

GameOn MAG

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COLIN MCRAE DIRT 2 REVIEWED



Halo 3: ODST

Orbital? Or will it be a drop shock?
Read about it inside.



RaceOn

A quick look at SimBin's upcoming
simulation racer.

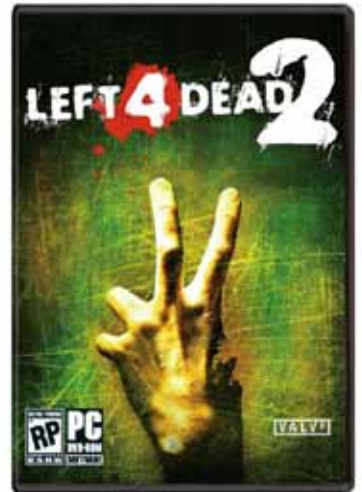
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ISSUE 15

WELCOME

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Issue 15 is here and we have some top shelf gaming content with it, just remember to ask your newsagent for some stepladders if you can't quite reach it!

We're bringing you a sneak at RaceOn, SimBin's latest foray into simulation racing.

We get up to the eyes in DiRT2 and find out what it's like in the Halo Universe when you're not being the omnipotent Master Chief.

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REVIEW

COLIN MCRAE: DIRT2



With recent racers GRID and DiRT, Codemasters have managed to show us two things. One; they have a penchant for irregular upper case letting. And two; they've shown us they really know how to craft a decent racing title. Grid, arguably, has become one of the most popular circuit racers, whilst Colin McRae DiRT took us back into rallying. Does their second iteration in this series sparkle, or is it just dirty?

The first thing you'll note when you boot up this game is its style. From the slick menus navigating around a tour bus to the gorgeous graphics, this game just shines. Every effort has gone into this game to make it the best looking and stylish racer out - and it does well to stand out. The soundtrack of the game is never overbearing; meaning that the songs that are played at the festivals your tour bus is parked at do enough to interest you, even

though they're more background noise. As you load a race, the music begins to blare out as you're offered a variety of stats based upon your current racing, and the upcoming track. Then the music is silent. It becomes just you, the car and the dirt.

And this is, in essence, the philosophy for the entire game. You begin the game with a Colin McRae special vehicle, which is yours to have and to hold - as well as smash around racetracks. You use this vehicle to enter the first race and, upon completing, nets you money and XP with which to level up. As you level up, you unlock more and more races in more and more places, as well as improving your rank from one of three available (thus providing you with even more races). It's simple enough. No pretentious storyline about being an undercover rally driver seeking to outwit the rally underworld - it's pure

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REVIEW

COLIN MCRAE: DIRT2

and simple, race to win and become the best. As you earn money, you can purchase more cars. These range from Rally cars to big trucks and off-road buggies. There's a healthy dose of vehicles here, and each has their own stats on performance in Speed, Acceleration and Drivability. The differences between the vehicles and their stats don't seem drastic, so there'll never be an out and out super-specced car that you'll receive towards the end of the game. They are all reasonably equal, so it's up to the player to pick and choose the vehicles they want. You will need to buy new vehicles for events where particular types are required, and eventually you'll build up quite a collection.

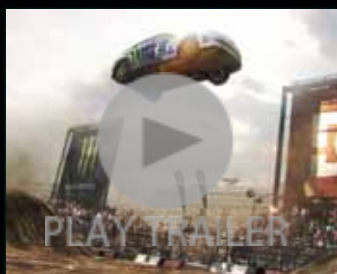
There is also a certain degree of vehicle tuning to be done, both a simplistic approach as well as a more advanced option too. Regardless, the choices of customisation aren't vast, so don't expect Gran Turismo level of fine-tuning. That said, you are given enough to make a difference.

Stiffening up the suspension will mean you're less bouncy on your landings, but will also make bumps more of a hazard. You'll be fine playing the game without ever tweaking your vehicles, but there is that option if you're the kind of person who enjoys customising for the race ahead.

You'll get a variety of race types in DiRT2's Tour Mode; from the expected Rally events, to races in different vehicles. The races differ too; Domination mode where the last racer is eliminated after a set period, lap-based tracks and long distance point-to-point races. There's enough variety in the game that means you'll never run out of differences races, or different vehicles, to take on. These can be based on single race events, points based competitions on multiple races in the same race type or the X-Games events which incorporate three different types of races. This does mean, however, that it largely becomes a hybrid off-road racing game, rather than a rally game. The rally sections are my particular



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COLIN MCRAE: DIRT2

favourite part of the game, though it seems there is a larger emphasis on races than the rallying that made the Colin McRae name. That said, none of the race types are boring and there's enough variety to keep you interested. It almost makes you feel that Codemasters made a generalised off-road game to get people interested, rather than focusing on a truly epic rally racer - of which gamers have been sorely lacking for years.

As for the tracks themselves, you're given nine different countries to race around. From the dusty Baja, California, the stony tracks of Croatia or the mud-filled Malaysia - some with a few tracks in each area. You're treated to a wide spectrum of places and locales and, most importantly in this game, different surface types. Unlike ever before, the difference is most notable. It's really possible to feel the tracks, to have to differ your racing as you switch from surface to surface. City based tracks like Battersea, London or Shibuya, Japan will see you making use of the patches of tarmac that have appeared from beneath



REVIEW

COLIN MCRAE: DIRT2



the dirt to gain control of your car after a little over-steer. Similarly, switching from region to region has you handling your car differently, from drifting around the dusty Baja to pacing along the fairly clay-based Utah track. It's this sense of knowing your vehicles grip on different surface types that really makes this game stand out. There is one fault with the game that does get kind of frustrating. More than any other, the racing genre can cause anger when you're unable to get into first position. DiRT2 is no exception. What really rattles the cage, however, is the sickeningly sweet chatter that your rival racers provide. Rarely will your competitors show anger or upset at your winning. In fact, they'll be pleased that you're in the first position. Should you smash into their car

(on purpose or otherwise), and you will be asked if you're okay. One particularly aggravating moment found me swaying and drifting trying to find an opportunity to overtake second and first place, only to have Dave Mirra have a lovely chat about the race, their driving skill and generally how nice the world was. Sickening and frustrating!

That said, it's not a real complaint and it's hard to fault DiRT2. Codemasters have managed another top-notch racer and it's looking like they're quickly becoming King of the Racer. If you were hoping for an entirely rally based game, you're likely to be disappointed, but for an off-road racing game - with rally elements - this is by far the best one out there now.



REVIEWER: **ADAM BARNES**
GAME: **COLIN MCRAE: DIRT2**
PLATFORM: **PS3**
DEVELOPER: **CODEMASTERS**
PUBLISHER: **CODEMASTERS**
RELEASED: **SEPTEMBER 11, 2009**

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

OVERALL: 8.5



REVIEW

HALO 3: ODS



The word fan boy gets pushed around a lot these days as gamers get more defensive over their favourite game or console being slated. Some people say I'm a Halo fan boy. This is true, I love the series even from the days when the Xbox was nothing more to me than a black box at my friends' house.

I remember being hooked on the story line of the first, annoyed at how short the second one is and how the third just blew me away with the new Xbox 360 visuals and even better game play and story line. But as quickly as it started it was over and Bungie had decided that the trilogy had been told and so the series was over. But now Halo: ODST takes you into another angle of the game being placed within

the second and third chapters of the original Halo story line. We follow a team of Orbital Drop Ship Troopers as they prepare to embark on trying to regain control of new Mombasa.

ODST isn't your regular run of the mill Halo game either. It's nice to see that the directors and game designers have added a new twist to how we have perceived the Halo series. ODST incorporates a much darker film noir design. You are no longer the super soldier Master Chief, instead you are human and have no special abilities like recharging shields, meaning fire fights are now a lot harder to win when you try and play Rambo. The story line begins with you the rookie dropping into Mombasa aiming to drop onto a Covenant ship with intentions of taking it out. However, during

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REVIEW

HALO 3: ODS



the jump one of your fellow marines, Dare, decides to change the trajectory of the landing zone to miss the ship. As it enters slip space a shockwave blasts the pods. The rookie ends up hitting another pod and knocking himself out for 6 hours. When you regain consciousness it's up to you to fight your way through the streets of Mombasa and try to piece together the story of what happened to the rest of your team.

The storyline then switches between the rookies actions six hours ahead and that of your fellow teammates six hours before. While the rookies parts are in a much darker and less hostile environment, this allows you to take your time around the city and find areas which hold clues about the main story line plot or other audio samples that you find around the city. This new

style of game play for the Halo series works really well and makes for a more interesting game play. There are still enemies for you to fight along the way or you can choose to be more stealthy and avoid direct contact. As well as this it also makes for a lot less of the run and gun play we all know in Halo but allow you to look around your surroundings more. As well as finding audio clues and also the main sections



TRAILERS



REVIEW

HALO 3: ODST

of the games you can also find ammo depots in hidden areas, a few even contain a Warthog for you to use as you drive around the city streets of Mombasa. Contrast to this are the Sections where you replay your teammates actions are set in a much brighter and colour rich scene which we all know and love from Halo.

The graphics of the game are pretty much the same as Halo 3 and due to the short development time I really didn't expect a brand new graphics style to blow us away. Do remember that Halo: ODST is the first in the Halo line that has taken under three years to make. This also rings true with the AI. While there has been some changes due to the non-linear style of the rookies section, not much has changed which really isn't a issue.

Once again the sound and soundtrack of the game is stunning. The music is top notch and balances the different scenes perfectly from the tense battle sequences, to walking through

the streets of Mombasa trying to find a way of piecing together what has happened.

While the multiplayer is packaged on a separate disc, it includes all of the newest Halo maps which is brilliant, allowing you to jump straight into a match. Again due to the short development time this has been ripped directly from Halo 3.

Like with other Halo games the single player campaign is also available in co-op mode, allowing you and a friend who gives you a extra thinking person rather than a random AI controlled substitute to help you play through the game, which is needed in the harder difficulties. ODST also contains a new co-op mode called 'FireFight'.

In this mode players take on wave after wave of varied enemies increasing in difficulty and seeing how long they can last. The FireFight system can be played either over Xbox Live or System Link with up to three other players. The team has a



REVIEW

HALO 3: ODST



pool of lives which is set to seven. As a player dies, one life is taken out of the pool. But these can be replenished by completing special bonus rounds. The game is over once all the lives are gone and all players are dead. With rewards for getting far and making special kills this feels very much like Gears of war 2's Horde mode but none the less enjoyable.

Halo ODST is Bungie's swan song, as while this game isn't any major improvement for

the system and the game, it's still nice to get some more Halo action and the way the game has been covered is brilliant.

The transition from the tense fire fights to the calm and sometimes eerily quiet streets of the rookies sections as you transverse and piece together the storyline is brilliant. It just shows you that the Halo platform has some life left in it as we wait for Reach with fanboy baited breaths.



REVIEWER: **SIMON BONDS**
GAME: **HALO 3: ODST**
PLATFORM: **XBOX 360**
DEVELOPER: **BUNGIE**
PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT GAMES STUDIO**
RELEASED: **OCTOBER 12, 2009**

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

OVERALL: **8.5**



STAR WARS: CLONE WARS: REPUBLIC HEROES



Star Wars is a fickle franchise when it comes to the gaming industry. On the one hand you have heavy hitters like Knights of the Old Republic and the Dark Forces / Jedi Knight series, but on the other you have games like Super Bombad Racing and the generally loathed Revenge of the Sith game.

Here we have Star Wars: The Clone Wars: Republic Heroes. It's a game with a ridiculously long title, but not enough substance. I'll start off by saying I enjoyed myself with this game for a few reasons, but I also came to hate it at certain points. Referred to from here simply as Republic Heroes, the game, sees you living out events from the world of the Clone Wars TV cartoon and movie, which are in turn based off the less than stellar new trilogy of films.

At the beginning of the game we are introduced

to Anakin Skywalker, along with his apprentice, Ashoka Tano. Here we are given a tutorial level on how the controls work and what we'll be doing for, well, most of the game. After getting to grips with the lightsaber combat and platforming abilities you have as a Jedi, you are then given control of one of the Clone Troopers – this is the second game type available to you. Controlling a Clone is vastly different from controlling a Jedi. Your abilities such as double jumps and force powers are all gone, in their place, a twin-stick shooter, where the left stick controls the Clones movement and the right stick determines which direction he'll fire.

The Clone parts are easily the worst parts of the game, with ropey aiming and grenade tossing, along with repetitive level design. The Jedi have the ability to scale cliffs and climb around, whereas the Clones

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REVIEW

STAR WARS: CLONE WARS: REPUBLIC HEROES

are stuck permanently on terra firma.

That is basically your game right there. You alternate at times between playing as the Jedi, and playing as the Clones – each time realising that the different Jedi and different Clones all control the exact same. There is an option for co-op play, however it's restricted to local play only, which is a shame, as the game has some potential for being good fun with two players controlling Jedi, killing enemies with lightsabers and competing for the highest score – a bit of a missed opportunity there.

The game does have a few things in its favour

though, it has pretty responsive controls for the Jedi when fighting, letting you jump on the back of an enemy droid – called “Droid Jakking” – then cutting it down to size with your lightsaber before jumping onto the back of a Super Battle Droid and using its laser to decimate any remaining droids, finishing up the dance of death with a swift lightsaber slash to the head of aforementioned Super Battle Droid. It's moments like these the game gets right, but unfortunately they're too few and far between, with the game instead opting to force you into some extremely unresponsive platforming.

The platforming sections see you and your



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STAR WARS: CLONE WARS: REPUBLIC HEROES

current Jedi hero performing acrobatics all over the place, which is all well and good, but it's so unresponsive at times, you'll mean to jump to a small ledge and instead end up saying hello to the never-ending hole beneath you.

These moments are frustrating and happen all too often, thankfully there's checkpoints scattered about every level, usually spawning you right next to where you died. This is also a problem though, since there's not really a penalty for death, I often times found myself jumping about randomly hoping for the best, if I fell to my death, so be it – I'd respawn and blindly jump in a different direction until I was successfully on my way. Needless to say, my attempts weren't exactly Jedi like.

The game comes with bonuses though. Those are always good. Have you ever wanted to see what Anakin Skywalker would look like wearing Indiana Jones' fedora hat? Now you can.

How about a Clone Trooper sporting an outstandingly oversized Darth Sideous mask, or a Greedo mask for the Jedi when you're jumping into big holes – I'm sure there's a few people who would want to do that. The game does sport a large number of unlockables, some of which are 'bought' using points earned in the game, while the rest are unlocked using artifacts you will find scattered about the levels.

This could add some replay to the game, but again, this is one of the things that would be more fun playing with someone else (preferably with the option of doing so online). As well as unlockables, the game also sports

a rather large amount of challenges you can find throughout the levels – over 100 in total – which are, unfortunately, all rather similar. If you find a challenge marker and accept it, there's a large chance you will be tasked with defeating waves of enemies, as many as you can in the time limit, for which you are awarded either a bronze, silver, gold or platinum medal. I done about 40 or so of these challenges and never failed to get the platinum. They are too easy and too samey, with the only differences coming when you are asked to kill enemies in a specific way (using Force Push) or killing enemies while in a vehicle.

Republic Heroes is too frustrating to simply call a kids game, but it's too easy to finish (no death penalty, respawning exactly where you died) to class as an adults game. It keeps the look of the source material, giving you an alternate looking Anakin, Obi Wan and their Jedi and Clone friends, which is refreshing in a time where most things tend to strive for realism.

Unfortunately, interesting graphics can't make me recommend it. It would be a better game in my book, simply with the inclusion of an online co-op mode, as you're not always going to have someone to play it with locally, and it's not a good enough game to warrant playing through on your own.

It's not a missed opportunity; it's more like a needless expansion of a time period in the saga that a large amount of Star Wars fans don't care about. The new trilogy was a disaster in terms of fan approval – I think Republic Heroes may suffer the same fate.

REVIEW

STAR WARS: CLONE WARS: REPUBLIC HEROES



REVIEWER: **KEVIN MALONE**
GAME: **SW: CW: REPUBLIC HEROES**
PLATFORM: **PC**
DEVELOPER: **KROME STUDIOS**
PUBLISHER: **LUCASARTS**
RELEASED: **OCTOBER 6, 2009**

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

OVERALL: **5.5**



UNCHARTED 2: AMONG THIEVES



Uncharted 2: Among Thieves is the highly anticipated – and much hyped – sequel to Naughty Dog’s PlayStation 3 exclusive, Uncharted: Drake’s Fortune. The PlayStation 3 has a rather fickle ‘hardcore’ fanbase, who hype games beyond all measure – see Killzone 2, as an example -, but once the initial thrill of their new game has worn off, they’ll move on to hyping their next big exclusive. Uncharted 2 has received more hype than is good for any game, but it just may be worth it.

Taking place two years after the events of Drake’s Fortune, Among Thieves begins as it means to go on – in blockbuster style. We see our hero, Nathan Drake (voiced excellently by Nolan North again) in a train carriage, bleeding, apparently having been shot. The carriage then starts to tumble and Drake falls out the bottom of the now vertical train. Within seconds of seeing him falling out and grabbing onto a railing for dear

life, you are in control. You’ll spend this time getting use to the game’s new climbing mechanics. No longer do you just shimmy left and right, you can now exercise the ability to free climb, and by free climb, I mean go exactly where the developers want you to; though it looks a lot more natural than it ever did in Drake’s Fortune.

Once you have escaped your near death from the wreckage of the train, you are then shown a flashback to how Nate found himself in this position. Sitting at a bar having a beer, Nate is greeted by an old friend, Harry Flynn and Harry’s girlfriend, Chloe Frazer. Here Nate is offered a job, robbing a museum in Istanbul to recover a green oil lamp which Drake initially believes to be worthless. Needless to say, the heist doesn’t exactly go according to plan and from here on out you will find yourself chasing after Marco Polo’s legendary lost fleet; something called the Cintamani Stone and the lost city

SCREENSHOTS



UNCHARTED 2: AMONG THIEVES

of Shambhala (also noted as Shangri-La). Your adventure will bring you to various locations, and let you hook up with some old friends including the lady-loving Sully, and Elena Fisher – the reporter from the original Drake's Fortune.

The story is typical Indiana Jones style, with you and your friends searching for lost treasure, maybe saving the world while you're at it, but it all gets told in such a fashion that you're wanting to see the next bit, which is one of the game's best qualities – I constantly found myself playing and saying, "I'll save at the next checkpoint"... "Oh that looks interesting, better save after that instead"... "Ah, a cut scene. It'd be stupid to skip this, I'll save later..." and so on, constantly wanting to go to the next part.

Other than the earlier mentioned 'free climbing' the game controls vastly similar to the original, but it feels tighter and more responsive, leaving you less likely to go jumping off a cliff by accident (by less likely, I mean you still will, just not as much). You still have to use cover wisely to stay alive, and you still can only carry two weapons at a time – with one exception, you can carry a sidearm (pistol, machine pistol, Pistole (a very powerful pistol) etc..), a heavy weapon (AK, M4, Shotgun etc...) and the heavy chain gun all at once, but the chain gun doesn't come into your possession very often.

The game is spent either shooting foes or platforming and solving puzzles, and the platforming has been reduced from the original, with more focus on shooting things here, which



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UNCHARTED 2: AMONG THIEVES

is a good thing – it keeps the game flowing at a faster, action movie pacing. The aiming is spot on and is still a near identical copy of Gears of War's cover and shoot system. The platforming as noted, is less frustrating than before, but you'll probably still find yourself dying more at the hands of a vicious cliff than the enemies themselves.

When you're travelling around the world, searching for Shambhala, you can stop and investigate the game's gorgeous environments looking for treasures, and performing odd tasks for money and medals (the in-game reward system). These tasks can be truly fitting and genuinely funny, such as Drake jumping into the swimming pool of a hotel and shouting "Marco!" and waiting patiently on his reluctant companion to shout "Polo" back to him. It's small moments like these that add to the characters in the game. Drake is likeable in an everyday man kind of way, while Elena and Sully retain previous charms. I'll leave you to find out about the new characters yourself.

Of course, one of the reasons Uncharted 2 is garnering so much praise is because of its graphics. It would be a crime to not mention them – they are absolutely gorgeous. Naughty Dog worked hard on water effects in Uncharted: Drake's Fortune, but here they've gone for snow effects. The environments are fantastic to look at and run around, the character models are superb, as snow sticks to Drake's jeans and the powdery, softer snow bounces around under Drake's heavy feet, and the animation is among the best I've seen. There's a certain part of the game that sees you jumping from jeep to jeep while also shooting at your pursuers. It looks amazing, doesn't let up for a second and is simply exhilarating to play through.

Uncharted 2 also sports a multiplayer component, which I was very sceptical of when I first heard about it. Uncharted is a single player experience, so I thought multiplayer would break it. How very wrong I was. Using a similar ranking / perk system to Infinity Ward's Call



REVIEW

UNCHARTED 2: AMONG THIEVES



of Duty 4, Among Thieves sees you playing standard deathmatches and capture the flag type games, as well as co-operative play, with you and two others either gunning for a treasure somewhere, or taking on waves of enemies a'la Horde mode from Gears of War 2.

Uncharted 2 is one of the best games I've played this generation and I definitely recommend it to anyone with even a passing interest in gaming. It's the most fun single player experience I've had in a long time, and the multiplayer is going to make sure I go back to it again for some time to come.



REVIEWER: **KEVIN MALONE**
GAME: **UNCHARTED 2**
PLATFORM: **PS3**
DEVELOPER: **NAUGHTY DOG**
PUBLISHER: **SCEE**
RELEASED: **OCTOBER 16, 2009**

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

OVERALL: 9



PREVIEW

RACE ON



Racing games come in all different shapes, sizes and genres and many gamers have a preferred style. Some feel that “arcade” games like Need for Speed and GRID are the better, whereas some prefer the more laid back style of the simulation games such as Gran Turismo and Forza.

In my eyes, a great racing game is finding the balance. Not just the type, but what cars are in the game, the tracks and the different game styles. The upcoming game from SimBin (a Swedish game company behind such titles as RACE Pro and RACE 07) named RACE On encompasses all these points beautifully.

The game that is due to be released on PC later next month has some serious potential to be a game that stands out in the genre. You have the opportunity to choose from up to 39 different vehicles in 17 different race categories of which

can be raced at over 45 various locations worldwide. This may not sound like a massive number, but this isn't all you get. The numbers I have shown here are for RACE On only. With your purchase you get 3 more full games - RACE 07 - The WTCC Game, STCC - The Game and Volvo - The Game. RACE 07 itself has over 300 different cars so the numbers keep going on and on.

Enough about figures and statistics, onto the game itself. The first thing I did upon loading the game was go straight to the options menu. I play racing games



PREVIEW

RACE ON

they way they should always be played, with a steering wheel. A good steering wheel is essential for such gaming - but it can only be good if the settings can be altered to match. Fantasticly the game recognised my controller straight away and unlike many games it allows the user to have a full 6-speed gear box for your designated controller (something I found lacking in games like GRID).

Some of the classes which you can choose from include several Formula Series Cars and many Touring Cars too, both of which are my favourites. To cater for all driving styles there are many sliders and options to



adjust your own specific preferences. There are enough to make it so the car handles like an arcade style game and when turned off the car handles like it would in a simulation - the perfect combination.

Most races are set-up like a normal race weekend with the exception that you can change the start from static on the grid to rolling. The weather conditions will also be adjustable in the full version as they weren't in the beta I played. Small things such as track officials and warnings of collisions of different sectors of the track put this game above many other racing games of its kind. One of the best things I found was the live split timings from the car in front and behind. Instead



of having timings on each sector, you can check your progress for gaining and pulling away from cars behind in front of you to the second - a very nifty feature.

I don't want to give too much away at the moment but what you can be assured about, is the fact that if you love racing games then this is a complete must have. It works perfectly with many game wheels and feels like a proper racing game, with as many different options as there are cars. To get 4 games in one is just a pure bonus for a game that will cost no more than a standard PC title.

RACE On along with all the games you receive with it will retail at £29.99 and is due to be released on the 9th of October although that can be subject to change.

James Bralant



STAR WARS: THE OLD REPUBLIC

Earlier this year, GameOn were lucky enough to catch a glimpse of Star Wars: The Old Republic while attending E3 back in June, whilst only being a viewing of the game, it still gave an insight on how the game was progressing. Fast forwarding to August at GamesCom, GameOn were even more privileged to obtain a hands-on demonstration of this highly anticipated MMO from the creative pockets of Bioware.

Walking into the Star Wars themed booth was very dangerous territory for me, not to mention dangerous for the Bioware team residing within. Having combined two of my passions, Star Wars and MMORPG's, it could have proven very difficult for me to leave the pc, not to mention difficult for the staff to tear me away from the seat. With World of Warcraft reigning supreme at the crest of MMO gaming, it was interesting to see what Bioware had created in order to topple the King, or at the very least,

punch a huge hole in Blizzard's armour and take a chunk of its user base away. The section of gameplay on show to us was set on an Imperial Star Destroyer which became under attack by Republic troops and we were given control of an Imperial Sith Warrior. From the outset of this demonstration mission, it was clear that Bioware have big plans for this game.

The full voice narration for every character you come across is a huge part of the interaction and immersion of your character development, no more reading a little pop up box with your quest information, now you get a nice interactive cut scene with your mission details which also includes dialogue options which determine how your avatar's personality will be portrayed while communicating with other NPC's.

These moral choices you make also determine the path you walk down in the game world's persistent story line,



STAR WARS: THE OLD REPUBLIC



so once that decision is made there is no turning back. Some opportunities may open up while others will become closed off for your character. This should provide a unique experience for each and every player who picks this title up.

The control system is very similar to World of Warcraft, utilising a modern FPS keyset (WASD) for movement and using either you clicking the icons on your action bar or pressing their pre-defined key binding to activate your skills, the positioning of your health bar, action bars and mini map are at the bottom of the screen, leaving the rest of your view port for all the action you'll be getting into. No doubt all of this will be customisable for those who seek the perfect UI though it is too early to indicate whether Bioware will support the creation of third party UI modifications akin to the myriad of addons available for World of Warcraft.

Visually, the game looks very authentic, the bridge of the Star Destroyer was laid out as expected even if the game is set

3000 years prior to the shenanigans of Anakin Skywalker and Co. The faction difference is easily identifiable, while we were dressed in dark apparel, the Republic troops which boarded our vessel were in bright uniforms so picking out adversaries in a fight should pose little problem.

Throughout our playtime with this game, our thoughts of "This is going to be something special" were growing stronger with every minute we spent with The Old Republic. Even in these early stages of playable code, the possibilities of the title are very exciting indeed, Bioware have an excellent reputation for producing quality RPG's, just take a look at Knights of the Old Republic and Mass Effect for example, the team here at GameOn really cannot wait to get our hands on the finished product. Bioware were tight lipped on time scales for this potential WoW beater, nor did they let slip if they had any plans of closed or open beta's however, I'm sure you will agree this will be a game to wait patiently for.

Neil Hetherington



SOUTH PARK: LET'S GO TOWER DEFENCE PLAY

When I heard the words South Park and Game in the same sentence, my heart seems to sink a little. All previous South Park games have been okay, but not great with shoddy graphics and give no credit to the show itself. Sadly, this game is not much of an exception.

The story revolves around our four main characters, Cartman, Stan, Karl and Kenny. They are trying to stop evil beings such as ginger kids and cows from attacking their town by chucking snow balls at them at different strengths.

Along with this, they are helped by a few laser towers and snowball throwing machines. The object of the game - like

any Tower Defense game - is to stop the enemies reaching the objective by destroying them before they can do so. Usually though I would think that a game with 'tower defense' in the title would have some sort of tower building system in it, but no. You are the four main characters; Throwing snowballs and running around.

The graphics are still quite bad in true South Park fashion as they are somewhat blocky, however, seeing as we are now on our 3rd generation consoles, I would hope to expect something a bit better than this, even if it is a Xbox Live Arcade title.

The voice acting is okay. It sticks with the story and doesn't seem to jump in



SOUTH PARK: LET'S GO TOWER DEFENCE PLAY

at random moments. In true South Park fashion, there are the occasional quips and jokes you'd expect from the characters. Although, the fact that you have Cartman shouting about "Respecting his authoritah" somehow compensates for some of the more dissapointing qualities of this game.

There is the option of multiplayer within the game, so you and a friend can control a character or two each, but in the event of lacking any real friends, you can control all the characters and switch between them by quickly pressing the left shoulder button.

Each character has their own special ability, which is charged up and can unleash almighty hell on their assailants. Each of the characters powers are different and as such can be more effective in different situations; for instance Stan can heal the town of South Park if you start to leak enemies whereas Cartman can release a large amount of energy to kill surrounding enemies in an circular area round him.

All together there isn't a lot to be said about this game. The story is kind of amusing, the game play is average and the graphics are not great. It's fun for a bit of a giggle but not really aimed at the more serious gamer.

Chris West



NEED FOR SPEED: NITRO

Need for Speed NITRO has been developed from the ground up specifically for the Wii and DS with the emphasis on fun and over the top arcade action rather than balls to the wall realism. All the cars are officially licensed from a multitude of manufacturers so expect to see the likes of Mitsubishi Evo's and Porsche 911's hurtling around weird and wonderful tracks at break neck speeds.

The thing that stood out to me the most, was the simple yet intuitive control method for the Wii, holding A to accelerate while twisting the Wiimote left or right to steer. Tapping the B button initiates a drift which felt so natural that in no time at all I was able to hold my 150mph drifts with ease.

So as you may have gathered this is not a serious racer at all, the graphical direction of the game also bolsters this

style with exuberant artwork on the cars with bright, colourful landscapes to drive through which are as varied as the paint jobs on your rides. Expect tracks ranging from city streets to roller coasters, with loops and twists ahoy.

As with any driving title the aim of this game is to finish ahead of the pack for that top spot of the podium, fighting your way past your rivals while simultaneously trying to avoid the over zealous police in their attempt to kerb street racers.

To help this you have a nitrous meter on your HUD which builds up via your drifting around corners.

Once one of the two canisters has filled you can shake the Wiimote to engage the boost propelling your car to warp speed for a short period of time; however any damage you may take in the race



PREVIEW

NEED FOR SPEED: NITRO



will decrease your nitrous ability which must be repaired via the spanner pick-ups which are dotted around the track. You also have a badge meter on your HUD to indicate how much police attention you are attracting to yourself; the higher the meter the more focused the forces will be in apprehending you.

To combat this, there is a pick-up shaped like a police badge, also on the track, which enables you to transfer your wanted rating to a fellow competitor by simply pressing the down arrow on the D-Pad. This is quite handy when you wish to shake off your full wanted level onto the race leader, leaving you to concentrate on the road while he has to contend with the fuzz. The title will house a multitude of

game modes to keep the replay value including seven multiplayer modes for up-to four players, featuring: Race, Team Race, Eliminator, Drag Race, Speed Cameras Challenge, Drift Challenge, and Time Attack Challenge.

To enhance the multiplayer experience a cooperative campaign is included where up-to three additional racers may join your game to partake in street racing to unlock new rides and customisations.

There is plenty on offer from this take on the Need for Speed series, which I would recommend taking a look at, even if you're not really a racing fan.

Neil Hetherington



COFFEE BREAK

GAME CHARTS

Top 10 Multi- Platform Games

1. Football Manager 2010
2. Wii Fit Plus
3. FIFA 10
4. Forza Motorsport 3
5. Pro Evolution Soccer 2010
6. Grand Theft Auto: Episodes from Liberty City
7. Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games
8. Tekken 6
9. Borderlands
10. Wii Sports Resort



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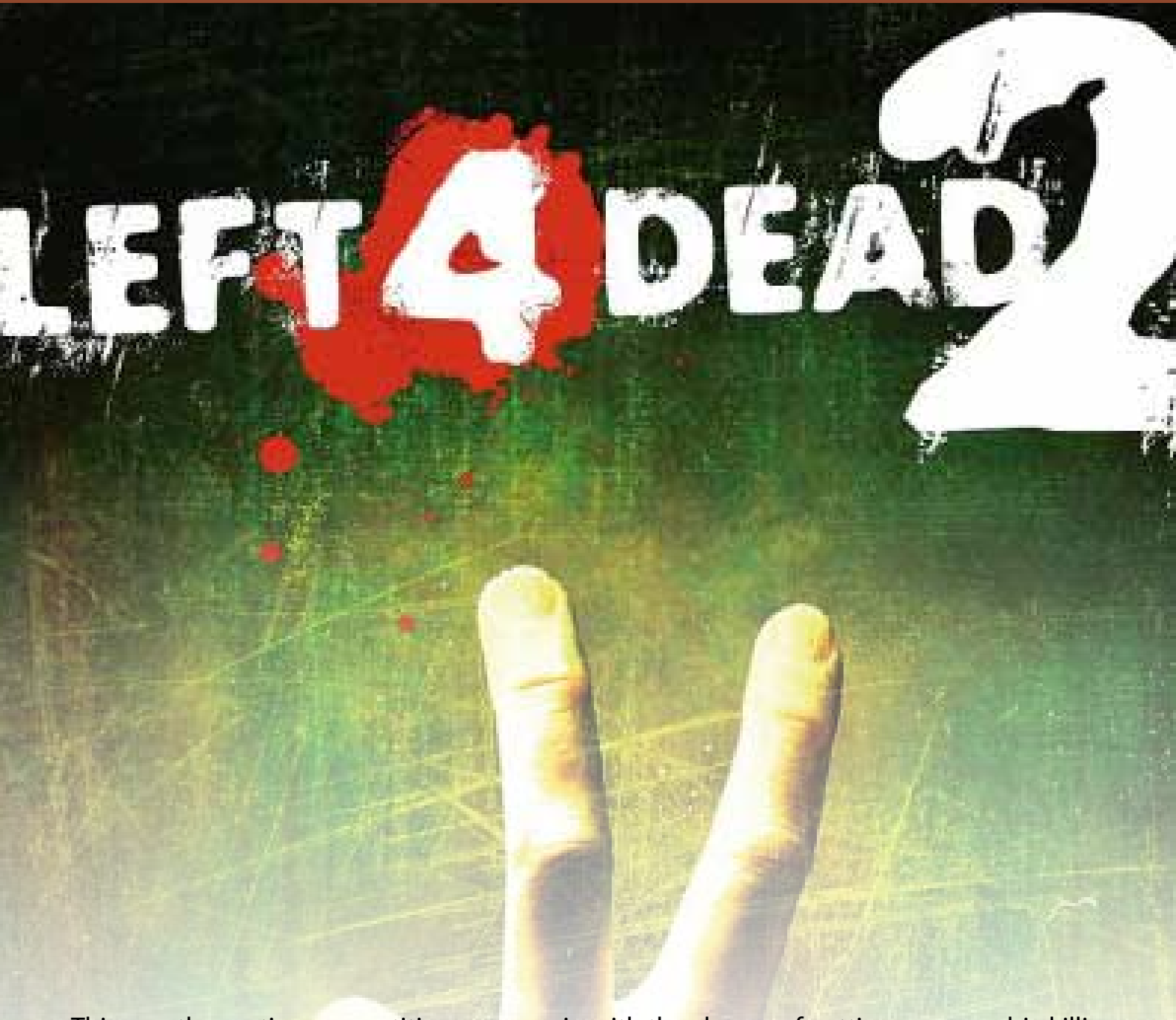


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Cool or what?



PC vs. Consoles:
Sports Game

COFFEE BREAK CAPTION COMPETITION



This months caption competition sees you in with the chance of getting your zombie killing mits on Left 4 Dead 2 for the PC (Steam Only). To be in with a chance of winning, simply head over to our new captions system, choose a picture and enter a witty comment, then post it on the forums to be in with your chance of winning Valve's newest zombie-em-up.

Competition System:



Entry Thread:





SEE YOU IN THE BORDERLANDS