVIDED BY PHOENIX ONLINE PUBLISHING

PLATFORM: **DEVELOPED BY: PUBLISHED BY: TESTED ON:**

RATING

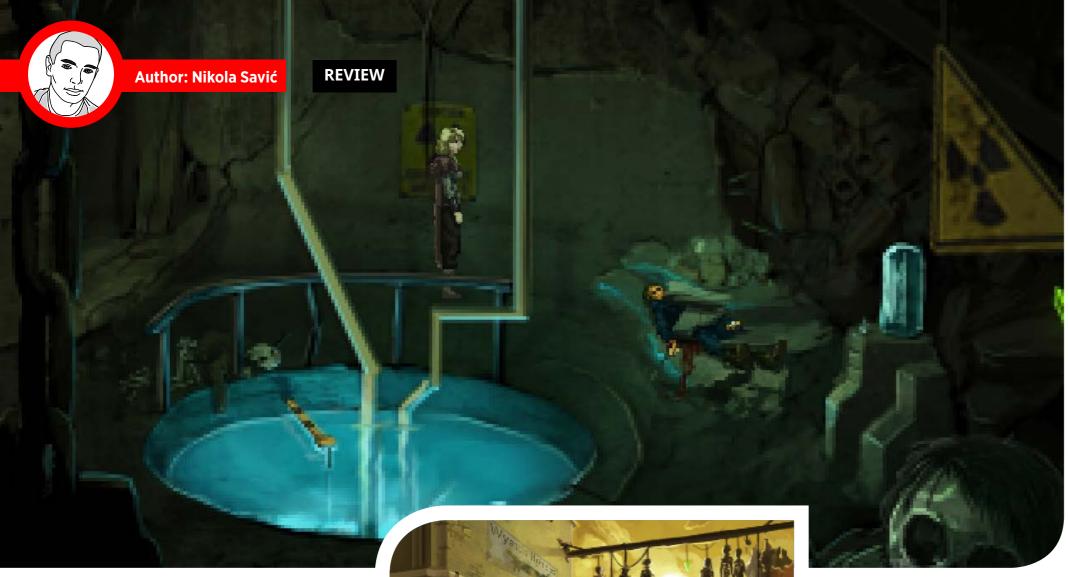
Truly creepy story

Blood-chilling sound

The pixelated graphics aren't for everyone

No narration... again





Shardlight
The apocalypse is colored green

he last game we talked about from our favorite retro P&C adventurists, the Wadjet Eye studio, was Technobabylon, which was about a false utopian future in a cyberpunk setting, and now Wadjet Eye tests the waters of dystopian post-apocalypse, balancing between chaos and autocratic rule of the minority, the choice doesn't look good.

First of all, we must remark that Wadjet Eye surprises us again and again with design and visual presentation of their games, especially within a "cramped" design space that comes with their style. In case you're not familiar, most of their games are made in Adventure Game Studio, a special tool for making retro pixelated P&C adventures. Armed with this tool they published 16 great titles so far and they all

stand out with their unique visual identity, and by that we don't mean just the pixel graphics.

In Shardlight the dominant colors are dark green, vellow and brown, which create an atmosphere of waste, disease and overall decay, exactly what we'd expect in a world almost completely destroyed in a nuclear war. The locations are mainly abandoned town districts, and objects that are now repurposed compared for what their use was during their "original" existence.

But this isn't a Fallout/Mad Max type of post apocalypse. Here we have a world with some kind of structure and a state that somewhat functions, but it's ruled by people who see themselves as new aristocrats and their primary goal is maintaining their own

needs opposed to the needs of "simple commoners". They call themselves by ancient Roman names and dress in the fashion of 17th century French aristocracy. A very trippy bunch, as we can see. To make things worse, there's a mysterious disease called "green lungs" which can't be cured, but only temporarily dealt with using a vaccine. Naturally, for the commoners the vaccine is practically impossible to acquire, while the "aristocrats" have easy access to it.

This is where we come to our heroine, Amy Wellard. At the start, we go to a so called "lottery job", which is a name for dangerous jobs that the aristocrats give commoners in exchange for a lottery ticket which gives them a chance to win a vaccine, given through daily lottery. Not much of a profit,

but when you're terminally ill it's all you have. During that job she meets a dying man who connects her to a much larger net of events on the outcome of which depends the destiny of the entire state.

The story is compellingly written and intriguing enough to make you play it to the end, but it somehow seems to have failed to be as convincing as some of the former games Wadjet Eye brought us. It's possible that this is because, unlike in many of earlier titles, here we only play in the role of one character, and somehow we aren't too sure about what her main motives are the entire time. Is it her friends, or the desire to be healthy again, or some greater good? The game also seems to have too many plot twists and somehow the story doesn't quite flow as you'd expect.

Things that are supposed to be twists actually fit expectedly and normally into the story. Also, you have very little influence on the story while playing and the only real decisions are the ones we make at the very end of the game. Still, even if it may seem that we're criticizing the story, it's actually very adequate scenario, and which is maybe reminiscent of a lighter version of Orvel's "1984". The gameplay is standard for the P&C genre, and generally for the games brought to us by

and deals with a real (although a bit stylishly

which communities might end up in a similar

painted for "artistic" purposes) situation in

Wadjet Eye. You can use the map to travel to various locations in the city (and they unlock and lock based on how far you are in the story), communicate with NPCs and collect items. Items are used in mutual interactions or in interactions with the surroundings. The puzzles are difficult enough, but not too difficult, and it may happen that you get stuck for just long enough to stop the session there and solve the puzzle quickly with a clear mind once you come back. The game has the unavoidable problem of "pixel hunting", so click on everything that seems like it might be useful. The left click is interaction and the right is the description click, i.e. Amy provides a comment. And Amy has a lot to say about a whole spectrum of things, and as a pedant thorough gamer, I patiently listened to all of her commentary. They mostly have a fun and descriptive role, but careful listeners may often get a hint for solving some puzzles through them.

We already talked about the graphics in the beginning of the article, the standard 2D extremely pixelated design that while giving the game a nostalgic retro feel, really looks amazing and atmospheric. They finally solved the problems with the text which is now a bit less pixelated compared to the rest of the game, and which makes it easier to read now. The music is great and it organically blends with the depressed and hopeless atmosphere of the deserted city ruins. It seems that every scene in the game has music written specially for it and it makes every location even more unique. The voice acting in the game is ok - it

goes from average (the main actress, even if alright, somehow seems too out of context in some situations) to really great, like the main villain Tiberius or the Reaper cult's spokesman in the city market.

We completed the game in 10-11 hours and really enjoyed it. Wadjet Eye fans have probably already played it themselves, and for those of you that haven't come across their games before, this is a great opportunity

to fall in love with them. RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION: **GAME PROVIDED** BY WADJET EYE **GAMES**

"THE GAME'S PLOT IS TAKING PLACE IN A POST-APOCALYPTIC DYSTOPIA, 20 YEARS AFTER "THE HIT"



Atmosphere and proven style

Excellent music, each scene has its unique piece

Puzzles might be a bit easier than we're used to in Wadjet Eye games

It's been a while since Wadjet Eye provided something innovative in . gameplay

"WADJET EYE GAMES IS A STUDIO MOST WELL KNOWN FOR RETRO P&C ADVENTURES"

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"SOMEWHERE BETWEEN METAPHOR AND ABSTRACTION, THE GAME'S TRYING TO SEND US A SERIOUS MESSAGE TOO"



hat do you need to fly off into space? A bathtub, a stool, two handles for steering, the top of a plastic bottle (sealed with a cork) - all of this makes one space cabin - a cockpit, which only needs to be placed upon a puffball mushroom and your space adventure can begin! At least that's what it's like in Samorost 3, brought to us by the creators of famous Machinarium and the phenomenal Botanicula. Once again, the developer studio Amanita Design made an effort to take us on an interesting journey.

You might have noticed the number 3 in the game's title, however you may disregard it since Samorost 3 is the first complete game, whose predecessors in comparison seem like concept projects made in Flash. "Third time's

the charm" brings us an awesome point and click adventure that doesn't require you to be familiar with the first two parts to fully enjoy it, and if you wish to play them anyway you can find them for free on the developer's website.

The first thing Samorost is going to amaze you with are the beautiful graphics, which teeters somewhere on the brink between graphical art and a real photography. This kind of a graphic style with an excellent music background provides a unique flavor and atmosphere to the game, while the sound effects additionally enhance that feeling throughout the game. We'd like to say that the sound effects have a very high quality to them and they are a central part of the game, considering that the game is

very melodic, which is already obvious at the beginning of this adventure.

You take on the role of a small gnome who lives carefree on his planetoid, floating through space in the company of his faithful dog. One day a small trumpet falls into your yard from the sky. You quickly realize that you can use it to listen to various objects in nature, and to collect "melodies" of different things and events, and often you can "return" the melody back with it, which in return may cause a certain reaction or reveal a part of the unraveling story through animations as you progress through the game. We won't reveal a lot about the story itself because there are small elements of surprise that are worth keeping secret, but the starting story is more or less ordinary

"THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM" BRINGS US AN AWESOME POINT & CLICK ADVENTURE THAT DOESN'T REQUIRE YOU TO BE FAMILIAR WITH THE FIRST TWO PARTS TO FULLY ENJOY IT"

and seen before, where your universe is threatened by a giant space squid that emerged from a black hole somewhere deep in space (did someone mention Lovecraft?) and devours every world in its path. Of course, you understand that it's up to you to try and stop that.

Your journey begins by finding parts and assembling the spaceship, a part of which we described at the start of this article. During your journey you'll visit wide variety of different planetoids traveling on their trajectories through this fantasy cosmos. The process of moving from planetoid to planetoid follows an interestingly concept of using mutual orbits. This prevents you from instantly going from the first to the last world. Instead, you have to use smaller intermediary planetoids that are orbiting near other planetoids - the worlds that you need to visit. On some you'll need to do a few simple operations before you move back to the main journey map, while on others you may have to change the planetoid's trajectory by solving puzzles in order to get it closer to the next planetoid you plan

in its visual style and the flora and fauna you'll encounter, and it really adds to the overall feel of travelling through space and discovering various interesting worlds. The puzzles aren't difficult; you'll mostly

be able to solve them by spontaneously exploring and interacting with objects and creatures you come across with occasional combining of objects from your inventory. A sudden increase in puzzle difficulty can be somewhat of a problem, because you'll be required to think in an exact way the designer had in mind, and it isn't suggested or presented in any way. Here the game relies on its internal hint system, which is a small puzzle in itself, and that's a very interesting innovation in the genre. It won't tell you how exactly to solve the puzzle, but it will point you to the right direction, that is, it will present what's expected of you, although the game itself was supposed to do that. Along with the main puzzles, the game is filled with lots of side puzzles and solving them may reward you with an interesting scene, an animation and, of course, an achievement. A lot of puzzles are abstract and a bit exotic, but it fits nicely into the beautiful weird universe we are presented with. Somewhere between the metaphor and the abstract, in small hints, the game is trying to send a serious message, and how successful it will be depends only on your desire to find and recognize it.

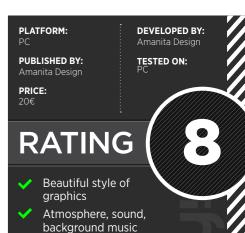
Samorost is a beautiful and cheerful adventure, which will easily grow on you with its charm and take you on a very

interesting journey for a few hours, and after you return you may realize that for a journey through space you don't really need anything more than a mushroom.

RECOMMENDED PC CONFIGURATION:







Some puzzles can be quite unclear

The game relies too much on its "hint" system



Daniel Vávra





WE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE A CHAT WITH DANIEL VÁVRA FROM THE CZECH DEVELOPER, WARHORSE STUDIOS. WE TALKED ABOUT THEIR FOUNDING, THEIR IDEAS, THEIR APPROACH TO GAME DEVELOPMENT, AND THEIR KICKSTARTED MEDIEVAL GAME, KINGDOM **COME: DELIVERANCE.**

HOW WAS THE STUDIO FOUNDED?

Warhorse Studios was founded in the year 2011 by two guys sitting in a pub, which is actually quite a common approach in the Czech Republic for good ideas: The idea was to get a bunch of veteran Czech game developers together, lock themselves in the basement and come out with a unique game that is historically accurate and as realistic as possible. We had to quickly realize that this will be a tough challenge. The two guys sitting in the pub were Creative Director Daniel Vávra and executive producer Martin

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO PORTRAY THE **MEDIEVAL SETTING?**

It has several reasons. One for sure is, that we want to tell the story of our Ancestors. And this is not only Czech history but in fact European history as Bohemia was the "capital" of the Holy Roman Empire. The other reason is that no one ever covered this period before in an RPG, nor you have all these slightly realistic games where you have realistic parts but there's always this slight addition of fantasy elements. We want to tell a story that is really kickass and interesting It was very interesting to research because nearly every event, NPC, building, and natural landscape existed or is still existing today.

FROM TODAY'S PERSPECTIVE: IF YOU WERE **DOING A KICKSTARTER CAMPAIGN AGAIN, WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?**

Looking back now at the Kickstarter we are happy that we decided to take part in the campaign. At that time It was the only possible option to survive as studio and continue following our dream: development

It was a sink or swim situation for us because without the successful funding we would have to close the studio. Luckily we swam and became the 3rd most successful Kickstarter Campaign in 2014. In general Kickstarter is a good thing but it also gives you a special responsibility. Since we are crowdfunded we want to be as close to the Community as possible. That's why we decided to have updated Alpha and Beta versions. We want to show every step in development, show the first drafts of new features and always gather feedback. This is

something we would definitely do again and recommend everyone - get in touch with your community and try to create something awesome together!

DID MOUNT & BLADE SOMEHOW INFLUENCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR GAME AND IF YES. HOW

Of course we are following the success of games like Mount and Blade, Witcher or Skyrim. Of course we are inspired by those gorgeous games. But like in every game development industry we take what we like. we avoid what we dislike and we add what we think is cool. On the other hand we are creating something that wasn't there before - Dungeons & No Dragons, a realistic and historical RPG that is focusing on a strong story and avoiding magic and dragons.

YOU HAVE SET THE GAME IN A REALISTIC **SETTING. WILL WE MAYBE ENCOUNTER SOME HISTORICAL PERSONAS?**

Your assumption is right. The setting of Kingdom Come: Deliverance is based in 1403 South-Bohemia and talks about the Hussite Wars that break out several years later. Nearly every NPC you will meet, at least the important ones, are actual historical characters which will do what they actually did back then. That's also why we have a full time historian in the team. She is double and triple checking every design element in the game and also researching about historical persons. What you can already see is that we talk about struggle between King Wenceslas of Bohemia and King Sigismund of Hungary, both sons of Charles the IV from the house of Luxembourg. But there will be more people you might know from your history lessons at

WHAT WOULD YOU PICK AS THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE GAME, SOMETHING THAT DEFINES THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE OF THE

I think that the most important fact is the fact that we are bringing some long gone era back to life and people will have chance to experience what it's like to live in the 15th century. See our history and that magnificent architecture as it once looked. We are creating a time machine to take everyone 600 years back in time and its damn exciting

Our game is a mix of realistic and kick ass story, full of exciting quests, fun and realistic combat, outstanding graphics and large scale battles! What is there more to wish for?:)

WHAT WAS TOUGHEST OBSTACLE DURING THE **DEVELOPMENT OF THE GAME?**

When we started to work on the game we thought that creating a realistic game is easy since you can take things from real life and just have to transfer it into the game. But we had to quickly realize that it is an even tougher challenge than creating something fictional since you have to come up with reasonable explanations for everything you do. It's even harder if you take in mind that we are first person only, so even the visuals must be outstanding to create the level of immersion we want to achieve. We had to do compromises due to technical reasons. So the biggest challenge for sure is to find the right balance between historical/realism and fun gameplay. That's why our historian and our creative director are in an everyday struggle. But we believe that we found the right balance in Kingdom Come: Deliverance. You can get a glimpse of that in our actual

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO DEVELOP THE GAME IN CRY ENGINE AND NOT FOR EXAMPLE IN UNREAL

In that time we decided that this engine is the best one to bring our vision of an outstanding game to the monitors. Even though we still need to adjust it a lot since the CryEngine was made for first person corridor shooters.

We need daily cycles, dynamic weather changes, hundreds of NPC's, a huge Al system that runs the world etc. etc. But our team is very talented and is always customizing the engine to our needs.

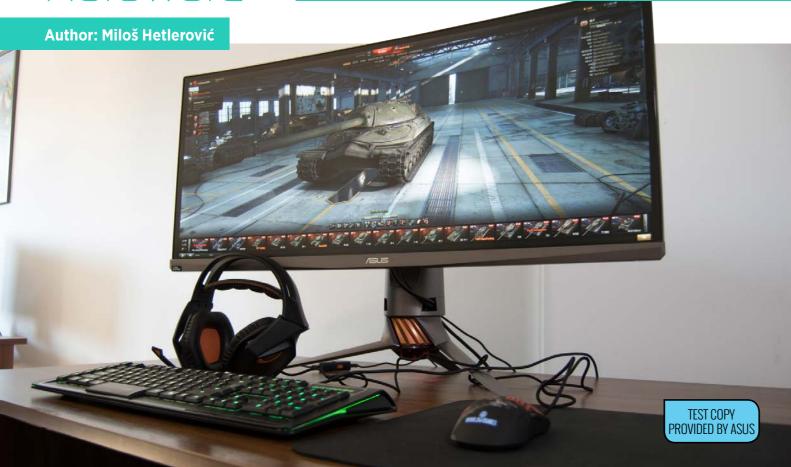
YOU ARE OPTIMIZING THE GAME FOR CONSOLES. **RIGHT? HOW DIFFICULT IS THAT? HAVE YOU** FOUND ANY PROBLEMS IN HARDWARE?

We want to deliver the best experience possible for each platform. Of course we will be making some of the changes due to optimization but still we are focused on producing high-end graphical experiences. Quality is very important for us.

DO YOU HAVE PLANS FOR THE NEXT PROJECT? **SOME NEW THEME OR GENRE?**

When we started developing KC:D we wanted to tell one huge story. We wanted to cover all the Hussite wars. During development we understood that it is not possible to cover this sheer amount of information. We decided to split our game in several parts. KC:D is a first instalment of our story. So prepare for more engaging stories and gameplay experiences from Warhorse studios.





Asus ROG Swift PG348Q

Surrounded by a screen

he gaming monitor market seems to be standing still for a while now when it comes to formats. There is an increase in resolution and refresh rates but the 16:9 aspect ratio remains. Asus got us very intrigued when they introduced a gaming monitor with a new aspect ratio – 21:9. Now that we had PG348Q for a test we can say that a gaming revolution might be on the way.

When I was arranging for a pickup of the monitor the guy from Asus office asked me a simple question – how large is the trunk of your car? What kind of a question is that, I am picking up "just" a monitor? Turns out he was on point with the question because the

box barely fit into my mid-sized car. But that got me even more interested about what's inside!

Opening the box, the first thing I found was the bottom of the stand, a tripod of sorts that is extremely massive and stabile. A vertical pipe that goes on it provides side motion, tilt and height adjustment, a marvelous mechanism. In the end there was the screen – a curved 34" display with 21:9 aspect ratio. Looking at it you get the feeling that somebody has put two standard 24" 16:9 monitors next to each other. But then they got bent a little! The best thing is that the screen is attached and released from the stand by just one click while remaining

"THE RESOLUTION OF 3440X1440 DEMANDS A POWERFUL PC TO RUN GAMES ON IT"

completely stable. I don't know who designed this system but it's a masterpiece of engineering. There is also a cable management solution

so you won't make a mess on the table while connecting a Display-port or HDMI, 4 USB 3.0 devices or headphones to it. The power supply is also dislocated from the screen in a form similar to a laptop charger so you can tuck it away somewhere.

The design is really top notch, although completely oriented towards gamers. It probably wouldn't fit well into an office environment but then again it's not meant to do that. I applaud the fact that apart from the bottom there is no bezel along the screen. This means that you can easily put two or more monitors like this in a row, but that would be a really huge viewing surface. When you turn on the device it projects a Republic of Gamers logo on the surface of the desk which gives a really nice impression. However when you turn it on probably the last thing you will be looking at is the logo.

When you get in front of this screen you get the feeling that it somehow surrounds

"THE 100HZ REFRESH RATE AND G-SYNC ARE THERE TO ENSURE THAT THE IMAGE FLOWS SMOOTHLY"



MODEL:	Asus ROG Swift PG348Q Gaming monitor
SCREEN:	34" curved Ultra-wide 21:9 QHD (3440 x 1440); 100% sRGB; IPS; 5ms response time;
REFRESH RATE:	100 Hz, G-Sync
CONNECTIONS:	Display-port, HDMI, 4xUSB 3.0, 3.5mm headphone jack
EXTRA:	Speakers 2x2W RMS, cable management system, thin bezel

you completely which is really nice because you truly get immersed in what's happening on it. The other thing to note is the huge resolution – at 3440x1440 pixels it's like having a 2560x1440 monitor (a more or less standard resolution for 27" screens nowadays) and you add about a third more to it on the sides. It takes some time getting used to because you start reading internet forums as if you're watching a tennis match, but then you realize that you can easily put two browser windows side-by-side and have enough screen real estate for both. Productivity rises almost as if you had two monitors.

However we were more interested in games - you get more additional space on the sides which can be very noticeable in first and third person shooters - you simply see more. You should also note that not all games support such a resolution so sometimes we got black bars on the side but that should change in the future as the support for ultra-wide screens increases. We had lots of fun when we played multiplayer Rocket League by vertically splitting the screen - it was as if every player got his own separate 4:3 monitor. Also important is to realize how big the resolution actually is - you will need a really powerful computer to run games on it. Our test PC was an i7 processor with a GTX 970 graphics card and less demanding games such as CS:GO or World of Tanks worked just fine. But when we started, for example, Witcher 3 it required lowering a few graphics details in order to run smoothly. Keep in mind that the resolution has 2,5 times more pixels than the standard Full HD. But once you get into the game you forget about the world around you, the experience is surreal.

Adding to the experience are the built-in technologies, foremost being the high

refresh rate. It runs at 60Hz as standard, but using a special overclock button the refresh rate goes up to 100Hz. The idea is to run the monitor at standard 60Hz when working or playing some less fast-paced games and switch to a higher setting when playing action games. If anyone is wondering why they didn't go for a 144Hz refresh rate there is a simple answer: the current Display-port connection standard does not support such a high refresh rate in combination with this resolution. So we will have to wait a bit longer for such a screen. One more important feature is G-Sync technology so you won't get screen tearing when some of the frames are not synchronized between the graphics card and the monitor refresh. But note that you need a Nvidia graphics card in order for this to work.

There are also several Asus proprietary built-in technologies that increase the image quality like GameVisual as well as Ultra-low Blue Light that protects your eyes from harmful blue light. All of these options are controlled through an on-screen menu which is navigated via a very small joystick on the back of the screen.

The price of this monitor is roughly 1.300€ which is very high, but you have to consider what you're getting for your money. This is truly an exceptional monitor, I would dare to say among the best I have ever seen. It's mainly intended for gaming but can also be used for other, even professional, purposes. We can only regret that as conceived at the moment it will probably remain out of reach for most of us gamers but we can hope that the technology will become cheaper and that more will be able to benefit from it. And while some of my colleagues threatened to chain themselves to the screen, others helped me put it back into its huge box, and an occasional weep or a sob could be heard during PG348Q's departure...



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Razer Mamba TE

Most precise mouse

ever!

azer is one of the pioneers of professional gaming gear and, of course, one of the market leaders in the field. Last year saw the refresh of their best mouse - the Mamba. We got to play around with Mamba Tournament Edition which features the best compromise between performance and cost.

Mamba is a mouse that Razer doesn't experiment with - this is simply the most

precise mouse that exists at the moment. With a laser sensor that has the sensitivity of up to 16,000 DPI, this mouse has more than twice the accuracy of some of its closest rivals. If precision is what you're after, this is the best tool out there. Other features of the sensor are also remarkable – it can withstand up to 50G acceleration or 210" of movement per second, which is more than 5 meters in just one swing. The polling rate is 1,000 Hz which is the standard for professional

"THE LASER SENSOR WITH AMAZING 16.000 DPI HAS MORE THAN DOUBLE THE PRECISION OF SOME OF ITS SERIOUS COMPETITORS"

gaming. All in all, if you're looking for the best sensor on the market there's no point in looking any further.

Looking at the mouse itself, it is ergonomically shaped for right hand use, it feels very comfortable and there is no strain even after long gaming sessions. Rubberized pads on the side also contribute to a better grip. This model was also envisioned to be a bit flashy, so you definitely won't go unnoticed while using it in a tournament because of all of the various lighting options it offers. Apart from the mouse wheel and the logo on the back, you can adjust the color and lighting effects along the two lines that stretch across the device. Razer Synapse software lets you control absolutely every detail from color, interval, intensity, color change patterns, up to the option to assign a different color or pattern to about 0,5 cm long strips onto the lines running on the sides. Of course too much of these flashy colors can produce quite annoying effects, but then again there are people who will love these options. You can always turn the lights completely off if you don't like them, or simply choose a moderate color combination

or pattern. You can also synchronize different Razer devices, like headphones, keyboard or a mousepad through the same software, so if you choose a wave color change effect it will seamlessly span across all of the devices.

Speaking of Razer Synapse it can, of course, do much more than just adjust lighting set the DPI levels for on-the-fly changes, program one of the 9 keys on the mouse, adjust acceleration, etc. The software is connected to your online account and all of the settings are stored in the cloud. All you have to do if you change computers is to log in. Something that we would like to see however is the option to change the colors of the mouse depending on the DPI sensitivity level. The DPI sensitivity is displayed on screen, but some games hide it, and this would give a more visual cue. That can possibly be added in some future revision of the software or the firmware of the mouse.

Since we noted that this is the Tournament edition it would be reasonable to compare how it fares against the standard Mamba. The bottom line is that the regular Mamba has a wireless option and this one is connected only via cable. However the Mamba is much more expensive and we all know that people looking for a top performing mouse are generally not inclined towards wireless technology, however advanced it may be. The TE is also missing the Adjustable Click Force technology which allows you to adjust the response of the keys when you press them, but testing this mouse it felt really good and I don't think it needs much more tweaking in that respect. So, our advice is: if you want a

"RAZER MADE AN EFFORT TO MAKE THIS MODEL COLORFUL AND NOTICEABLE FOR TOURNAMENT NEEDS"



top performing gaming mouse you shouldn't waste your money on wireless options, but instead get a more affordable mouse that has all of the key features - Mamba TE.

Maybe this quote from a Speedy Gonzales cartoon best describes the Mamba TE. It is

the fastest and the most precise mouse out there and if that is what you're looking for in a mouse, then you shouldn't look any further. Of course, the Mamba TE doesn't come cheap - it costs around 90€, but it's worth every cent.

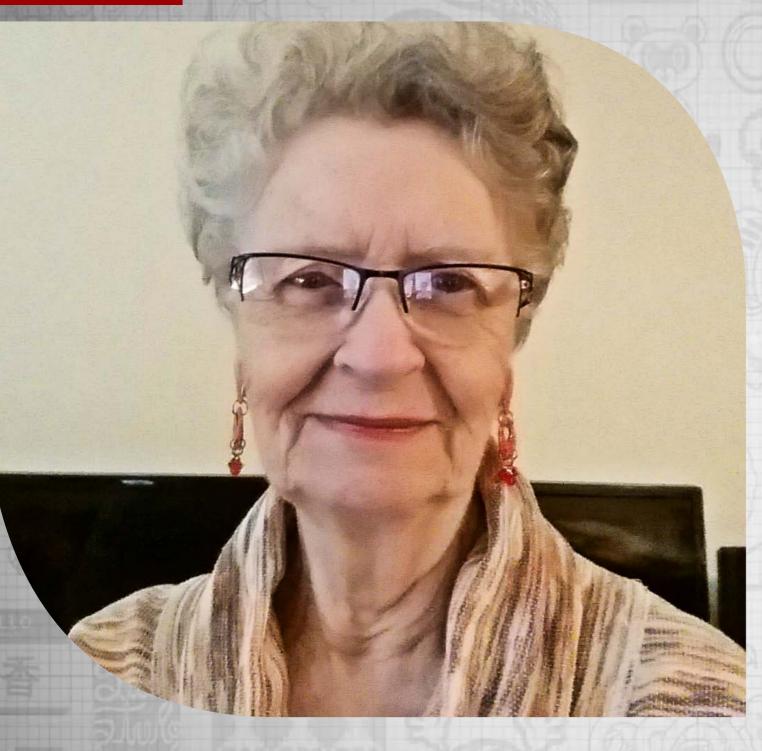


MODEL	Razer Mamba TE
CONNECTION	USB, 1000Hz polling rate
SENSOR	Laser, 16.000 DPI (adjustable)
FEATURES	9 programmable keys, adjustable lighting, Razer Synapse software

"RAZER SYNAPSE SOFTWARE CONNECTS TO YOUR ACCOUNT AND STORES ALL YOUR SETTINGS ON A SERVER"

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Author: Igor Totić



YOUTUBE GAMER Shirey GURRY

WE OFTEN HEAR THAT VIDEO GAMES ARE MEANT FOR CHILDREN AND THE YOUNG. WE OFTEN HEAR THAT THERE'S NOTHING TO LEARN FROM VIDEO GAMES, THAT THEY'RE A WASTE OF TIME, THAT THEY'RE SOMETHING TO OUTGROW. MRS. SHIRLEY CURRY DOESN'T AGREE. SHIRLEY IS A YOUTUBE GAMER WHO CREATES "LET'S PLAY" CONTENT OF HER PLAYING SKYRIM AND ARK. NOW YOU WONDER, WHAT SETS HER APART FROM ANY OTHER YOUTUBER AND WHY WE **CHOSE HER TO BE THE FIRST IN OUT NEW SEGMENT?**

rs. Shirley is 79 years old and has 4 sons. 9 grandchildren and one greatgrandson and almost 120 thousand YouTube subscribers. She has also probably seen more of Skyrim than any of us. We had the honor of asking her a few questions, which led us to believe that gaming knows no age:

WHEN DID YOU START PLAYING VIDEO GAMES AND WHAT MADE YOU LOVE THEM?

In the mid '90's one of my sons gave me a computer and a game (Civilization2) and showed me how to use both. I really loved it and had a lot of fun, and just became addicted to certain types of games.

WHAT OTHER GAMES DO YOU PLAY BESIDES **SKYRIM AND ARK?**

All of the Civiliztion games for years, Banish, older games on disc; Syberia and Amerzone, and a LOT of others. Also I've started several, like Fallout: New Vegas and Fallout 4, The Park, Salt, Stranded Deep, The Solus Project, The Vanishing of Ethan Carter, and a lot of others.

WHAT KIND OF GAME WOULD YOU LIKE TO PLAY IN THE FUTURE?

I don't like space fighting but I do want to play Deliver Us the Moon when it comes out. I really want a space game for exploring... no monsters like the stupid zombies that's in all the games now! Everything seems to have gone to the Apocalypse! I'll be glad when they get off that kick. I want to start Far Cry Primal, The Long Dark, Firewatch. I really want a new Elder Scrolls and have seen teaser footage of Skywind!

DID YOUR YOUTUBE POPULARITY AFFECT YOUR LIFE AT ALL?

YES! It is taking up a lot of my time, and I have to skip other things sometimes, which is sad. I'm very active and I hate to miss meetings and such. But it's funny when someone asks for an autograph, or to sign a napkin, or go "I can't believe you are actually in my store!" It gets funny.

HOW DO YOUR GRANDKIDS RESPOND TO YOUR **CHANNEL?**

They think it's really cool having a "gaming grandma"! lol

DO YOU PLAY WITH YOUR KIDS AND **GRANDKIDS? DO YOU LET THEM WIN?**

No. The two here aren't into that. I'm use to watching sports with my grandson (which is how I spent this past weekend!), and talking 'girlie' stuff with my 16 year old granddaughter. The rest are spread across the states.

DO YOU THINK THERE IS AN AGE BARRIER BETWEEN PEOPLE WHO PLAY VIDEO GAMES?

Of course!! That's why I let people know my age and use my own picture. I've met a lot of older gamers on YT but they hide behind a cartoonish picture or something and never mention age, until they talk to me. So YT doesn't know they are there. Now all the young people think I'm either strange or a liar. front of a TV and just watch stupid stuff They don't even know that actually it's rather

WHY DO YOU THINK YOU'VE GAINED THIS MUCH POPULARITY?

I've been told it's because I have a calming voice and a clean channel and of course because of my age.

WHY DO YOU POST YOUR GAMEPLAY ON **YOUTUBE AND WHY SO OFTEN?**

I had gathered a couple of hundred subscribers just from the comments I make on my favorite gamer's channels. They finally kept asking me to record my own game play because they wanted to see how I play. So I finally did one day just for fun, and all this happened. Now I try to give them two a day because that's what they want. Some of them want "more, more, more" like typical kids do. lol

DO YOU HAVE ANY DIRECT FEEDBACK WITH YOUR VIEWERS/FOLLOWERS?

Sure, constantly, in the comments under each video, every day, etc.

CAN YOU SHARE SOME POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE

The positive is how sweet and caring most everyone is! I love to read and answer comments. The negative is the nasties that comment to all YouTubers. If they get too bad I just ban them, because I won't have that kind of language in my chat. I'm shocked at some of the things people say, and it's all over YT. It's just ignorant people.

DO YOU FOLLOW ANY OTHER YOUTUBERS? IF SO WHICH ONES AND WHY?

OMG yes!! ALL of the guys on the Ark Pooping Evolved Server!! They are all great!! And funny!! If I started with names, I'd surely leave someone out and then I'd feel horrible so just check that Ark server out and see. lol

DO YOU HAVE ANY TIPS OR SUGGESTIONS FOR NEW YOUTUBERS?

To some who have asked me to look at their first video I've given this advice: Talk! You're supposed to be giving commentary. Also be heard. (I need to take my own advice at times:)), Also, talk about what's going on, what you are doing, what you plan to do, where you plan to go; in other words talk about what's happening, that's commentary.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SAY SOMETHING TO OUR READERS?

I have so many complaints from young people that their parents don't understand their love of playing games. To the parents I say that it involves thinking, planning strategy, being in charge of what's happening, using their brain. That's good, for young and old. Do parents think it's actually better for their kids to just sit like lumps in going on? The child isn't doing anything, just sitting there, but the parents let them do that for hours on end. \o/ Also the young people want their parents and grandparents to be involved with their gameplay, but they're always told "I'm too

old to do that"...well I have a lot to tell them

about that!

The gamers are pushing the boundaries every day; by creating new content through gameplay or creativity, YouTube opens the door to everyone who wishes to show something, to draw attention, or simply to play and show their results. Gaming is becoming available to everyone and, as we have seen, tears down age barriers. To play, it doesn't matter if you're 7, or 77, or 79 like Mrs. Shirley. Games provide fun, enjoyment, a vent, a hobby, can even teach and encourage creativity, but they don't discriminate - that's something people do.

Follow Shirley Curry on Youtube



