

GameOn MAG

The Official Gaming Magazine from GameOn.co.uk

Issue 11 May 2009



HALO
WARS



BATTLEFIELD
heroes



WANTED

**THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK:
ASSAULT ON DARK ATHENA**

Vol 1 No 11 £0.00

Export Price: £0.00



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DS

PS2

Wii

PSP



PC

PS3



XBOX 360



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Disclaimer: The content featured throughout this magazine may contain links to our forum where there may be unsuitable language for children or those of a sensitive nature.
We highly suggest that you are at least of the age 13 to visit the forums or click the links within the magazine.

ISSUE 11

WELCOME

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Welcome to Issue 11 of the GameOn Magazine.

This issue is packed with more game previews and reviews including Battlefield Heroes and Halo Wars.

Be sure to check out our updated coffee break section with wordsearches, crosswords and a cut-out.

I would also like to take note that the editor has been changed for the magazine. I would like to congratulate Steven Dawson on his fabulous work he did for the magazine. Thank you.

THE EDITOR

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ARTICLE

ROLE PLAYING

This is a continuation of an article from a previous issue. If you missed it, [click here to view it!](#)

To take things even further and on a larger scale you need to understand the power of RPG's for example the MMORPG, Anarchy Online.

The story of Anarchy Online is simple: humanity was almost finished. They needed to leave the earth because it would be destroyed from all the pollution. A company called Omni-Teck which is one of those grand companies that would seem to control the world proposed to explore space. They did exactly that, found a planet and settled in. There they started "giving birth" to a new humanity through cloning. Afterwards humanity rebelled on the new planet, calling for their freedom. This created two sides which wage war until this point in time. The freedom fighters are called "The Clans" and the side which fights for centralism Omni-Teck.



The features:

- 1.** The choice of joining a side and being part of the world. Giving the player the opportunity to make a difference. The two sides are always adversaries, one calls for evil in, the other side for justice.
- 2.** You! The player is given the ability to modify almost all parts of their appearance. You can be a female, male, tall, short or even bald.

Allowing such variety creates individuality in one way or another. No one wants to look like the other thousand players in the game.

3. Your profession. In this case your class and race. If you want to be Opifex for example (the agile race which represents elves) or Atrox (a race that resembles dwarves in their strength but are a little dumber) you can. If you want to be an Engineer or an Agent, an Adventurer or maybe a Soldier: you can.

4. After the choice phase is complete you are introduced in a tutorial, in this case an island. This phase is important as it makes you learn the basics of the game and its mechanics. Most RPGs have this idea in common. You will certainly need it to grasp the ins and outs of the world.

5. The aspect of "Levels". This calls for assessments, through levels you can say who is "better". Certainly a level 10 player can't be compared to someone with level 120. The higher level will have a greater understanding and more resources than the lower.

6. Vistas to explore and dungeons to invade. You will find huge maps and numerous places to visit, either to have fun and meet friends over a nice sun rise in a garden or in a café in some town or remote city. There are also the dungeons and the "fighting zones". These tend to be more gruesome in nature. You will find various players joining in the fight to kill monsters and forms of low life which will give them Experience Points (XP) to advance in level or find special items that can't be found anywhere else.

7. Experience Points are always referred to as XP. These XP points are the "currency" that you gain through killing NPCs and use to level up.

8. Economic system. This appears exactly like real life. There are trade points which will force players to sell or buy from. There are also player made points where you will find traders just like real life. Here you can find people willing to be hired for a job or get you an item or people that are selling their items or weapons. You will find that trade here takes different forms again like real life.

ARTICLE

ROLE PLAYING

9. Politics. You will find conflict, war, greed, agony, happiness, and triumph, everything that would happen in real world. You will find people cheering and electing leaders to their organisation or heading to attend the Council of Truth which in this game forms the political pillar and decision making place for The Clans side.

10. No end. In all MMORPGs you will find no ending. The game will always have to continue. If the game ends the developers will be out of work! Therefore, the game continues on, offering more content and new features for both low and high level players. People play online games all the time, they love and adore them. Some would say that both RPGs and MMORPG's are addictive. Playing such fantasies and living in different worlds make people escape reality and be what they want, but there is a danger they go too far. Many studies have been conducted and they have found that the more you play, the less likely you are to quit. This is not by any means a warning, nor is it a form of encouragement, but you need to be aware of the facts. Everything has a positives and negatives, a balance of care and trust should be taken when making decisions in most cases. Games are not evil, you know!

In World of Warcraft an incident happened where a girl died in real life. Friends of hers all over the world that knew her and played along side her decided to hold a funeral. They decided to make the funeral in a "Player vs Player zone" (a place where players can battle each other from different factions), which was her favorite place. As the funeral was in progress another opposing guild is called Serenity raided the place and killed all the players at the funeral. People were furious and some said it was funny. The discussion can be found on various message boards and especially the one run by Blizzard. How far would people go in their Role playing style? Was it really role-playing or a real life gesture made on an online game? It is your opinion.

Through both studies I hope you have mastered the basics of RPG's and that you have a grasp of what to expect from those games. Of course through these basics you can deduce which other genres of gaming have borrowed some aspects from RPG's. Blizzard's Warcraft franchise is a famous RTS (Real Time Strategy) series that has role-playing elements. In that case you can control a special unit called a Hero. This Hero has the ability to cast magic spells and hold items in its inventory.



The role-play element is vast and cannot be confined to one form. Role-playing is a great art, thus it flourishes through players like you. Most likely you will find many titles to play and many games to have fun with. Immersing yourself will be an easy task once you start in your adventure be it as a rider, a warrior or just a plain traveler. Please, do not come blaming this article when your parents ground you because they find you hiding in the kitchen cabinet role-playing a rogue that needs his magic cookie to defeat the evils of hunger.

Mohamed Magdy

GENERAL GAME CHARTS

Top 20 Multi- Platform Games

1. **Wii Fit**
2. **The Chronicles of Riddick: Dark Athena**
3. **The Godfather 2**
4. **FIFA 09**
5. **Resident Evil 5**
6. **Professor Layton and the Curious Village**
7. **Mario Kart**
8. **Wii Play**
9. **Call of Duty: World at War**
10. **Carnival: Funfair Games**
11. **Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games**
12. **Dr. Kawashima's Brain Training**
13. **Guitar Hero: World Tour**
14. **My Fitness Coach**
15. **Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection**
16. **Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare**
17. **Raymans Raving Rabbids TV Party**
18. **Grand Theft Auto IV**
19. **Ben 10: Alien Force**
20. **Lego Indiana Jones: Original Adventures**



GENERAL COMMUNITY



We have picked out what we thought was one of the best photos from the forums this month.

GameOn user **Bemused Dave** wins with lovely landscape picture of an ocean scene.



From our brave and comical leader 'Rasher' comes this quote about purchasing a new zombie survival game.

"It's a no brain-er"

The forum post can be found here



ASSAULT ON DARK ATHENA

The original Xbox was a revolutionary console. It had the best online console multiplayer of it's time and had some fantastic games released throughout it's lifespan. However, 'The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay' wasn't one of the those hailed titles. For the people that played the game, they experienced a brand new style of combat, mixing first person action shooting with slow strategically paced stealth. The game was seen as the hidden gem in the Xbox's life and now, five years later, Atari have brought the title back for the new generation of consoles sparing nothing in terms of brilliance. Chronicles of Riddick: Assault on Dark Athena is the name of this new masterpiece but with the way things are at the moment, it could be brushed aside into the dark.

Before I get started, here's what you get for your money: The brand new campaign 'Assault on Dark Athena' and the totally remade 'Escape from Butcher bay' all on one disc. Getting the Dark Athena game itself is something special, but a remake of the classic too? That just shows what a commitment Atari have put in. The original game hasn't just been directly imported onto the next-gen console, it has been given a complete overhaul. New graphics, new music and sounds as well as fantastic new set of voice actors.

The original game is a tie in to the film 'The Chronicles of Riddick'. After playing the game for the first time, I could see one thing.

That this is probably the only movie game that has been made right. The story focuses on Richard B. Riddick, who has been captured and sent off to a high security prison, Butcher Bay. Nobody has ever escaped from the prison, but this is of course your main goal and as you progress you find that side missions and hidden objectives are the things that fill out the game's lifespan.

As many of you know, Riddick is played by Vin Diesel. Not a single other person on the planet could play out such a part like him. He brings a real feeling to the character and just like in many good games, you feel a close connection to him and want him to do well. The simple one liners that he produces can be at times unnecessary, but are quirky and interesting. As well as this massive name in the game, Butcher Bay has another well known celebrity. Xzibit, former rap artist and host of Pimp my Ride stars as the main cell guard. He plays the part brilliantly, bringing not just a social diversity to the game, but an interesting and amusing character too.



SCREENSHOTS



REVIEW

ASSAULT ON DARK ATHENA

The re-vamped version of the game is stunning to look out. When putting screenshots side-by-side comparing it to the original Xbox version, you can really see the detail that has been applied. The lighting makes the game feel more atmospheric, as does the rest of the graphics to some extent. The character models are highly detailed and look fairly realistic especially the main character models. The modern robots and AI controlled characters give off the same great visuals to make a fantastic looking game overall. The game itself is good enough to be released separately, but Atari have been kind enough to give that bonus bundled with the new game at no extra cost.

You are introduced to the basic controls right at the beginning of the game. They are simple, but can cause some issues if you are more of an FPS player. Some combat issues are present when fighting close range and can be a tad frustrating at times but aren't too big a thing to be worrying about.

Something that made the game stand out on the original Xbox was the fact that there are numerous styles of combat. You can't simply run around blasting people's heads off whenever you feel like it or you will get easily ambushed. Instead, you have to mix up your styles of play, making the game interesting and gripping all the time when you are playing. Hiding in the dark, and sneaking around is the most effective form of combat when faced with numerous enemies. Guns are involved in the game but with limited ammo, therefore forcing other combat options upon you.

The gameplay can be a bit samey at times but the variety of different styles of play keeps you hooked to the game for hours. Although, tedium is the least of your troubles. Yes, in every game there are some bad points but this one has some that are simply unforgivable. The AI in the game is terrible. Sometimes you see computer controlled units walking into walls, walking off cliffs or staring straight at you without doing a thing. It's so bad that the game takes a lot longer to complete than it should. This isn't just an issue that plagues the re-make, it's something that is just as prevalent in the newer title but more on that shall come later.

In the second game, Dark Athena, you start off on a ship as you cruise through space. Riddick spots a massive ship heading straight towards yours, and you are reeled in by a huge anchor. As your ship is searched, your team-mate Johns is gassed, captured and taken to the prisoner quarters as you hide in the shadows. This time, your goal is to seek out the captain and take control of the ship. Although a similar storyline, the game features numerous twists that keep you enticed for hours on end.

The controls are more or less the same as in the first game, as is the health system. The system works on a part regenerating, part non-regenerating style. You have "blocks" of health with each one able to be depleted depending on the damage you take and what difficulty you are playing on. Once you lose enough health to deplete a full block, that does not regenerate, but if you have a small amount left, that can regenerate after some time in the shadows or avoiding combat.

TRAILERS



REVIEW

ASSAULT ON DARK ATHENA

To replenish blocks, you have to find health stations. As well as these stations, there are resilience stations that increase the amount of blocks of health you have. This all may sound confusing, but is easily worked out after the short tutorial sessions at the beginning of each game.

A noticeable difference in the newer title is the complexity of the graphics. Although the classic game has been re-vamped, it hasn't been done so to the extreme nature of the new title. I was simply flabbergasted at how detailed the worlds and characters were.

When watching the character involved cut scenes, I felt like I was watching something truly remarkable. The animations on the characters' faces are the most realistic I have ever seen. All cut scenes and intervals are done using the in-game graphics, so what you see, is really what you get. I haven't seen something this impressive in a long time and wouldn't shadow any thoughts on saying they are the best graphics on any console game, ever. The lighting adds another dimension to the effect, where metal glistens realistically and bricks are textured so impressively.

So, the bad parts. I said earlier about the terrible AI, but this is only the start. The game is horrendously buggy. I was playing both the games on the hardest difficulty and found that there were parts where I had to rely simply on lucky to get me through. First of all, the saving. When playing the game an auto-save feature is utilised. After each loading screen, the game always saves, but after using a med-station, the game only sometimes saves. This is in my eyes the most frustrating part of the game. When you complete a hard section of the game and you come across a med-station you think that there could be some hope, maybe some justice. So you kneel, praying to all the Gods on the planet that the small floppy disc icon will appear at the top of your screen... but no, nothing. You feel that you may fall victim to another unexpected attack.

That's another thing, the game is relentlessly hard. I can spend a good hour just trying to get past one part of the game. I would more than likely be able to complete it, but the game is so buggy that it's down to complete luck as to when you will do so.



ASSAULT ON DARK ATHENA

Other unforgivable bugs are having enemies shoot through houses and hit you, projectiles not exploding with the sound of them being shot on a continuous loop and being stuck on flat ground randomly. Many of these issues could be fixed with a simple update, so hopefully it will be something that is taken into consideration. The final thing I want to bring up, on the bad side of things, is how unexpected the attacks are. Like I say, I played the game on hard mode where dying is relatively easy so as I went through the game, I found myself checking each and every corner just to make sure a bunch of enemies wouldn't jump out and kill me out of the blue. When playing for the first time, you would want some indication that five people are going to pop out, spray you with SMG's and kill you in a second. This was more common in Butcher Bay, but still an issue in the Dark Athena. Mini-bosses are frequent but have no indication on how to be defeated. I was left clueless when attempting to kill the last boss as she just was not dying. All things can be flipped though when you do take control of the mini-bosses. You feel very powerful storming through corridors destroying anything in your path.

Both games have collectables and achievements throughout. In Butcher Bay, cigarette packs can be found and purchased and in Dark Athena, bounty cards can be found. Each of these collectables unlocks hidden extra content that can be viewed on the main menu. The achievements are well spaced out during the game and are attainable through completing the main storyline, and all the other ones that branch off.

The multiplayer mode that is featured during the game also has several achievements to collect. Having too many for multiplayer isn't something I like but does bring an essence of longevity when playing. The multiplayer mode at this early stage has some serious potential. From what I have experienced there are several modes that can take place including the regular deathmatch and capture the flag games. The game contains a unique mode called "Pitch Black". One player plays as Riddick, while the others play as Mercenaries trying to eliminate him in the dark, with the player in charge of Riddick hunting them. There is a tremendous amount of lag during the games and some small glitches too but, again, if all is fixed it could become a very popular multiplayer community.

The game as a whole is very good. When Atari sit down and play through the games finding out where the bugs are, and how to solve them, then the game would be a lot more desirable. It has a massive potential to become an iconic game on all the platforms, but at this rate, it could yet again become one of the hidden gems just like the original. My view, buy it but with a warning that you may experience serious frustration that is bundled with the variety of brilliant graphics and unique gameplay. Hopefully, after all is fixed, the game that has huge potential will garner all the praise it is deserving of.



REVIEWER: **JAMES BRALANT**
GAME: **ASSAULT ON DARK ATHENA**
PLATFORM: **XBOX 360**
DEVELOPER: **TIGON STUDIES**
PUBLISHER: **ATARI**
RELEASED: **APRIL 24, 2009**

PLAYABILITY: **8**
REPLAYABILITY: **7**
SOUND: **10**
GRAPHICS: **10**

OVERALL: **8**



REVIEW

HALO WARS

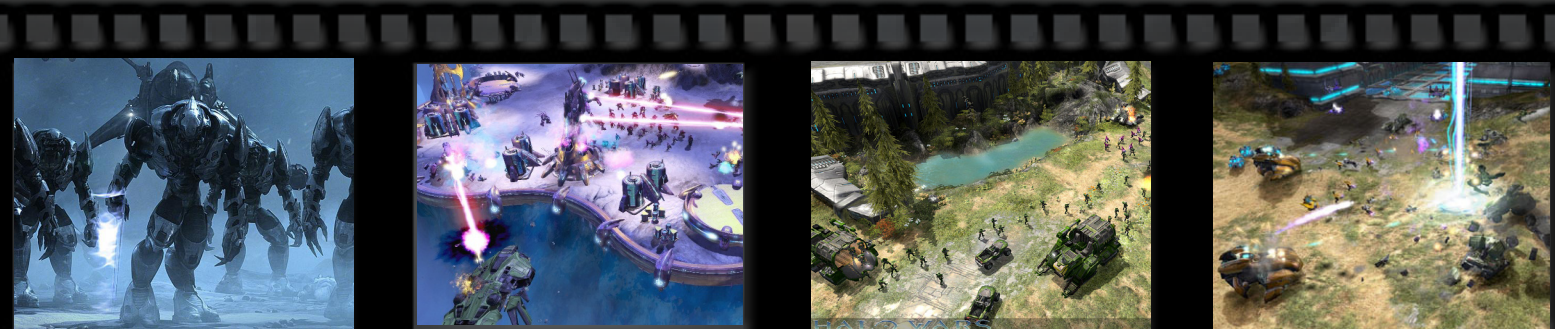
Okay, I will be the first to admit that when I first heard about the concept of Halo Wars being an Xbox 360 exclusive RTS game I was a little worried. This isn't because I didn't have complete faith in the developers Ensemble studios, who are known for great RTS games like Age of Empires, it's the fact that I would miss my mouse and keyboard. After playing some RTS games on a console it just didn't feel right, like a new pair of shoes - It works, it was just that my comfy pair was so much easier to wear, and that was the problem with most of the RTS games that I have played on a console which were also available on the PC as well, which I preferred. So will this big step for the first Halo RTS be a big success or a resounding fail?

The story starts 20 years before the original Halo game and like most of the Halo series it will close some doors on some story arcs but will also open up some new and interesting ideas on where Microsoft can take the series in the future. The storyline basically picks up six years after the first attack on The Harvest, in which the Covenant are just starting to find information about the Halos and the forerunners technology and are trying to use this for their advantage. As always of course, the UNSC are trying to stop them at every opportunity.



For any fan of the genre you will soon realise that Ensemble studios haven't got the whole hog with this game - more like they have dappled their foot in the water to show people what can be done with the RTS genre on a console if you spend some time on it. For example, many RTS fans will notice that you won't be able to assign groups to specific units and that most of the micro management which we have grown to love on RTS games has been completely stripped. With that in mind however, you will notice that all the controls for this game are easily streamlined to the Xbox controller, and even better it feels like it should have always been this way.

SCREENSHOTS



REVIEW

HALO WARS

The controls are simple: the left analog stick moves you around the map while the right controls the pitch and zoom of the camera; the X button does actions or moves units; the Y button uses the unit's special attack which can range from flash bangs to stun enemies to rockets which are more powerful against buildings; the A button selects units. If you keep the A button held you will see that a circle is drawn which you can use to select certain units. The trigger buttons are used for selecting the units on the screen or the units across the whole Map.

After a slow tutorial which teaches you the basics you will start building your bases, a task which is even simpler to do than on the existing RTS games. You basically get a certain number of slots on a base location where you can build buildings such as barracks or even supply drops to get more cash to build units and buildings. Once you have used all the slots on your base you can upgrade to a bigger base which has more slots to build upon. You also have the advantage of building more bases which can be used to get more credits or build your army closer to the enemy.



The Covenant build a single temple, where up to three tech levels can be attained by researching Ages. While the Covenant have one less tech level, each upgrade is more expensive, and if a player loses their temple they also lose all the tech until it is rebuilt.

The Units are quite simple to use and Ensemble has used an easy rock, paper, scissors triangle system - Ground vehicles are powerful against infantry, infantry is stronger against aircraft, and aircraft are exceptional at destroying vehicles. This allows you to remember quickly what type of units you need for your battles as well as giving the combat a balance without over analysing units to send into the battle.

TRAILERS



REVIEW

HALO WARS

The UNSC also have access to the Spirit of Fire, and its special abilities one of these includes a powerful coilgun called the Magnetic Accelerator Cannon. This can be used to attack buildings as well as units to give you the upper hand when needed. In contrast to this the Covenant have access to cheap and powerful defensive shield generators which allows their bases a level of protection the UNSC lack.

As well as this the Covenant leaders appear on the battlefield in multiplayer games as fighting units with their own attacks and upgrades. The UNSC leaders determine the army's special upgrades and specialties but do not appear as physical units.

The graphics are stunning and all the visuals are set in a true Halo environment. All your favourite units are in this game as well as the small details, such as warthogs that jump over ledges and you get com chat in-between your units as they are fighting the battle. The details are stunning down to the bullets from certain weapons like the needler. The soundtrack is a masterpiece and it that truly sets you up for some good all night skirmishes. The music isn't in your face though, just naturally in the background and is balanced to the area or mission you are playing. The gameplay is split up into two areas: you can play a skirmish mode with friends over Xbox live; you can work together on the campaign together or take it on your own.



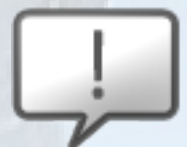
REVIEW

HALO WARS



The campaign is set over 15 missions all ranging in objectives, and different styles of gameplay will be used to combat these effectively. Like with most games nowadays, you are being marked as you play the game on your combat skills, your time skills, and any other side objectives you have done. These give you a rank which you can then improve on and leaves the door open for replay ability just for the status of having every level with a gold medal. While we are on the subject of the status, the Skulls are back. In case you are not a Halo fan, skulls are collectable items hidden around the map which once found, will unlock certain bonus items or just fun effects that can be anything from people exploding into confetti or having your units only be as half as powerful for some extra challenge to the game. As well as this to keep you going back into the game there are also black boxes which help tie in pieces of the storyline which explain more details.

For the first RTS game that has been especially designed for the Xbox, I reckon the guys at Ensemble have done a good job; however, this isn't the best RTS game you will ever play due to the lack of strategic depth nor will it be the best Halo game as the original will always be in my heart as the best. However this doesn't mean that it isn't a good game and having a RTS game that actually plays well as well as works brilliantly with the controls is a blessing. Seeing as Bungie was going to create the original Halo as an RTS it seems like things have come full circle, and I couldn't have seen a better game to be the final game in the closer of such a great game company that is Ensemble.



REVIEWER: **SIMON BONDS**
GAME: **HALO WARS**
PLATFORM: **XBOX 360**
DEVELOPER: **ENSEMBLE STUDIOS**
PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT GAME STUDIOS**
RELEASED: **FEBRUARY 27, 2009**

PLAYABILITY: **8**
REPLAYABILITY: **7**
SOUND: **8**
GRAPHICS: **9**

OVERALL: 8



REVIEW

WANTED: WEAPONS OF FATE

The sequel to the 2008 film, *Wanted*, comes in the form of a video game. The game picks up roughly five hours after the movie ends where our hero – Wesley Gibson has just killed his target. The question is, can the game live up to the movie in a time where all movie tie-ins are expected to be sub par?

As mentioned, *Weapons of Fate* picks up about five hours after the movie's finale and Wesley now finds himself searching for more information about his mother, Allyse. Wesley has been having a recurring dream which always ends the same way, his mother being shot, but he never sees the killers face. He is awakened by two French

SWAT officers ransacking the apartment. The SWAT members find a kill order, which are what Fraternity members use to identify their targets, behind a picture of Allyse. From here, it's gung ho action all the way.

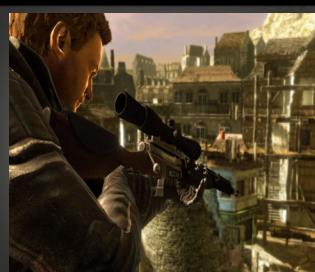
You are given tutorials in the beginning to get you used to the game's various mechanics, the main one being cover dodging. You'll be using a lot of cover in this game, if you don't, you will die. Once you're used to the controls you're off to kill a rather sizeable amount of members from the French

chapter of the Fraternity. For the first two missions this is as simple as going from cover to cover, popping out and killing, but once you're past that, you learn the movie's main gimmick – Bullet Curving. The actual bullet curving itself is easy to pull off, and tremendously satisfying. You simply hold R1 and use the analogue stick to determine the trajectory of the bullet.

Right from the beginning, if you've seen the movie, you may notice something is off. Wesley has went from being an efficient killer who had doubts about The Fraternity's (the organisation he worked for) motives, to someone who doesn't seem to mind causing a total bloodbath. It is a video game however so this is quickly forgotten.



SCREENSHOTS



REVIEW

WANTED: WEAPONS OF FATE

If the line is red, you'll miss and if it goes white, you're onto a hit. There's something about seeing a bullet swerve around a crate and go straight into someones head in slow motion that never gets old.

You will also find you do not play solely as Wesley during the main game. You will also be playing as another Fraternity member, Cross in numerous flashback levels, which fill you in on some of the story.

Slow motion plays a part in all special abilities in the game, be it from bullet curving, slow motion cover movement – where you'll move from one piece of cover to the next in slow motion while having the ability to shoot enemies and finally, the sections of the game that utilise nothing but slow motion.

There are sections to break up the monotony that turn the game into an on-rail shooter.



You have no direct control over Wesley/Cross but when given the opportunity you can shoot enemies and bullets in slow-mo. These are really well choreographed and capture the feel of the movie well. The only downside is, if you miss a single bullet or enemy, you start that section again. This is annoying on the hardest difficulty when all aiming assistance is gone. The other two features the game uses to break up the action, are sniping and mounted gun sections. These are both useless, as the sniping is very easy and doesn't add anything (you can't move your character, only the sight) and the gun emplacement sections are tedious. You literally have about two seconds before you have to go back behind cover or you will be smothered by a barrage of bullets.

TRAILERS



REVIEW

WANTED: WEAPONS OF FATE

Unfortunately just as you may be starting to enjoy curving bullets into enemies while they are hiding behind cover, the game ends. This is its weakest point; the length. On my first playthrough I completed it in a little under three hours. On my second playthrough I completed it in less than two. Call me picky, but I like to think customers paying full price for a game might expect more than that and to rub salt into the wound, there is actually a trophy/achievement for completing the game faster than the developer (1:10:00). It feels odd that a developer would award a player for completing their £30+ game in less than an hour and there's little replay value to be had here.

Once you have met certain conditions, you unlock new character skins. And that's exactly what they are – skins. All these characters handle the exact same way as Wesley and Cross, and this can be distracting when you're playing as the annoying ex-boss Janice and she's swiftly ducking and rolling from cover. Once completed, there is also Headshot mode, Close-Combat mode and Time Attack mode. But all these aren't as exciting as they may sound, they're more of an annoyance. Headshot mode you have to kill basically every enemy with a headshot, if you miss, you have to begin that section again. Same goes with Close-Combat mode, replacing headshots with melee attacks.



Time Attack mode is self explanatory, this is where you'll be trying to complete the game in less than an hour.

All of these modes and characters to be unlocked, along with several artworks and comic book covers don't add to the games longevity, they instead hinder it as you'll be forcing yourself through specific sections looking for small scraps of fabric which unlock the bonuses and this isn't fun.

Even although I've sounded negative; I had a really good time with Wanted: Weapons of Fate while it lasted. The main pulling point is the bullet curving and the main setback is obviously its length. However I still find myself putting it on so I can curve some bullets, as it's one thing that never gets old.



REVIEWER: **KEVIN MALONE**
GAME: **WANTED: WEAPONS OF...**
PLATFORM: **PS3**
DEVELOPER: **GRIN**
PUBLISHER: **WARNER BROS.**
RELEASED: **MARCH 17, 2009**

PLAYABILITY: **7**
REPLAYABILITY: **3**
SOUND: **6**
GRAPHICS: **6**

OVERALL: 6



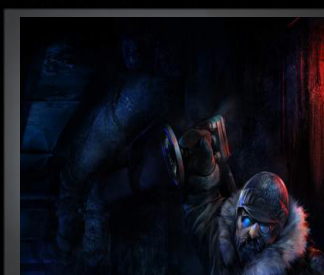
CRYOSTASIS: SLEEP OF REASON

Cryostasis: Sleep of Reason is the game I have been looking very much forward to since it was first announced. I heard it was going to be in the first person, but more of an adventure game than a shooter, which is exactly my type of thing. I've finally got my hands on it and the results are a mixed bag of, funnily enough: generic shooting, clunky hand to hand combat and some innovative ideas that didn't quite reach their full potential.

The game kicks off in Antarctica where you take control of our hero, Alexander Nesterov, a meteorologist. In the opening scenes we are shown Nesterov discovering a shipwrecked Icebreaker - and it's an impressive sight the first time you see it, with the snow whistling around as you strain to look up on the massive ship. Once on-board, it's your task to find out what happened and why. This starts off in a pretty clever way, giving you small flashbacks of how Alexander came across the ship in the first place and how he got on-board.

After about ten minutes on the doomed Icebreaker you'll discover you're not alone. The ship is also inhabited by some sort of ice monsters; these will be your main enemies throughout the game. The first time you come across one of these monsters, you don't expect it. The game does a good job of making you let your guard down, showing you a flashback of an ex-crew member struggling for their life and then all of a sudden it's you getting attacked. It's a good way to give the player a fright and it worked on me, however, the vast majority of the time, when the game tries to scare you, it's done in the same way; see a frozen corpse, see a flashback and then be attacked. It gets a little tedious after a while when you know there's something coming.

SCREENSHOTS



REVIEW

CRYOSTASIS: SLEEP OF REASON

This doesn't detract from the game in any major way though as it's still enjoyable, however the combat system for fighting these monsters is a letdown. Think *Condemned: Criminal Origins*, and you'll have a good idea of how melee combat works here. The problem is that it's neither as fluid nor as satisfying as *Condemned*. It feels clunky as you swing a punch or throw out a combo and you'll miss a lot of the time, thus leaving yourself open to attack. Once you get your hands on a gun however, it's a different story - from that point onwards, the game is too easy. The difficulty curve is certainly uneven.

Along the way, you'll find assorted letters and documents giving you insight into the story along with some flashback cut-scenes. Thankfully, since this is the way the game mainly tells its story, the actors doing the voiceovers when reading letters/documents are pretty capable.

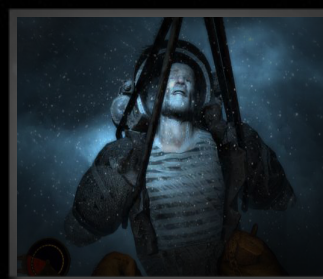
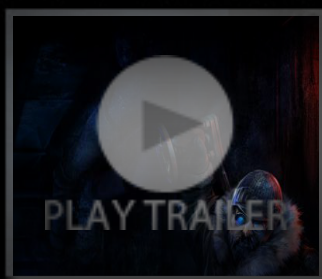
The graphics in *Cryostasis* are one of its stronger points. It's one of the first (if not, the first) games to use PhysX real time water physics and it's impressive in motion. The water and ice effects are some of the best I've seen, although be warned; the game doesn't like to be played on multi-core machines for some reason.



You may also experience slow frame rates with certain features turned up to high, or even medium.

One of the games main features is the way you regenerate health. Since you are on a frozen ship in the Antarctic, it's a tad chilly in there, so you'll need to heat yourself up. This is how you regain health. The idea is good in theory but the atmosphere that draws you into the game is sometimes broken when you realise you can regain quite a lot of health simply by placing your hands a few centimetres above a light bulb.

TRAILERS



CRYOSTASIS: SLEEP OF REASON

The game's second main feature is something called "Mental Echo". It is a good idea, but I don't feel it's used to its full potential here. The basic gist of it is this; if you come across a frozen corpse and it's blocking your way, you can dive into the deceased crew member's body, as it were, and change his past. For example, if there is someone frozen on a set of ladders you need to climb up, you can dive into his memory, and replay his last moments via flashback. This gives you a chance to save the man's soul, and when you have saved

his soul, his body is no longer in the physical world, meaning you can now climb the ladder. This may sound all well and good, but I don't feel the mechanic is used as well it could be. It could have been put to great use, if only you were given more than one option in each "memory". Instead, if you do it wrong or fail to save the man's soul, you must simply start the flashback from the beginning until you get it right. This is a common theme with the games flashbacks, you have one option – do it wrong and you have to do it over.

If there were perhaps consequences later on for messing up a man's fate or not finishing a flashback fully, I feel it could have added to the game's atmosphere for one and its replay value for another.

Replay value is something this game is severely lacking, with no form of multi-player and a linear single player campaign which I had finished fairly quickly there's not much reason to go back once you've completed it once. However for the one run you'll give it, it's a solid adventure game with a fairly well crafted story. The clumsy fighting mechanics and the linearity let it down somewhat though and you may well find yourself struggling to find the need to complete it. Cryostasis is by no means a bad game - far from it, it's just nothing we haven't seen before.



REVIEWER: **KEVIN MALONE**
 GAME: **CRYOSTASIS: SLEEP OF...**
 PLATFORM: **PC**
 DEVELOPER: **ACTION FORMS**
 PUBLISHER: **505 GAMES**
 RELEASED: **FEBRUARY 27, 2009**

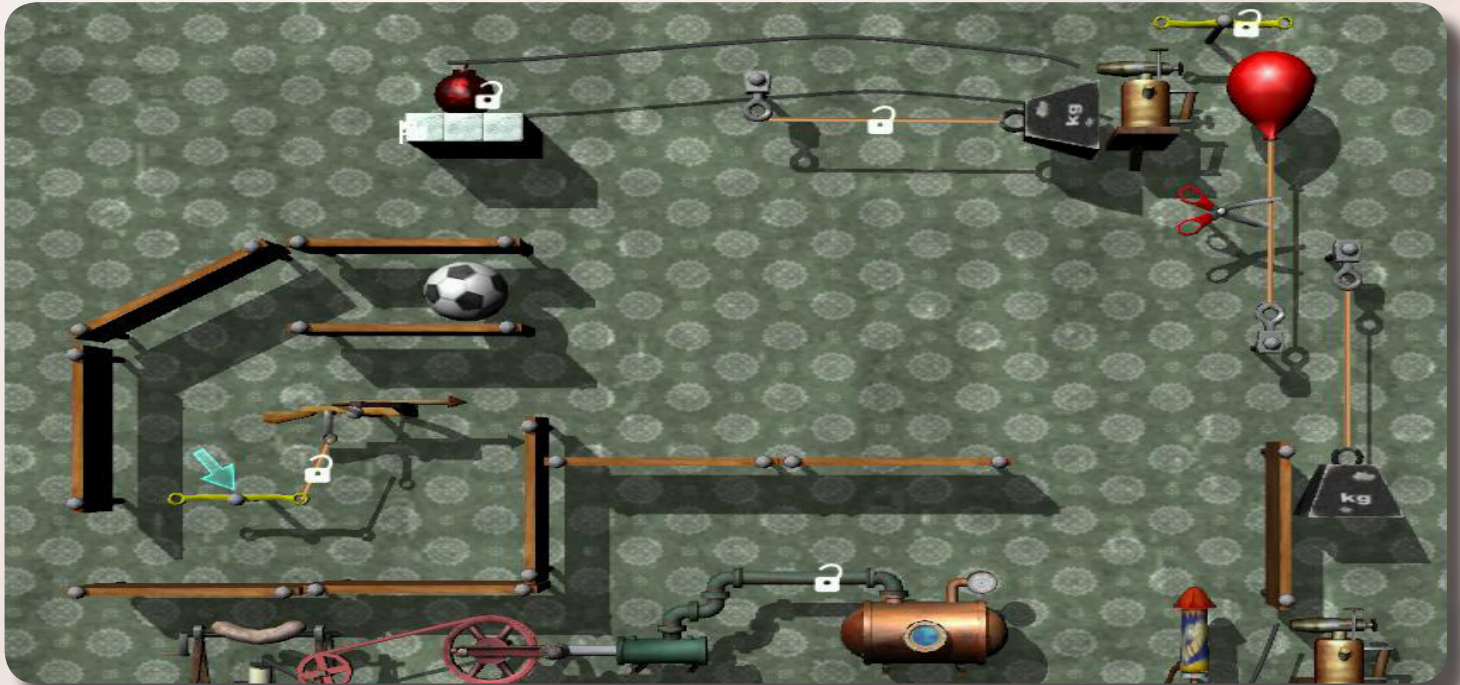
PLAYABILITY: **7**
 REPLAYABILITY: **3**
 SOUND: **7**
 GRAPHICS: **9**

OVERALL: 7



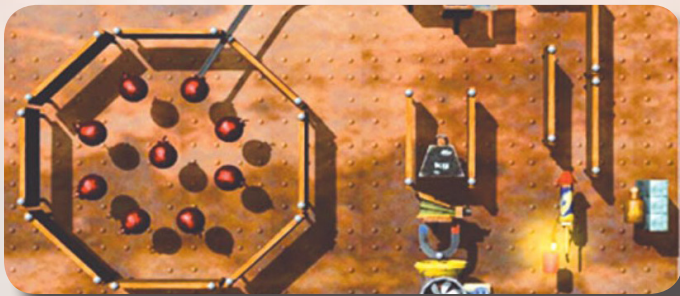
REVIEW

CRAZY MACHINES



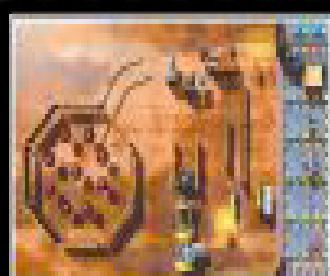
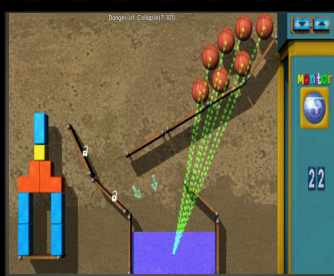
Crazy Machines is a puzzle type game on the PC, which requires you to really flex your thinking muscles.

I'm sure that many readers will have played the board game Mouse Trap at some point - this is the same sort of idea.



You must set up the items of a laboratory in such a fashion as to complete the goal, of which there are a wide variety. In later levels, these requirements include objectives such as blasting a robot into space or making a robot go around a virtual Earth. An unnamed Professor is your in-game mentor, and will tell you what to do for each level as well as giving hints each time you come across a new obstacle. There are over a hundred levels in the game, as well as several other sets that bring another hundred in each, although a lot of these extra levels are just variations on the same techniques. Earlier levels introduce new aspects, which you will need to remember for later levels.

SCREENSHOTS



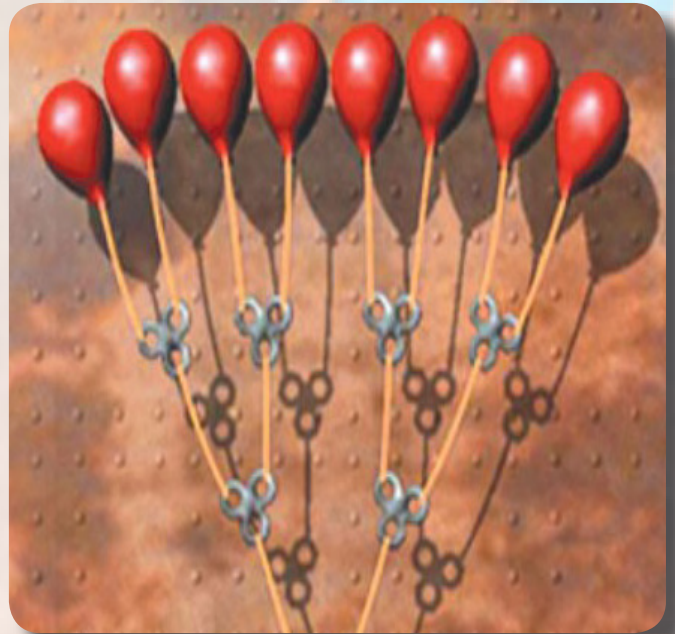
REVIEW

CRAZY MACHINES

Depending on how fast you can work out what to do, you may well spend a fairly long time on some levels. Every so often, there is a 'test' level, where the Professor gives you less help with how to do it, instead just telling you what needs to be done. Some of these tests, especially the final ones, can really tax your brain.

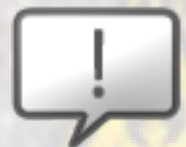
There is a wide array of equipment at your disposal, with the extra level sets bringing new tools with them, but your current level will only give you a selection - most will be required items, but there can also be totally unnecessary red herrings in there too. There is not always just one way to do a level either, you will frequently find that you can arrange the same equipment in different ways, or use different pieces to attain the stage's purpose. If you like, there is a scoring system in play, which takes into account how long you take and if you have any tools leftover. The only thing that scoring brings to the game is a competitive edge with friends, allowing you to pit yourself against each other.

An interesting feature is the ability to create your own scenarios. You can set it up just like any of the set levels are - gravity to Earth, Moon or space, which objects are set and what equipment is available. However, there doesn't appear to be an option to publish these to a web community, which is a shame as there are many creative minds out there that could create an almost unlimited number of scenarios, which in turn would bring replay value right up.



The sound and graphics aren't amazing but in a game like this it really doesn't matter. The only real flaws are that the music gets a bit repetitive before just seeming to cut out altogether and the Professor will get right on your nerves, especially when he pops up over a bit of the contraption that you want to keep an eye on. Luckily, the settings menu includes an option to turn him off.

Crazy Machines is great, simple fun, much more of a casual game to cool off with or to stretch your thinking. It's unlikely you'll find yourself surprised if you keep going back to it for just 'one more go', as it does have that addictive charm to it. Did I mention that it is pretty good?



REVIEWER: **KYLE NUTLAND**
GAME: **CRAZY MACHINES**
PLATFORM: **PC**
DEVELOPER: **VIVA MEDIA**
PUBLISHER: **KALYPSO MEDIA**
RELEASED: **APRIL 24, 2009**

PLAYABILITY: **5**
REPLAYABILITY: **7**
SOUND: **5**
GRAPHICS: **6**

OVERALL: 7.5



SNK ARCADE CLASSICS VOL 1

SNK Arcade Classics 1 is a compilation of SNK's biggest arcade hits, 16 in fact squeezed onto a UMD ideal for pick up and play gamers. Included in this package are, Art of Fighting, Baseball Stars 2, Burning Fight, Fatal Fury, King of Monsters, Last Resort, Magician Lord, Metal Slug, Neo Turf Masters, Samurai Showdown, Sengoku, Shock Troopers, Super Sidekicks 3, The King Of Fighters '94, Top Hunter and last but not least World Heroes. A somewhat mixed bag of games are on offer but this keeps this package interesting. I am not going to go through each one of these games in depth but instead pick one or two from the bunch and expand on them.

The first game I played was Metal Slug. Most people will be familiar with Metal Slug or at least the franchise. It has had multiple remakes and sequels across many platforms. In this game you have to run and shoot your way to the end of the level whilst a) collecting hostages and b) trying not to die - with the second point being the more difficult one! As you run through you are subjected to relentless enemy fire from both the sides and above. You can collect power ups as you go along to make yourself more powerful which certainly comes in handy against the hoards of soldiers wanting to kill you. Metal Slug is a 2D side scrolling action game with fantastic graphics, pretty backdrops and good music. The transition to the PSP has been good for this game and I found it to be good fun and always a challenge. I also played Magician Lord. This is a game I hadn't actually heard of before so I didn't know what to expect. Magician Lord is a game similar to Metal Slug. The basic goal is to get to the end of the level shooting enemies with magic balls and collecting various coloured spheres that change your magician into a different form giving him extra powers. For example if you collect a red sphere, you turn into a red cloaked magician who can send a string of fireballs heading towards the enemy.



SCREENSHOTS



SNK ARCADE CLASSICS VOL 1

One thing I immediately noticed about this game was the difficulty levels. This game is hard, not mildly challenging but hard straight from the word go. This is something I feel that could have been revised for the handheld version of this game, the steep difficulty may alienate gamers who just want a quick go on the game, which being on the PSP, is quite a high percentage of the players. However I enjoy a challenge and I found it to be fun, if a little frustrating at times.



This compilation seems to include a lot of fighting games. One of these games is Samurai Showdown. It's basic fighting game stuff really; you pick your fighter and go through 10 stages trying to prove your worth to the world.

You have 13 samurais to choose from in the beginning, whether you can unlock more I'm not too sure, I never managed to. Interestingly the characters in this game all wield weapons that were considered quite unusual and individual at the time. It also included bloody and fatal move videos which were filtered for the home releases back when this was released in '93 but they return in this version.

The gameplay is very fast paced which is refreshing because I personally find some older fighters to be a tad clunky and slow. Each character has an extensive moves list, this makes it interesting to explore their fighting styles more, trying to master them. Another nice inclusion is the 'POW' bar, after you have taken a few hits this fills up and you can unleash a super attack on your unfortunate foe. This adds an element of strategy to the game as you have to plan when the best time to use it is. The game runs in 2D, it has some fantastic background graphics and the fighting areas are very nicely designed, with interactive items in the areas such as barrels that get cut open when you use your weapon nearby. I really enjoyed Samurai Showdown, more so than most of the last gen fighters I have played.



TRAILERS



REVIEW

SNK ARCADE CLASSICS VOL 1

One of the weaker inclusions to the game in my opinion was Baseball Stars 2, this to me wasn't too much fun and was really samey. Hit the ball, computer runs for you, hit the ball computer runs for you, rinse repeat, so on so forth! It just seemed a tad boring. I also found the fact that you can't save midgame really frustrating, it's ok if you're sat at home playing but if you are on the move and you have to switch the console off and you're in the middle of a game you will lose your progress. The game looks nice though, with well designed character models and good graphics, but sadly this (to me) is not enough to save the game.

The game itself offers multiplayer Ad Hoc mode for every game which offers a lot of replay value, especially on the fighting games only problem being that it is not a game share game so both party's need a copy of the game before playing the multiplayer aspects.

Another nice inclusion is an achievement style system. There are specific goals you can aim for like completing a certain move with a player in one of the games unlocks the achievement. There are no points on offer, just bragging rights to your friends. I liked this because it gives you something to aim for in the game and gives it replay value because you want to get the achievements.

My only issue with this package as a whole is the stories from the games have seemingly been cut out. For example, none of the fighting games have a back story, like who's who and what they are fighting for exactly.

It just chucks you straight in at character select. For me, having a story is important in a game. It doesn't necessarily have to be a novel but just a few sentences saying what on earth is going on. I found myself having to research the games and story's to find out. This is a massive disappointment and the games feel a bit hollow without them.

A good point about the game as a whole though is the transition from the Neo-Geo to PSP has been a good one. These games suit the pick up and play style the PSP is known for. The controls work well and don't feel wrong at any point and the graphics are lovely. I personally enjoyed this compilation. Some games more than others but then that's what having a mix of games is about. There is something on this game for everyone.



REVIEWER: **SARAH COLLINGS**
GAME: **SNK ARCADE CLASSICS...**
PLATFORM: **PSP**
DEVELOPER: **IGNITION ENTERTAINMENT**
PUBLISHER: **SNK PLAYMORE**
RELEASED: **SEPTEMBER 20, 2008**

PLAYABILITY: **9**
REPLAYABILITY: **8**
SOUND: **7**
GRAPHICS: **8**

OVERALL: 8.5



REVIEW

CEVILLE

It seems that point and click adventures have become more what you'd find down the back of a sofa, than an entry into the mainstream games line up. With so much emphasis on more immersive games things like first person shooters, sports simulations and massively multiplayer online games, amongst others you'd be forgiven for thinking that point and click just couldn't hold its own against the big guns.

However, that's where Realmforge Studios have decided to step up to the table with the intention of creating something to fill the void. Ceville drops you straight into the action with you taking part as Ceville, evil ruler of the fantasy realm of Faeryanis. Held against your will by two guards of somewhat questionable intelligence, you have to make your way out of this predicament and onto other more pressing issues.

The puzzles in Ceville offer enough variety and challenge to keep the game from feeling too easy over the time you're playing, and getting toward the end of the game, the links you have to make can become quite tricky indeed. Thankfully, things don't seem to get as strange as adventure games like Discworld, but will certainly have hardened adventure gamers scratching their heads for a while. Adding to this complexity are the sections of controlling two characters, which adds a multitude of 'who does what' situations.

Sometimes finding key items to storyline progression can become a bit irksome, namely because the item hasn't been hinted at clearly enough, it's too small and nestled away into the backdrop or the chance is that one character has to take the item in order to pass it onto another.



SCREENSHOTS



REVIEW

CEVILLE

On the humour side of things, Ceville has enough quips and quirks to keep a smile on your face whilst you're playing, which is nice for a game of this calibre given the length and sometimes infuriating periods where you are left asking yourself over and over, 'what on Earth do I do now?' The humour just keeps you going. There are also plenty of stabs at modern day affairs, which again, left me chuckling away adding some much needed wit and humour to a game that could be left feeling a bit dry and lifeless at times without.

The voice acting is to be praised, for a game to use such a lot of dialog the need for good voice narration is essential. It pulls this off very well and the voice actors have managed to fill the role of the characters exceptionally, which adds to their believability and overall immersion in the title. This all coming from a small 10 man German company makes me wonder why others have struggled to do the same thing.



There are a few gripes to the game, mostly nothing too major that will detract from the experience enough to be troublesome, but firstly, the least problematic was the lack of a tutorial mode, or step through, to initiate the player into the game. While this is a point and click adventure, it took me a brief while to figure out the controls which led to me not being able to move around and interact with objects as efficiently as I should have. The controls are all detailed in the manual, but for the current generation of gamers who feel that they need to be guided through in game, the manual just doesn't cut it at times.

TRAILERS



REVIEW

CEVILLE



The graphics fit the bill well, remaining somewhat comical as many point and click adventures are, but yet serious enough for it to look very impressive with the locations that have been created. Cut scenes also add to the story line, helping it to progress evenly, rather than removing you completely from the game play and having you watch the game roll by. It's nice to see a game getting the balance between too much story line, and not enough game play just right.

Second on the list of gripes are the loading times. The in game tips that display while the game is loading even mention that they are only there while the game is loading as it has long wait times to get all of its thinking done. Which is a shame, as loading in the middle of a story can remove the feeling of immersion within the world and its characters. Again, this isn't a major concern, more something that would have been nice to have been without whilst playing.

Lastly, however, is the Big One. Whilst playing Ceville, the game dropped me out to the desktop on more than one occasion. If this had only happened once, then I could have put it down to sheer bad luck, but since it had happened on a few occasions, I deemed this to be a problem with the game's code somewhere. This is most likely something a patch would fix, and I wouldn't be too surprised to see Realmforge making headway for the fix as soon as they can pinpoint what it is.



In summary to the game, it's a pleasing point and clicker, and a welcome return to the genre that has seen more than its fair share of dust on the shelf. If anything, I'd have liked to have seen this game be a little bit longer, but that's merely my own opinion. If you want to recommend someone to a point and click, then Ceville is a good direction to point. Being more of a welcome nod back to the genre rather than trying to invent anything new really works at Realmforge. If episodic adventures aren't your thing, then Ceville looks like it could be the answer you are looking for.



REVIEWER: **STEVEN DAWSON**
GAME: **CEVILLE**
PLATFORM: **PC**
DEVELOPER: **REALMFORGE STUDIOS**
PUBLISHER: **KALYPSO MEDIA**
RELEASED: **FEBRUARY 19, 2008**

PLAYABILITY: **9**
REPLAYABILITY: **7**
SOUND: **8**
GRAPHICS: **8**

OVERALL: **8.5**



PREVIEW

BATTLEFIELD HEROES

The Battlefield series has been around for years, with its multiplayer following continually growing. DICE have generally used the same gameplay for their series, but this time they're bringing something a little different to the party. Whilst the core mechanics of Battlefield Heroes hasn't changed much from its predecessors, it still has a sense of newness about it. You join a game and spawn in at one of four control points, depending on which ones are owned by your team. You choose a class, each of which has access to a selection of weapons which are very different to any other classes. The objective is for you to take over the control points by eliminating enemy in the area and protecting the location of the control point until the flag has changed from your enemy's to your own. Any Battlefield veteran would feel as comfortable jumping in and playing Heroes as any other Battlefield series.

The variation of the game lies within every other aspect. As I say, the core gameplay remains the same; it's everything else that makes Heroes feel entirely new. Most noticeably is the graphical change. Battlefield has always been a 'realistic' game, with the series aiming for convincingly real graphics and weapon and vehicle models. Not so with Heroes. DICE describe Heroes as a 'cartoon shooter', and have put an emphasis on fun rather than seriousness. You'll want to take the plane for a sightseeing tour first, just to absorb in the gorgeous landscape. The characters themselves are caricatures, with the vehicles being exaggerated and pronounced versions of their real-life counterparts. If DICE are highlighting fun as a major part of Battlefield Heroes, then the graphics go a long way to help with that.

Each map begins with fifty 'tickets' on either side. Each time someone dies, they use a ticket to respawn. Depending on how many control points is owned by your team affects how many of your enemies tickets are used per respawn.



PREVIEW

BATTLEFIELD HEROES



Fifty tickets isn't an awful lot, with most matches lasting about fifteen to twenty minutes. It's mostly each to their own on whether they'd prefer a longer match, but it seems to work well. There are usually a few rounds to each map, which makes up for this shortness. A counter to represent the total wins on that map and, thus, an overall winner would benefit the game, but considering the drop-in/drop-out style of play seems to negate the need for such a counter. The largest part of the change behind Heroes is not an aesthetic one, however. It is, in fact, the system behind how the game plays. Rather than having an account which tracks your overall abilities and achievements, you have individual characters which each have a separate name and level. You initially create the character on the Battlefield Heroes website, choosing a name, a faction, his class and a few appearance options. The classes available are the Commando, Soldier and Gunner; who each represent the light, medium and heavy spectrum of fighters and cover all the stereotypical attributes you'd expect.

Currently you can only create a limited number of characters and you are not able to delete them, but I expect this will change once the full game is released. However, the point of the game is not to have a variety of characters with which to play. Instead, DICE intend for you to concentrate on a single character, working on levelling him up as much as you can, rather than shifting your time between your current choice of play style. Anyone who's played an MMO will know this familiar concept; working to make a single character great rather than keeping a selection of low level characters. The MMO similarities don't stop there either. Obviously the game is multiplayer and multiplayer only, yet the maps currently only hold sixteen players per map. Whilst the levels seem the perfect size for the number of players, sixteen can't be classed as massive by any stretch. However, the interface of the game seems directly related to an MMO.

PREVIEW

BATTLEFIELD HEROES

You control your character in third person with a bar running horizontally at the bottom of the screen. Here you'll apply your available weapons and abilities to the bar, with a number on the keyboard representing a slot on the bar.

Then there are missions, which are personal goals for you to carry out during your playtime. You can pick up to three missions at once, which vary in tasks from killing a certain number of tanks/infantry to scoring a set number of points. These can be culmative or per round, as well as some having to be completed without dying a certain amount of times. You start off with one mission, and unlock more as you complete different ones, with each mission focusing on a different style of play. Whilst I enjoyed this idea, I have a fear that it may result in players seeking to achieve their mission goals, rather than working as a team to win. This implementation of abilities and missions is a vast difference from any other in the series, and may be the thing that will deter diehard Battlefield fans, but it does add to the sense of fun that DICE are pushing.



Customisation is the keyword with Heroes. The abilities that your characters use are unlocked using 'Hero Points', which you gain every other level. Each class has about six abilities, each with five slots to upgrade. Add one Hero Point to an ability and it becomes unlocked to use, anymore will increase its effectiveness. This brings a whole new depth of to the series, allowing for each player to personally choose how they would like to play. For example, one Commando could focus on his stealth abilities, trying to get close to quickly finish off the enemy with his knife or pistol, whilst another could focus on the sniper abilities to become deadly from afar. Second to that, another player could be a jack of all trades and unlock all of the abilities, rather than concentrate on a single one. This level of customisation not only brings depth to the game play, but also allows a player choice of their character's progression.



PREVIEW

BATTLEFIELD HEROES

Just like any good MMO, customisation doesn't stop at the abilities you use. The clothing of your character can be changed with the use of two types of funding. There are ten available slots for clothing, from head to feet, in which you can customise your characters appearance, with each faction having different options available to them.

This brings me onto the main focus of Battlefield Heroes, and the brunt of its innovation. This game will be free-to-play. As such, DICE have decided on micro-transactions to fund the game, with much of the costumes and items being available for the two types of currency. Firstly there are Valor Points (VP), which is gained through playing the game, provided for defending/attacking a control point and larger amounts given for completing missions. Then there are Battle Funds, which are bought with real life money and used to purchase the better items earlier on. Both of these are used in the in-game store for buying items, though the items currently available for VP are particularly limited. As you level up you unlock more items available for VP, but even still the options are scarce. For £4.50 you will get 700 Battle Funds to spend, which could attire your character with a modest outfit. For all the bells and whistles, such as belts, gloves and other accessories, you may need to spend a bit more. I respect DICE's decision to fund the game in this way. It's new, it's innovative and it takes a great deal of effort to do something new in the industry; but if the items you've bought with real, hard-earned money last for no longer for a month, you can see why people might be a bit vigilant about splashing out.

It is a relatively new idea, especially for the online shooter, so you have to give DICE their dues for trying, and the game itself is highly enjoyable. I expect the service will evolve and expand as they figure out what is best for them and for their user base. Saying that, for a game that, in essence, costs nothing, it's worth anyone trying it when the full version is released this year. Just expect to get addicted to a new age of Battlefield.



Adam Barnes

SECRET FILES 2: PURITAS CORDIS



Secret files 2 is a point and click adventure which is the sequel to the game Secret Files: Tunguska. While the first game has good reviews we can't judge a game based on its predecessor so will this outperform the last game or will this come up short?

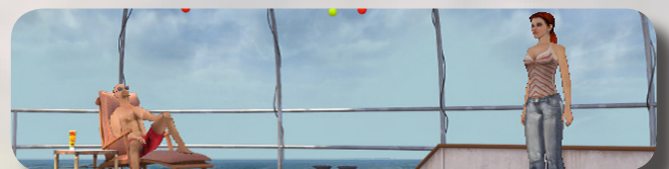
The story line picks up some time after the first game where both main characters from the last game, Nina and Max, have been taken back on. But for some strange reason they are now both separated from each other.

But just before we did catch up with our two heroes we get introduced to a new character who is basically a guide to all new players showing them some of the simple puzzles in the game and allowing them to get to grips with some of the controls before they get too stuck in. During the introduction, you play as a priest who has a scroll which depicts a huge issue of the end of the world. After hearing his friend, whom we saw in a cut-scene only moments ago, is dead it is up to you to hide the scroll before the men outside your window come in and try and recover the scroll for themselves.

Throughout the cut-scene, and later on in the game through TVs and conversations with people, you will find out that there have been an increasing number of environmental problems and the world turns to Nina's father to discover what problems are causing this - with her father being an expert in precisely this subject. The good thing with this sequel is that most of the back-story that you need is filled in during the game within the first 10-15 minutes which means that you don't need to play the first game just to know what is going on.

While Nina has decided to take a cruise to try and forget all about Max she soon finds out that this cruise won't be the normal relaxing type and it quickly ends up becoming a rollercoaster of a ride. Whereas Max finds himself in an Amazon rainforest trying to track down a mysterious temple only to have the base camp ransacked and his partner for this adventure kidnapped. While the story line seems to take a lot of twists and turns and also splitting off quite heavily it somehow fits to the game play and also means that you are never with any one character for too long, which keeps the game play varied.

The graphics are good for a point and click and most of the locations that you do visit are in glorious 3D, but obviously this game isn't going to win any awards or compete with the big dogs of graphical gaming like your Unreal Tournament 3 and your Gears of War. The locations add to the in-depth storyline and nothing is hidden away in some dark pixel like the good old days. The backdrops to the game are varied; from a cruise liner to an Amazon rainforest all of which are detailed and add to the experience of the game.



SECRET FILES 2: PURITAS CORDIS

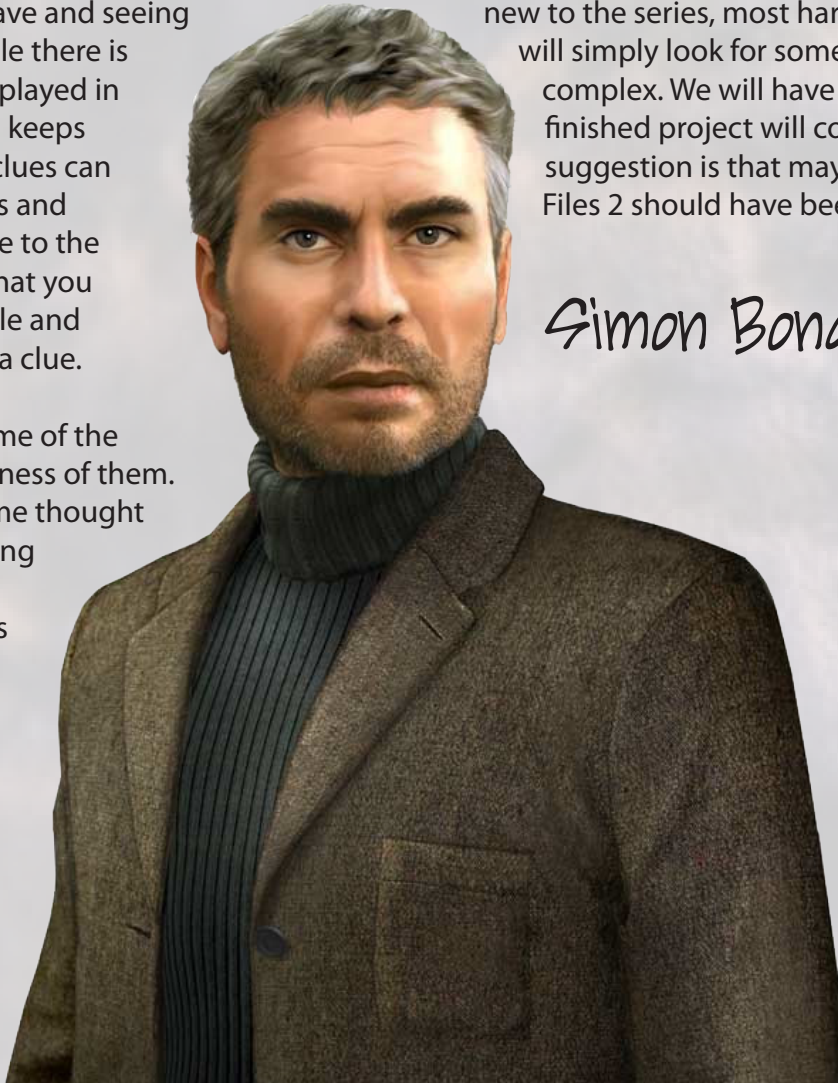
While the graphics are good, the voice acting is a bit of a mixed bag. Some lines are delivered perfectly and voices well done, other dialog seems forced and somewhat unnecessary, plus some of the accents are at best a good attempt but comical. Sometimes dialog does feel too long winded - an example of this is when you first meet Nina after the tutorial section with the priest. While the first cut scene with her is all about how she is going on the cruise, listening to and, indeed, watching one half of a telephone conversation isn't exactly my idea of a tense and dramatic cut-scene. It's more like a five minute clickathon to actually get into the game.

The way in which the game plays itself is again well done, with a range of puzzle difficulties which will keep most point and click fans happy. My one problem is the fact that a lot of puzzles rely on the inventory and can be solved by just combining everything you have and seeing what comes out the end. While there is also a hints section that is displayed in the back of the journal which keeps all useful information, these clues can be somewhat useless at times and also damn right annoying due to the fact that some will tell you what you already know about the puzzle and there is no way to get an extra clue.

The other issue I had with some of the puzzles was the long windedness of them. Some puzzles did require some thought but others just had you running back and forth all over the place collecting 3 or 4 objects from different areas which, in some cases, is the hardest thing of all. There is also an information button which will toggle helpful question marks over areas of interest but again most fans will properly stay away from this unless they are really stuck.

The inventory system is all done via the mouse and when you are hovering over an object you can interact with it. While the inventory system works well and allows for quick and easy access, my main gripe with this system isn't so much the system itself but the characters that are using them. Everything you do is met by some type of dialog or reaction; while this is great the first, second or even third time it can soon become tiresome. Also, on one scene I was annoyed when a puzzle went wrong and I had to painstakingly remove each object from its combined state only to be confronted with tiresome dialog every time I did.

The game itself seems, at best, a good attempt but like most modern point and click games fall short due to long winded conversations and simple and annoying puzzles. While I feel that this game will be worth its while to anyone new to the series, most hard core fans will simply look for something more complex. We will have to see how the finished project will come out but my suggestion is that maybe The Secret Files 2 should have been kept a secret.



Simon Bonds

PREVIEW

7.62 HIGH CALIBRE

So here I am with another offering from 1C Company in the form of 7.62 High Calibre, essentially the sequel to Brigade E5; a tactical strategy game akin to titles such as Jagged Alliance and the X-Com series. The setting is a small Latin American country which has recently undergone a coup d'état, which provides a most opportune place of sanctuary for those who do not wish to be found.

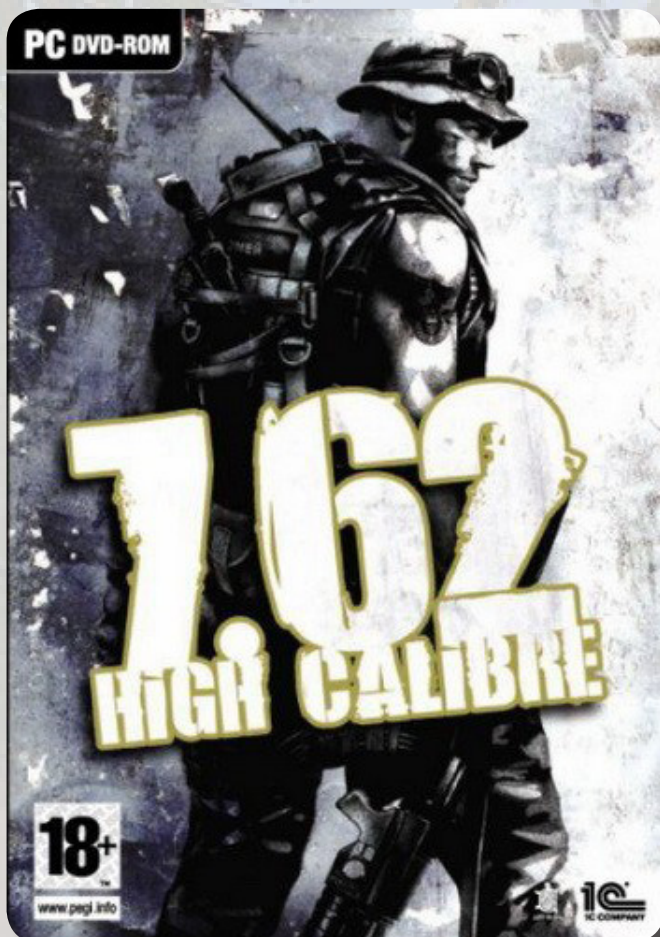
This is where you are brought into the game as one of several selectable mercenaries, each with their own levels of attributes, hired to find a Russian businessman who has run off with a large sum of money into the aforementioned country. So you begin your journey in a small tourist town asking questions about the Russian and running side missions for the locals in an almost RPG-esque manner.



While playing through this game you will encounter other mercenaries which you may hire into your party for variable fees which I would highly recommend as you will encounter random ambushes whilst travelling between settlements. You may have up to 6 mercenaries in your party at anyone time, but be sure you have a substantial income of revenue before recruiting these war torn dogs as they will seriously bleed your funds dry if you're not careful.

Everything is rendered in 3D with a camera system you would expect to see in such a title. You can view what your mercenaries are up to in every conceivable angle, or even go first person on each merc if you so wish. You may run about the towns in real time or use the live pause system to click positions for your controllable characters then un-pause the action to view your planned movements. While in theory this seems to be a solid system, in practice I found the controls to be clunky and unintuitive especially during combat.

Due to the level of control and detail the game has regarding weaponry, a task of throwing a grenade is not as simple as pressing one key as in FPS games. In High Calibre you must open the inventory, drag your grenade to your hand, close the inventory, arm the grenade, aim where you wish to throw then click to complete the action and then switch out of paused mode to finally see the fruits of your labour.



PREVIEW

7.62 HIGH CALIBRE



If there is a long winded way for performing an action then this game will probably have it, I'll use an example of buying ammunition for your weapons. One would think that it would be a simple case of finding the appropriate vendor then hand over your cash for the goods, well guess again. In High Calibre you have to find a local vendor, purchase empty magazines for your weapon, then purchase the appropriate ammunition then load the bullets into the magazine before you have something usable in your guns. The by-product of this method allows you to load a magazine with different types of ammunition of the same calibre, such as full metal jacket rounds mixed with hollow points.

Every weapon you come across seems to have a large amount of data associated with it, along with a vast array of upgrades and additional components available for them.

This level of detail kind of scares me as I know there are gamers out there who love this kind of anorak level of tinkering, feverishly exploring every viable avenue of upgrades to find that extra 0.002% of accuracy on a Tokarev pistol.

Sadly though the game did not grasp me enough to warrant further play, this is not necessarily a bad game it's just not a genre I would normally play. It has the potential to be good for fans of similar titles and appears on the surface to have a lot of depth to the game but definitely requires further polish in certain areas.

Neil Hetherington

CAPTION COMPETITION

RESULTS

Last week we put it to you to create a witty caption for the image(s) below. We were very pleased by the amount of responses that we got but sadly, there can only be one winner. This months winner is:
"TheGingerKid"



[Read More](#) [Add New Comment](#)

Posted By [evilpiraffemen](#) - 01/11/2008

[Interview](#)

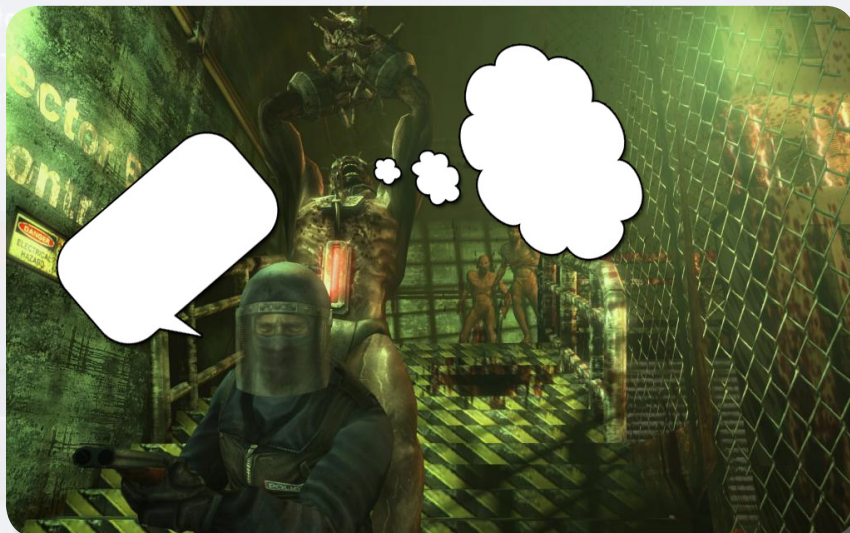
The original screenshots can be found here among past competitions. You can still show us these on the forum but they will not be counted into the competition.



CAPTION COMPETITION

KILLING FLOOR

This months caption competition is based on a new game out, Killing Floor.
To take part in this months competition simply click on the speech bubble located next to this and edit the image in any editor!
Good Luck!

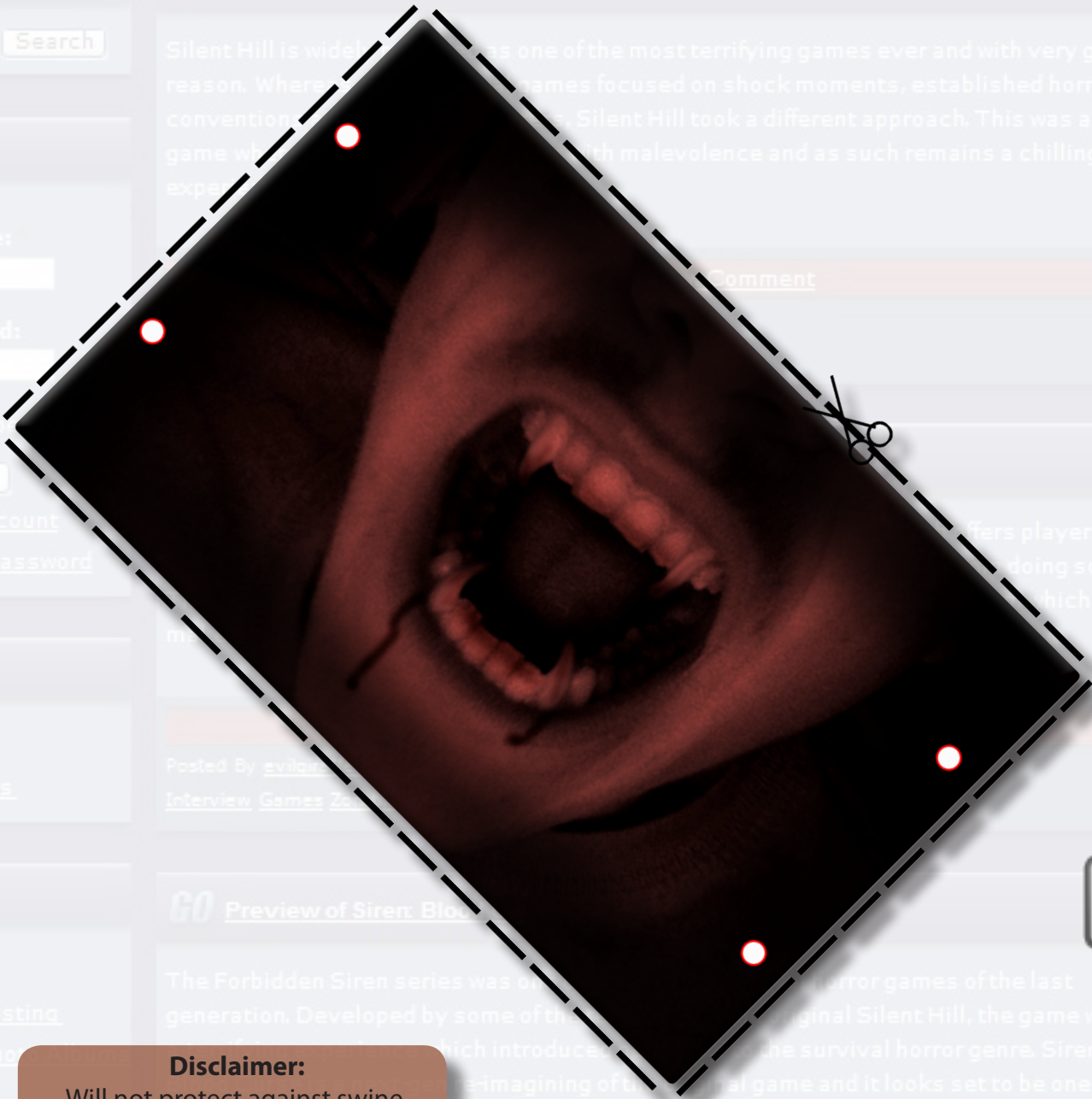


If you happen to not own an editing tool, then you can find one inside the forum post in the link above!

CUT OUTS

FLU MASK

Due to the recent zombie out-break that has hit our world, we have been extra precautions and equipped the GameOn Flu Mask! It protects you from all mass outbreaks. Zombies, Birds, Swine; you name it, you are protected!



Disclaimer:

Will not protect against swine, bird, avian or any other type of flu.

Printer friendly version can be downloaded here

Halo Wars Wordsearch

H I S F S Y A M P C A U P A G R
 S E G U O I G F I H R H H Y R U
 R P M P P R S O C E O E E I Y B
 X X A G E P E E H S N A B B S I
 B O G R C B L R B T S A R S F M
 O R C A T E S I U F R X O B A O
 A I R D R A X F E N A A T A R T
 I R O E O B N F D S N I W R B D
 T N S S O I I O C O V E N A N T
 C B P X P B O T F O S O R C I M
 E U E P S L P I E U H R E S I A
 L Y T S F A A R I R A A R S X E
 C L I T A S R I S C L C A V F I
 T H A R E T I P K P O O D O E R
 Y G E T A R T S E M I T L A E R
 L N S B A I B X I N N H A A R C

This month's
word search is based
on the game

Halo Wars

All words are related
to the game.



Arbiter
 Covenant
 Forerunner
 Realtime Strategy
 Spirit of Fire
 Upgrades

Banshee
 Cutter
 Halo
 Scarab
 Supplies
 Warthog

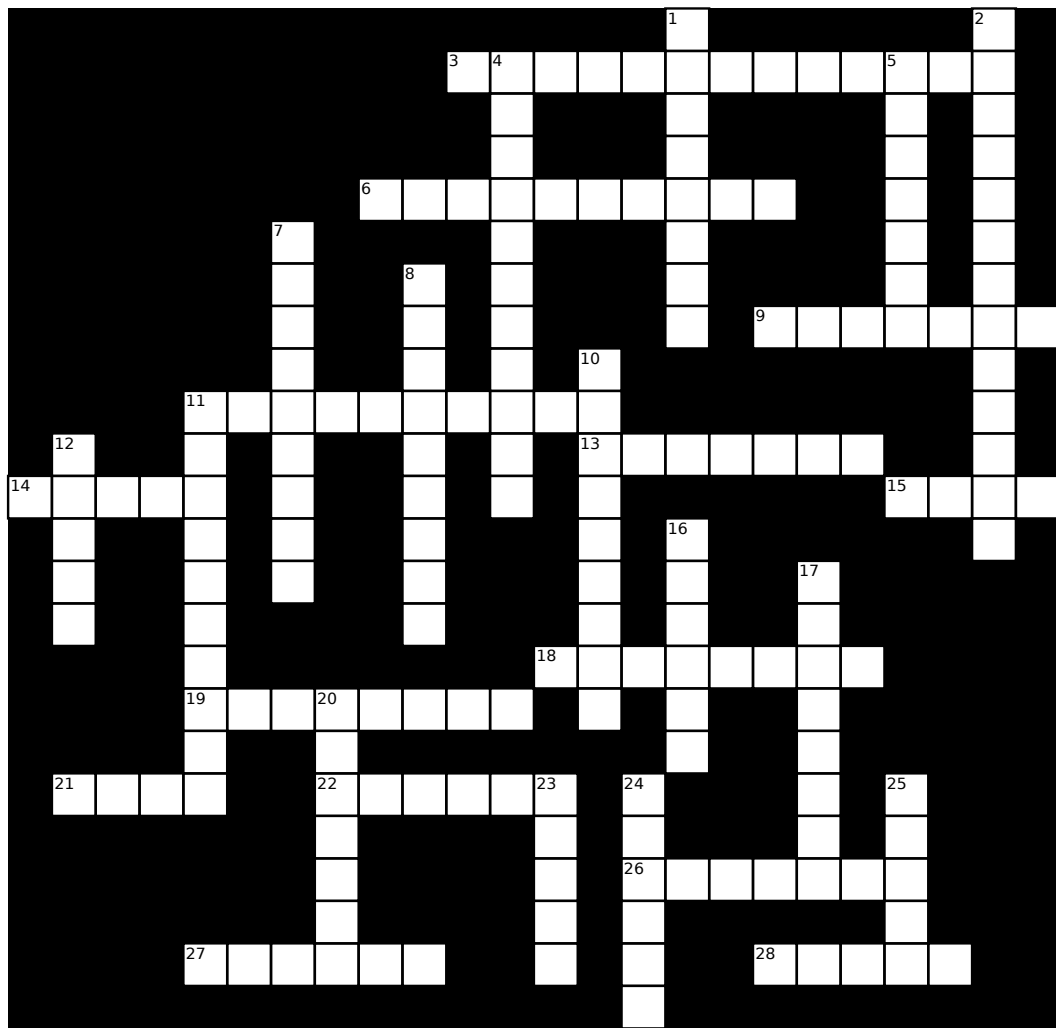
Barracks
 Flood
 Microsoft
 Spartan
 Troops
 xBox



COMMUNITY

CROSSWORD

Silent Hill: Homecoming Crossword



Across

- 3 All in the mind..
- 6 Silent Hill: *****
- 9 Daughter of Doctor Martin Fitch
- 11 Weapon used for plumbing
- 13 Egyptian Scrustructure
- 14 Straight from the depths of hell
- 15 Wife of James Sunderland
- 18 A place full of graves
- 19 Built from a mass of female bodies fused together
- 21 Above the shoulders
- 22 Final boss in Silent Hill: Homecoming
- 26 Human with very sharp blade for limbs
- 27 The genre of the game
- 28 Need a place too stay?

Down

- 1 If bitten by a Creeper, you may visit here
- 2 Main character in Silent Hill
- 4 Where it all happens...
- 5 Giant insect that reacts strongly to light
- 7 Headless, armless living sewing dummies
- 8 Religious order within Silent Hill
- 10 Mutated form of Joey Bartlett
- 11 (Last Name) James...
- 12 A dog-like creature
- 16 This place carries away waste products
- 17 It is all that matters to Alex
- 20 First female primary character in the game
- 23 Not a doctor but a..
- 24 Producers of the game
- 25 A lot like a hex

BACK ISSUES

DOWNLOAD OLDER ISSUES



Missed a previous issue?
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on your PC or Mac from here!
Cool or what?

Issue 9 March 2009





SEE YOU NEXT MONTH