SKOAR!*

LIVE TO GAME

INSIDE

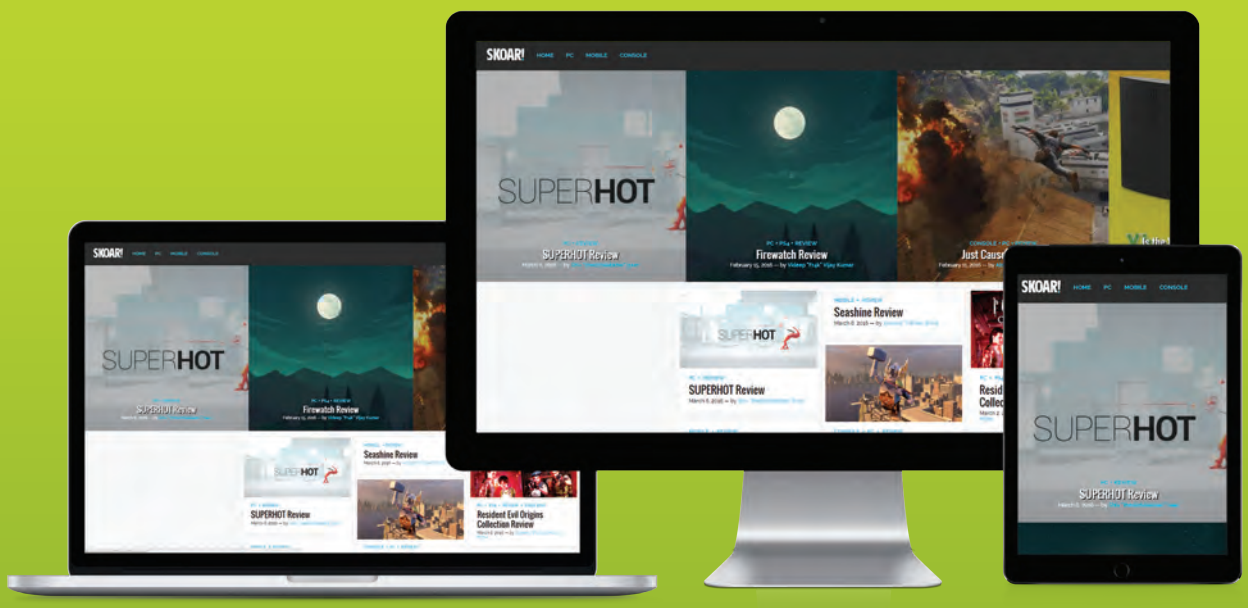
REEVU
Deep Rock Galactic

PREEVU
Ratchet and Clank:
Rift Apart

FURST IMPRESHUNS
Apex Legends



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AN AGING GAMER



Manish "Trigger-Happy" Rajesh
SKOAR! Overlord | feedback@skoar.in

I'm someone who has pretty much been gaming since the moment I got my hands on a keyboard back in 2nd standard. Gaming is something I always made time for, heck, I'd remove time from other things to spend more time gaming. Others bunked classes to go out, I would bunk classes to stay home and game. Waking up in the middle of night and creeping into the study to game was also something I frequently did as a kid. I'd skip out on social events like parties and gatherings etc because I'd honestly rather be at home gaming. The list is pretty long. Needless to say I'm a horrible role model and you should definitely not be doing those things, but this was just to give you an idea of how much I love gaming. I'm sure there are a lot of you who are in the same boat as me, and have done similar – or worse – things to game as much as you could.

What I'm trying to get at though is, something's changing of late. While I still very much love gaming, and I'd still drop everything to game in a heartbeat (if I could), they don't affect me the same way they used to. I can still fondly look back at the times I played my favourite games, and thoroughly explored every nook and cranny of the world the game offered me. These were games I could play over and over again, but today I'd simply think it was too much of a hassle and drop the idea. It doesn't just apply to long time favourites; I'm as hyped as anyone for the next big game to launch, but on the day of launch, I find that I've all but lost my willpower to play the new game, either for being too complicated, or being too long, or some reason or the other. Eventually I might still try it, and I might even get hooked and play it all the way to the end, but the drive has certainly diminished. I need to convince myself a lot more before immersing myself in a new game.

I've had a newfound appreciation for short games on the other hand, and even *gag* mobile games. Games where you can simply slip in and slip out. A few hours or minutes a day. No need to worry about getting immersed in a massive world and its storyline, or worry about learning new complicated game mechanics, or grinding for the best gear the game has to offer. My go to game for a long time has been League of Legends, where games last between 20 to 40 minutes, and I can easily fit a few games in throughout the day. As an avid RPG and MMO player from back in the day, that's a pretty massive 180 for someone like me.

You might be thinking, "well you're just getting old, that's normal", and you might be right, there's a lot of research to back that up as well. But for someone like me who lives and breathes gaming, the thought that gaming will someday no longer interest me is kind of terrifying. On the flip side, games are also changing and evolving, and I can't change the fact that I'm aging – slowly moving away from the primary target demographic of most game creators. So is that it? They're simply no longer making games that appeal to me? That answer doesn't really satisfy me.

Ultimately, I believe that as we age and have less and less time to game, that doesn't necessarily mean that we no longer enjoy gaming, but rather changes the kind of gaming experiences we seek out. Much like the games themselves, we too are evolving over time, and so are our preferences. What do you think? *

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SKOAR!*
LIVE TO GAME

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What's New

E3 2021: SCHEDULE

E3 is in an all-digital format after being cancelled last year amid pandemic concerns. It will take place between 12th and 15th June. Check out the schedule.
http://dgit.in/e32021



THE NINTENDO GALLERY

Nintendo has announced that it will be opening a museum dedicated to famous characters who shot to fame over the past three decades. It's expected to open by Spring of 2024.
http://dgit.in/ningal



AMD HAS 30% OF THE GAMING CPU MARKET

According to the latest Steam Survey, AMD claims that they power 30% of CPUs in gaming PCs. This isn't exactly surprising news, beyond the fact that it has taken so long to get to this point.
http://dgit.in/amd30

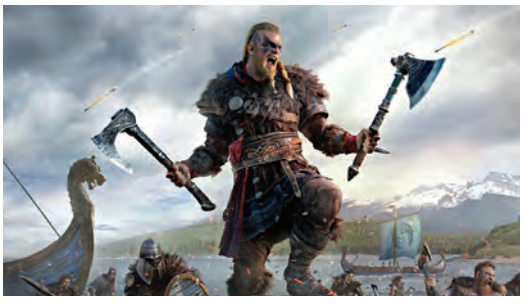


SONY ON RELEASING PS4 EXCLUSIVES ON PC

In an interview with PlayStation Blog, Sony Worldwide Studios head Hermen Hulst talked about what we could expect from PlayStation through the rest of 2021 and into 2022.

During this interview, Hulst gave an insight into PlayStation's current strategy behind putting some of its exclusives on PC. He said they were still early on in their planning for PC and seeing the success of Horizon: Zero Dawn on it, he said they had gotten to know of the appetite from gamers outside the PlayStation ecosystem to experience the vast portfolio of amazing games that PlayStation users have enjoyed for years. He also added that PlayStation consoles will still be the best place to enjoy PlayStation exclusives at launch but at the same time, they value PC gamers and the PC releases will happen at the "right times".

http://dgit.in/pspc



ASSASSIN'S CREED VALHALLA HEADING TO NORTH AFRICA?

A reliable leaker of Assassin's Creed Valhalla's previous DLC has shared details of a possible third DLC. Until now, Ubisoft has only revealed two expansion packs on its roadmap for 'Assassin's Creed Valhalla', which should both be released by 9th November 2021. Diving into the files of Assassin's Creed Valhalla, Jonathan uncovered three particularly revealing files named DLC_EXP1_Ireland, DLC_EXP2_Francia, and DLC_EXP3_Meteor. Very obviously, the first two refer to the 'Wrath of the Druids', and 'Siege of Paris'. As for Meteor, the leaker believes it is going to revolve around Norse Mythology and center around Muspelheim, or North Africa.

http://dgit.in/acafrica

UP AND COMING



CHIVALRY 2

After a lot of waiting, the sequel to Chivalry is finally here. Chivalry 2 promises epicness and chaos on a much grander scale than its predecessor, we can't wait.

Release date – June 8



FINAL FANTASY 7 REMAKE INTERGRADE

Final Fantasy 7 Intergrade features graphical upgrades for the remake, plus an additional DLC, EPISODE INTERmission featuring fan favourite Yuffie Kisaragi.

Release date – June 10



DARK ALLIANCE

Dungeons and Dragons Dark Alliance is a third-person RPG and spiritual successor to Baldur's Gate (we have a few of those around now). It will be based on the D&D ruleset..

Release date – June 22





When rogue meets rhythm

BY KSHIPRA 'FAAFDAAJALEBII' JADAV
FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

It's not often that we see two very different genres of the gaming industry come together and create something that complements both of them in their own way. You see, when you combine two genres like Action and Adventure, you know that they are kind of in the ballpark of each other and you know for a fact that even if one genre overpowers the other, the game will work.

Crypt of the Necrodancer was released on 30th July 2014 on Steam followed by a full release on 24th January 2015. After that, it gained a lot of attention from the community just because it was a concept that was alien to the community. Combining the rhythm genre with the roguelike genre was something that would miserably fail if not implemented perfectly just because of lack of common points between the two genres. But still, the game managed to pull it off and has a

10/10 rating on Steam. At this point, you're probably wondering what did the devs do to pull off such a feat and how did they do it? Don't worry. We got you covered.

STORY

The main heroine of the game is a young woman named Cadence. Initially, you play as her and as you progress through the game, other characters in relation to Cadence are unlocked. Cadence goes to the Crypt of the NecroDancer to search for her father. When she arrives there, she immediately starts digging for an entrance but suddenly the ground beneath her splits open and she falls and hits her head. Fatally wounded, she lies there until the NecroDancer appears and steals her heart, cursing it to forever beat to his music. The NecroDancer takes Cadence's heart and heads to his lair deeper into the crypt.



Although the story is not really apparent from the start of the game, as we progressed through the game, the story started piecing itself together and things started making much more sense. We personally think that if the player would have been given a little bit of more information to start out, they would be able to connect with the character and the game much more easily. But still, the story was worth the wait and so were the countless hours we put into the game to complete all five zones.

Since the story is not the main driving force of the game, we won't focus much on it but yes, the whole story becomes much more interesting when the DLCs come into the picture.

GAMEPLAY

This is the part where the devs absolutely nailed it. You move with the arrow keys and that's it. There is literally nothing else as a moving or interacting mechanic. Up, Down, Left, Right. That's it. No fire button, no ADS, no "E to Use/Interact". Just

the good old arrow keys. But with those arrow keys, you will navigate, interact, kill and dig in the game.

The movement is grid based and you can only move one block at a time in whichever direction you like. The catch here is that you will have to move to the rhythm of the song playing in the background. Otherwise, the player won't move and you will miss the beat. To assist you, a neat little heart with some guiding lines are given in the bottom so that you can move to the beat, but you'll be better off not using it and just feeling the rhythm and moving.



There are a total of four zones in the main game and an extra fifth zone if you have the DLC installed. Each zone has three levels which get progressively harder until you reach the end of the third level, after which you will have to face the boss. Clearing the bossfight will unlock the next zone. Needless to say, when you start out, only Zone 1 will be unlocked and other zones will have to be unlocked by the player. The levels are procedurally generated – meaning each time you play the map, it will be a different one. However, the difficulty of each level would remain the same. So, if you're on level 1 you will get a new map each time you start but the difficulty will be the same.

It is important to mention here that as the game is a rogue-like, it has the concept of perma-death. Die once and you lose all your progress. Hence, if you die at the bossfight, you will have to start from level 1 all over again. This brings a risk factor to the table and a sense of "do or die" which makes you pretty immersed in the game.



There's also an in-game shop – no. not the kind you're thinking – where you can purchase different upgrades with coins that you earn that can enhance your experience. Since we are in the Gameplay section, we'll touch upon the topic of different combos and the coin multiplier too. Basically, if you have purchased something from the shop like a bomb or a piece of cheese (more about the shop and the items later), you can use it by pressing a specific combination of keys like UP + LEFT or DOWN + RIGHT to use that item. There is also the concept of 'Coin Multiplier' which builds up overtime as you kill more enemies. When you kill an enemy, they drop some coins and will be multiplied by the coin multiplier value if it is more than 1. But beware that the multiplier is not a permanent one and will reset if you get hit by an enemy or miss a beat.



COMBAT

You will require a keen eye if you want to master the combat tactics of the game. Each enemy has a specific moving pattern and they move to the beat of the song too. You will need to kill each enemy by observing their movement pattern, and killing them when you're out of the harm's way. For example, the blue slimes move every second beat jumping vertically over the span of two tiles. If you want to kill them, you will have to approach them horizontally or else you will get in their way and they will attack you.

To master the combat mechanics you will have to play through the entire level at least thrice or even four times. Although this is an easy thing to do as you will be dying a lot in the game and due to the perma-death you will eventually have the movements of almost all the enemies and bosses memorised.

POWERUPS

They are an essential part of the game. At first, you will see no use for them and question their very existence in the game. But, the longer you play the game, the more you will realise the value and importance of these powerups.

Powerups in the game give you various kinds of perks. Some increase your coin multiplier, some increase your damage, some may heal you or some will even give a useful boost to your weapon's damage. They all cost coins to purchase and as mentioned above, you can get coins by killing enemies. Although, you shouldn't really rely on them for the long term, but they do help to get out of some sticky situations.



The only caveat here is the implementation of their combo. You see, you will need to press a certain key combination such as UP + LEFT or RIGHT + DOWN in order to activate them and that was the part which we found was a bit annoying to carry out. Everytime we would have to look at the key combination and press those keys in sync with the beat so that the powerup would activate and we wouldn't lose our coin multiplier too but everytime, due to the weird key combination we would end up skipping/mistiming the combo and would lose our coin multiplier. You can change the key bindings in the settings but we didn't really think that it would be fruitful to make use of any key other than the arrow keys.

MUSIC

The game has a fantastic soundtrack to offer. This is almost expected since it heavily relies on music and rhythm and boy oh boy! Does it do a fine job at nailing that. The music does a very good job on tying the game together and making the player immersed in the game. Danny Baranowsky - the composer of the original soundtrack has done a fine job in making the tracks progressively complex as the player advances through the level. Hence, you start out with just a kick and clap and it slowly turns into a full blown song with complex rhythms.

Another cool feature that this game provides is that you can add your own music too. Yes, you can literally add any mp3 to the game and play the game to its beat. Didn't like the soundtrack? No worries, just put on some Daft Punk and vibe to Get Lucky while you beat the enemies and clear the dungeons. This is one of the very nice features to have in a game and we think a lot of the other games should also implement this feature as it really makes the whole experience feel very personalised.

CONCLUSION

Crypt of the Necrodancer is a game that combines two very different genres into one package. It is a roguelike rhythm

MOAR!

DEVELOPER
Brace Yourself Games

PUBLISHER
Brace Yourself Games

PLATFORMS
iOS, Microsoft Windows, OS X, Linux, PlayStation 4, PlayStation Vita, Xbox One, Nintendo Switch

PLAYED ON
Microsoft Windows

PRICE
₹479 (Steam)

game. Yes, we know that those two words don't really go together but yet, here we are wondering how the devs pulled it off. Whenever we look at the rhythm games, we think of games like OSU!, Beat Saber, Friday Night Funkin, Taiko no Tatsujin, Muse Dash, etc. Whereas when we look at the roguelikes, we have games like Hades, Binding of Issac, FTL: Faster than Light, Spelunky, etc. We have a broad spectrum of gameplay elements here, but you'll find that none of them have any correlation between music and gameplay. The music is just there to complement the things happening on the screen. Crypt of the Necrodancer breaks all those boundaries and brings you a game that is based on rhythm and is in all aspects permadeath and dungeon based which makes it fall in the roguelike category too. *



CO-OP FIRST, EVERYTHING ELSE LATER

BY MANISH "TRIGGER-HAPPY" RAJESH

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Ghost Ship Games' Deep Rock Galactic has been called many things, but the description that fits it best is probably 'Left 4 Dead meets Minecraft'. Of course, there's a lot more to Deep Rock Galactic than that, but the one thing that should be pointed out about the game is that while it can be played solo, it's one of those games that are best enjoyed co-op. Don't let that turn you off though, this is a fantastic co-op game, even if you're playing with randoms, which was apparently Ghost Ship Games goal all along, to make a fantastic co-op game. Without further ado, let's get into the review.

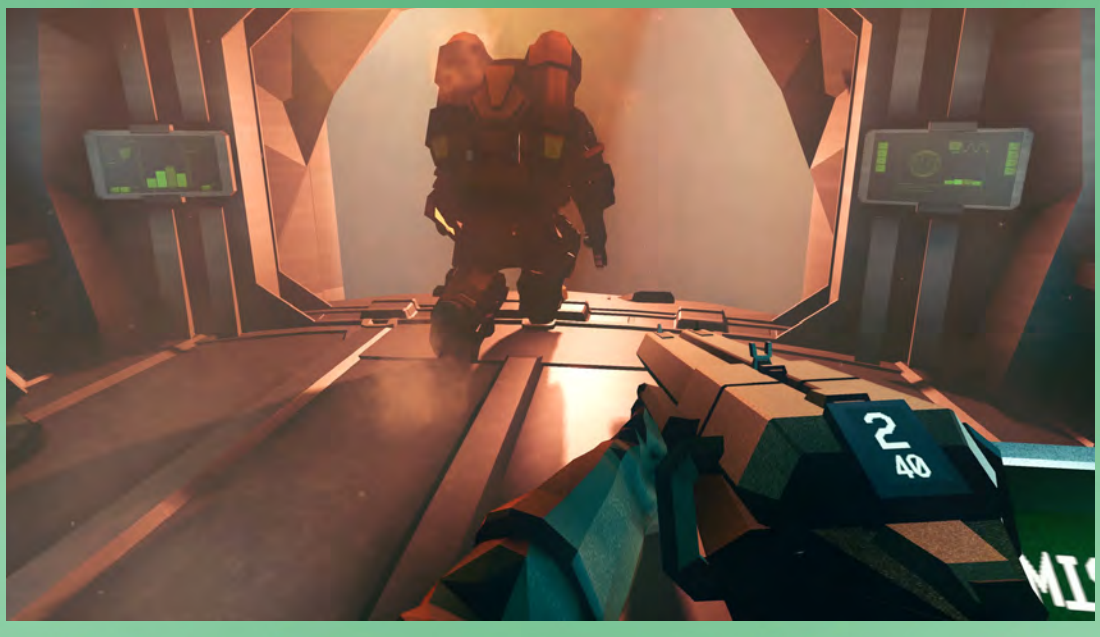




GAMEPLAY

With the game being co-op first everything else later, there's no real story here. There is a background plot in place for what you're doing what you're doing, but that's about it really. The moment you start the game you're thrown into a tutorial, which you need to finish to start playing co-op. The tutorial does a great job of introducing the game's basics to you. Use pickaxe to make tunnels and mine resources. Use gun to shoot at bad spider things. Call M.U.L.E to deposit resources you've mined. Then there are the aditional abilities, press 3 to equip zipline launcher – for hard to reach places, press 4 to create a shield globe. While you're doing all of the above you're constantly tossing out flares to light the way, which is otherwise very very dark. The final step, once you've deposited the required amount of mats into the M.U.L.E is to call for an evac ship. It's not that simple though, the game will tell you where it's landing and you've got to get there before the timer runs out, or it'll leave you behind. That's about it to the gameplay loop, which is both simple and somehow, a lot of fun. Probably has to do with how it's all been executed. What you have here





is a very well-balanced co-op experience, with so many different aspects to the gameplay loop, the resource gathering, dealing with enemies, race to the evac ship, it all weaves together very nicely, so props to Ghost Ship Games for pulling it off. If the above wasn't enough, there are also different miner classes, each specialising in one of the above mentioned aspects. Scouts for lighting the way with more powerful flares, gunners who are equipped for dealing with baddies, drillers who all about the resources and engineers who can set up turrets and other defencive structures. Four classes in a four-player co-op game.

If you're not a pre-made team of four, things can get pretty chaotic. Deep Rock Galactic features a rather complicated 3D map, that's hard to grasp at first, there's also all the darkness, so it's easy for everyone to keep getting lost while attempting to navigate the environment. The environments in the game are procedurally generated, so no two runs are the same, and the environments are also almost completely desrtuctible. Of course, this means that there's no real way for you to know where the resources you need are; this is something you need





to figure out on your own, and without coordination, this can, for lack of a better word, be a b*tch. This makes a rather difficult game to get into, but once you master the terrain, literally anything is possible. Making the four classes work together is something to witness, and is honestly enough to keep anyone going. With all that said, you really want to be playing this game co-op. You can certainly play it solo, but it won't be nearly as fun of an experience, it almost feels incomplete. Like they said, co-op game first.

GRAPHICS AND AUDIO

The game isn't too graphically intensive, however, some of the effects can tank your frames. If you have a powerful rig though, you shouldn't have any issues whatsoever. In terms of looks, the game looks kind of like a very clean, voxelised version of Borderlands. You aren't on Pandora however, you're in a lot of caves. There is quite a bit of variety in the biomes, with new ones being added regularly. Shiny crystals, glowing plants, complete pitch darkness, it's all there. The game's sounds compliment everything very well, from the pickaxes thwaking



away at materials to the sounds of the various equipment you're using and even gunfire. Of course, there's the random dialogue that your miner throws out, in a very thick dwarvish (Irish?) accent.

VERDICT

Deep Rock Galactic is a game that's hard to get into, but once you're in, there's no turning back. The gameplay loop is some of the best we've seen in co-op games, and we'd love to see them in more games. Everything works together really well, it simply clicks, but only if you're playing co-op. This isn't a game you want to invest in if you're planning to go it solo. *

MOAR!

DEVELOPER:
Ghost Ship Games

PUBLISHERS:
Coffee Stain Studios, Coffee Stain

PLATFORMS:
Xbox One, Microsoft Windows, Windows 10

PLAYED ON:
Windows

PRICE:
INR 699 (Steam)



A BLOATED EXPANSION WITH A GOOD STORY TO TELL

BY MANISH "TRIGGER-HAPPY" RAJESH
FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

Wrath of the Druids is the latest expansion for Assassin's Creed Valhalla and takes you to the shores of Ireland. This is an expansion that's loaded with content, for a game that's already got plenty of stuff to do, so you can see that as either a pro or a con. The new expansion features a massive chunk of Ireland for you to explore, with a spankin new campaign that you can start at any point during your main questline. So you don't have to worry about having finished the main story beforehand. With that out of the way, let's get into the meat of this expansion.

STORY

The DLC begins with you receiving a summons at the docks of Ravensthorpe. Summons from a cousin, Barid, who you've never heard of until this point. Also, he is somehow a king in Ireland??? Why are we only hearing about him now? Of course, your cousin Barid isn't the only king in Ireland, he's just the





king of one of the many warring territories that call the land home. You can already see where this is going. More riches to plunder, trade routes to establish etc etc Eivor is “convinced” and now off to Ireland. The primary antagonists of the expansion are the Children of Danu, a particularly violent cult of druids who will use whatever means necessary to preserve their ways. Hunting down members of the Children of Danu ties-in deeply into the expansion’s gameplay, and is basically the crux of the expansion; you need to deal with them in order to progress through the main story of the expansion. More on them in the gameplay section. We won’t go into too much detail about the story, but it’s easily one of the better storylines the franchise has seen. The political turmoil between the warring factions, the conflict between the new Christian monarchy and the old pagan druids and how they’re dealing with rapid growth





of Christianity and the potential end of their own faith, all comes together nicely paired with some great voice acting and well-written characters.

GAMEPLAY

This is still Assassin's Creed Valhalla, so the gameplay is essentially the same, so is the gameplay loop. Go here, get this. Go there, kill everything, repeat. It's not like we went into the expac expecting anything else, so we were neither disappointed nor impressed. You'll be doing a lot of the above for the entirety of the expansion, so you may as well get used to it. If you've already invested a bunch of time into the main game, then you'll feel right at home.

The only part of gameplay that stands out are your dealings with the Children of Danu. You need to track them down and kill





them. Investigation is important this time around, you need to pay attention to the clues you find. Once you've found them, the druids also make combat more interesting, offering an experience that didn't exist in Valhalla prior to the expansion. Their interweaving of "magic" into combat keeps things fresh and interesting. We say "magic" here but it's not really magic – it's basically gas that screws with your brain – but Eivor seems to think it is, so we guess it is magic.

They've also added a new quest type, Royal Demands, which has you running around doing errands for your allies in the different regions of Ireland. This in turn increases their influence and opens up more quests for you to do and gives you resources for building. This however is more of the same old gameplay loop that we spoke about earlier in the section. This can get pretty repetitive.





This is a meaty expansion so there's a lot more stuff that you can do, including plenty of optional side missions, boss battles, and cool gear to find. You could easily sink a lot of time into this expansion, or could choose to beeline the whole thing to the end, it all depends on the completionist in you. Sucks to be you if you are one, man this is going to take you forever.

GRAPHICS AND AUDIO

Valhalla was already a fantastic looking game with its rendition of England, but they've somehow managed to make the game look even better. The rolling hills and woodland glens of Ireland are a sight to behold and a joy to explore, with a fairy-tale-like charm to both the pretty looking castles on hills and the mystical bogs. The voice acting is great, and the music is fitting.





VERDICT

Assassin's Creed Valhalla: Wrath of Druids brings with it a lot of content. However, it's a lot of the same content that was already in the base game. There's a few new things in there to keep things interesting, like the druids, and a few optional fights, but otherwise, there's isn't much new here in the gameplay department. However, in the storytelling department, Wrath of the Druids is backed by some great writing, both in the main questline and the sidequests which capture the political and religious turmoil of the region wonderfully. *

MOAR!

DEVELOPER:
Ubisoft Montreal

PUBLISHER:
Ubisoft

PLATFORM:
PlayStation 4, Stadia, Windows, Xbox One, Xbox Series X/S, PlayStation 5, Luna

PLAYED ON:
Microsoft Windows

PRICE:
₹ 1,249



HOW SONY'S UPCOMING PS5 EXCLUSIVE EXPLOITS THE POTENTIAL OF THE CONSOLE

BY SAMEER "PSYCHOMANTIS" MITHA

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Ever since Ratchet and Clank made their debut on the PS2, the franchise has inspired the feeling of playing a Pixar movie. It was during the era of the PS3 that the visuals of the game were almost indistinguishable from an animated movie. Now, it looks like Ratchet & Clank Rift Apart scheduled to hit the PS5 (review) is dialling things up to 11. We had a chance to check out some behind the scenes gameplay of Ratchet and Clank Rift Apart. We also heard what the developers had to say

about the game; from crafting the story to exploiting the features of the PS5 and building the beautiful world the game takes place in. Here is our hands-off preview of Ratchet and Clank Rift Apart.

VISUALLY STUNNING

Insomniac Games, the developers of Ratchet and Clank Rift Apart have already flexed their muscles with Spider-Man Miles Morales (review) and Spider-Man Remastered for the PS5. But those were cross-gen games, available for the PS4 as well. Ratchet and Clank: Rift Apart is a PS5 exclusive and the developers are not held back by the limitation of the previous generations. This allows the developers to exploit the potential of the PS5. From what we've seen the game has an incredible amount of detail, large open environments and some breathtaking animations for all the characters. Needless to say, the game also shows off impressive raytracing as well.



Ratchet and Clank Rift Apart is a PS5 exclusive game.

Another feature we can look forward to is the load times. In a matter of seconds, Ratchet can jump through a tear and enter a whole new world. While previous Ratchet and Clank games had an animation of a spaceship flying through space as a loading screen, this game has no loading screens. Simply jump to a Rift Tears and you are in a new world. Games like

Returnal (review) and Demon Souls have exploited the insanely fast SSD on the PS5 and it looks like Ratchet and Clank will do the same.

UPPING THE ARSENAL

Ratchet and Clank have a legacy of introducing players to a diverse portfolio of weapons, some of which have interesting personalities. From Mr Zurkon, your flying robot companion who constantly refers to himself in the third person with the cheekiest one-liners to the Groovitron which makes every foe on-screen dance to disco tunes, the weapons in Ratchet and Clank are a definite highlight. We are most definitely looking forward to the quirky weapons Rift Apart has in store.



You have a variety of weapons in the game.

Another interesting thing we saw during the preview was that player will have to mix their weapons use if they want to survive the hoard of enemies. Some shield-wielding enemies will be able to deflect attacks from some weapons. We experienced something similar in Doom Eternal (review) where each enemy was vulnerable to a specific weapon forcing players to mix things up. If the same holds true here, the gameplay experience in Rift Apart will be truly diverse.

With the power of the DualSense, it will be interesting to see how the weapons feel in the game. During the sessions, the

developers told us that traditionally, players would need to charge up a weapon with one button, and then press a second button to execute an attack. But with the adaptive triggers, that's no longer the case. The experience of using each weapon in the game will be different thanks to the tension in the triggers.



You play as a new character, Rivet in the game.

The Burst Pistol, for example, will fire slow but accurate rounds when the trigger is half pulled. When pulled completely, the gun will fire rapid but less accurate rounds. The same for the Enforcer (the game's version of a shotgun). Pull the trigger halfway for a single barrel shot or pull it completely for a double barrel shot. The NegaTron Collider charges up as you half pull the trigger and fully pulling it lets out a charge. We have already experienced half pull to aim down sights and full pull for alternate fire in Returnal, so it will be interesting to see how the adaptive trigger features feel in-game.

While we are on the subject of the DualSense Controller, another interesting feature will be the haptic feedback. From grinding on the rails to collecting bolts and even traversing different terrain, it looks like the developers are looking to indulge as many of the player's sense as they can. Speaking of sense, we are also looking forward to the 3D audio implementation in Ratchet and Clank Rift Apart.



Ratchet and Clank Releases for the PS5 on June 11.

TWO SIDES TO THE STORY

Moving over to the story, the developers have said that this is a story that will appeal to newcomers and fans of the franchise alike. The story kicks off a few years after Into the Nexus. Clank has remade the Dimensionator so that Ratchet can travel to



The game supports Ray tracing as well.

the Lombax dimension. But as always, Dr Nefarious is there with his evil plan and opens the doorway to a parallel dimension, one with a female Lombax named Rivet.

Players will be able to play as Ratchet and Rivet and while the gameplay mechanics and weapons for both the characters are the same, we look forward to seeing how the story of the two Lombax plays out.

The Ratchet and Clank franchise always been a visual showcase for the PlayStation. The franchise has also succeeded in delivering a story that has a lot of heart, gameplay which is frantic yet fun and weapons that have a personality of their own. Not to mention impeccable voice acting and humour that's straight out of the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. Rift Apart looks like it will surpass the legacy laid by preceding games and we can't wait to embark on the journey when the game launches on June 11, 2021, exclusively for the PS5. *



BUILDING ON A SOLID FOUNDATION

BY SAMEER "PSYCHOMANTIS" MITHA

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It was a bold move for Capcom to switch to a first-person perspective in Resident Evil 7, but the gamble paid off, and the game redefined the horror genre. Resident Evil Village builds on the foundation that RE7 laid and improves on some of its criticisms. It also introduces a shop in the game, changes up how some mechanics work and delivers an experience that fans of the franchise will definitely enjoy!

RESIDENT EVIL VILLAGE: STORY

The story of Resident Evil Village kicks off a few years after the events of RE7. If you haven't played RE7 (you really should), there is a recap at the beginning of the game to bring you up to speed. Since the story and some key events in both the games are connected, it's best to know what's going on to get a full grip of it all. It's an engaging story with quite the eventful twists and turns, and there are some 'A-ha!' moments for fans of the franchise. Without spoiling anything, you once again don the role of Ethan Winters. He is "trying" to lead an everyday life with



his wife, Mia and their newborn daughter Rose. One evening his house is attacked by none other than series veteran Chris Redfield. Chris kills Mia and kidnaps Ethan and Rose. As expected, their convoy is stopped, and Ethan awakes at the edge of a village searching for his daughter.

As you have probably seen from the trailers and demo, the village is filled with all kinds of nasty. The village is looked after by a mysterious person - Mother Miranda. Miranda's four children "rule" different parts of the Village. You have Castel Dimitrescu ruled by Lady Dimitrescu and her three daughters. Heisenberg has his factory where he produces some pretty nasty stuff. You have House Benevento (the lady in black with her puppet bride doll) and Moreau, who looks after the river, or swamp.

The premise of the game starts off pretty simple - find your daughter. But I can confidently tell you that the story takes some unexpected turns. If you are a fan of the franchise, this is one of the best RE stories out there. If you have only played RE7, then there is enough here to keep you hooked. I don't want to delve more into the story, as it is genuinely one of the game's biggest highlights and one worth experiencing.

RESIDENT EVIL VILLAGE: GAMEPLAY

While the core gameplay is the same as RE7, Village has made some much-needed changes. Resident Evil Village is a first-per-





son survival horror game with a lot of action thrown into the mix. While RE7 relied on action set pieces and a few 'moulded' enemies here and there, Village has some more emphasis on the action and has various enemies.

The environment in the game is divided into four areas, all of which are connected by the central settlement of the village. The game is a lot more open than RE7, with large areas to explore, some of which you can only access when you gain a new key or ability. After each significant encounter, you find yourself back in the settlement area. The game is linear, which means you can't tackle any of the four areas in any order you prefer.

Each area you visit brings something new to the table. Castle Dimitrescu, for example, is a massive mansion with hidden chambers and is full of puzzles. Adding to the tension is Lady Dimitrescu and her three daughters that follow you in the castle. While Lady Dimitrescu herself is slow, like Mr X from RE2, her daughters are more agile, and you need to escape from them quickly. House Beneviento, on the other hand, has you sneaking around and makes you feel like you are in an Escape Room and have to find the key to get out.

The beauty is that each of the four areas has its charm, its USP to keep things fresh, and each boss battle is unique. I don't want to delve more into the areas or details of the variety of enemies you will encounter but know that the variety is

enough to keep things fresh throughout the 12 hours it took me to finish the game. The demo has shown off the Lycans, sword-wielding hooded figures and some flying enemies, but that's just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the variety of enemies you encounter.

The inventory management system in the game has changed for the better. No longer are crafting items, keys and collectables a part of your main inventory. They have a separate space, and weapons, ammunition and health items dominate your main inventory. Crafting items have a separate tab, so do the collectables you will use to open gates and solve puz-



zles. There is a separate tab for the collectables that you can sell to The Duke for Lei. It's good that items like keys and ingredients don't occupy the main inventory, and the "inventory management" is significantly reduced, letting you focus more on the game. Lei is the in-game currency.

The Duke is a new mysterious character who sets up shop at convenient locations throughout the game. He sells arms and ammunition and can also store your excess baggage, upgrade your storage capacity, and cook food for you. Yes, if you hunt for fish, chicken and meat in the game, the Duke can cook some interesting recipes. These recipes act as permanent character upgrades by enhancing your maximum health, let-

ting you take less damage when blocking, so on and so forth. He can also upgrade your weapons. There are a lot of collectables in the game that you can sell to the Duke for Lei.

The new inventory management system and the new shopping mechanic are welcome changes from RE7.

Moving over to pacing, Resident Evil Village is very well-paced, offering a good mix of action, puzzles, mini boss and the final boss fights. The only downside is that once you've defeated the caretaker of a particular area, you can't return there. So, you may want to scour the areas before leaving.

On the PS5 (review), there are some DualSense features implemented as well. It isn't as detailed as Returnal (review), but you do get adaptive triggers offering different resistance based on the gun you are using. It's a slight touch but adds to the immersion.

It's tough to talk more about the gameplay of Resident Evil Village without spoiling it so let me leave you with this. Dead Space was one of my favourite survival horror games until Dead Space 2 came along and dialled everything to 11, and that's exactly what Resident Evil Village has done. It has taken a formula that made RE7 great, added to it, tweaked some of the frustrating elements, and delivered a cinematic horror experience. There are fewer jump scares this time around, and that's ok as the package on offer is enough to keep you at the edge of your seat.

RESIDENT EVIL VILLAGE: GRAPHICS

Stunning is the first thing that comes to mind when you start playing Resident Evil Village. We played the game on a PS5 with Ray Tracing enabled, and let's get the worst out of the way. The framerate in the Moreau area sees some massive noticeable dips. The rest of the game has a solid enough framerate as not to hamper the experience.

Visually the game is stunning. From its cold white village to the large halls of the castles, the underground factory and even the swamp areas, it's all very diverse. The game may have 4-5 key areas you visit, but each one has a character of its own. Since the game is in first person, special emphasis has been made to ensure that the characters you encounter up close are detailed and very well animated. Standing inches away from Lady Dimitrescu's face really does send shivers down your spine. The textures on some of the walls, however, feel slightly low resolution. There are also times, especially when you are



running from one area to the next, when we notice some texture pop in.

While the game supports ray-tracing, one of the downsides is that many areas in the game are too dark. This does have a scary appeal in some areas, but in others, it feels more like a hindrance, especially if you are trying to solve a puzzle.

The weapons in the game have a detailed design but a special mention for the enemies you encounter. Sticking with the



ones you may know of, the Lycans are well designed. Their hair moves naturally as they try to avoid your gunshots while the hoods of the sword-wielding enemies sway as they try to take a swing at you. Some of the NPC's you encounter in the village are pretty scary, and a lot of this has to do with their design.

Overall, while RE Village may have some shortcomings, the overall package on offer is immersive, with rich, vibrant environments, diverse enemies to tackle, and realistic environments to traverse.

RESIDENT EVIL VILLAGE: SOUND

You know how there is an eerie silence in the night just before you hear a dog bark or the sudden horn of a car. That's the



same feeling the sound design of RE Village gives you. You are walking through the settlement. It's silent, except for the sound of your footsteps. And all of a sudden, you hear something above you, on the rooftops of the house. It's a Lycan. It roars. Suddenly, there's a pack of Lycans. It's this build-up that happens in a matter of seconds that's present in various capacities throughout the game and is proof of the importance of good sound design in a horror game.

Another special mention to the voice actors in the game. There were multiple times when I thought the game would get quite corny or cheesy, but it didn't. The voice acting is spot-on,

from the impatient tone of Lady Dimitrescu to the condescending Heisenberg and even Mother Miranda.

I highly recommend you play this game with a pair of headphones. It is immersive, and when you hear a sound from behind you on the left, you better turn quickly.

BOTTOM LINE

Resident Evil Village is a culmination of everything the developer has learned over the past two and a half decades with the franchise. The move to first-person adds to the immersion. The shop and inventory management are a welcome change. The game's pacing is spot on with a story that will definitely appeal to fans of the franchise and newcomers alike. *

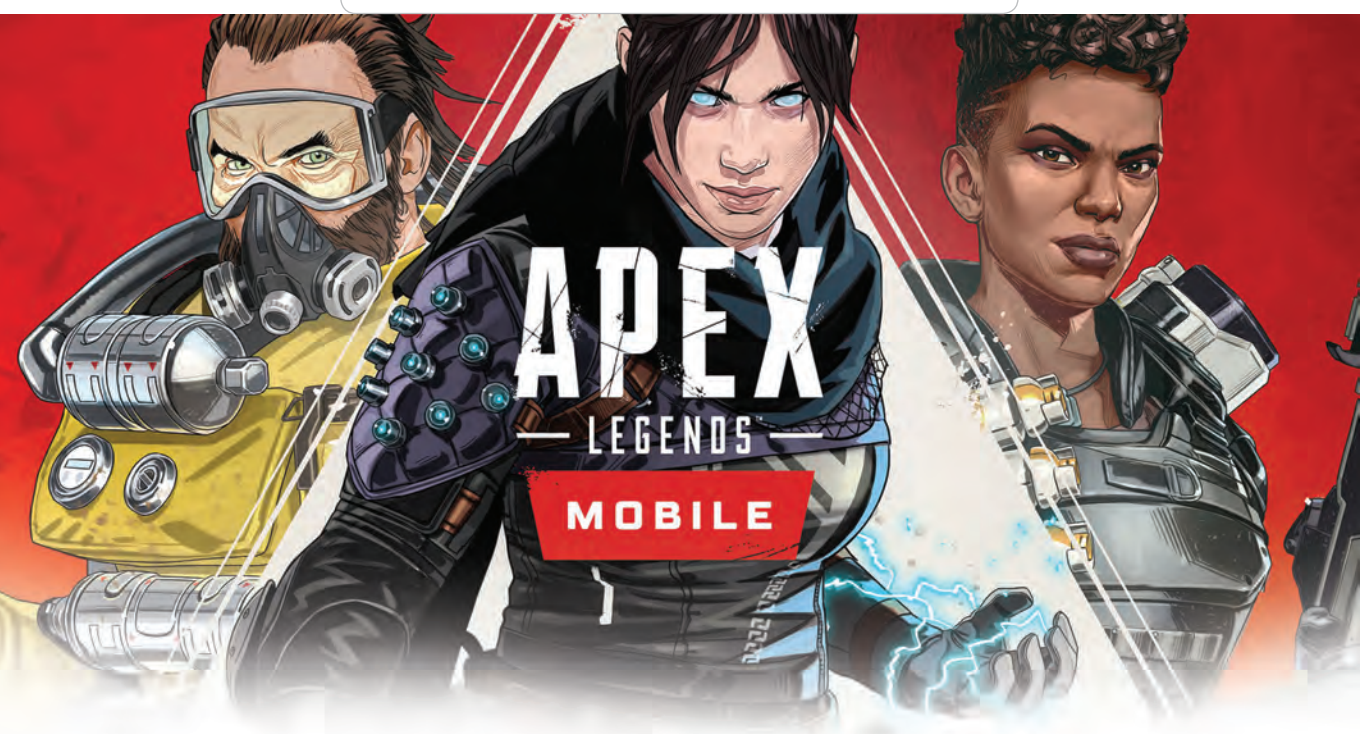
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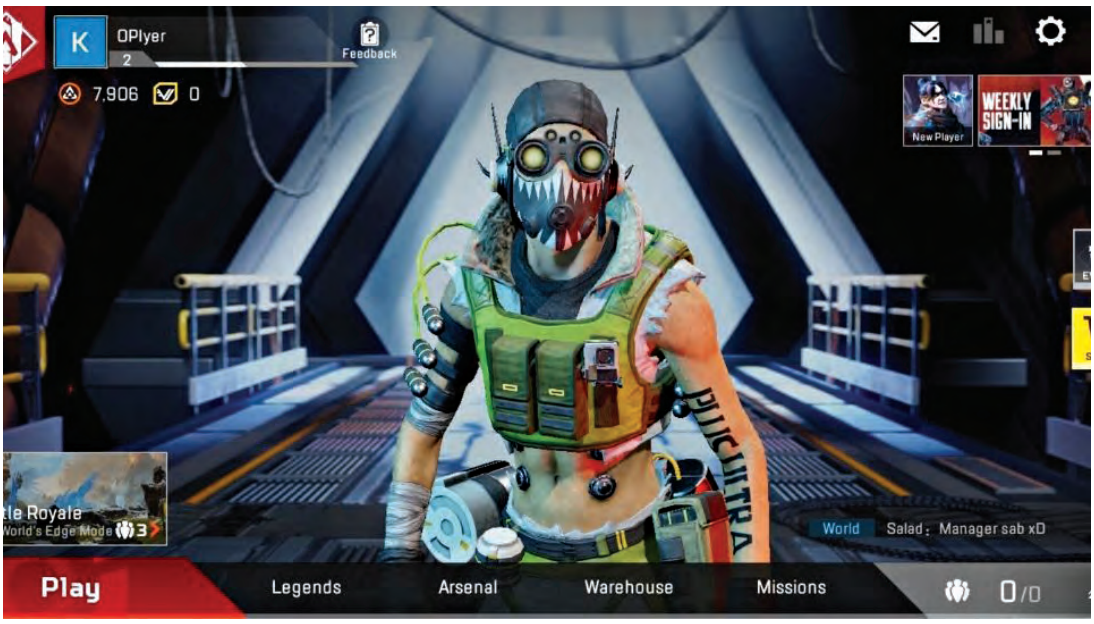


RESPAWN'S BATTLE ROYALE IS OFF TO A GOOD START ON PHONES

BY KARTHIK IYER
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Respawn Entertainment made a huge announcement recently regarding the launch of Apex Legends Mobile. The mobile version of the game is specially designed for touchscreens, with streamlined controls and thoughtful optimizations. The game went live for





us on our Play Store account earlier today and we have already played a few games. Apex Legends Mobile is far from being a finished product but the beta version feels much, much better than what we expected Respawn to ship. We will try to update and push out more information about the game over the course of the next few days but here are our initial impressions of Apex Legends Mobile after playing for a few hours.

ROUGH AROUND THE EDGES

Apex Legends Mobile plays similar to, say, the PC version or the console version of the game. It's essentially a battle royale in which you drop into a map, gather around some loot, eliminate other squads and be the last squad standing. Battle royale is the only game mode that's available now and we honestly don't expect Respawn to add other modes anytime soon. The version



of Apex Legends Mobile that's live here in India is a beta build of the game, so it goes without saying that it's not there yet. That being said, We must say that some aspects of the game are well polished. The looting mechanism, for instance, is near perfect and it makes it a lot easier to pick up items and quickly enter the fights without having to spend any extra time. Even things like using your healing items or equipping/ holstering guns, etc. feel very good. A huge chunk of Apex Legends gameplay revolves around the Legend abilities and we are glad that Respawn has implemented it very well without making it overly complicated. We weren't able to try all the available legends but the ones that we did felt really nice to play. All the passive, tactical, and ultimate



abilities were working fine for both Bloodhound and Octane when we played. You can customize the on-screen controls to change the button layout and the ability to cool down timers are shown on the button itself. The gameplay feels a little janky but we didn't have any major issues. Besides the occasional no-reg issues that made us feel like an absolute bot against the bots, We were comfortably able to drop on the map, loot, and even our way to victory more than a few times now. So it's safe to say that the game is definitely playable. In fact, it's more polished than we expected it to be considering the fact that the game is still in beta. We didn't face any connectivity issues during our games either, which is honestly very surprising to us because even the PC version drops down to its knees quite often. We hope Apex Legends Mobile's team will try to keep it just as stable if not better all the time. Overall, we'd say that Apex Legends Mobile, in its beta stage, feels good to play. It's obviously not without its quirks but it's in an acceptable shape and doesn't make us want to uninstall it, so that's a good place, to begin with.

A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

I like how Respawn decide to start off small and didn't try to release the full game with all the legends and guns. For now, you only have 8 legends in the game - Bloodhound, Lifeline, Gibraltar, Octane, Wraith, Bangalore, Caustic, and Watson. We are sure other legends that are already out on the PC and console versions will be added later. You also have access to a limited arsenal. Respawn essentially added only a few of the guns from each weapon category. A lot of guns like Mozambique, Triple Take rifle, Volt SMG, Mastiff shotgun, etc. are missing here on the mobile version. But the ones that are available shoot similar to the PC version that we are used to. You also have all the attach-



ments as the ground loot for your guns but a lot of them are still missing. We weren't able to indulge deeply in character and weapon cosmetics. However, we did see a bunch of weapons skins and they're the same as the ones we have already seen on the PC version. You will have to spend Legends Tokens or Apex Coins to unlock the legends and weapon skins. I'd like to point out that in-app purchases to buy Apex coins aren't working yet, so spend those legend tokens carefully for now.

KEY DIFFERENCES

I noticed a couple of new things in the mobile version of the game that is not present on the PC version. For starters, there's a 'World chat' in which you can send messages and talk to, well, literally anybody who's currently in-game. You need to hit level 5 to be able to send messages on this world chat, but friends chat is available right from the get-go. The mobile version of the game also has an aim-assist to help you hit your targets. It's honestly, a little too high at this and you



really have to try and miss your shots to not hit your opponents. The in-game store also looks very different from the one that we are used to. For now, most everything is available to purchase using Legend tokens but we are sure this will change as more people enter the game so that Respawn can monetize the game properly. Voice lines are also majorly missing for the most part. Besides the diverse roster of characters with unique abilities, Apex Legends is known for its communication system that uses a unique ping system. While you can ping locations, loots, etc. there are no related voice lines to it which feels a little weird. We are sure it's only a matter of time before they add that to the game though.

THE FINAL SAY

I have barely scratched the surface of this mobile version of Apex Legends. We are going to continue playing this game for the next few days and see if anything changes during that time. But for now, We truly think that Apex Legends Mobile is off to a good start. We are not sure if they have done enough to make it the next big thing in the mobile gaming scene after PUBG Mobile, but it definitely feels like a step in the right direction and it has the potential to go a long way. More than anything, we are glad that the game on mobile feels like a genuine effort unlike the Switch version, which unfortunately feels like an afterthought, to say the least. Now if you'll excuse us, we gotta go play it and decimate these bots before a bunch of tryhards enter the game and start sweating it out. It's time for us to drop in or as Bangalore would say, "It's time to drop, shock, and rock!" *



PC SETTINGS OPTIMISATION

BY MANISH "TRIGGER-HAPPY" RAJESH
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Resident Evil Village has been out for a little while now and we've already got a review out for it. For the review we played the game on a PS5, which it runs fantastically on by the way, but we haven't forgotten about the #PCMR. Naturally, we've played the game on PC as well, there's just something about the comfort of a keyboard and mouse that any amount of fancy adaptive triggers or haptic feedback can't replace. That being said, in terms of content, there are no differences between the console and PC variants of Resident Evil Village, which is as it should be. What we're going to break



down here is the performance of Resident Evil Village on PC and what you can do to optimise your performance.

The RE Engine has been at work of late, with Resident Evil 2, Resident Evil 3, Devil May Cry 5, and even Monster Hunter Rise for the Nintendo Switch using the same engine. This is a heavy duty engine brimming with shiny features and fortunately, it's not too taxing on weaker systems while offering some great visuals if you've got the rig for it.

PERFORMANCE BREAKDOWN

Resident Evil Village doesn't come with its own built-in benchmark, which kinda sucks. So the only other option is to replay the same segment over and over with different settings to see



if there's any major change in frames and visual fidelity. For this article we've got two primary rigs, a mid-range one and our test rig which is basically a beast of a machine. You can look up the specs on our test rig in the killer rigs section of our main magazine. For the mid-range rig, we've got an Intel Core i5-9400F, 16 gigs of RAM, and an AMD Radeon RX 5600 XT.

The game itself has a few preset graphics settings: Prioritize Performance, Balanced, Prioritize Graphics, Ray Tracing, and Max.

On the test rig, the game easily crosses the 200fps mark on the prioritise performance preset. On max settings the game still sits on a comfortable 120+ fps. However, using ray tracing sees a significant drop in fps, however, at around 80fps there's really no complaining.

Surprisingly, we got pretty decent frames on the mid-range rig as well, with an avg fps of around 150 on the prioritise performance preset, and 80 on max settings. Of course, no ray tracing support on the mid-range card so we didn't bother.

A lot of games have a little bar on the side which indicates how much VRAM turning certain features on or off will use up. The game recommends using GPUs with 8GB or more VRAM. Older cards, especially NVIDIA cards do not have 8GB of VRAM on them. However, all AMD cards from current and the recent generations, and the recent generation of NVIDIA cards shouldn't have any problems. Don't fret though, it only ever hits that 8GB mark if you prioritise graphics, on the balanced preset the game uses 5.5GB of VRAM, which is more manageable, but budget cards with 4GB or less VRAM will still struggle. At prioritise performance though, you should still be able to get

satisfactory fps without any issues on budget cards as well at 1080p.

RESIDENT EVIL VILLAGE SETTINGS OPTIMISATION

So here's the thing, while the game throws a lot of settings at you, you're not going to get too much of an FPS difference from simply turning them all off. Instead, there are a few particular settings that you can tweak to get the maximum bang (in this case, fps) for your buck. We're not going to be talking about resolution here, because that's a given, you will get more frames if you play on lower resolutions. Of course, this also means that if you have a 4K monitor (and no rig to actually play on that resolution for some reason?) and turn down the resolution, it will look bad.



Shadows

Let's start off with the most obvious setting, well at least, the first one we look to drop in order to pull more frames – Shadows. Dropping shadows will give you a pretty sizable increase in fps, at the cost of a rather noticeable change in the game's visuals. If that doesn't bother you too much, this is the easiest way to boost performance.

Render mode

Switching to Interlaced rendering from Normal actually gives a significant boost to fps, more so than shadows even. Of course, it comes at an even greater cost to visual quality. This drop in quality is barely noticeable at lower resolutions and smaller screens, but on higher resolutions it's quite clearly evident.



However, this is an easy setting tweak recommendation if you're looking for more frames.

Subsurface scattering
This is basically the setting that determines how light affects translucent objects in the game, including skin. Especially skin actually. You could get a few frames from turning this off, and the best part is you won't really miss it.

Ray tracing
We haven't tested this on the mid-range PC for obvious reasons, but if your system can handle it, turning off ray tracing actually gives you the biggest possible boost to fps, a whopping 40% in some areas. Then again, if you're in a position where you actually can use ray tracing you probably don't care too much about not having enough frames.

CONCLUSION

Resident Evil Village runs surprisingly well across a wide range of PC rigs, which is nice to see and a testament to the RE Engine's optimisation. A majority of the settings don't make much of a difference, at least in terms of performance, but the game should run on your system without you needing to tweak any of the settings in most cases (if you have a low-medium gaming rig that is). In terms of loading times, the PS5 is king and takes mere second(s) to load, for PC, it largely depends on your hardware. *

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MOBILE MADNESS

YOU HAVE TO TRY THESE GAMES OUT ON YOUR SMARTPHONE!

BY TEAM SKOAR!
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Sixit

While on the surface Sixit looks like a cutesy kids game, this is actually quite a challenging puzzle game. This is a narrative puzzle game where you only have 6 actions per run. Once you use up your actions, you have to start all over again. As you progress and solve puzzles you'll get access to more items that you need to use in order to solve more puzzles. Unlocking more items only makes things more challenging because you need to juggle not only your actions, but the order in which you will use them. So you need to keep in mind the actions you will require to get to the new location, plus the actions you will need in order to actually solve the puzzle at the location. And you have manage it all within 6 actions for the most part. The game is populated with cute animals who you have to help, these are essentially the puzzle providers in the game. Controls are purposely limited, all you can do in the beginning is move left or right. The action button is on the right, the movement controls are on the left. However, when you start you won't have any



actions. After a quick first run, you'll get access to your first item/action, the megaphone, which will allow you to talk to the other animals. From there you start solving puzzles to unlock more items in order to solve more puzzles. Like we mentioned above, the challenge here is junggling the right items in the right order to solve the puzzle you're aproaching. Sixit is definitely a fresh take on the puzzle genre and one fans of the genre should check out.

Moonlight Sculptor

Moonlight Sculptor is an open-world MMORPG where the you're playing a game within a game. The premise is that



you're playing a VR game in the virtual game, Royal Road. It's a premise very similar to n number of isekai anime out there. Right off the bat, the visuals for the game are great, they aren't going for a black desert look, but more of an isometric cartoony 3D look, and it works well. Once you're through with the intro you're taking to character creation, here you can

pick one of six different classes. You've got the usual suspects such as warrior, mage, archer, priest etc, but you've also a classless spec and the alchemist spec which aren't as common. Gameplay is simple, and as expected you've got the ability to automatically run about and do your thing, including combat. This can be a turn-off to some, or a QoL thing for others. There's plenty of monsters to fight in Royal Realm and the combat is nothing flashy, but it's polished and robust. There are also large scale PvP battles, plus single-player modes. As with any MMORPG, you're going to have to grind quite a bit or dish out real cash if you want to compete with the best of the best. This is unfortunately how it is when it comes to most MMOs on mobile. Ultimately though, the overall experience is not too bad if you're looking for a new mobile MMO to jump into.

Rage In Peace

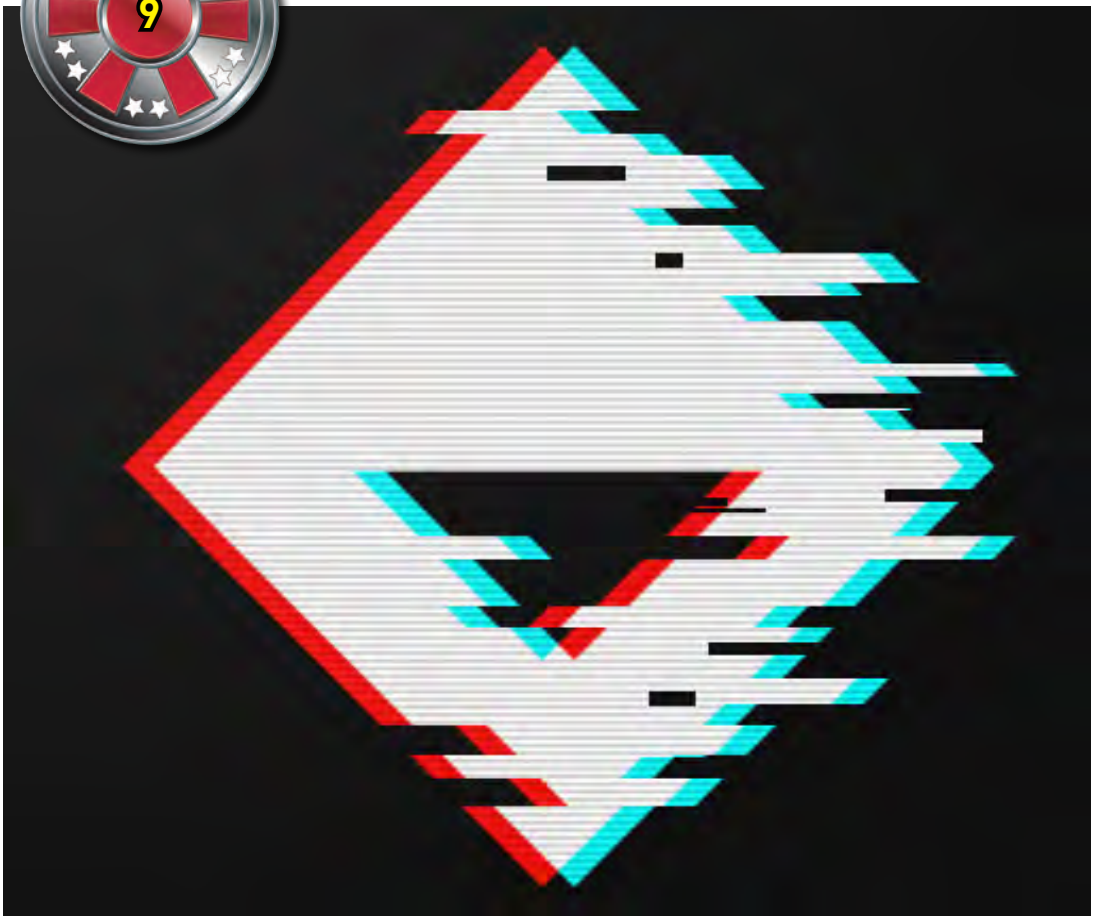
This game is a port of its PC version which gained 9/10 on Steam with a "Very Positive" review. What is it about this game that makes it so special? Well, Rage In Peace is a side-scrolling perma-death(ish) adventure game where you play as Timmy Malinu, an emotionless guy whose only dream is to



die asleep in his pajamas, in peace. One day, the Grim Reaper comes to Timmy and tells him that he is going to die today but he does not specify when and where. Hence, Timmy has one last chance at fulfilling his dream as he sets on a journey to "cheat" death. The speciality of this game is that it will make you rage - by retrying levels over and over, it will make you smile - by the subtle humour and by some of Timmy's lines, it will teach you life lessons - the game is full of ups and downs just like life and everyone in the universe is out there to kill you just like in real life and at last it will give you a memorable experience that most side-scroller games cease to give. This game requires a lot of memorization about the locations of traps and falling objects and requires a fair bit of muscle memory building too (for certain stages). If you're into side-scroller games and want to have fun while learning important life lessons, we highly suggest you try this one out.

CyberCode Online

CCO Is a Cyberpunk themed lightweight Text Based MMO RPG where you play in the Cyberpunk world, levelling up your character by defeating NPCs and clearing random dungeons. The game flaunts Co-op with real players to defeat dungeon



and bosses in Real-Time, along with Real-time player market for you to trade and earn. There's also Global chat available with a helpful and friendly community, if that's what you were waiting for. Another fact, that it implies the concept of buffing all active players fairly to ensure no P2W, is something that makes such a title exceptional. The art style, graphics and settings all coincide with the 'techy theme', inspired from Cyberpunk again. Although it might take some time for players to catch up, if they are not yet that familiar with the Cyberpunk world. (You can jump straight into the game via any of your web browser too, check out : https://cybercode-online.com/)

Suspects: Mystery Mansion

If we had to describe it in the least words, it'd be: Among Us, but with better looks and more features. The game though, does look promising and something you won't get bored of any soon, if you have just the right bunch of



people to play along! Just like Among Us, the multiplayer deduction game offers two primary lateral roles one can get in a match, which are of: a killer or a guest. As the killer your aim is to stop the investigation by killing all the other guests/ investigators. This can be achieved by either assassinating all the other guest players or by planting bombs unobserved and blowing up the mansion. As a guest, you have to perform investigative tasks to get closer to finding the killers' identity. All the while being also aware of the fact that the killers are among the group and can put you to bhoot-wala state any-time by killing (yeah quite original UC).

But even though it uses similar mechanics as Among us, it rectified it's shortcomings as well. For one thing, they added an in-game mic that can be used to communicate while in lobby or while voting for suspected killer in-game. Although not exceptional, the mic functionality works decently enough. Finally, the animations are quite well designed for a 2D-game, where the art style is pleasing to eyes and conceal a mali-cious n funny tint. The animations are comical themed too, which just adds up to the overall taste.

All in all, you should give it a try if you have the perfect group of people to play with (keep in mind: you need atleast 4 players to start a match).

Tiny Room Stories : Town Mystery

The game begins with a small introduction of our protagonist who is a private detective.He has recently received a mes-sage from his father asking him to come to his town for an unknown reason. As he was on the way, he comes down to a traffic booth that had its barrier down. This is where the game starts.

You are explained how the game functions which is a sim-ple tap mechanism. You tap on something that you think might hide a clue and if you're right, you move ahead. Much like other similar games of this genre like the Rusty Lake col-lection, the story is absolutely intriguing. As we move forward from the traffic booth we reach the address our father had asked us to come to which is supposedly his residence. While entering the town, we notice nobody on the streets. The town seems abandoned.

As we enter the house, we don't find anybody. The place seems to be a mess and we soon start gathering clues. The clues are positioned in such a way that they make the game



moderately difficult. They are very straightforward if taken in the right way and would have you running in circles for hours if you missed out on one little detail.

Overall, The game is a must play for fans of the mystery genre and also for someone who is just looking for some thrilling entertainment in some free time. Beware though, the game is very addicting and it took the game to finish for me to finally leave it alone.

Cookies Must Die

Cookies Must Die is an action platformer with a cheeky concept. Cookies, for some reason, have become sentient and taken over the world. Scientists have engineered humans who can perceive time much slower than others giving them an advantage in the battle against the cookies.

You initially play as Jack, assigned with rescuing hostages and destroying cookies in each chapter. You can unlock more characters as you move on, each with a special ability that you can utilise during intense moments.

The best part of this game is easily the various abilities and weapons that you can unlock and upgrade as you pro-



gress through the game. Abilities and weapons float in a circular fashion across the screen while battling with the cookies. They are randomly generated and can give a tactical advantage during combat depending on the type you get. The weapons are not useful during the initial stages of the game because of the low ammo count, but you can upgrade them as well. There are surprisingly a lot of enemy types each with a different attack that you need to be mindful about. The ultimate spectacle happens when you combine chain attacks against the cookies by collecting multiple abilities at the same time which will happen more often as you unlock different abilities. The ability to slow time to better angle your trajectory is super satisfying especially when you dodge the attacks from cookies like Neo from the Matrix, moving past them at the same time.

Even though there are some ads that pop up in the main menu, you can choose to view ads optionally as they are quite rewarding and will be helpful for getting a good upgrade to your arsenal.

Where Cookies Must Die falls from grace a little bit is its repetitive level design that you will start to notice once you

cross Chapter 50 or above. Another missed opportunity is that the game doesn't further develop its story aside from that small bit at the beginning.

Cookies Must Die is a game that you can have loads of fun with when you play it once in a while or even if you want to grind your way into unlocking new abilities and weapons. Its slow mo mechanic combined with a banging soundtrack, is addictive enough to keep you engaged despite its few shortcomings. *

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