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# PCGzine

Issue 54 | June 2011

Free Magazine For PC Gamers. Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...

**EXCLUSIVE!**

## STAR WARS: THE OLD REPUBLIC

Exclusive playtest and interview inside!

**PREVIEWED!**

**TERA**  
An MMO but not as we know it!

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BONUS MAGAZINE

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**RED FACTION:  
ARMAGEDDON**  
One of the first reviews of this destruct-'em-up!

DEUS EX: HUMAN REVOLUTION

SWORD OF THE STARS 2

BRINK

PIRATES OF BLACK COVE

THE FIRST TEMPLAR



# Welcome to PCGZine



We've gone a little MMO crazy this month with not only a mammoth preview of Star Wars: The Old Republic but also our latest impressions of TERA. Both premium titles are looking to revolutionise online gaming in their own way and are worthy of every PC gamer's attention, regardless of genre preference.

No matter how much we fight it, some of the industry's most talented developers are turning their hands to crafting online-only experiences, and if it's any consolation, most new projects look far and beyond what we've seen before.

What an exciting time, and the E3 show is only just around the corner...

Andy Griffiths, Editor  
pcgzine@gamerzines.com

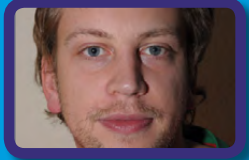
**READER FEEDBACK!**  
Click here to tell us what you think of the magazine!

## MEET THE TEAM

Probably the best games writers on the planet



**David Scammell**  
Still can get over just how good Portal 2 is.



**Jon Denton**  
Is now obsessed with all things Detroit. Word!

## Don't miss! This month's highlights...

**Star Wars: The Old Republic**  
*BioWare's bravest endeavour yet!*

**TERA**  
*Can this MMO from Korea compete?*

**The First Templar**  
*Much more than an Assassin's Creed clone*

**Red Faction: Armageddon**  
*Epic adventure or glorified explodathon?*

### QUICK FINDER Every game's just a click away!

Sengoku	Saints Row: The Third
Star Wars: The Old Republic	Deus Ex: Human Revolution
TERA	Pirates of Black Cove
Sword of the Stars II	Red Faction: Armageddon
Brink	The First Templar
Section 8: Prejudice	Black Mirror 3

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**Publisher:** THQ  
**Developer:** Volition Inc.  
**Heritage:** Red Faction  
Guerilla, Saints Row  
**Link:** www.saintsrow.com  
**ETA:** Christmas 2011

**PREVIEW FEEDBACK!**  
Click here to tell us what you think of Saints Row: The Third



Saints Row: popularising purple since 2006.

# Saints Row: The Third

**FIRST LOOK**

*New city, still no rules*

### What's the story?

Featuring the same disregard for decency in pursuit of fun, violence and general madcap action, Saints Row is back. The Third iteration is set in a new fictional city dubbed Steelport, moving on from Stilwater, and features the return of your customisable protagonist – whatever he or she was – in a plot which is set months after the second game.

### What do we know?

Story has never really been what this series is all about, but that isn't to say The Third is going to take itself seriously. The elaborate array of costumes – including cheerleader outfits – return in their madcap manner, with a mixture of silly and modern weaponry which is now fully upgradable via scopes and extra barrels. Car customisation returns with a similar approach featured in the previous games.

Competitive multiplayer, however, has been dropped, in order to allow more development time to be spent polishing the game's co-op potential.

### Anything else to declare?

Most interestingly of all, Saints Row 3 will include a new XP-based levelling system akin to Grand Theft Auto's San Andreas, with players able to specialise their character in a number of avenues. This series has always been accused of copying Rockstar's star attraction, but it appears once again that Saints Row will be the comical cousin to GTA's serious uncle.

For any other series this would be deemed over-the-top...



Every game needs a tank!  
Are you listening Rockstar?





# WE'RE NOT IN AZEROTH ANYMORE



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**RP**  
Content Rated by ESRB  
May contain content inappropriate for children.  
Visit [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org) for rating information.





## 戦国 SENGOKU

**Publisher:** Paradox Interactive  
**Developer:** In-house  
**Heritage:** Crusader Kings series  
**Link:** www.paradoxplaza.com/games/sengoku  
**ETA:** September

**PREVIEW FEEDBACK!**  
Click here to tell us what you think of Sengoku



There are many more clans simulated here than in Shogun 2.



Navigating a series of menus is still a big part of this experience.



Agents and armies appear on the map in period attire.

# Sengoku

**FIRST LOOK**

*So you think you know Feudal Japan?*

### What's the story?

The strategy legend that is Chris King is shifting his focus from Europe to the Far East, in a grand strategy title which seeks to accurately emulate Japan's turbulent Feudal era from 1467 until 1630. All the staples of this studio's previous games are here, including the ability to wage war against other powers, use your family to maximum political influence and managing finances, but this is the first to have a finite victory condition to unite Japan and be proclaimed Shogun.

### Wait a second, haven't we heard that before?

Sengoku does share a similar premise to Total War Shogun 2, but this is a much more cerebral experience with no glossy real-time battle system. However, what this strategy title lacks in finesse, it makes up with an supremely deep simulation of the time, with plenty of historical characters and a detailed clan system which constantly evolves. New clan leaders are regularly declared and family members or warriors can double-cross their own kind to form their own clan or move to a competitor.

### So how does it work?

Whenever players start a new game they choose a clan to control, and throughout the campaign years they use honour to orchestrate their forces via a variety of sub menus – ordering hits on competitors via stealthy ninjas, using their sons as pawns in forging alliances or asking those low in the clan to commit seppuku – ritual suicide. King has promised that the GUI won't be as click dependent as his previous games, and from what we witnessed that definitely seemed to be the case, with no more than four clicks to get access to the information needed.

### Anything else to declare?

Sengoku will only appeal to a certain type of gamer, who isn't afraid to sacrifice some visual excellence when in pursuit of a complex and evolving grand strategic experience. If Shogun 2 introduced us to the Feudal Japanese period, Sengoku looks to educate us about it, and that's definitely something to be encouraged.





# VOLUME 4 : ASTRAL ODYSSEY


## Officially launches in Europe on 11.5.11





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# 7UP

More golden nuggets of gaming glory to come

## Guild Wars 2

Publisher: NCsoft | ETA: TBA

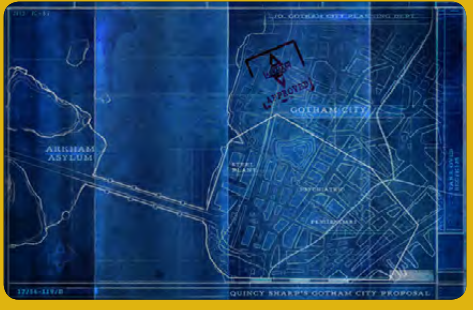
This news got us really pumped. The city of Lion's Arch will return in Guild Wars 2. It's strange how one virtual place can sum up an entire MMO, but its transformed state looks absolutely wondrous and we can't wait to talk to vendors, find quests and run around like mentalists. Check out the trailer online!



## Batman: Arkham City

Publisher: Warner Bros | ETA: 21st October

A high-resolution map of the playable game area in Arkham City emerged over the past month, ripped from a secret room inside Arkham Asylum. Unfortunately it isn't very detailed, but it does allude to the fact that Arkham City will be at least three times as large as the previous game.



## Kingdoms of Amalur: Reckoning

Publisher: EA | ETA: 2012

Big Huge Games has released gameplay footage from their recent showing at PAX East, with commentary from Ian Frazier. It's definitely worth a search, if only to see some gnarly looking weaponry and monster design.



## Hitman Absolution

Publisher: Square-Enix | ETA: TBA

Finally IO Interactive has confirmed that they are working on a new entry in the iconic Hitman series. Few details are known, but Agent 47 will once again star with proceedings mostly taking place in the US. Lots of Hollywood talent are being associated with this one, so let's hope they don't taint it with blockbuster ideals.



## Diablo III

Publisher: Blizzard | ETA: TBA

We don't know about you, but we're getting a bit tired of Blizzard teasing Diablo III. We just want to play the ruddy thing! Well, to prevent the impending revolt, an open Beta will occur at the end of summer which will allow fans of the dungeon crawler to put it through its paces. Now all we need is a release date...



## Trackmania 2: Canyon

Publisher: Ubisoft | ETA: 2011

A Beta date for Trackmania 2 has been set by Ubisoft. Racers will be able to sample this speedy sequel in July, with the online framework, ManiaPlanet, also debuting. As long as we'll be able to race on elaborately designed tracks with massive jumps then we'll be happy.



## Ghost Recon: Future Soldier

Publisher: Ubisoft | ETA: 2012

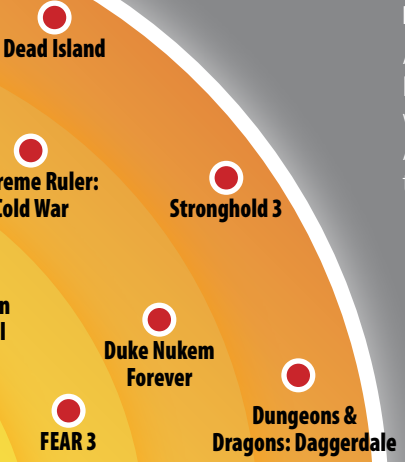
Seeing as everyone seems to be releasing a Triple-A shooter at the end of 2011, Ubisoft has elected to push their's back until next year. Who says extra development time is hard to come by?

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**HANDS-ON**



**Publisher:** EA  
**Developer:** BioWare  
Austin  
**Heritage:** Baldur's Gate,  
Dragon Age, Knights of the  
Old Republic  
**Link:** www.swtor.com  
**ETA:** Autumn 2011

**PREVIEW  
FEEDBACK!**  
Click here to  
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you think of  
Star Wars: The  
Old Republic

# STAR WARS: THE OLD REPUBLIC

*Much to learn, you still have...*

Say what you want about BioWare, but they don't like to do things by halves. Usually MMO developers only like to give a few hours worth of access to their vulnerable alpha efforts, but with The Old Republic we were given an unprecedented 19 hours worth of access over two days, to put the game through its paces, and with

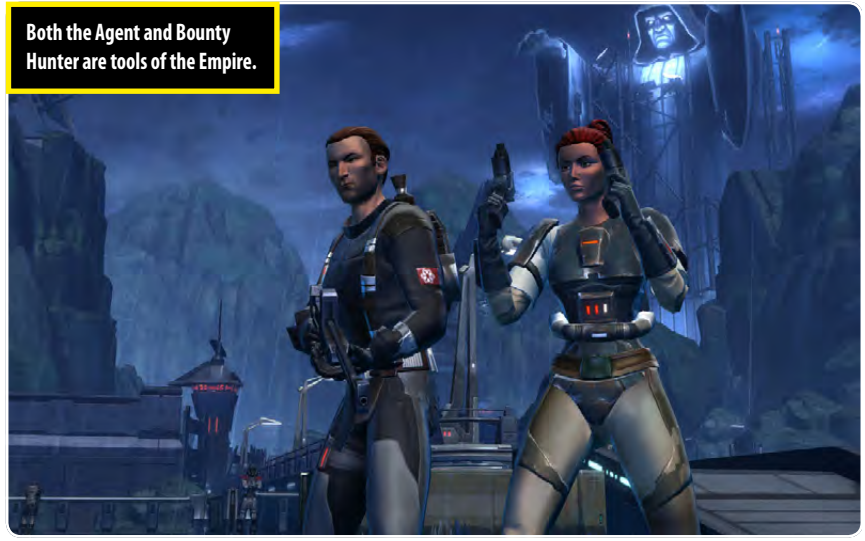
no developers hamstringing our play. All we were given was a pre-made alien Bounty Hunter avatar and asked to quest until the clock struck 10pm. These immersion days are a very confident statement of intent from BioWare, especially as SW:TOR has yet to have an official launch date. And even though we took the Jedi Consular for a

spin only four issues ago, we were shocked and impressed with just how different the Bounty Hunter played, and how his story panned out as well. Each of the game's eight good vs evil classes – Republic Trooper, Jedi Knight, Jedi Consular, Smuggler vs Imperial Agent, Sith Inquisitor, Sith Warrior and Bounty Hunter – have their own unique

story-arc and share starter planets – two per class. There are generic quest-lines to follow but the main story, which BioWare promise will be as long as Knights of the Old Republic's campaign, will be personal to your character class, with a selection of companions to be recruited along the way. With all the character classes



Our Bounty Hunter wasn't anything like Dirty Harry, but in our hearts he was. "Just try it, punk!"



Both the Agent and Bounty Hunter are tools of the Empire.



It pays to team up with players from other classes, both in combat and story terms.







> **Old Republic** cont.

accounted for this should equate to an experience 8 times as large as KOTOR.

Our journey began on Hutta, a gloomy under-developed planet which was ruled by slimy crime lord, Nemro the Hutt. During our first steps emerging from a cantina, we noticed the world was in a constant state of battle between rival criminal gangs, giving us ample opportunity to utilise our twin laser pistols and wrist-mounted rocket launcher – not bad for starter skills. In typical MMO fashion, vendors stand in a stationary position just waiting for you to click on them, so you can hear (and potentially solve) their array of problems. Some quests were shared content between our class and the Imperial Agent, who also started on the same world.

Despite witnessing BioWare's fully voiced quest briefings before, we still got a massive kick out of them. It's a small touch which makes the world seem so much more alive. There was the occasional fetch quest and hunt X of Y creature task, but occasionally there was an effort which showed a spark of BioWare's brilliance. For instance, one quest featured us talking to a mother who wanted us to hunt down her husband who had kidnapped her son, in order to prevent the potential youngling from becoming a Sith Lord. The resolution here allows plenty of moral wiggle-room, with the Bounty Hunter's ability to lie to almost everyone involved

to get the experience necessary to level, or do the so-called 'right thing'.

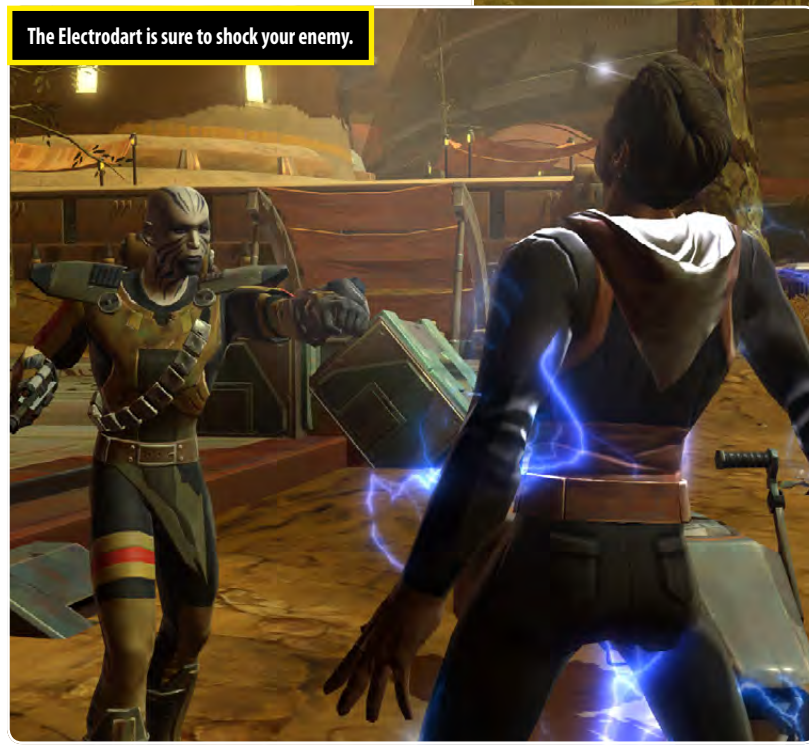
The over-arching goal is to get yourself and your team enrolled in the Great Hunt, the galaxy's number one contest to get noticed for your bounty hunting talents and Nemro holds the golden ticket, so the majority of missions involve making the giant slug happy. However, the way this pans out is really novel and unique. Class-specific missions involve going into instance-sensitive areas where as soon as you initiate the next part of the story, you're separated from the gameworld to do your own thing. Other classes can join you to help, >

*"Despite witnessing BioWare's fully voiced quest briefings before, we still got a massive kick out of them"*



Nemro's palace dominates the Hutta skyline.

The Electrodart is sure to shock your enemy.



As a non-human, Imperial hardliners will usually treat you callously and with suspicion.







STAR WARS  
 OLD REPUBLIC



The Chiss do feature and yes, they are awesome!



Only the lengthy Flashpoint mission gave the impression of intergalactic turmoil.

> **The Old Republic** cont.

but not fellow classes, in order not to upset the narrative balance. It sounds complicated, but in real-terms it means when you're in a group when two Bounty Hunters, one will initiate their story mission and the other won't be

able to join him or her until their cut-scene sequence is complete. On paper it sounds like a strange compromise and not conducive to a multiplayer environment, but it does mean that your hero feels much more important in the grand scheme. Incidentally, these segments are given

an estimated completion time, so you can tell your friends to come back in five minutes or however long proceedings will take.

That said, teaming up in TOR is still fun and vital during the early levels. All of the functionality you'd expect is here, with the ability for dialogue options to be tackled together and a random dice roll to determine how certain conversation options are tackled when in a group.

At around level 10 we got access to the real tools of the trade, such as the always epic 'Death from Above' move – raining missiles down on enemies from an elevated position care of our boosters for a few seconds, and the ability to shock enemies and then freeze them in Carbonite.

After performing a series of morally dubious activities for the Hutt – including bringing a head of a dissident to the crime lord – we won our endorsement and headed to the planet's space port, where we hitched a ride to the Great Hunt's host planet,



There are a fair number of pistols on offer, some more exotic than others.

**WARZONES**

*How The Old Republic approaches PvP*



**Big guns**

**All action**

**Lots of Valour**

**Big guns**

TOR's PvP takes place in arenas dubbed Warzones. We sampled one area set in Alderaan where the goal was for two teams to take down their competitor's enemy capital ship orbiting above, by controlling capture points which possessed giant cannons.

care of an Imperial shuttle.

Prior to this point, the intergalactic struggle between light and dark was barely touched upon, but it was thrust into the limelight care of a long story-driven quest dubbed Flashpoints. In this case it involved the Imperial shuttle we found ourselves on being boarded by invading Republic forces, after an elongated conversation with the ship's captain. We won't ruin the whys and wherefores, but the hour-long section was the highlight of our play. The action fully embodied the grand







STAR WARS  
OLD REPUBLIC



Droids are rarely more than a nuisance.

> **The Old Republic** cont.

themes Star Wars has become known for, and concluded with an epic battle with a Jedi Master, after slaying legions of his Republic forces.

After completion we found ourselves on the planet Dromund Kaas, an autocracy ruled by Imperial gentry who

despised our profession almost as much as our non-human heritage. The world was a part-urban metropolis, part-English countryside but the immoral undertones were clear to see – think Nar Shaddaa but with more trees. Unfortunately we didn't have enough time to be granted our own class-specific ship, or for the inevitable

The Imperials of Dromund Kaas are always ready to look down on common folk.

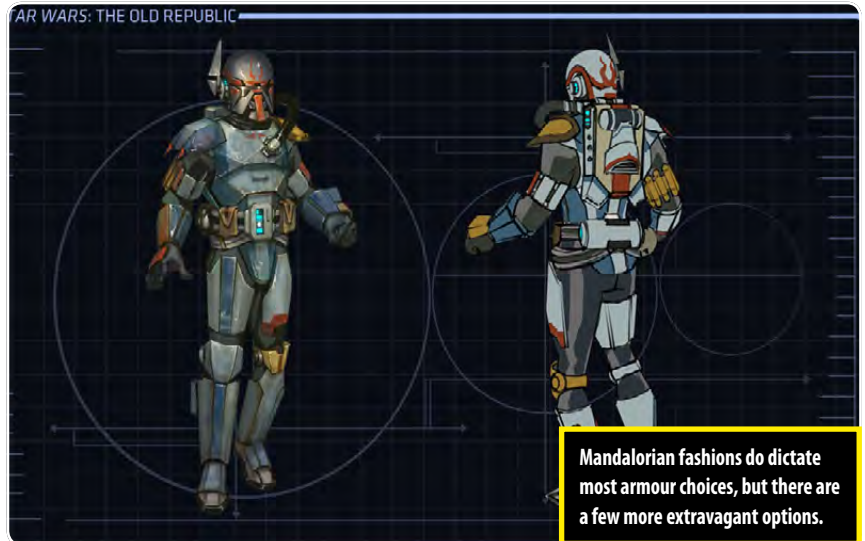


romance sub-story to reach fruition with our companion Mako, but we were impressed and surprised by what we played.

The Old Republic has all the trappings of an MMO, but a lot of the time while playing it felt more like a single-player BioWare game in a persistent world – which sounds like a distinction but it's true. The gameplay mix is odd, but it works and we suspect it'll offer the easiest transition for non-MMO players to sample the genre. If you just wanted Knights of the Old Republic 3, that's here in all its glory, in

addition to seven other story-arcs which we hope will be just as evolving, personal and entertaining.

Sampling the game in such a controlled environment with only a handful of players occupying each server does pose some interesting questions about how this experience will be altered by the presence of thousands of other players, especially with the way core story missions are dealt with, but those answers should be forthcoming. In the meantime we'll look forward to having another hands-on with The Old Republic soon. ●



Mandalorian fashions do dictate most armour choices, but there are a few more extravagant options.

	<b>HOW COMPLETE?</b> 	<b>FIRST IMPRESSIONS?</b> 
	<i>It's starting to look like BioWare will deliver</i>	



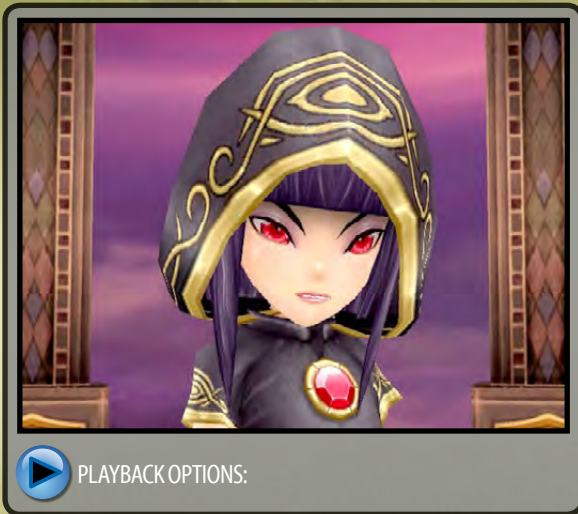


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**Publisher:** EA  
**Developer:** BioWare Austin  
**Link:** www.swtor.com  
**ETA:** Autumn 2011

# Do or do not... there is no try

*We discuss Star Wars: The Old Republic with the project's Principle Lead Writer and Han Solo fan, Daniel Erickson*



Daniel Erickson is in charge of BioWare Austin's legion of writers, and his previous work includes Dragon Age: Origins, where he crafted one of the best opening quests of all time: City Elf.

In a quaint yet deceptively large office outside of Austin, Texas, BioWare are putting together their most ambitious project to date: Star Wars: The Old Republic. Returning to the universe which attracted this developer such widespread acclaim is something the studio is grasping with both hands, including a gigantic voice actor cast and that premier narrative quality that's quintessentially BioWare. We caught up with Daniel Erickson to ask how he doesn't dance around like a giddy Star Wars fanboy the entire time he's at work and of course, how development of The Old Republic is going...

**You've been part of The Old Republic from the very beginning. What's it like thinking about this project's early days?**

Sitting down those first days and discussing what we wanted to do, very quickly came down to what was really fun, and the answer was Knights of the

Old Republic. That game was really fun, so why don't we do more of that? Honestly the question was if we asked our fans, if you wanted an MMO of one of BioWare's games, which one would you really want? We all knew the answer was going to be KOTOR.

**BioWare is all about the power of a good narrative but traditionally in the MMO genre, players don't care so much about the story...**

But that's a restriction, I honestly believe, of the technical and of the effort. I don't believe that, in the early days of the MMO, they sat down and said 'Hey, why don't we go ahead and ship the ruleset of this RPG and not include any adventures? Even for this game, it has taken this long before BioWare could say 'Hey, we really think that we could do that now.'

When this was discussed years ago, during the Neverwinter Knights time period honestly, nobody had an idea



The Republic throws the best parties.



Well, bounty hunters don't have to be ugly. They just eventually turn out that way. It's the nature of the job.





Shots like this give us goosebumps, they really do!



How many people are going to choose the one of the Jedi classes? We're guessing a lot!

## > Interview continued

how to do it. And even now it takes a monumental effort, as this game could never have existed if there had not been a Mass Effect. If we hadn't discovered an incredibly good way to at least automate a great deal of the camera work, and the conversations.

They figured out during Dragon Age how to manage huge amounts of voiceover and story tracking, and all of that together only gave us the very beginning of what we needed to do this. It's interesting now that what used to be a genre restriction based on want, became a genre ideal to where we came in and said: 'We're going to do this'. They said that you can't put story in

there, as there aren't stories in MMOs. What we have not heard in testing is people saying that they just skipped it. In fact, it's interesting to watch the people who very fundamentally said that is what they planned to do and it basically never happens.

### Do you think that's because it's Star Wars, because of the overall quality of BioWare or because of overall reputation?

I don't think reputation helps you at all once you start playing. If it's boring you just skip. I don't think it's based on mood either, or anything else. I'm not going to ever say there won't be conversations that people may get a bit 'skippy' through. One unfortunate voiceover

casting decision can make you not want to listen to a guy. You may have to run the conversation again or whatever, but people like stories; people like to see what happens. An example I use is that – if you want to go outside the RPG thing – there's no reason to watch a cut-scene in a Grand Theft Auto game. There are no choices or options, but I don't remember skipping them. Why? Because they were high quality.

People say 'it's an MMO, so players have a shorter attention span. Do conversations have to be shorter?' We proved that not to be the case in testing again and again. It's the same thing with this bizarre race in movies to make them 80 minutes or 60 minutes. A bad movie is too long at 10 minutes. A good

movie? Well I wouldn't care. I'd like to bring back the intermission for the potty break or whatever, but besides that, make it as long as you want, as long as it's good. We see the same thing, as good content holds people's attention and bad content makes people walk away.

### Having a specific story for each class in the game is very different from the traditional MMO approach. What made you go for that?

Total self-indulgent greed! So James [Ohlen] was the Lead Designer for Dragon Age: Origins. I was working on there and so was Emmanuel Lusinchi – he was the lead technical guy on there, and we loved the Origins stories. The game ended up having Origins in the title, but Origins' stories were very close to getting cut early on in the process. They're expensive and a lot of people didn't see why it was important to give every class their





Each class in SW:TOR will have a ship of their own design.



Each ship will act as the player's home, with their companions mulling around and a host of activities to get involved in. There has to be a Pazaak table around here somewhere...

## > Interview continued

own intro to the game, but we would have loved to have done the whole game that way. We always talked about it. It was never an idea for Dragon Age itself, because we knew the game was already huge! But we wondered, 'what if we could've kept doing that'? Wouldn't it be great to have missions that kept coming back to your origin? The only way anyone was going to give us the manpower and the budget to do that was if somehow the game was going to be so big, that people would play all of that content. Even if different parts of the population played it all. In a single-player game people mostly just play the story once.

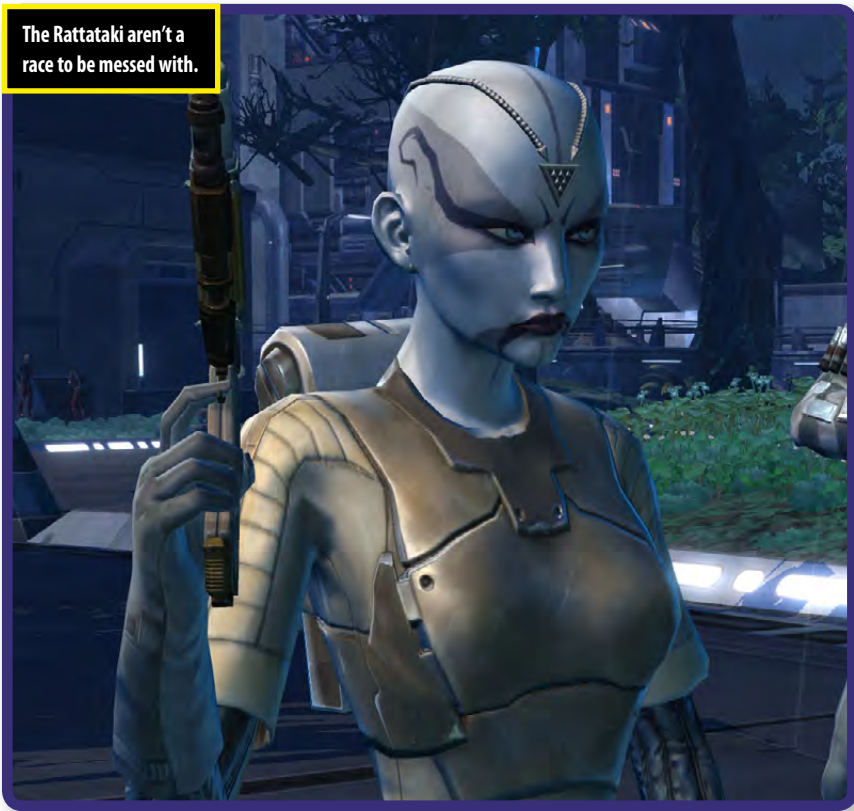
The original sell for me was 'I'm a writer for BioWare'. I wasn't sitting around thinking, 'Man I'd like to do an MMO'. But when James and I started talking about it, what I saw was the potential to do the biggest RPG ever and the first fully class-specific one. As great as the former games we've done are, we had to make the plots and a lot of the way people deal with you kind of generic. The class stories let us establish your entire identity very differently. The Smuggler is living in a different world; a strange semi-action comedy where everything goes wrong and there's crazy schemes where he/she is constantly in over his or her head, whereas the Sith Warrior is almost living in a Shakespearean drama. Getting to do

all of that in one RPG means that firstly there's a flavour for everybody and everyone can find their piece which says 'This is the RPG I always wanted to play' and secondly, getting together with your friends is really fun. **Is The Old Republic trying to get players that don't really like MMOs involved as well?** Really we only really know how to do one game. We do story-based games, and it has the ancillary effect of bringing people in much easier. That is the reason I think traditionally our female gamer percentage is much higher than the average in the industry, and our age graphic goes older and younger than the industry average. It's a less predictable

niche that our games fall into. Story is very accessible, so it's very easy to get people in there. The story becomes very important with something like Star Wars, because it's so steeped in lore that we need a vehicle to introduce you to it. We don't know how much Star Wars players know. We don't know if you liked the old movies and never saw the new ones, or saw them way back in the Seventies. We don't know if you're 12 and just love Clone Wars, which means we need to give you all relevant information without doing it in a big depository. So doing the class stories lets us tell you what your character would know. The Smuggler doesn't know who's sitting

***"What I saw was the potential to do the biggest RPG ever and the first fully class-specific one"***





## > Interview continued

on the Jedi Council, as they wouldn't anyway, so we don't need to give you the information, but we get to teach you clearly through your quests what it means to be a Smuggler; what your place is in the world. Then we slowly start to introduce you to your choices, so you can start to push out.

Ideally, with the gameplay being fairly simple at the beginning, as in most RPGs or MMOs, the story catches you up and your brain is more into that space, and then you start running into issues about learning to play. For instance, if you don't play MMOs, at that stage you're dedicated enough to it that you'll do the work to find out. What we see a lot of the time is

that people will turn to the person next to them and say, 'Hey, where is my inventory?' They have a discussion and the problem is solved.

### **Do you guys have any plans to emulate the X-Wing vs Tie Fighter style of gameplay?**

Well, we've shown the space game stuff and right now it's a solo game. It was one of those things where there are lots of people who would love to actually get it into doing the 'multiplayer thing', but what we had to do was get an engine down.

Basically, what you're talking about is putting in a completely secondary game on top of the first one, so the most important thing right now is to get

the engine down, get an art style, prove it out and get it into launch. Past launch the players rule everything. If what they want is more space combat, and multiplayer space combat is top of the request lists, what are we going to give them? We aren't going to say no!

### **How do you accommodate all of Star Wars' different characters and worlds into one cohesive game?**

The great thing about Star Wars is that they all live in the same space. C3PO lives in the same world as Darth Vader, and there is nothing amusing about Vader in the original movies, whatsoever. But then a minute later, you have C3PO wandering through the halls, so good comedy pieces offset the tension.

One of the things we always talk about is that if you turf someone out to be funny, you've probably failed. David Gaiter was the lead writer for Dragon Age, and back in the Baldur's Gate days, he got drafted in to write HK-47, who was never a comedy piece. They gave him an Assassin Droid and he didn't know what to do with it, and didn't terribly like the idea of doing it, and started to write this rebellion against what droids are in Star Wars, which turned into one our most classic pieces. You establish the ruleset, what the feel of Star Wars is and you let the writers go, and a lot of what you get is a complete surprise. ●

***“One of the things we always talk about is that if you turf someone out to be funny, you've probably failed”***



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**Publisher:** Square-Enix  
**Developer:** Eidos Montreal  
**Heritage:** Studio debut  
**Link:** www.deusex.com  
**ETA:** August

**HANDS-ON**

# DEUS EX: HUMAN REVOLUTION

**PREVIEW FEEDBACK!**  
Click here to tell us what you think of Deus Ex: Human Revolution

## Getting down and dirty in Detroit

**T**wo crazy facts for you: For starters, nearly 50 per cent of the population of Detroit is illiterate. Right now. In 2011. Second fact – nanotechnology exists here and now. Put those into context, and Deus Ex: Human Revolution’s near-future version of the motor city really isn’t that

far-fetched at all. It’s filthy, crime-ridden, drowning in poverty and oppressive. Okay, so the real Detroit probably won’t be drenched in a light-brown filter and be perpetually dark in a few years, but there’s a closeness to the bone that makes Deus Ex: Human Revolution that much more resonant.

During our now lengthy time with the game, one thing is clear, and it’s that this is a real return to form for a series damaged by a lacklustre sequel. There’s no messing about underground. Much like the revolutionary original game, you’re straight into work, learning the parameters of the game’s systems,

which frees you up to fulfil your role as Adam Jensen, the head of security for Sarif Industries. So you’re working for Sarif, doing his bidding and trying to work out just who the hell smashed into his research facility and took out a number of his staff. At first, it seems like a daunting task, not



Ah, test chambers. Always going to inspire fond memories...



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It’s a violent game when it needs to be.







It's very moody, very Blade Runner.



### > Deus Ex continued

only do you have to play through Human Revolution's gloriously option-filled FPS missions, you've actually got to solve the whole this mystery, too.

When Human Revolution does break out into its more 'open' setting, it

becomes apparent how enormous Eidos Montreal's effort actually is. Within minutes of walking out of Sarif Industry's doors, there are a myriad characters who want your attention for side missions, gossip and augmentation options. And don't forget, because this is Deus Ex, you can choose to interact, ignore, even kill

**"The sheer volume of content in Deus Ex: Human Revolution is astounding"**

them. This is a game that practically refines the word 'openworld'. The sheer volume of content in Deus Ex: Human Revolution is astounding, the attention to detail impressive and the atmosphere spot-on, if a little cliched.

Hopefully in the remaining few weeks and months of development time, Eidos Montreal can tighten up the dialogue interactions – there's a few too many stilted French-Canadian conversations for our liking, as they break the illusion somewhat.

## MEAN MACHINA

Deus Ex's Detroit, broken down



Living free

Stack happy

Augmented reality

### Living free

It's not openworld in the traditional, Rockstar sense, but Deus Ex: Human Revolution does let you roam the streets of Detroit and take on tasks at your leisure.

Still, don't let that dull your enthusiasm for what is one of the frontrunners for game of the year. This is proper adult entertainment – mature and thought-provoking in the way so few games are. Just a few short months to go, and you too can know what it feels like to live in Detroit. ●

Roll over screen for annotations



PCGZine **HOW COMPLETE?** **FIRST IMPRESSIONS?**

90% 90%

**DEUS EX HUMAN REVOLUTION**

*A fine and welcome return to greatness predicted*







# CASTLE OF HEROES



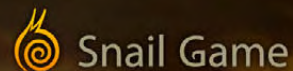
▶ PLAYBACK OPTIONS:

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**Publisher:** Frogster  
**Developer:** Bluehole Studio  
**Heritage:** N/A  
**Link:** [www.tera-europe.com/en/index.html](http://www.tera-europe.com/en/index.html)  
**ETA:** 2011

**PREVIEW FEEDBACK!**  
Click here to tell us what you think of TERA

◀ **HANDS-ON**

# TERA

*“TERA is a world with great characterisation and historical resonance”*

*Is this MMORPG from Korea Tera-ble or Tera-fic?*

**M**MORPG combat isn't exactly the most stimulating of the genres. Clicking to auto-attack while watching an enemy's HP slowly run dry with nary an animation to communicate its impending doom has been typical of online games for a very long time now, and it's something that Bluehole Games are looking to rectify forever with their new game TERA. We were lucky enough to recently sampled this exciting new online prospect at a glossy, and

surprisingly sandy, event in Germany and it made an indelible impression. Powered by the Unreal Engine 3, looking at the two continents of TERA is a rich and fulfilling experience, with none of the dull greys and blacks usually associated with Epic's tech. Instead the world is vibrant, with imaginatively devised monsters and locations which scream a level of detail usually only seen only in the artistic powerhouse Guild Wars. Players have a choice of six assuredly



This is a world unlike any other, with a stunning level of detail.

different races, with eight different classes, ranging from the panda-like Popori to the Amazonian Castanics, as well as Human and Elf options. Each race has their own detailed style and locale which plays up their identity and place in the world. For existence, the Elves are elegant and boast advanced tech, with a city which looks like it warped in straight out of Star Trek, whereas the

Castanic's capital appears more demonic, oppressive, and secretive. Needless to say, TERA is a world with a great characterisation and historical resonance, with forests, deserts, villages and dungeons, which we found were very enjoyable to just roam around in. Aside from the high level of polish applied to the visuals, TERA's other ace



Players can hitch a ride between regions, with checkpoints never further than a five-minute walk away.



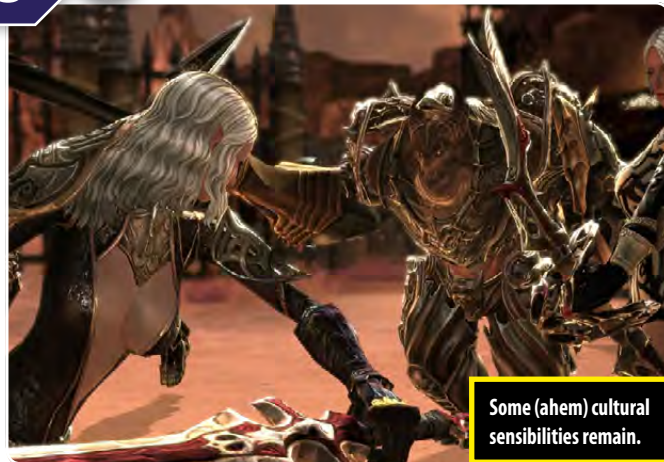
Bosses are not only constrained to dungeons, but also roam the world at large, looking for prey.







TERA



Some (ahem) cultural sensibilities remain.



Magic fractures and bends light, creating some lovely combat effects.

### > TERA continued

in the hole is combat. Rather than just targeting an enemy, players will have to aim either short-range melee attacks or projectile volleys at their enemies, with shots to the head or torso causing more damage than just aiming willy nilly. It sounds like a small detail but it leads to skirmishes which feels a great deal more involving than typical systems. This is


further accentuated by combos being possible, thanks to applicable skills popping up next to the reticle – and it's all context sensitive. We played as a pre-made level 35 Mystic, and even though she only boasted range-based skills, there were skill pop-ups hinting what skills to utilise next, be they a powerful magical rebound recovery when downed or an area of effect spell which drained HP on a second-by-

second basis. Massive bosses also roam the land, with multiple attack phases, visual transformations and attack cues, which again is a nice touch. There are some great special effects to convey the more ethereal side of combat, and for more Warrior-based classes, collision detection has been dialled up. How this radical combat vision is achieved is by TERA's miraculously efficient netcode, but Bluehole wouldn't be pressed on the finer details.

TERA hails from South Korea and the online centre of the world does hold some different values to our own when it comes to MMOs, by Frogster's own admission. As a result the European version of the game will boast over 600 quests and a promise that players won't need to grind to get ahead, instead all they'll need to do is story quests.

## WHAT ELSE IS IN STORE?

More details of TERA's MMO Functionality



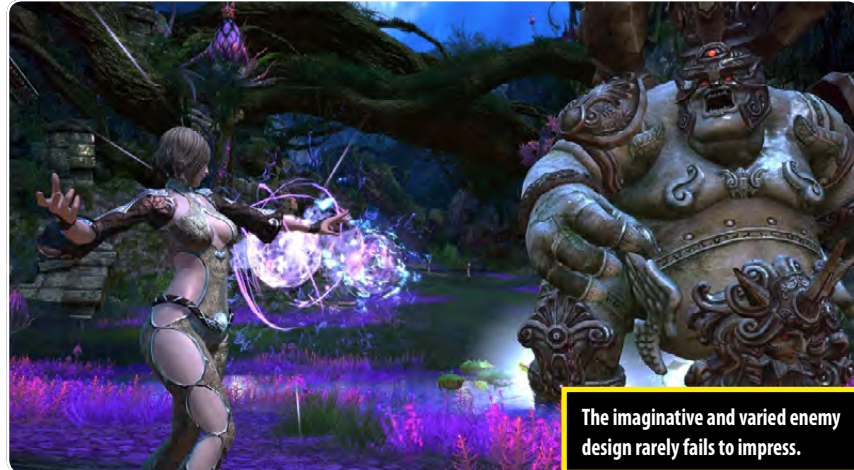
**PvP**

**Run your own town**


**Personal vendors**

**PvP**

As you would expect from TERA's exciting combat system, PvP is being focused on a lot. Five versus five and 10 versus 10 Capture the Flag, King of the Hill and Deathmatch mode match variants will be available, with more to be added in future updates.



The imaginative and varied enemy design rarely fails to impress.



**HOW COMPLETE?**

60%

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS?**

85%

Something new and different in the MMO space





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**Publisher:** Paradox Interactive  
**Developer:** Nitro Games  
**Heritage:** Commander: Conquest of the Americas  
**Link:** www.paradoxplaza.com/games/pirates-of-black-cove  
**ETA:** Summer

**PREVIEW FEEDBACK!** Click here to tell us what you think of Pirates of Black Cove

PREVIEW

# PIRATES OF BLACK COVE

Well if Sid Meier isn't going to give us a new Pirates...

Some games are born out of new ideas and others out of inspiration. Pirates of the Black Cove is very much the latter, inspired by Sid Meier's Pirates! with a dash of Monkey Island thrown in for good measure. The linear story-driven campaign takes place in the Caribbean during the sixteenth century and features you guiding a humble

pirate (out of a choice of three) from vagabond to undisputed Pirate King. How you do this is rather simple. You'll need to gain favour with each of the three factions on a host of tropical isles, by carrying out quests for their leaders. As your chosen avatar gains notoriety, their skills, ship and crew will become more powerful, with the

eventual goal to take down the ruling clan of the Caribbean: The Black Cove. The Pirate, Corsair and Buccaneer factions each have their own defined character, strengths and weaknesses. The Pirates are mangy sea dogs who like getting drunk, but are hardened and determined, Corsairs are more thoughtful, with birds constantly on

their shoulders and the Buccaneers are masters of the musket, with the ability to take foes out from a great distance. As you carry out missions for these guys you'll gain experience and be able to purchase their specific skills or recruit crew from their clan. For instance, make the Corsairs happy and you'll be able to gain a new bird's-eye perspective of the

The player-controlled ship battles feel much more arcadey than Commander: Conquest of the Americas.



The art style is very cartoony, but it isn't without its charms.



The UI is very friendly and approachable. Perhaps too simple for some tastes?





> **Pirates** continued

battlefield, whereas if you follow the Pirate line you'll unlock a crew member who has a barrel for a leg, who uses his over-abundance of wood to

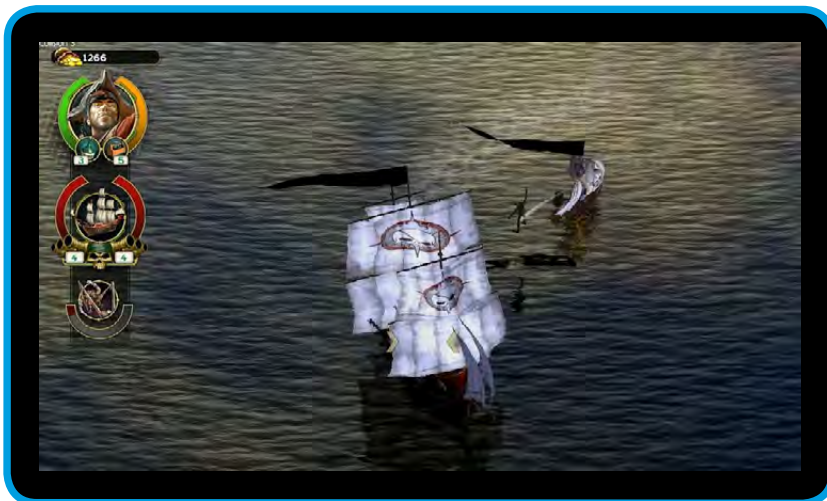
automatically patch up holes in your ship – very useful, we're sure you'll agree. As you may have guessed, proceedings are very tongue-in-cheek, and this experience takes the salty sea-dog formula in new and inventive directions.

The gameplay formula we're told is 60/40 per cent in favour of RTS gameplay over roleplaying elements, with a campaign which will take at least 10 hours to get through, dependent on how many side-quests are undertaken. There are six chapters in all, and each will be bookended by colour cut-scenes which echo the game's brilliant concept art.

Naval combat is very much about using your weapons, be they regular cannons, or homing barrages to their maximum advantage while ensuring your foes don't get too close. As you move to your location you'll see other forces going about their business and inevitably battles do occur. The on-land elements seem much more

complicated, as there is the need to recruit different unit types for each faction, and marshal them yourself in missions with the ability to add new units to your horde via upgrading your bases' facilities. Those looking for a deep RTS like East India Company or Commander: Conquest will be disappointed, but this is a much lighter and fluffier experience.

A lot of Pirates of Black Cove's success will be determined by how well Nitro Games can interject gameplay with the funny atmosphere players expect from the source material. It won't win any awards for originality, but it should at the very least scratch that Pirates! itch, which is no longer catered for in modern gaming. ●



PCGZine



HOW COMPLETE?



70%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS?



80%

*An established formula given new life*



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HANDS-ON

# SWORD OF THE STARS II: LORDS OF WINTER

*A new chance to tame the final frontier*

The last time we looked at Sword of the Stars II, we were shown the impressive new engine and told about how Kerberos were aiming to evolve the 4x strategy genre into all-new directions. The dedicated team from Vancouver certainly talk a good game, and we recently discovered how accurate their words actually were when we found some time to sit down with the latest build.

However, before we get into all that, let's provide some context.

Lords of Winter continues the story of the original Swords of the Stars and will include six imaginatively designed playable races which range from humans to the insectoid-like Hivers, as well as a brand-new race dubbed the Suul'ka. This mystery race are known for their brutality and little else, but they will sport all-new technology and their

own ship designs. Like other 4x games, the campaign doesn't follow a story, instead stars and planet configurations are completely randomised, allowing every playthrough, with AI making decisions on a turn-by-turn, battle-by-battle basis.

What was immediately apparent when we got our hands on the game was how much the main campaign

interface has improved upon since the original. It still retains its colourful nature with the ability to control each system and delegate each planet's resource potential, and it properly conveys that 'Lord of the Universe' vibe thanks to the selection of nebulae in the background and the ability to zoom in and out.

Unfortunately we couldn't take a look at the diplomacy module with a



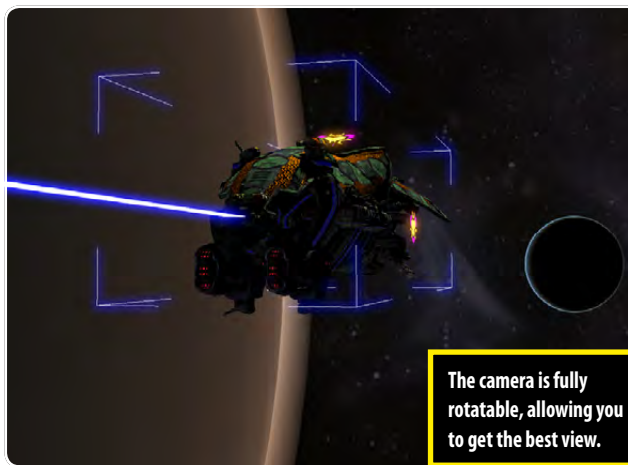
**PREVIEW FEEDBACK!**  
 Click here to tell us what you think of Swords of the Stars II



The UI is brand new, yet still retains that Sword of the Stars feel.







> **Sword of the Stars** cont.

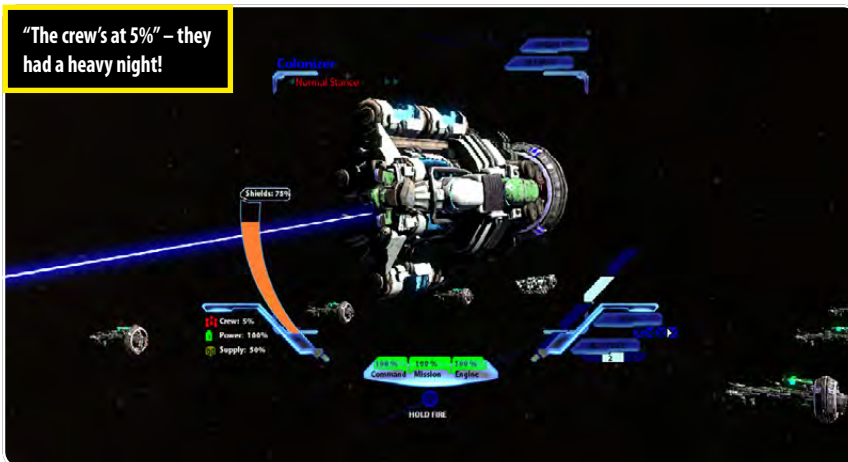
representative of Paradox Interactive looming over our shoulders, but we did get a look at the ship manufacturer. Like before, all ship classes – be they small cruisers or massive leviathans – can be constructed, via clonking together different ship segments to create your vessel of the stars. The emphasis on randomisation permeates this element too, as every ship created

will be granted special bonuses or weaknesses, dependent on how the production process goes. For instance, your dreadnought could have a weaker hull rating or be a bit quicker than the galactic standard.

Kerberos are aware that some of *SotS*'s subtler features may be a bit too alien for newcomers so there will be a selection of scripted missions just to ensure everyone is on the same page. We didn't have access to these missions

but we would assume these would represent the perfect opportunity to introduce gamers to the universe.

Last but not least we sampled some real-time space combat, which is initiated whenever two fleets occupy the same space. We've said before just how beautiful these ship models look, but when you witness them sending volleys of neon at each other, it really hammers the point home. Controlled in a typical RTS manner, players can target specific components of each enemy craft. If you want to neutralise their weapon batteries or disable their shields, you can with a simple click of the enemy vessel. Each ship has a nifty reticule display which shows their current hull, shield, crew and power status – it looks like something out of *Babylon 5*, only in a good way.



**ICING ON THE SPACE CAKE**

*Lords of Winter's* other features



**Campaign multiplayer**

**Ship control**

**Encyclopedia**

**Campaign multiplayer**

An often fan-requested feature is coming to *Lords of Winter*: the ability to play an entire campaign with a friend. The system will facilitate a drop-in, drop-out structure, which means if your buddy leaves then the AI will take over until they return.

After spending a brief spell with this 4x strategy title, it's clear that on the surface at least, *Sword of the Stars II* is shaping up to be something special. We won't know for sure until we're neck deep into a campaign playthrough, but it's safe to say that we're very excited about this overdue sequel. ●







**Publisher:** THQ  
**Developer:** Volition  
**Heritage:** Saints Row series, Red Faction: Guerilla, Freespace  
**Link:** www.redfaction.com  
**ETA:** 10th June

**System Requirements:**  
Dual Core CPU, 2Gb RAM, GeForce 8800GT, Radeon HD3870 series or higher

# Red Faction: Armageddon

### When Mars attacks!

Chances are that if we mentioned the name Volition to you, three words were instantly spring to mind: Saints Row and openworld. Way too few gamers played the excellent guilty pleasure known as Red Faction: Guerilla when it appeared on PC in 2009, and when we heard the developer was taking the destructive series in a brand new, more linear, plot-led direction then we were apprehensive to say the least. Story has never been this series' strong suit, yet against all odds, Armageddon proves it really should be. Gameplay is still just as enjoyable – both making the most of the GeoMod engine's insane destructibility and introducing a new

menace at the same time. Armageddon is an over-the-shoulder third-person shooter which proves just how enjoyable that one man army feeling really can be.

You play as Darius Mason on a Mars which is still wrought with war between Red Faction and the mysterious Cultists. During one notable skirmish the planet's Terraformer is taken out, forcing the entire planet's population underground, and if that wasn't bad enough, the protagonist unwittingly lets loose a new monstrous threat which has the potential to kill every single human on the red globe. Making the player responsible for the threat proves really

*"The story has never been this series strong suit, yet against all odds Armageddon proves it really should be"*



Darius is cocky and crazy in equal measure.



## THE JOYS OF NANO FORGE

Here are some of Armageddon's niftiest tricks in action



**REPAIR**  
Vital when navigating the environment, this ability allows you to rebuild almost anything at all.



**IMPACT**  
Best used when enemies are directly in front, this ability sends an energy wave directly ahead.



**SHELL**  
This shield ability protects Darius from any attacks via a protective orb.

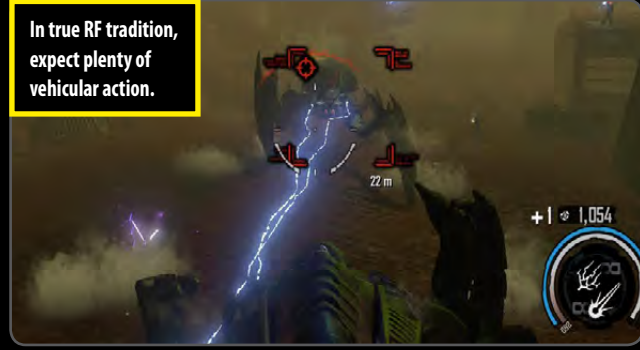


**SHOCKWAVE**  
This ability whips enemies into the air and places them in an anti-grav field.



**BESERK**  
This momentary power-up increases the speed and power of attacks.

In true RF tradition, expect plenty of vehicular action.







> **Red Faction** continued

interesting, and the drama inherent to the situation is communicated via beautiful cut-scenes which are both well-written and well-animated. Darius himself is the typical Hollywood archetype, proving cocky yet likeable – like if Han Solo and John McClane has a lovechild. The tertiary characters are also fully formed and well-rounded with Kara proving the spunky love interest, Winters the gruff military General, and SAM a sarcastic AI. Occasionally it does all get a wee bit clichéd, but the way events unfold feels genuine.

Surprisingly, for a Red Faction game the plot has been fully fleshed out, which is a very pleasant surprise, and the openworld format has been completely done away with. Instead the campaign has been shrunken down, with Darius needing to walk down specific paths in order to achieve any given objective.



The freedom which won such plaudits in Guerilla has been reigned in, but that doesn't mean the experience is any less fun to play. The impressive arsenal of weapons is still just as barmy, including the gravity gun which propels one target (be it monster or structure) to another point at increasing speed, and the Singularity rifle which creates a localised gravity well before a massive explosion. And the destruction is still as game-changing, with pathways often collapsing under enemy pressure. The experience has been focused into these singular pathways which usually open up to massive areas, therefore allowing great freedom of combative expression and usually you'll need to manage dozens of enemies attacking you at once. It can get pretty hectic but you can improve and add to your abilities in the game by spending salvage collected from the environment.

The aliens are a much more interesting threat to deal with than the

warriors featured in the past, even though some still do get in, and they can completely change the way you fight. Some will leap all around the level



before settling to shoot their beams, projectiles or whatever else they have handy. Coupling the bevy of exotic weapons with the Nano Forge abilities (see 'The Joys of Nano Forge') feels fantastic and very empowering. All constructed environments will collapse >







Plenty of different types of Martian monsters have been awoken, but few are more formidable or angry than the Behemoth.

> **Red Faction** continued

under the strain of battle, which makes combat feel epic, and the fact you can instantly put all buildings and walkways

back together instantaneously with the Nano Forge is effortlessly cool. There are requisite vehicle sections too, with some new and improved mechs to stomp around in, but due to the stricken

environments, these sections aren't quite as impressive as they should be.

Most of the campaign's spent underground which sounds off-putting, but Volition introduce enough variation that isn't so much of an issue. There are moments when you finally get to fight above the Martian surface, but at certain points we did yearn for some fresh air. Despite how enjoyable this experience is, there's unfortunately a big problem: running time. We finished the campaign in less than seven hours, which for a premium-priced release is an issue. There's a wave-based co-op mode and score-attack destruction mode dubbed Ruin to supplement the well-paced plot, as well as some nifty new game+ content, but some gamers may feel a bit short changed.

Volition has taken this franchise in an all-new direction and it's a success on most fronts. For a multi-format release it has been fully optimised for our

**PULSOMETER** *Signs of life*

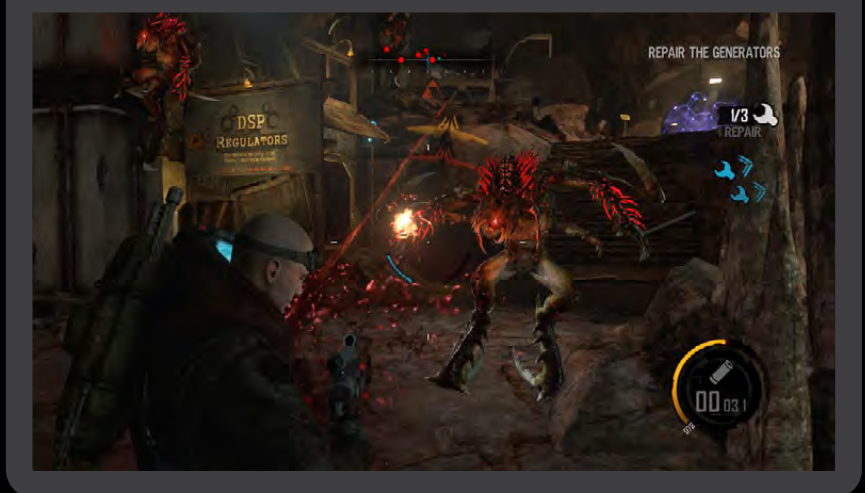


*"The action never feels like it was to be enjoyed with anything less than a mouse and keyboard"*

platform and looks wondrous in full Direct X 11 glory, with action which never really feels like it was to be enjoyed with anything less than a mouse and keyboard.

When measured by content alone, Armageddon is a triumph with fantastic set-pieces and excellent destructive gameplay. So much so that we wish there was more of it. Regardless, there's nothing guilty about this pleasure and that's undoubtedly a massive step forward for this series. ●

Roll over screen for annotations



**PCGZine**  
**Verdict**

*A fantastic adventure which we wish lasted for a while longer*

- Empowering combat
- Good plot with satisfying conclusion
- Too short for its own good

**85%**



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**BRINK**

# Brink

## Organised chaos

**Publisher:** Bethesda  
**Developer:** Splash Damage  
**Heritage:** Enemy Territory: Quake Wars  
**Link:** [www.brinkthegame.com](http://www.brinkthegame.com)  
**OUT NOW**

**System Requirements:**  
Dual Core CPU, 2Gb RAM, NVIDIA GeForce 8800GS/ATI Radeon HD 2900 Pro or higher



**W**e don't envy any developer trying to establish a new team-based shooter in this day and age. Between Team Fortress 2 and Battlefield, nobody has time for any effort which is anything less than extraordinary. Straight off the bat, Brink was under a lot of pressure, and the problematic launch certainly didn't help that, with plenty of annoying bugs and missteps. However, despite the patches and fixes, it still wasn't the multiplayer experience we were hoping for.

Brink is a class-based multiplayer shooter which is less about reactions and more about maximising your team's combat efficiency by accomplishing objectives and buffing

your teammates in a competitive online environment. Best enjoyed without the help of bots, matches accommodate as many as 16 players on eight different asymmetrical maps.

### Game structure

The structure of the game amalgamates a traditional campaign structure with a multiplayer setting, so even though there is some resemblance of a story for both of the game's factions (Security

and Resistance), there's never a sense that Brink is anything more than an online shooting gallery. There are cut-scenes for each of the 16 missions, as well as well-acted audio diaries, but anyone looking for a good tale here will be disappointed. It's a strange compromise, especially as we suspect a lot of time has been dedicated to crafting the compelling apocalyptic premise and the aesthetics which go with it. Luckily however, Splash

*There's never a sense that Brink is anything more than an online shooting gallery"*



The number of character customisation options are impressive.

## NOW THAT'S A GOOD IDEA

*Brink's moments of brilliance*



**Gun editor**

**Character progression**

**SMART movement**

### Gun editor

Brink's gun editor is a fantastic tool. Each weapon has several components to choose from, culminating in new effects, designs and skins. You're just swapping out components but seeing the rotatable models up close is a really nice touch.







It's a shame the Ark's history isn't covered in more depth than cut-scenes and audio logs. Splash Damage have taken the time to craft a fiction but not utilise it.

### > Brink continued

Damage has really delivered in the multiplayer stakes... The class system really saves Brink's bacon, with goals for each mission optimised for certain disciplines and a clever XP mechanic which rewards teamwork at every opportunity. Players will need to regularly hot-swap with all the different classes to progress in matches, but there's plenty of room to find a role you like. Each are as you would expect, with the engineer able to place turrets, the spy proficient in disguise, the doctor to heal and the soldier to blow things up.

### Endlessly replayable?

The advantage of good multiplayer design is that, in theory, content is endlessly replayable, but because matches rarely last more than 20 minutes, you'll get through Brink's content extremely quickly and grow increasingly tired of it. There are lots of level-specific unlockables for each class, but we didn't feel compelled to play more to progress our character.

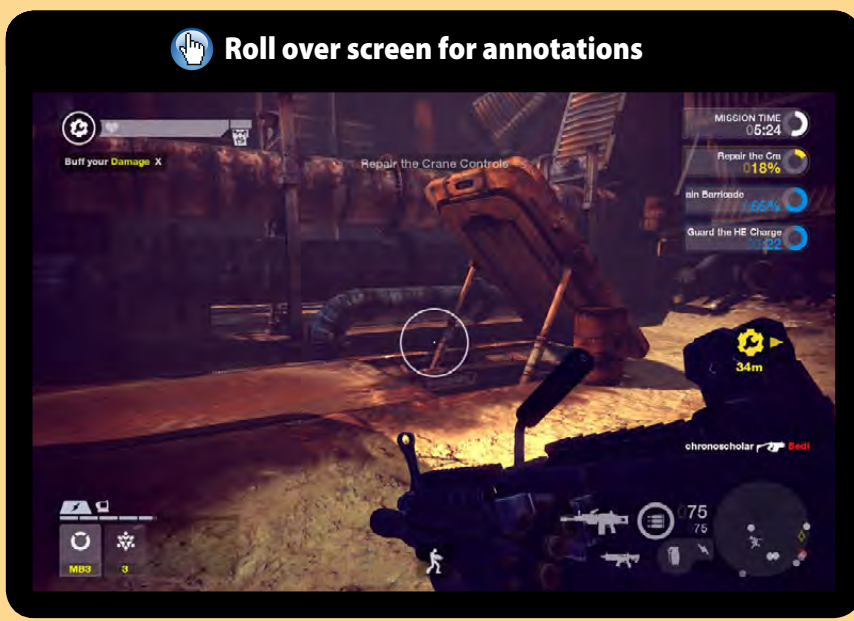
Ultimately, Brink is a polished multiplayer shooter which suffers from a basic lack of content. We couldn't help wanting more info about the story and a few more locales to fight in. There are more maps in the works, but asking players to fork out full-price for this offering as it stands is a hard sell. However if you're aware of the inherent value before taking the plunge then you'll find Splash Damage's latest very enjoyable. Just don't expect it to stay on your hard drive for very long.



It's moments like these you pray somebody has your back.



The bots are good, but you can't beat playing with humans.



Roll over screen for annotations

## PCGZine Verdict

A brave and beautiful shooter that should have a lot more content

- Well-designed team gameplay
- Enjoyable and unique premise
- Not enough mission content

# 78%







THE FIRST  
TEMPLAR

# The First Templar

**Publisher:** Kalypso Media  
**Developer:** Haemimont Games  
**Heritage:** Tropico 3, Grand Ages Rome  
**Link:** www.haemimontgames.com/TFT  
**OUT NOW**

**System Requirements:**  
Dual core CPU, 2Gb RAM, NVIDIA GeForce 8800 GTS/ATI Radeon HD 3800 or higher

## Conduct a Crusade with a friend

Remember when Assassin's Creed was first announced? When we were all really excited that a time other than the 20th Century was getting covered in a game? Before Ubisoft revealed all that future, ancestral DNA memory baloney? Well, you'll be pleased to hear that this third-person actioner doesn't have a futuristic get out clause and instead takes place entirely in the 13th Century.

The plot follows the tale of two Knights Templars (Roland and Celion) in their pursuit of the Holy Grail, as their order is on its historic downward spiral, beset by Saracen, Hashashin and even the Holy Inquisition. Haemimont Games

have built a melee-combat-focused third-person action game for two, with another player able to fight at your side, solve puzzles and enjoy the linear campaign alongside you.

As first impressions go, The First Templar doesn't make a great one, with bland 'click to strike' combat, poor character models, and voice-acting which feels very uneven. Yet after the rough opening hour, this game begins

to get its hooks into you. Partly this is due to the excellent combo-heavy combat, which becomes more complex once you unlock some fancy upgradable moves and punishing one-hit kill finishers, but it's really the exotic locales visited which propels progression – including recreations of Acre, Ascalon and other places in the Middle East. The lighting and architecture does a fantastic job of



Special moves are usually context-specific rather than button presses, so they are easier to perform once you get the hang of them.



Um guys, the camera is over here.

## COMMITTED TO THE CAUSE

Rewards, loot and character progression



Templar chronicles

Outfits

Skills

## Templar chronicles

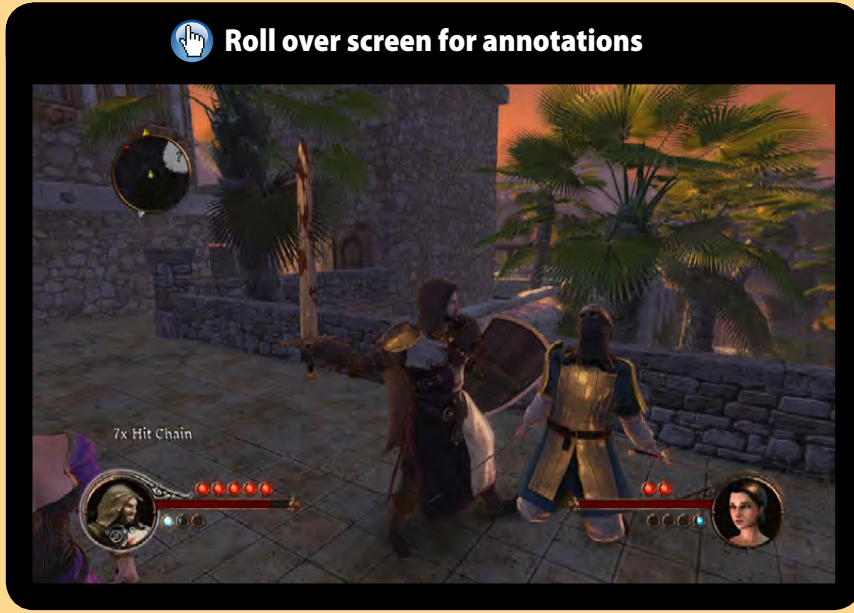
Audio diaries are so cliched nowadays, but The First Templar's are actually quite neat. Scattered around the game's levels via tombstones, the 40-plus articles are fully voiced and range from diary entries to Templar code of conduct and tell the story of how the Templars were established and what led to their downfall.







The locations in *The First Templar* rarely fail to deliver the wow factor.



Roll over screen for annotations

## > The First Templar cont.

emulating the period and makes up for the odd sloppy-looking NPC.

As you move from gorgeous level to gorgeous level you'll learn of corruption within the church (heaven forbid...) and meet a lovely lady named Marie who's also playable. Obviously the game has been built from the ground-up to accommodate online co-op play and it works well, but the AI is good enough to successfully fill in, and there's always the option to hot-swap between two lead characters.

Controls have been optimised for both keyboard and mouse as well as gamepad, with no method proving superior to the other. There's no elaborate platforming or anything. In fact there's no jump button at all, instead the challenge comes in avoiding medieval traps, fighting your way successfully through legions of soldiers, and hunting around for bonuses via secret treasure chests.

The slew of differently themed levels do their bit to mix up the action, with elaborate dungeons, cities under siege and occasional stealth elements which ensure the experience rarely feels like a slog. There are optional philanthropic side-quests too.

First Templar recovers from its early missteps to forge a meaty and enthralling historical experience. The greatest success of all is that this adventure is entertaining without resorting to mythical elements. Instead, Haemimont has stuck to the source material with religious vigour and it works really well, creating an enjoyable and pure experience. ●



## PCGZine Verdict

A solid and entertaining adventure, which is just lacking a bit of polish

- 👍 Makes the most of the setting
- 👍 Great co-op implementation
- 👎 Voice-acting is shocking at times

# 82%







SECTION 8  
PREJUDICE

# Section 8: Prejudice

*Challenging gamers' perceptions of value*

**Publisher:**  
TimeGate Studios  
**Developer:** In-house  
**Heritage:** Section 8,  
Axis and Allies  
**Link:** <http://warisprejudice.com>  
**OUT NOW**

**System Requirements:**  
Single or Dual Core CPU,  
2 Gb RAM, NVIDIA GeForce  
7800/ATI Radeon X1900  
or higher



**T**imeGate Studios first gave the world Section 8 in 2009, and despite being a strong all-round sci-fi shooter, it didn't perform as well as it should've. Most developers would have let the franchise be consigned to history, but the Texan team decided to publish the sequel for themselves digitally and adopt a new pricing mechanism, ditching the established £30 model and instead selling Prejudice for a paltry £9.99. Many have tried a similar RRP-slashing tactic before, but most have resulted in tepid experiences. However, that definitely isn't the case with this sequel, as it blew away all of our expectations.

Prejudice is a substantially more well-rounded experience than its fully

priced predecessor, promising not only a fully evolved multiplayer experience for up to 32 players in four different environments, but also a story-driven campaign which takes the universe in some interesting directions. The premise involves Section 8 and Arm of Orion forces once again facing off in highly advanced mechanised armour (think Iron Man) and a slew of weaponry. The six-hour experience doesn't re-write the rulebook, but it does introduce the universe in a great way with accomplished voice-acting and enjoyable set pieces.

Of course, the mainstay of this shooter is multiplayer and this is another area where TimeGate has

gone far beyond what is expected. Player progression is tracked akin to Battlefield and Call of Duty, where experience is rewarded for kills, team activities and match wins which then unlocks new skills and weaponry. It's a great touch and complements the existing choice of jumping in and deploying equipment in the field in a really effective way.

We could talk about how much fun it is to drop-in on enemies from 30,000 feet, or the joys of stomping around in the mech or tank, but put simply, there's no reason why you shouldn't try Prejudice yourself. This is one of the rare times when a developer delivers on every single promise, and we demand you give it a try. ●



The melee finishers are a bit silly, although still very satisfying.

## THE SECTION 8 FORMULA

*Why Prejudice works so well*

The secret to Section 8's success is the Dynamic Combat Missions which come in to play at regular intervals during matches. You'll be fighting for control of one of a map's bases and then suddenly a VIP will arrive needing to be escorted to an enemy base, or critical components spawn on the battlefield requiring collection. There are numerous mission types which funnel the action to new areas of the map, and are an invaluable tool to mix up gameplay.



'Dropping' into battle is still one of the best feelings to be had in a multiplayer shooter.



When in doubt, get in a bigger mechanised suit.



PCGZine  
Verdict

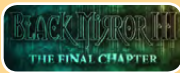
*A ridiculous amount of play for your pound!*

- Great expansion of the core formula
- Surprisingly enjoyable campaign
- Thrilling multiplayer combat

**94%**







# Black Mirror III

**Publisher:** Lace Mamba  
Global  
**Developer:** Cranberry  
Production  
**Heritage:** The Guild series  
**Link:** [www.mamba-games.co.uk/black-mirror-3the-final-chapter-p-68.html](http://www.mamba-games.co.uk/black-mirror-3the-final-chapter-p-68.html)  
**OUT NOW**

**System Requirements:**  
1.4 GHz CPU, 1 Gb RAM,  
DirectX 9.0 compatible  
128 Mb graphics card with  
Shader 2.0

## Into the mind of a madman

Concluding chapters are always difficult... do you aim for newcomers or concentrate on satisfying existing fans? Black Mirror III is without any doubt firmly placed in the latter camp. This 2.5D point-and-click adventure follows a tried and tested formula, but if you've played this cerebral horror series before then you cannot miss this fitting finale.

Events follow directly on from the previous game, with protagonist Darren Michaels arrested for murder and arson in-front of a gutted mansion. Even newcomers will see that something isn't quite right with this young man, and it isn't. Not only is he suffering from an identity crisis, but he's also possessed by

an evil spirit linked to the tragic Gordon family from the original game. The possessed one needs to wander around the sleepy village of Willow Creek, in an effort to cure his affliction and keep his newly acquired alter ego at bay.

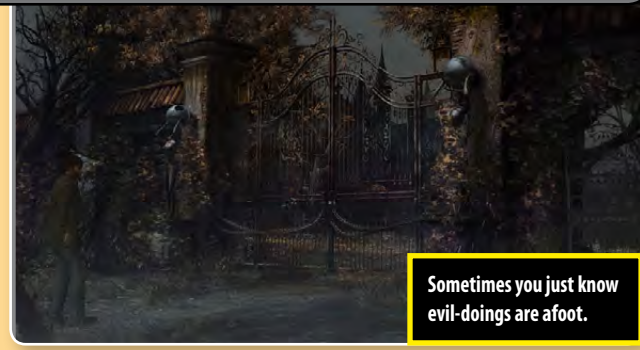
The plot meanders on at a slow, but methodical pace with everyday locations giving way to more spooky environments later in the lengthy campaign, all of which are meticulously detailed. Unfortunately some sub-par voice-acting performances occasionally ruin the mood, but for the most part the story is told in an enjoyable manner supported by well-written dialogue.

Puzzle design is one of the game's real strengths too, with interesting and

varied activities throughout, ranging from avoiding gothic contraptions or securing provisions for policemen, and illogical solutions rarely rearing their ugly head.

Overall this threequel is more of the same talking, walking, collecting and combining formula, just slightly better executed – which we suspect is exactly what most fans will want. It'll take most players a long time to get through everything here and the journey is mostly worth it until you reach the end. Wrapping up a trilogy is always difficult, but Black Mirror III's climax feels rushed and disappointing. That doesn't make it a terrible game, just an inevitably unsatisfying one. ●

*"Even newcomers will see that something isn't quite right with this young man"*



Sometimes you just know evil-doings are afoot.

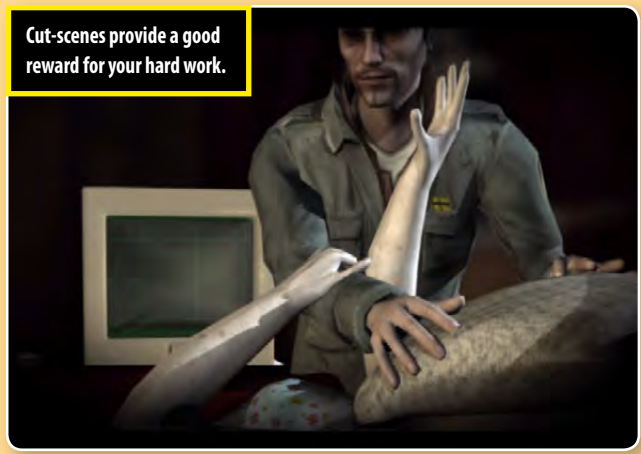
## LESS SPOOK, MORE TALK

### How BM III maintains a scary atmosphere

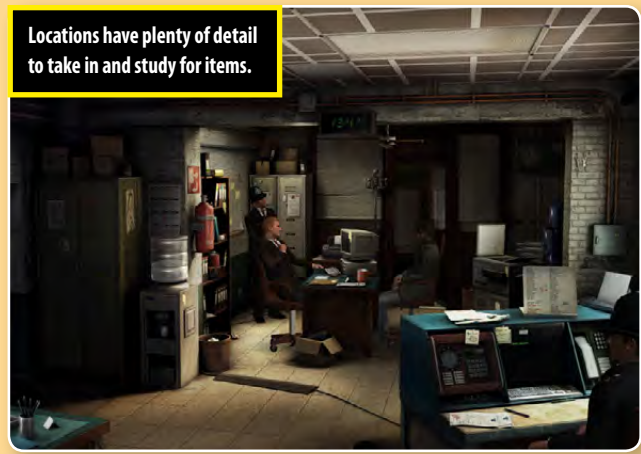
Flickering lights? Peculiar moans in the background? A lot of games try to be frightening, but so few deliver. Thankfully, Black Mirror is less about the cheap scares and more about maintaining an oppressive atmosphere with villagers that don't seem to trust the protagonist and cut-scenes which show off some truly grizzly scenes. It takes a while to get going, but eventually you'll see some truly spooky sights.



Cut-scenes provide a good reward for your hard work.



Locations have plenty of detail to take in and study for items.



## PCGZine Verdict

A slow, but enjoyable adventure with a very confusing resolution

- 👍 Tells a good story for the most part
- 👎 Little effort to ease newcomers in
- 👎 Poor voice-acting performances

# 63%







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# HUNTED<sup>®</sup>

THE DEMON'S FORGE

## THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

FROM THE PUBLISHERS OF PCGZINE, P3ZINE AND 360ZINE



### INTERVIEW

The final word from inXile Entertainment

### THE CRUCIBLE

Hunted's ace up the sleeve unveiled!

### EXTENSIVE PREVIEW

Why you should care about this co-op adventure!





# WELCOME

Co-op is rarely thought of as more than an add-on; another feature added to the back of the box to sell more copies. However, with *Hunted: The Demon's Forge*, this is far from the case. Built from the ground-up to accommodate two players working together, this is the ultimate buddy experience enhanced by a dark fantasy setting, epic dungeons to explore, loot to lust over and its very own editor.

*Hunted: The Demon's Forge* is far more than just another blockbuster. Underneath its polished and pretty exterior beats the heart of a hardened dungeon crawler which rewards exploration and player commitment. We had the privilege of getting exclusive access to this exciting third-person actioner and needless to say, it definitely got our blood pumping.

In this magazine we take a closer look at what exactly sets this title apart from its rivals – without spoiling the plot – and we also have an exclusive interview with the talent behind the game, not to mention your chance to get a copy of the game for free on your format of choice!

We hope you enjoy this very special magazine.

Andy Griffiths, Editor

"*Hunted: The Demon's Forge* is far more than just another blockbuster"

## CONTENTS

- Meet the Stars **03**
- Introducing *Hunted's* protagonists **03**
- Playtest **04**
- What we think about the game **04**
- Joys of Co-op **07**
- Why *Hunted* should be enjoyed with others **07**
- The Crucible **08**
- Detailing *Hunted's* Dungeon Editor **08**
- Interview **09**
- We chat with Bethesda **09**
- Competition **11**
- Win some top *Hunted* goodies! **11**





# INTRODUCING THE STARS OF HUNTED: THE DEMON'S FORGE

What better way to introduce *Hunted* than by taking a look at its playable stars. Described by inXile's Matt Findley as exactly the opposite of what players would expect from their appearance, this fantasy duo are sure to steal plenty of hearts – well one is anyway...

## CADDOC

This straightforward warrior may look like the Duke Nukem type, with his bulging muscles and grumpy demeanour, but in actual fact this mercenary boasts a keen strategic head. Not one to let his emotions get the better of him (due to a mistake in his younger years which led to his wife meeting an early demise), he's a grizzled veteran of many battles and he's been around the block more than once. Caddoc relies on his trusty sword and shield skills to get the



job done. He has a crossbow for long-range attacks, but he isn't as proficient as his sassy colleague. Honestly, he seems like a bit of a softie at heart. He despises anything remotely creepy or crawly and looks to get ahead whenever possible, as long as the means are just and the rewards plentiful.

## E'LARA

The female part of this duo is much more like the average gamer: rash, unpredictable and always ready for the next thrill. One of the last Elves on the planet, you'd think her rare status would give rise to caution, but instead she rarely thinks about her tragic past and focuses on the next moment of adrenaline-pumping action she can grasp with both hands. She's always busting Caddoc's chops about being too old and careful, but as we soon realised, *Hunted's* world isn't one without dire consequences... ●





# PLAYTEST



**Formats:** PC, Xbox 360, PlayStation 3  
**Publisher:** Bethesda Softworks  
**Developer:** inXile Entertainment  
**Heritage:** The Bard's Tale  
**Link:** www.huntedthegame.com  
**ETA:** June 3rd (Europe) May 31st (North America)

So we've introduced the protagonists but what about the game itself? Well as we mentioned before, in essence *Hunted: The Demon's Forge* is a third-person dungeon crawler with a fully fledged cover system and co-op dynamic.

The plot kicks off with a glossy in-game cinematic introducing the adventuring duo, bemoaning their monetarily poor existence, with Caddoc haunted by a nightmarish vision of a mysterious evil entity and E'lara ribbing her professional partner in the usual manner. Soon the duo stumble upon a spooky magical artefact which gets them noticed by a seductive ghostly mistress named Seraphine (voiced by the luscious Lucy Lawless) who becomes bound to E'lara after she touches the mysterious magical

*"Caddoc is haunted by a nightmarish vision of a mysterious evil entity and E'lara ribs her professional partner in the usual manner"*

macguffin. This leads them to all to investigate the affects of their actions and attempt to set free the untrustworthy Seraphine from her spiritual binding. E'lara's mistake won't be undone easily, as the world is being ravaged by the disgusting Wargar, an Orc-like race which are as ruthless as they are ugly. Their origin is unclear and their motives unknown, but they've taken to raiding towns and slaying entire human populations before burning the centres to the ground. Like all other great fantasy worlds, *Hunted's* is in a





“Dialogue between the starring duo really helps to give proceedings a fun and fluffy tone, with dark undertones bubbling nicely beneath the bravado”

## ENEMY CLASSES

Three of the foes you'll be facing during Hunted's six different chapters



**Wargar Archer**

**Archghoul**

**Minotaur**

## Wargar Archer

These ugly fellows are the mainstay of the Wargar force, along with their soldier brethren. Due to a lack of armour, they prefer to stay back and pepper foes with arrows. Players should be prepared to slay legions of these guys.

## > PLAYTEST continued

state of chaos, which leads to some very entertaining set-pieces and bosses to slay across six lengthy chapters.

Both E'lara and Caddoc have their own combat specialities but neither are limited to them, as both can elect to use either bows, swords, hammers and daggers. Fights follow the usual hack and slash tropes, with the ability to perform combos on enemy soldiers, which is handy as they usually come at you in droves, requiring tactics of mob management and occasionally taking cover to hide from enemy arrows or magical barrages.

All of this sounds like a regular hack-and-slasher, but the dialogue between the starring duo really helps to give proceedings a fun and glossy tone, with dark undertones bubbling nicely beneath the bravado.

However what really stood out from our experience with the game was just how much inXile allow players to deviate from the main path. In every chapter there are opportunities to tackle optional sidequests. While we were navigating a dark dungeon with very dank corridors and hassled intermittently by a giant spider, we discovered a room adorned with a giant up-lit treasure chest, at which point a wall opposite slid open and a pop-up emerged detailing an objective which would lead to the mysterious container opening.

Loot lust is something very few multi-format releases cater for, but it's alive and well in Hunted, and players will often be tempted to go the extra mile for a special sword or bow, with drops







“Hunted is a game with plenty of strings to its bow”

> **PLAYTEST** continued

which are randomised. Special weapons usually having a coloured aura surrounding them, so you'll know when you earn a good one with the HUD offering up vital stats. It isn't all about weapons though, as both characters also earn crystals when completing missions which can then be spent on unlocking new abilities via the skill wheel.

During our time playing as Caddoc we unlocked an explosive orb option which worked a lot like a magical grenade, as well as a powerful Shield

Bash move which when activated made the bald warrior carry out a deadly shoulder charge on enemies. Magic is the other major attack avenue, with moves often requiring little time to charge with the potential to set ablaze, electrocute and freeze enemies.

Hunted is definitely a game with plenty of strings to its bow, including fan-requested split-screen co-op, and from what we sampled, it could be one of the few fantasy games to be a hit with not only the hardcore but the casual crowd too. It's an accessible, beautiful and cinematic experience, which promises an evolving and entertaining campaign. ●





# THE JOYS OF CO-OP

**H**unted: The Demon's Forge has been designed from the ground up to accommodate co-operative, whether a player is working together with a friend or an AI buddy. But what exactly does this mean in real terms?

Players begin the game either as Caddoc or E'lara, with the other character appearing on-screen with you – either online or locally via split-screen. There's also the opportunity to switch between the two characters whenever they come across special obelisks liberally sprinkled throughout the game's branching levels. The structure will be familiar to those who have played either Gears of War or Army of Two, but in all honesty, Hunted's melee-centric combat is a much more natural bedfellow for co-operative play than its shooter cousins.

Taking down enemies with a sword and shield while your compatriot hits them from afar with arrows never gets old, and inXile have gone even further to ensure teamwork is rewarded as much as possible.

Gamers have the ability to revive their ally whenever they are about to expire by throwing down a respective potion in their vicinity, and they charge each other up to

enable more powerful status attacks. Also, at key moments in the campaign, players will need to arm ballistas to take down more powerful threats, while their partner slays oncoming enemies. These stand-off moments are carefully placed, so they don't feel routine and create great moments of tension.

Every essence of combat feels a lot cooler whenever you tackle it with a friend, even the dull-witted ones. inXile are keen to throw players a bone now and then with some of the more challenging puzzles, with protagonists often giving audible commands or hints about what to do next. It's a system which will be appreciated by most players, especially as usually you just want to get on with the fighting.

All these elements culminate in a really memorable co-op experience, but it's the protagonists themselves

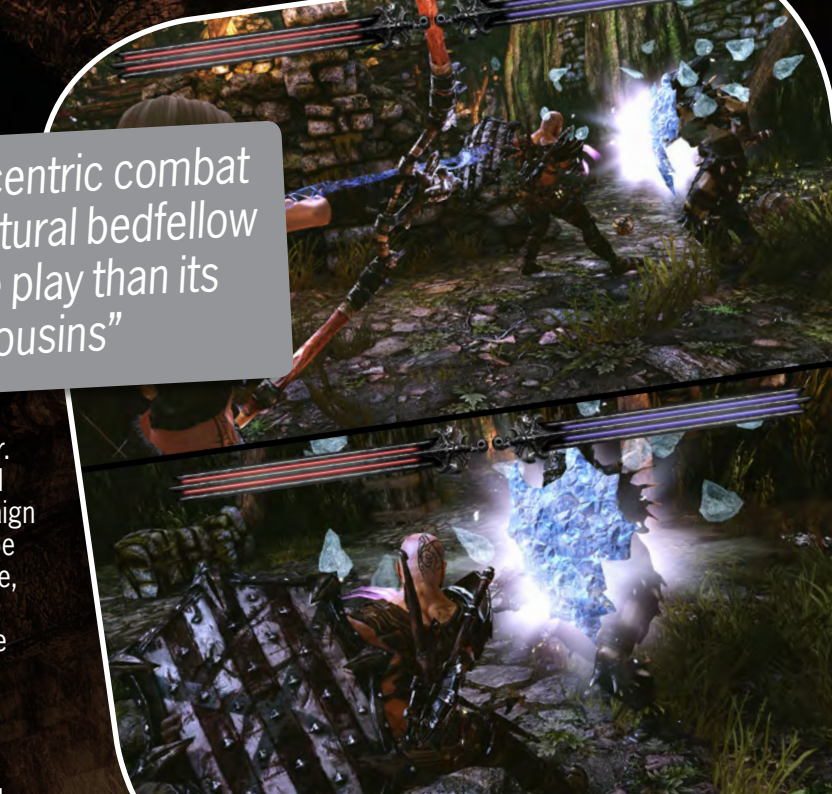
*"Hunted's melee-centric combat is a much more natural bedfellow for co-operative play than its shooter cousins"*

that give it such a unique flavour. Hearing Caddoc and E'lara goad each other on during the campaign often echoes what players will be doing themselves over Xbox Live, PSN or Steam chat.

Crucially, the developers have taken time to listen to their fans when creating this experience, adding additional co-op-specific on-screen cues and rewarding players with multiple playthroughs with friends. If you have a regular game-playing compadre waiting in the wings, Hunted should definitely be on both your radars. ●

**HUNTED**  
THE DEMON'S FORGE

**THE POWER OF TWO**





# LET LOOSE YOUR CREATIVE SIDE IN THE CRUCIBLE

Throughout the campaign you'll amass enough gold to fill Fort Knox, and what better way to spend it than in Crucible mode; a map editor which allows players to create elaborate dungeon runs utilising all the enemies, locations and weapons from the main game.

All the content is determined by the amount of gold found in-game and is split into 29 different tiers, with the earliest unlock granting skeleton enemies and the last enabling your run to be populated by the evil antagonist Annuin for an impressive 190,000 gold. Usually this kind of editor is reserved for PC owners, but this functionality is present in every version of Hunted.

The method behind forging your own gauntlet starts by choosing a layout on a red grid, and selecting a theme. From there you'll need to choose a location, enemy types, and number

*"Usually this kind of editor is reserved for PC owners, but this functionality is present in every version of Hunted"*

of waves. Finally there's also the ability to transform the experience with mod slots, which include bonuses and hindrances such as automatically replenishing health or adding a time limit, and the loadout where players must choose from a

variety of weapon sets. Further details are discussed in the video below, but we were shocked and impressed with just how powerful and easy to use it was once you've grasped the basics.

Crucible mode should expand this title's life exponentially, with players awarded more gold for completing run-throughs, and the ability to share and download other gamer's creative efforts online.

Obviously the success of this mode depends on how well it's adopted by Hunted's community, but from what we've seen it should prove to be a fan favourite. ●





# HUNTING FOR HITS

**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW**

*We wanted to know more about Hunted so chatted to Matt Findley, the President of inXile*

**There have been less 'fantasy' games over the past few years, with a lot of developers working on modern concepts. Do you think Hunted: The Demon's Forge can do its part to popularise the setting once again?**

The great thing about Hunted is that it's a modern take on the dungeon crawl, with 'modern' gameplay mechanics. It has universal appeal and applies co-op cover-based action game mechanics to this classic formula set against a

fantasy backdrop. There will be a lot of players that are familiar with this style of gameplay and will feel at home with it as soon as they get their hands on it.

Beyond the accessible controls, we know that Hunted genuinely offers something new and exciting with broad appeal that will also tempt newcomers to fantasy.

We have been talking about this game for years and as a team are all massive fans of fantasy, and have a lot of collective experiences in this area. We have a lifetime of playing and making these types of games!

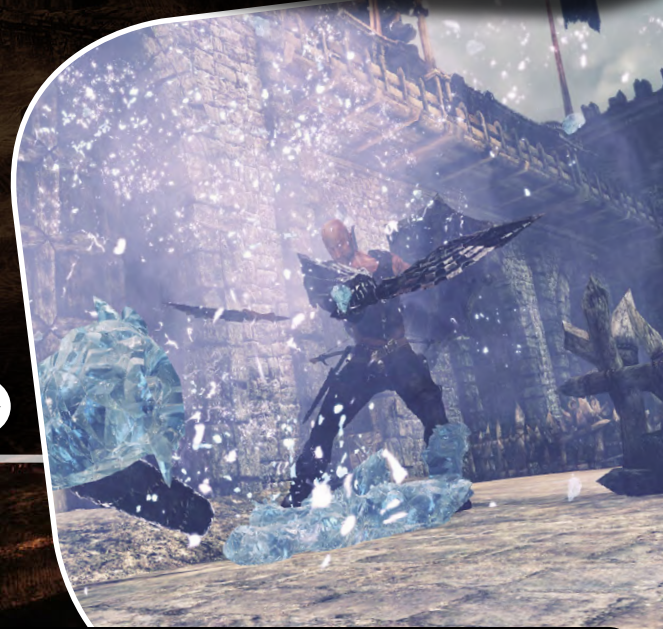
create a dark fantasy action game from the start and one that offers a more mature experience. We also wanted to cover a large range of emotions, and with the story we explore themes of addiction, morality and betrayal. We were inspired by the Middle Ages and try and give a sense of history and tell a story through the environments as well.

That said, we also wanted to inject some humour into the game and avoid too many genre clichés. There is some great banter between Caddoc and E'lara, and we use this as a device to lighten the mood at times. As you progress through the game we have gone for some diverse locations to ensure that there is lots of variety, ranging from dark dungeons to lush forests.

**The world of Hunted is dark, violent and quite seedy, with plenty of skin being flashed all over the place. We aren't complaining, but why did the studio elect for these motifs?**

Our intention was to

**Coupling the classic dungeon crawler formula with the third-person action template is really a no-brainer. Why do you think so few developers have done it successfully?**





## > Interview continued

We're not sure why it's not been done before, and the initial press and consumer responses echoed this. We have wanted to create this game for a few decades now and finally feel we are at a point from a technology stand-point to deliver on this vision.

Although we are revitalising an older genre, we are able to do this with amazing graphical fidelity and add the co-op aspect to resonate with a new generation of gamers. Also, unlike many dungeon crawlers, *Hunted* has a meaningful plot. We also develop this template further by adding the concept of character growth, exploration and developing skills and abilities as you progress.

**Getting Lucy Lawless to voice Seraphine was a massive coup for you guys. How important is**

### **getting the right voice talent when crafting a game like *Hunted*?**

We wanted Lucy from the outset as she is perfect for the character of Seraphine. Seraphine acts as a spirit guide and is a beguiling character, and Lucy's voice and acting experience was perfect.

Casting the right voice is really important particularly for such an important character within the plot and one that has a complicated relationship with our protagonists.

### **The ability to build your own maps via the Crucible mode is a very nice touch. How difficult was this mode to put together, and is it easy for players to use?**

It's not so typical in a console game to be able to create your own levels. We wanted to give gamers the chance to create their own dungeons. We allow players to jump in there, and provide the building

blocks and parameters to create their own levels and create an experience you can share and play online. Essentially, we've given the tools to create infinite levels and modes.

It was an ambitious task but we feel we have pulled off a really cool system that is both deep and intuitive but not intimidating either.

### **Are inXile planning to add new components to that mode via DLC?**

I can't really confirm comment but watch this space.

### **Developers from inXile have said before that they have plenty of**

### **ideas for *Hunted 2* already. Are you guys any closer to getting the sequel green lit?**

We're not able to confirm plans at this stage but rest assured this is something we are looking into and have lots of great ideas. ●







# COMPETITION!

## THREE HUNTED BUNDLES TO BE WON!

We've teamed up with Bethesda to offer three lucky readers a copy of *Hunted: The Demon's Forge* on their format of choice (PC, PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360) along with an assortment of goodies associated with the dungeon crawler, including an almighty T-shirt and belt buckle!

For your chance to win one of these *Hunted* Bundles, all you need to do is answer the question on the right-hand side of the page and enter your details before 30th June. Winners will be chosen at random at the competition's end. Good luck!

For full competition terms and conditions, please see [www.gamerzines.com](http://www.gamerzines.com)

