

SKOAR!

LIVE TO GAME

13 GAMING MYTHS DEBUNKED!

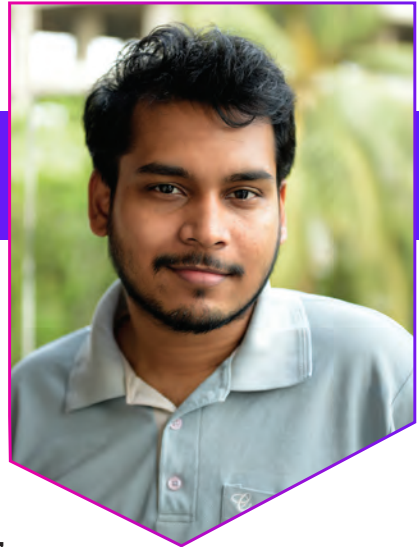
UNRAVEL THE TRUTH BEHIND SOME OF
THE BIGGEST VIDEO GAMING MYSTERIES



INCOMPLETE

Manish “Trigger-Happy” Rajesh

SKOAR! Overlord | feedback@skoar.in



Being an avid MMO player, I'm quite excited about New World and MMOs that are still in the works like Ashes of Creation. The MMORPG scene is in a pretty bad state, and New World could give it the booster shot it needs. Thanks to the game being a new release, it's bustling with life right now, and the excitement of exploring a new world (pun intended) for the first time together with the rest of the world is something that you can't really explain, you need to experience it. It doesn't get more exciting than that.

Unfortunately, New World didn't exactly have what one would call a smooth launch. The game did recently have a closed beta, but the issue with closed betas so close to launch date is that whatever problems were discovered are most likely not going to be addressed by launch. One of the biggest issues for instance, is the game frying people's GPUs. That's right, the game apparently has uncapped frames, which pushes GPUs to their very limits, literally frying them. Most games have an internal frame cap, usually much higher than what you'll ever need. New World didn't, so it would squeeze your GPU for everything it had. During the beta, the issue was thought to be with only EVGA Nvidia cards, but the sample size was pretty small. After launch it was discovered that the issue was not just EVGA cards. To EVGA's credit, when it was discovered during the beta they recalled and replaced damaged cards.

Here's the thing, with an MMORPG like New World which will constantly be changing and updating, it's pretty normal to have

server issues and stress issues and whatnot. The GPUs getting fried is pretty serious though and should certainly have been addressed before launch. But other than that, broken quests, balance patches, glitched equipment, it's all pretty standard fare in MMORPGs.

The problem is all that is becoming common fare in just about every game to release. We've gotten so accustomed to day 1 patches that we think it's the norm, when it really shouldn't be. People really don't want to play an incomplete game on the day it launches and wait a few weeks till it's in a playable state. It's hard to name games which haven't done this in recent times. Then again, as the scale of games goes up and the demand to meet deadlines gets tighter, it's only to be expected. We're more than happy to wait a little longer to play a game that's not broken at launch. What about you guys? *

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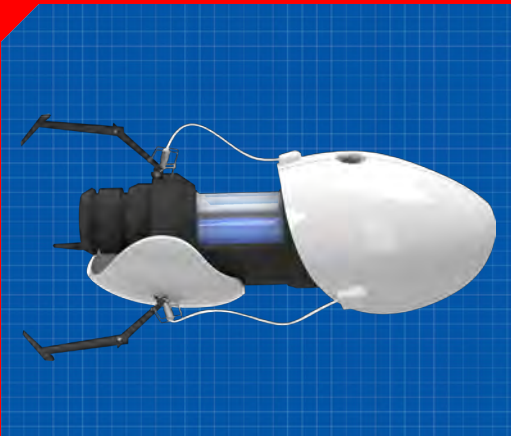
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LIVE TO GAME

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Manish “Trigger Happy” Rajesh

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What's New



BEWARE! THOSE TEMPTING BGMI REDEEM CODES ARE ALL FAKE!

If you're looking to browse the internet for BGMI redeem

codes, you'll find a ton of offers wherever you look. However, as tempting as they might be, steer clear of them as these promotions are fake. As of now, there are no redemption centers in India for these BGMI redeem codes. Until the brand makes any official announcements for the same, fans of Battleground Mobile India should refrain from trying to get them.



BRENDAN 'PLAYERUNKNOWN' GREENE WORKING ON NEW SURVIVAL GAME

Brendan Greene has recently left the company that he creat-

ed - PUBG Corp. and has moved on to starting a new game studio based in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Back in 2019, Brendan shared a mysterious teaser for an upcoming project 'Prologue'. He has revealed more about 'Prologue' and his future plans in a teaser video and an interview with EuroGamer.



BGMI PERMANENTLY BANS 59,247 ACCOUNTS

Krafton Inc., the developer of Battlegrounds Mobile India has announced that it has perma-

nently banned 59,247 accounts between September 10 and September 16. The offending accounts were caught using ille-

gal programs via the developers' security system and community monitoring. In simpler terms, these accounts were banned for using illegal cheats such as aimbot, wall hacks, speed mods or even a combination of multiple hacks.



UBISOFT IS MAKING A TV SERIES NOW?

Yes, you heard that right. Ubisoft - the game studio - has partnered up with Binge (a streaming platform) to make the live action version of it's

already popular Driver video game franchise. According to GamesIndustry.biz, Driver will be shifting gears towards a live-action series which will primarily focus on "undercover agent and ex-race car driver John Tanner as he tries to take down a crime syndicate." The Driver series will be produced by Binge's Vincent Talenti and Allan Ugnar who apparently are the same guys who made the Uncharted live action fan film in 2018 that went viral very quickly. According to official sources, Binge is a new streaming platform dedicated to delivering premium entertainment for gamers.



APPLE REFUSES TO ALLOW FORTNITE BACK ON THE APP STORE

Last year, when Epic announced that players will be able to make

direct payments on Fortnite, bypassing the app store's own payment systems, Apple retaliated by banning the game from the App Store. Now, even with an anti-monopoly law passed in South Korea, the tech giant is refusing to reinstate the game. South Korea made global headlines when it passed a law that banned Google and Apple from forcing tech developers from integrating their payment systems in their apps.

UP AND COMING



FAR CRY 6

The sixth installment of the Far Cry franchise takes us to Cuba-inspired Yara, where we presumably take down the fascist dictator Anton Castillo. This will be the largest Far Cry to date apparently, so expect plenty to do.

Release date – October 7



BACK 4 BLOOD

Back 4 Blood is the spiritual successor to Left 4 Dead that's being worked on by the creators of the OG game. Back 4 Blood features identical co-op gameplay with an added deck building element that wasn't present in the original game.

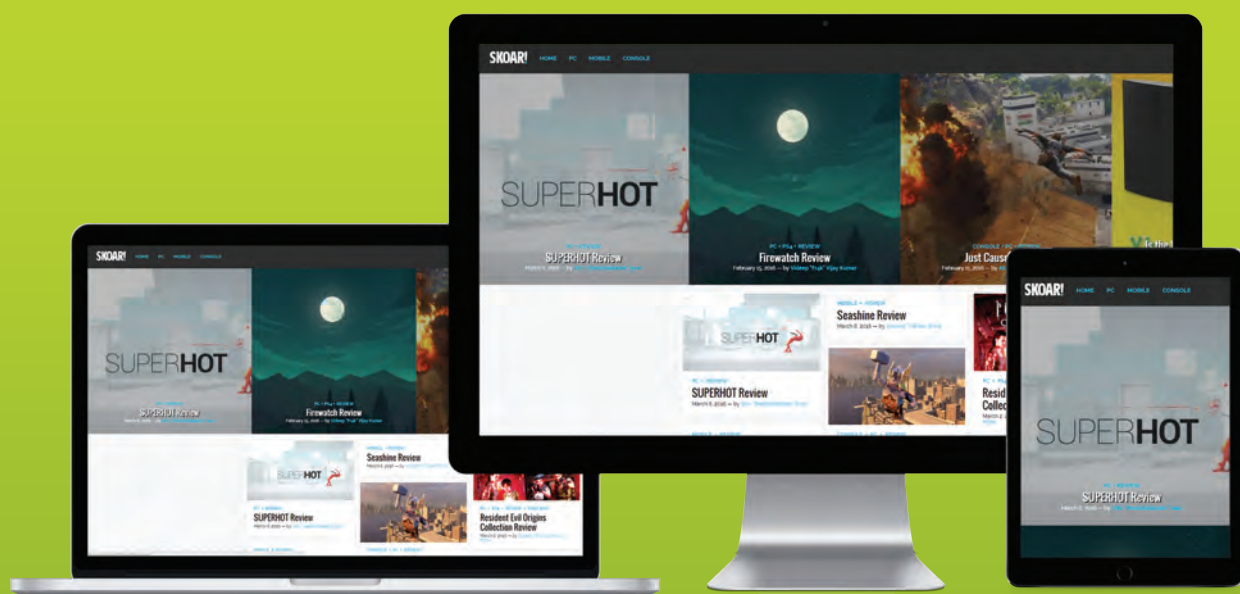
Release date – October 12



AGE OF EMPIRES 4

The fourth installment in the Age of Empires series has been a long time coming, and will feature a lot of the mechanics that were present in the beloved Age of Empires II. Fans of the RTS genre like us probably can't wait.

Release date – October 28



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MONSTER HUNTER STORIES 2™ WINGS of RUIN

GOTTA RIDE 'EM ALL

BY MANISH "TRIGGER-HAPPY" RAJESH

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Everyone is familiar with the Monster Hunter games. They're the epitome of skill-based combat and hitbox-porn, right up there with the likes of Dark Souls. Of course, this very fact, along with the steep learning curve and mechanics makes the Monster Hunter games rather hard to get into. Enter, Monster Hunter Stories, a game based in the world of Monster Hunter where you don't actually hunt monsters, but tame them. Think Monster Hunter meets Pokemon. Considering this is Monster Hunter Stories 2, it's a formula that works, and not much has been changed from the first game. With that being said, let's get into the review.

STORY

The good thing about Monster Hunter Stories 2 is that you don't need to have played the first game, or even Monster Hunter games in general to get into it. Sure there are a few recurring characters here and there, but it's really not significant enough to warrant needing to play the first game. Like with all Monster Hunter games, you start with character creation, and there's a decent amount of customisation to go around, so if you, like us, enjoy character creation, you might be here a while. Like in the first Stories game, your character doesn't really talk much – or at all for that matter.





In Monster Hunter Stories you take on the role of a rider, whose job, unlike the hunters, is to tame monsters, rather than kill them. Although you will be doing a fair bit of monster killing anyway.

The game's story is pretty weak. The story has never really been a strong suit for any of the Monster Hunter games, sure there's plenty of rich lore and background info, but as for why your character is doing what they're doing, you're a bit in the dark.

As long as you're not really bothered with the details, you should be fine. If you're a stickler for that kinda stuff, you will probably be bothered.





GAMEPLAY

Monster Hunter Stories 2 plays like a traditional JRPG, with turn based combat. In typical JRPG fashion, the grind is real and there's lots to do, which is not necessarily a bad thing depending on, well, you. There's a quest system, which is essentially a 'go to this location and bonk this monster' type of deal. While you're free roaming you can encounter wild monsters, which will start the game's turn-based combat. Combat in Monster Hunter Stories follows a rock, paper, scissors format. You've got three attack types: power, speed and technical. You need to pick the right attack type to counter the move the opposing monster telegraphs. In Monster Hunter Stories you're also accompanied by your own monster – dubbed “Monstie” to distinguish it from the monsters you're fighting – who will help you in combat. Both your monstie and the monsters you face in combat have a primary attack type and element, which you need to guess the first time you face them, in order to effectively counter them.

Figuring out how to beat a monster you're facing the first time is a lot of fun. There are multiple phases to every fight, and monsters won't follow the same patterns for every phase. Just like with Monster Hunter, your choice of weapon also makes a difference, depending on the monster you're hunting and how your weapon will affect their different body parts. You can also double team monsters with a combo move along with your Monstie, dubbed Kinship skills. While the first time is the most fun, once you've figured a monster out, you've pretty much fig-



ured it out forever, so they can never get the jump on you again. Which kinda sucks. There aren't too many different monsters you can face, so you'll eventually get used to the patterns of every monster you can face, which in turn starts becoming quite repetitive. Fortunately, while battles are pretty long, you can speed them up, and eventually even resolve them instantly.

Another aspect of Monster Hunter Stories is the Monsties. Collecting and raising them will take up a big portion of your playtime in Monster Hunter Stories 2, and it's time well spent. The world is dotted with monster dens, where you will find eggs. You swipe these eggs, which have patterns on them indicating whether you've already collected the monster inside or not. Of course, you can get even deeper into the whole collecting and breeding thing and fine-tune your monsties to have perfect stats and genes and whatnot. While this won't really make too much of a difference in regular battles, it does in multiplayer battles. Oh and the optional subquest battles, which are comparatively more difficult.

GRAPHICS

The game looks amazing. The battles, the biomes, the monsters themselves, the animations, attack effects, special moves, all of it looks amazing in Monster Hunter Stories 2. It looks so good that you would be forgiven for forgetting that the game's getting repetitive because it looks so damn good. You can clearly see the love and attention to detail that has gone into the animations in Monster Hunter Stories 2, which brings



the game to life. Just the act of riding your monstie buddy across open plains is beautiful. Each monstie also has its own animations, and have different ways they move around. We don't think we need to mention the monsters themselves, which are obviously top-notch, just like they have always been in Monster Hunter games. The graphics are slightly more anime when compared to Monster Hunter World, but overall, no complaints from us in the graphics department.

VERDICT

The story in Monster Hunter Stories 2 is ironically its biggest weakness. However, it covers up for it in just about every other department, which ultimately leads to us not really minding the lack of a story. Clearly, even Capcom is aware of this.

There's a lot more content planned for the game, and none of it expands on the story, it's more monsters and monsties to tame. They know what the game does well and they're sticking to it, and we're all for it. With Monster Hunter Stories 2, what you have is a game that's for all the people who weren't too keen on the Monster Hunter gameplay, and were looking for another way to sink their teeth into the expansive Monster Hunter universe. *

MOAR!

PLATFORMS

Nintendo Switch,
Microsoft
Windows

PUBLISHERS

Capcom U.S.A.,
Inc., Capcom

DEVELOPERS

Capcom,
Marvelous Inc.

PLAYED ON

Microsoft
Windows

PRICE

₹ 3,499 (Steam)



5 THINGS WE LOVED AND 3 THINGS WE DIDN'T

BY SAMEER "PSYCHOMANTIS" MITHA

FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

Before we get into Deathloop, a little background on why I think the game is great and why it won't appeal to those that love a classic first-person shooter. The first time I played Dishonored on the PS4 I was blown away by its amazing setting, unique abilities and combination of stealth and action that reminded me a lot of the original Thief games. Needless to say, the sequel, Dishonored 2 not only surpassed my expectations but the Clockwork Tower level cemented my opinion that Arkane is one of the best game development studios out there. While Arkane has also developed Prey in 2017, I missed the game and it has been on my backlog for some time.

When the promotions for Deathloop kicked in I was intrigued, but slightly sceptical. I was sceptical about its rogue-lite structure of reliving the same day over and over again. While we have experienced this 'live, die, repeat' formula in Returnal (review), the way it is executed in Deathloop is a lot more like the movie Edge of Tomorrow than a rogue-lite game. Just like Tom Cruise learns the patterns of the 'Mimics' by reliving each day, you do the same by reliving the same day and





learning the enemy patterns and movements to get one step closer to taking out the Visionaries. But there is a catch to this formula which we will describe below.

Before we get to what we loved and didn't like about Deathloop, here's answering the all-important question - is Deathloop for you? Well, if you are a fan of fast-paced FPS games like Doom Eternal (review), Call of Duty, etc. or enjoy games like Far Cry (review) then Deathloop may disappoint you. Unlike Doom which is more about running and gunning, Deathloop is about strategizing, planning and then executing some slick moves. If you enjoyed games like Dishonored, or Thief or even Bioshock to some extent, then you are in for one heck of a ride.

Here's what we loved about Deathloop

Well woven story with a good mystery

From the moment your character, Colt, wakes up on the beach, you are in for one heck of a story filled with some of the best-written dialogue I've heard in a video game and some impeccable voice acting to compliment it. How many times can you hear a man talk about reading text on the wall and chuckle at his description and analysis of what he has read? This has happened on multiple occasions in the game and I looked forward to every time Colt opened his mouth as I was sure there'd be a wise-cracking one-liner coming my way.

This form of storytelling is only accentuated and complemented because of the relationship between Colt and the other

Visionaries (the main villains you need to eliminate), especially Juliana. Without spoiling too much, the relationship between the 2 is explored a lot in the game and their banter is one to look out for.

Colt shares a relationship with the other Visionaries as well, but the details are hidden in text conversations on computers and documents scattered throughout the game. I wish there was more dialogue between Colt and the Visionaries. I just feel like I have missed some grand detail by not reading all the documents thoroughly. Remember the reveal of Samuel Hayden in Doom Eternal's documents? Despite this, the story of Deathloop is one of its strongest suits.

Slick combat

The combat in Deathloop is easy to learn and can be mastered if you spend a little time learning the ropes. You cannot carry any weapons or abilities back with you in a loop until you unlock Residium which is like the currency you use to attach gear, guns and abilities to yourself permanently. The combat is an evolution of what we found in Dishonored. Powers from Dishonored such as Shift (the ability to quickly move/jump to places) and Nexus (the ability to link multiple foes and kill them with a single shot) make an appearance here as well. There are other powers as well such as Aether that makes you invisible for some time, Havoc which increases your damage and defensive abilities, Karnesis which lets you hurl enemies into the air and more. The ability unique to Colt is Reprise which essentially gives you 3 lives before resetting the day again.





These abilities can be upgraded by acquiring them again and again from the Visionary who holds them, but remember, if you don't "infuse" the upgrade using Residium, you will lose it the next day. There are other trinkets that you collect in the game that give you passive abilities like faster health regeneration, more damage, etc. While all the elements glueing the game together can get confusing, the developers have done an excellent job of holding your hand while you learn how the game mechanics work. To put things into perspective, the first 3 odd hours of the game can be thought of as a tutorial before the game stops holding your hand.

The combat is quite free-flowing. You can go guns blazing if you like, or stealthily dispatch foes. There were some runs



where I achieved the objective without firing a single bullet. It's amazing with the best part being that, unlike Dishonored, there are no consequences based on how you tackle the game.

The combat in Deathloop can be as simple or as complex as you like and that's the beauty of the game and prevents it from feeling too repetitive with each run.

Amazing voice acting and music

A special shout out to the voice actors donning the role of Julianna and Colt. From the moment Colt awakens on the beach for the first time the voice acting just draws you in. There are few games where the voice of the protagonist is so spot on that it subconsciously draws you into the game and this is definitely one of them.

As for the music, its 60's style feels retro and in line with the visual theme of the game. Once you get into combat, high octave part music kicks in and you feel your blood pumping either to clear the room of foes or run for your life (based on the situation). There is even this signature sound that kicks in when you achieve an objective.

The best part is how the DualSense speaker is used. All your conversations with Juliana come from the controller speaker and so do the voice recordings you pick up. It's such a subtle touch but one that has an immediate impact.

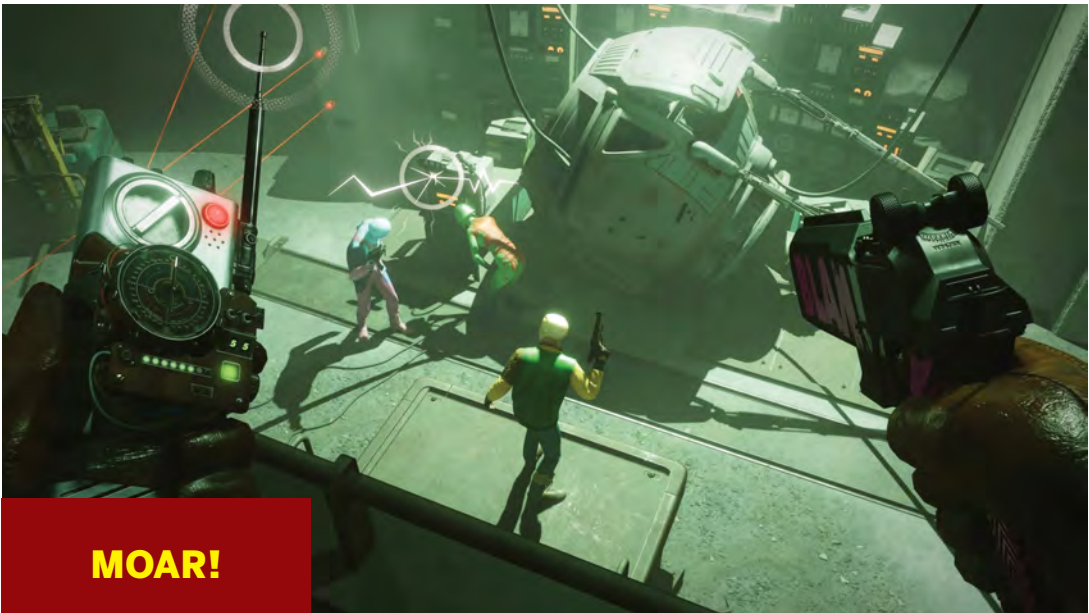




Unique multiplayer

As you probably know, you can control Julianna and infiltrate someone else's game online and vice versa. There are quite a few times a player-controlled Julianna entered my run and added a whole new challenge and distraction to the game. If you don't like this, you can always switch to playing offline. This won't stop Julianna from invading your game, but other "more skilled" players will not be able to do so. This isn't like what we've seen with games like Dark Souls. It has its own unique elements and one I think fans of multiplayer shooters will definitely take to.



**MOAR!****TESTED ON**
PS5**DEVELOPER**
Arkane Studios**Publisher**
Bethesda
Softworks**PLATFORMS**
PS5, PC**PRICE**
₹3,999 (PS5),
₹3,499 (PC)

Stunning visuals and unique environments

Your time on Blackreef island is spent exploring 4 parts of the island and you can visit each part of the island at a different time in the day - morning, noon, afternoon and night. Each area has a different visual aesthetic, enemy placement, shortcuts, etc. at each time of the day adding not only visual differences but gameplay variations as well. Needless to say, the game's visuals look stunning and playing in performance mode at 60FPS is a treat on the PS5.

What we didn't like

Moving over to the small niggles we have with the game, and the first one is a big one, especially if you live in a place with power outages

No mid-game saves

To save a game you need to safely return to your bunker (the tunnels that connect the four areas). While this has its merits, the most annoying thing is when you are in the middle of a fantastic run with some incredible loot and the lights go out. I won't say more. It still hurts.

Some of the puzzles can get annoying

There are moments in the game when you need to collect some documents or hear voice recordings that lead to your next clue. While the game does a good job of letting you know the approximate location of these clues, it can get very annoying when the one thing left is a single document kept on a table in the corner that you've passed a hundred times and missed.

Only 2 powers at a time

While Dishonored lets you use your suite of powers at any point, Deathloop restricts you to 2. For the majority of my playthrough, I used Shift and Nexus and was happy. But there were times when I wished I could go invisible or give the other powers a go and then I realized that I need to finish the current section, go back to the bunker and then change the powers. Can get a little annoying especially when you want to switch things up a bit in the middle of a run.

Deathloop: Verdict

Overall, Deathloop is a fantastic game. The game is a visual treat with some of the best writing and voice acting. While it isn't a traditional rogue-lite game, it borrows heavily from the genre and puts its own unique twist to it. I can see a lot of people not liking the game for what it has to offer. On the other hand, I can see players like myself that want to restart the day, one more time, to try and execute the perfect loop. Those that love stealth games, or games that make you scratch your head a little should definitely give it a go. *



PATHFINDER KINGMAKER™

**O I JUST CAN'T WAIT
TO BE KING (OR QUEEN)**

BY MANISH "TRIGGER-HAPPY" RAJESH

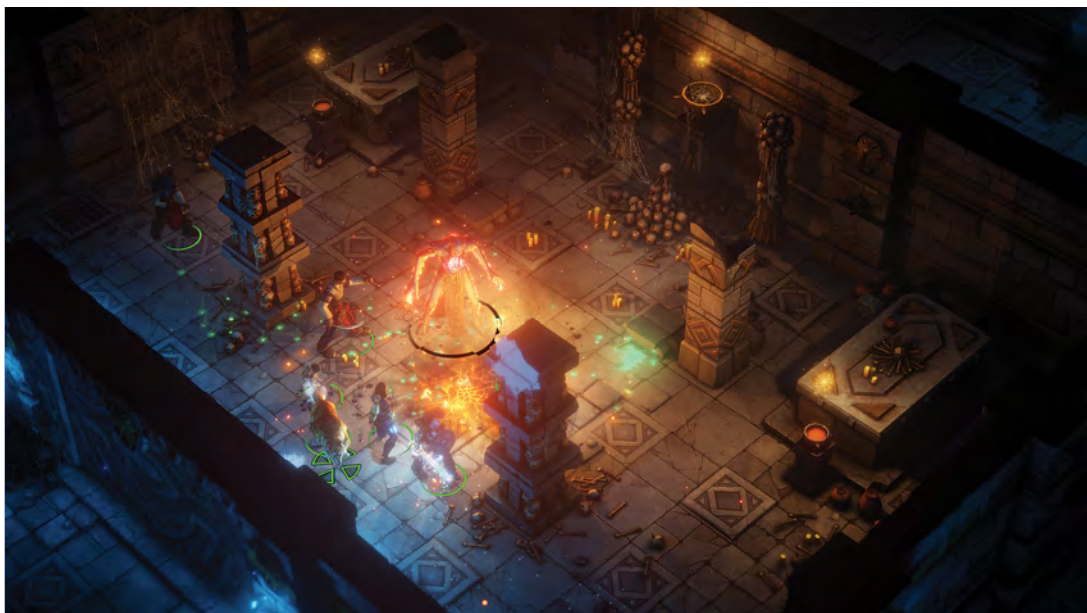
FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

With the recent release of Pathfinder: Wrath of the Righteous, it made sense to revisit Pathfinder: Kingmaker. We hadn't reviewed the game when it first came out, so what better time than now. Crowdfunded and released in 2018, Pathfinder: Kingmaker pays homage to the CRPGs of old. If you're familiar with literally any CRPGs from back in the day, we're talking games like Baldur's Gate, Planescape Torment, Diablo, and Neverwinter Nights, among others, then you'll feel right at home with Pathfinder: Kingmaker. Inspired by the classics, Kingmaker has a lot going for it, let's dive in.

STORY

Before we get into the story and character creation, we're going to point out that Kingmaker is based on Pathfinder, a tabletop RPG that was released back in 2009. Pathfinder is largely based on Dungeons & Dragons 3.5, and was a result of the introduction of the 4th edition of Dungeons & Dragons. There are a lot of new rules, abilities and classes in the game, but at its core, it's still very familiar. You're still rolling a D20 as usual.





Back to the story. As is the norm with RPGs, you start off by creating your character. The gender makes no difference other than potential romances in the game. You're pretty much preparing your character sheet here with your stats, the class you're going to play, what abilities you're going to start out with etc. Pretty standard tabletop RPG stuff.

The game starts off with you and a ragtag group of mercenaries and whatnot gathered in a hall. You've been asked to gather in order to conquer a disputed territory called the "Stolen Lands", and the reward for succeeding is a barony of said lands. What with you being the protagonist and all, you do eventually end up as the baron of the stolen lands, and now have your own kingdom to manage as well. While the story



MOAR!**DEVELOPER**

Owlcat Games

PLATFORMSPlayStation 4,
Xbox One, macOS,
Microsoft
Windows, Linux,
Macintosh
operating
systems**PUBLISHERS**Deep Silver, Koch
Media**PLAYED ON**Microsoft
Windows**PRICE**

₹ 529 (Steam)

starts off fairly simple, it eventually evolves to become quite complicated and filled with political intrigue. There's plenty of plot twists along the way, as you discover what is actually going on in the stolen lands and how everything is being orchestrated from behind the scenes. Of course, you've just started ruling your own kingdom, and there's no way you're letting it fall right after you founded it.

The companions in the game are very well written, each with their own distinct personalities and motivations. They've each got their own alignments and views that could lineup or clash with your own. Clash with them too often, and they'll confront you about it or leave your party. You pick the alignment for your character during character creation, however, as you play the game, your alignment can shift depending on the actions you take. Your alignment also comes into play during speech checks, opening up new options or closing off oth-

ers. The game gives a lot of importance to dialogue, and you'll be doing a lot of it; being able to talk your way out of a situation can be both handy and rewarding, as the game gives you experience for picking non-violent solutions as well.





Throughout your playthrough you will meet plenty of colorful and memorable companions, many of whom can even be missed if you don't bother exploring the game's world. Among the first companions you meet are the likes of Amiri, a barbarian who believes actions speak louder than just about anything else, Linzi, a bard who also happens to be the one narrating and journaling your story, Harrim, a cleric who believes the world is coming to an end soon, and many more. There are a total of 13 companions in the game, including the DLC.

GAMEPLAY

Like we mentioned in the intro, if you happen to have played the CRPGs of old, you could potentially play this game on muscle memory alone. Most of the controls are the same, Space



to pause combat, R to rest, hold down tab to highlight interactable objects. Once you've selected a character, or your party, you can left or right click on the map or on enemies to make them attack or move. You've got your action bar at the bottom, with expansions to the bar on the left side of the screen as the number of abilities you have grows. Right clicking on an action will set it to auto-cast indefinitely or until the resource that ability uses runs out, such as spell slots for magic using characters.

The controls are fairly easy to grasp. On lower difficulties, with a general idea of what's going on, you can pretty much run into a room and point-and-click your way to victory, like an RTS game. Bumping the difficulty up, even to just normal, will



require you to do a whole lot more preparation, strategising, and pausing before and during encounters in order to succeed. The game has a turn-based mode as well, which players of games like Divinity: Original Sin 2 might be more familiar with, but do note that it slows the game down significantly, since it was initially designed to be played in real-time. Turn-based mode does work just fine though.

Some parts of the game will take place on the pages of a book, where you read through the encounter and are prompted with the actions you can take at the bottom. They're accompanied by beautiful illustrations to portray what's happening.

They're fairly uncommon and serve as a nice break from the usual top-down gameplay.

Throughout the game you will come across various skill checks, the most common of them being perception which allows you to spot traps and potential loot. You'll also come across areas, like shortcuts, where you will need mobility or athletics checks, disarming traps is a trickery check and so on. Fortunately, the game will automatically pick the party member with the highest score for that check, which incentivises having a well-rounded party.

Finally, we come to Kingdom management, the part where you actually manage your kingdom. This is something you can skip entirely if you so please and have the game do it for you automatically. However, if you decide to be hands-on and do it yourself, there's a LOT to do. Here you will be able to annex new lands, establish new towns, build them up, and set tasks for your advisors. Your alignment again comes into play, determining what kind of buildings you can construct and some of the actions you can take. It's certainly no full-blown management sim, but it's still a unique feature to the game. Unfortunately, it plays a very insignificant role compared to the time you spend on it. You could pretty much skip it entirely and not have it affect the end result.

VERDICT

Pathfinder: Kingmaker has some aspects that are unique to the genre, but doesn't otherwise stand out too much. The writing is solid, with a gripping story and well written characters, and the visuals are pretty good too. Unfortunately, Kingmaker was not good enough to make it stand out amongst its contemporaries, but it's still a decent game nonetheless. Wrath of the Righteous however looks to be shaking things up, and we're definitely excited to give it a try. *



13 GAMING MYTHS DEBUNKED!



UNRAVEL THE TRUTH BEHIND SOME OF
THE BIGGEST VIDEO GAMING MYSTERIES



BY MANISH "TRIGGER-HAPPY" RAJESH

FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

Myths and legends exist in all walks of life. This is especially true with something as popular as video games, which have grown exponentially in the few decades that they've existed. From the very first game to ever release to more recent titles, video game myths have existed for cheats, secret characters and endings and a lot more. Let's go ahead and take a look at some of the biggest gaming myths and debunk them.

POKEMON – LAVENDER TOWN SYNDROME

You wouldn't normally associate a word as dark as suicide with a Pokemon game, but that's exactly what happened with the very first Pokemon games in the series. We're talking about Pokemon Green, Red and Blue from way back in the day. Lavender town was a pain to get to, but once you got there things



went from being a pain to plain depressing. This was basically a ghost town, and a pokemon graveyard. However, the thing that really unsettled players was the creepy soundtrack. The Japanese version (Green) was apparently so creepy and horrifying that it made kids go crazy and drove them to suicide in the hundreds! While the kids committing suicide part is completely untrue, the music was retuned for global release because it actually was a tad jarring on the ears.

MADDEN – THE MADDEN CURSE

A pretty well known myth, but probably something most of us wouldn't really be bothered about since it concerns the NFL. EA Sports' Madden NFL games to be precise. Dubbed the Madden Curse, it was basically a myth that athletes from the NFL featured on the game's cover were cursed and would get



injured the following season. This apparently happened for several years in a row, to the point where fans would lobby against their favourite players showing up on the game's cover. Here's the thing, the NFL is a very rough sport, and injuries happen frequently. It's safe to say that it was all just a coincidence, however, we're sure players who are called to be the cover of the game still keep the curse at the back of their mind.

FINAL FANTASY VII – SAVING PRIVATE AERITH

The original Final Fantasy VII for the PlayStation is a classic, and a game that both introduced and popularised the JRPG genre to the western masses. It was a game with an epic story and a memorable cast of characters, both companions and villains. One of the protagonist's closest companions was the young flower seller, Aerith. Over the course of the game, both the protagonist Cloud, and you the player, got to know Aerith better, as she joins your cause to take down the megacorporation Avalanche.

The game then pulls the carpet out from under you when



she's murdered by the game's primary antagonist Sephiroth, in a move no one was expecting. This devastated most of the people playing the game, and rumours and myths quickly started spreading that you could actually save Aerith. Steps included doing crazy amounts of grinding and convoluted steps and even being able to sacrifice Tifa instead of Aerith.

Well, they were all nothing more than myths. There was no other alternative, Aerith had to die and that was that.

MINECRAFT – HEROBRINE IS COMING

There's plenty of myths and rumours surrounding Minecraft. Doesn't really come as a surprise considering how big the game is. There's little you can't do in the best-selling game of all time. Of all the myths and legends surrounding Minecraft, the biggest is probably Herobrine. Herobrine is a character that



resembles the default Minecraft Steve, but has glowing white eyes. He is said to be a ghost that haunts single-player Minecraft worlds and disrupts player builds and constructs weird structures. We say ghost because the myth is that Herobrine is the ghost of Minecraft creator Markus Persson's dead brother. Spooky for sure, but completely untrue. Markus Persson has denied the existence of Herobrine, heck, he doesn't even have a brother. Herobrine does not even exist in the game's source code, but it's still pretty popular to this day.

STREET FIGHTER 2 – YOU MUST DEFEAT SHENG LONG!

In Street Fighter 2, Ryu had a line which said “You must defeat Sheng Long to stand a chance”. That clearly seems to point to someone martial arts master named Sheng Long, right? Maybe even a potential character in the game?! See how simple it is to get a myth going?



It didn't help when Electronic Gaming Monthly, a popular gaming mag at the time, confirmed the existence of Shen Long in the game as an April Fool's joke.

Turns out, it was just a bad translation, with Sheng Long actually referring to Ryu's Shoryuken. There was no Sheng Long. That didn't stop people from spreading the myth that a long and complicated series of tricks could be used to unlock Sheng Long in the game. As compensation though, Capcom

would go on to release Gouken in Street Fighter IV, to fill the shoes of Sheng Long.

PLAYSTATION 2 – NOW WITH MISSILE GUIDANCE!

This one's pretty old, and definitely already debunked, but it's a classic so we're mentioning it here anyway. The two generation old PlayStation 2 was a powerful console for its time,



with a host of new features that had never been seen before. It was so powerful that people thought you could use them to power nuclear missile guidance systems! Technically, we guess you probably could turn the PS2 into one, but you'd need to do so much modification that it would be an entirely different thing at that point. The myth began when rumours began circulating that then Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was stockpiling PS2 chips, because they could power missile systems, like we mentioned above. It became a pretty big thing at the time, even making global news. Complete bull though.

BLOWING ON CARTRIDGES TO MAKE THEM WORK

Even if we didn't own an original Nintendo back in the day, a lot of people did own the rip-off TV consoles which had a million games on a single cartridge or cassette. And of course, if ever the cartridges weren't working properly for some reason,



the age old trick of blowing into the cartridge would solve the problem and it would start working just fine.

Only, blowing into the cartridges actually damaged them. If you checked all cartridges carefully, you'd even find a warning asking you specifically not to do that. Every time you blew into a cartridge, you were actually spitting into them, which just sped up their degradation. Yikes.

GTA: SAN ANDREAS – THE ELUSIVE BIGFOOT

The Grand Theft Auto games are always swimming in controversy and rumours. Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas especial-



ly spent a good amount of time in the limelight for its many controversies and rumours. The infamous Hot Coffee minigame for instance, which we're not getting into details about. Just know that the game was pulled and re-released without the minigame. This led to gamers hunting down more such hidden features within the game's world. One of these things was an apparent Bigfoot sighting in the game's world.

Soon, the internet was flooded with photos of the supposed Bigfoot that was roaming the San Andreas countryside. It didn't end there, the myth was that spotting the creature was very rare, and getting close prompted it to run away. Others still stated that getting too close would make it attack you. This myth has pretty much been confirmed to be untrue by the developers, however, there were some mixed responses, where some devs claimed there is "something" in the woods, and others saying the creature was present in the game's beta but removed.

PONG – NOT THE FIRST GAME EVER?

Normally when you think of the first game to ever be released (to the public), you think of Pong, the simple and easy table tennis inspired game that was released in 1972. That's actually a myth! The first video game to ever release was actu-



ally a game called Computer Space, created by a company named Nutting Associates, and it was released exactly one year before Pong, in 1971. The creators of Computer Space, Nolan Bushnell and Ted Dabne, would eventually go on to found Atari. This was the first game where the concept of creating a machine for a game was started (unlike now where we create games for existing platforms), i.e., the birth of the arcade cabinet. Unfortunately, the game didn't do too well, and was too complicated for its time, the simpler and more popular Pong that released soon after easily eclipsed it.

MORTAL KOMBAT – UNLOCKING ERROR MACROS

Another one from the Arcade gaming era. Mortal Kombat saw its fair share of controversy thanks to its depiction of violence and gore. These of course helped its fame catapult even more. Players were obsessed with the game, and of course they were able to get into hidden menus in the game, which is how the existence of the hidden character Reptile was discovered. However, in the hidden menu that showed Reptile, there was another name spotted, right below Reptile. This name was Ermacs.

The claims for how he could be unlocked and several methods to unlock the hidden character started making the rounds



soon after the discovery, with even popular gaming magazines pitching in, claiming to have letters sent to them by readers with instructions on unlocking the hidden character.

Those of you who play Mortal Kombat now already know that Ermac is an actual character in the game, but he didn't exist at the time. There weren't even plans to make him. Ermacs simply stood for Error macros. The developers eventually added Ermac to the game in Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3, after seeing the hype surrounding Ermacs thanks to this myth.

007 GOLDENEYE – BONDS, JAMES BONDS

007 GoldenEye for the Nintendo 64 is one of the most prolific games of its time, and one of the epochs of the FPS genre. While the story followed that of the movie, the game was most remembered for its multiplayer. Up to 4 players could take on each other on several different maps, and there were a bunch of different characters you could play as. This included Bond himself, and a bunch of characters from the GoldenEye movie. The myth was that one could apparently unlock the past James Bond actor skins in the game, including Roger Moore, Timothy Dalton, and Sean Connery. While definitely a myth, it was almost the truth, because the developers actually wanted to



include the previous Bonds' but weren't able to secure their likeness for the game.

SONIC 3 OST FEAT. MICHAEL JACKSON

Around the time Sonic 3 released, there were rumours flying about that Michael Jackson composed some of the music in the game. Some of the music in the game did actually sound like his stuff, so the rumours and myths were not unfounded. The myth continues that Jackson was even going to get end credits for the music, but opted out because he wasn't happy with the end product. The other side of the coin is that Sega wasn't happy with all the negative press he was receiving at the time and dropped him. Sega still deny Michael Jackson having any involvement with Sonic 3 to this day, however over time it looks like he actually might have contributed to the game's



OST, but pulled out because he wasn't happy with the sound performance on the SEGA Genesis console.

POLYBIUS

A myth that we've probably never heard of considering the golden age of arcade gaming never happened here. An interesting myth nevertheless, this one is about the arcade game Polybius. Polybius was reportedly available to play only for a month, it supposedly magically appeared overnight in Portland, Oregon, from out of nowhere. For the single month that it was available it had gamers lined up to play it because it was incredibly addictive. Of course, the rumour doesn't end there, the arcade cabinet was supposedly maintained by men in black



suits which led to the rumour that the game was actually the government testing out a new weapon. Those who played the game would suffer from amnesia, insomnia, night terrors and hallucinations. If that wasn't all, once a month was over, the cabinet disappeared the same way it appeared, never to be seen again. None of the myths or rumours have been proven true, and while there are developers who have claimed to have worked on the game, we still don't know for sure. This one is still a bit of a mystery.

And there we have just a few of many gaming myths debunked, or even proved true in some cases. We're sure there are many popular ones we've missed, we simply didn't have any more room for them. But do let us know what your favourite gaming myths are by writing in to feedback@skoar.in. *

GO RESCRIPT THE “SIGMA” FPS

Do y’all kids even know what
“Strafe Run” means?

BY KSHIPRA ‘FAAFDAJALEBII’ JADAV
FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

The 90s and the early 2000s were a golden era for FPS games. We saw the release of some of the most influential FPS games till date. Wolfenstein 3D, Quake, Doom, Duke Nukem and many more.

But as computers and their graphics performance evolved, video games evolved too. Yes, change is inevitable and we, as gamers, are always excited to see what the latest games can offer. From realistic graphics to an immersive storyline or realistic game mechanics, we welcome it all. But during this whole process of change, something was lost. The simplicity that the older games had. Everybody was implementing 20 different animations and ways to kill a guy. Games were seeing a plethora of options in terms of everything. Guns, skins, walking mechanics, running mechanics, etc. Almost none of the games released in the last two decades could capture that magic and simplicity of the games of old.



We're not crying, you are!

With all this commotion and players who demanded more and more features from a single game, came Gorescript. The FPS game to revive the magic of the golden era. This game feels right at home with all the old games. Let us tell you why.

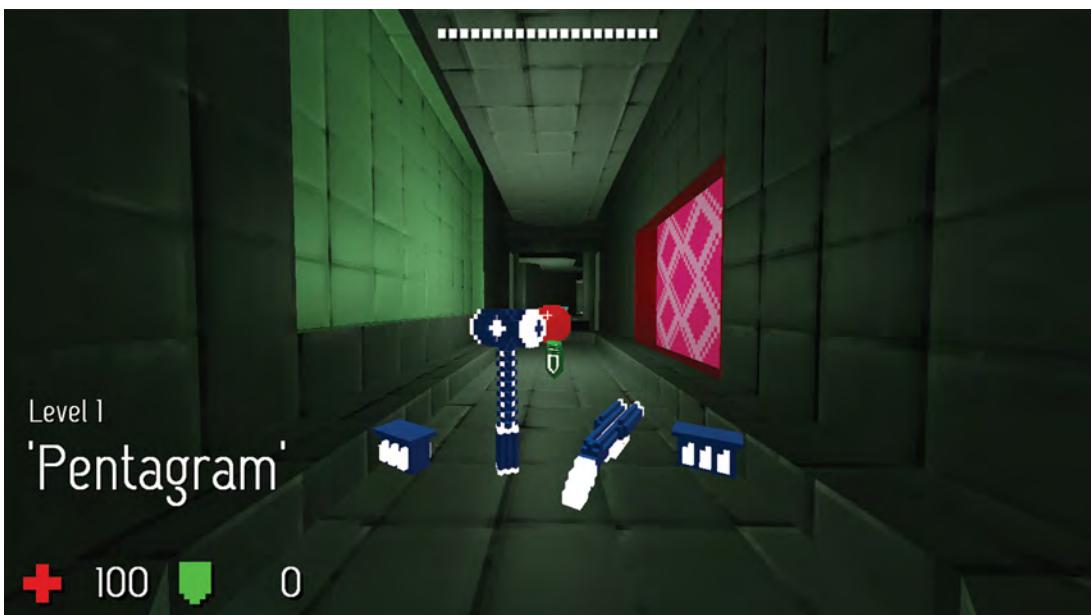
OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the game is simple. You spawn into a level. You kill enemies. Collect the keys. Unlock the doors and finish the level. Just like the old times. No fancy side quests, no NPCs, no talking. Nothing. Shoot, Kill and Complete. That's what makes this game different from the others in the same genre right now.

The reason why we are emphasizing on the striking similarity with the old games and the nostalgia trip that this game gives us will all be justified once we dive deep into the graphics, movement mechanics, shooting mechanics and the level design.

GRAPHICS

The first thing that is out of the ordinary about this game are the graphics. The whole game is made of big square pixels but still somehow does not feel like we're playing GTA V at 640 x 480 resolution. You can say that it is the 'good' kind of pixelated graphics. Take Minecraft for example. The graphics there too are made of big squares but the game feels high definition. That's how this game is. If you found that a bit confusing, you'll get a pretty good idea of what we're talking about if you take a look at the picture below.



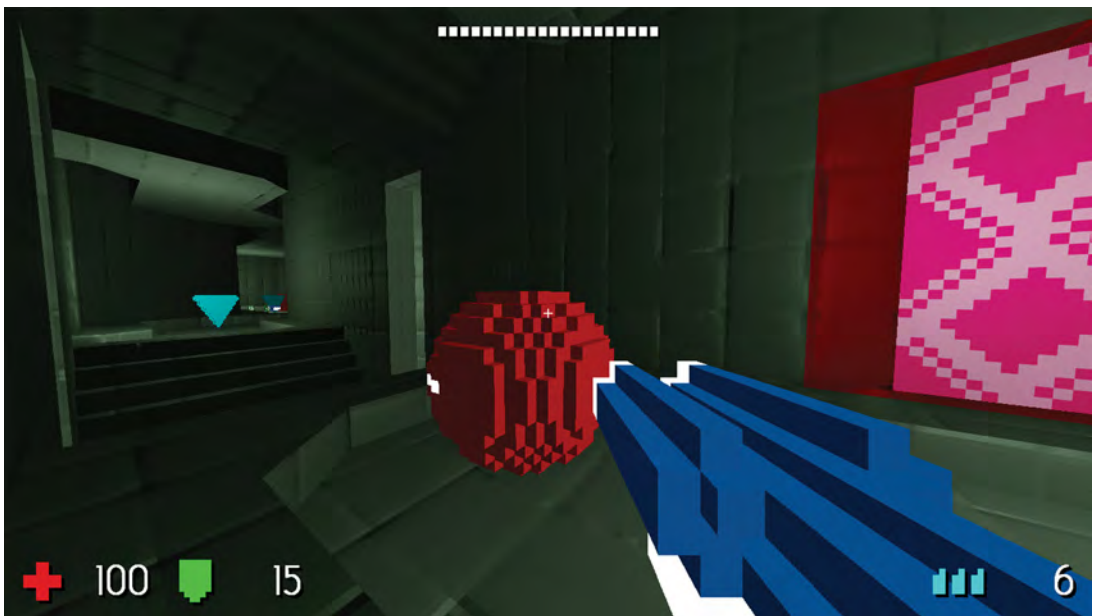
Humble Beginnings

Using these graphics in the game ultimately kills two birds with one stone. Firstly, from a player standpoint, the graphics look minimal. The game follows a very simple color palette of green, white red and blue.

This helps by:

01. Not overcomplicating the scene with a truck load of colors and gradients.

02. Giving the player a clear distinction between the environment and the enemies. Basically, the enemies and the impor-



Big, chonky pixels but still High Definition.

tant stuff (like keys or doors) will be easily identifiable by the player and he/she would not have to look hard for it.

03. Whilst staying minimal, it still looks beautiful and fluid. Every color just works with the other colors.

From the developer's standpoint, developing the game just got easier! Why? Well, because there are no complex geometric patterns, high resolution multi-gradient textures and much more. It's just a simple 4 color color palette which the dev has to implement into his game.

MECHANICS

Mechanics are one of the most important things to consider while playing a game. Although game mechanics is a broad branch to cover and we don't want this article to be a wall of text spanning 5 pages, we'll spare you the hassle and talk about the 2 most important game mechanics which are - movement mechanics and fighting mechanics.

MOVEMENT MECHANICS

As you might've figured by the title, movement mechanics generally govern the player's movement. How fast a player can move, if the player can jump or not, can he crouch, etc. Here's where GoreScript really shines. The implementation of movement mechanics in GoreScript is well thought out. You can complete a level in two ways. With jumping or without jumping. Since the ability to jump is given by the 'Anti-Grav Boots' which can be found if you ponder around the level enough, we decided to play the game without jumping. Sure, at times we hit Spacebar as a reflex since jumping is a very common mechanic in all the games nowadays but the weird thing we noticed is that even if the player did not have the ability to jump, the game still did not feel incomplete or even the player didn't feel a handicap. There were no places (as far as we know) that could only be reached through jumping. You could take the easy way and jump to get there or you could strafe run. Strafe running (incase you didn't know) is a technique where instead of press-



The game's color palette



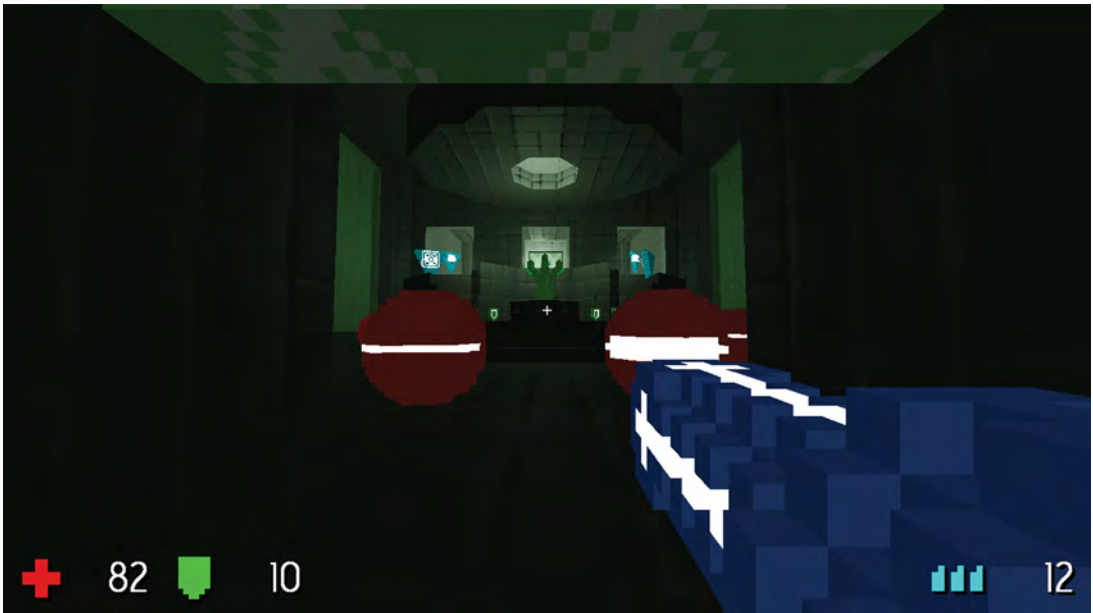
You can start strafe running from level 1 itself!

ing W to just run forward, you press W + (any directional key like A or D) which makes your player run sideways with the only difference being that side running is much more faster albeit much more harder to control as compared to straight running. The best example that we could find for this is in the first level itself where the player is prompted to strafe run in order to get the powerup. Sure, if we have the Anti-Grav Boots, it would just make our life easier but where’s the fun in that?

Other than that, the movement is simple. W A S D to move, Mouse1 to fire, Mouse2 to shield and Scroll Up / Down to change weapons, Space to Jump and E to Use (you’ll only be opening doors with this one). There’s also Tab for Inventory



Lesser the keybinds, less keys to worry about!

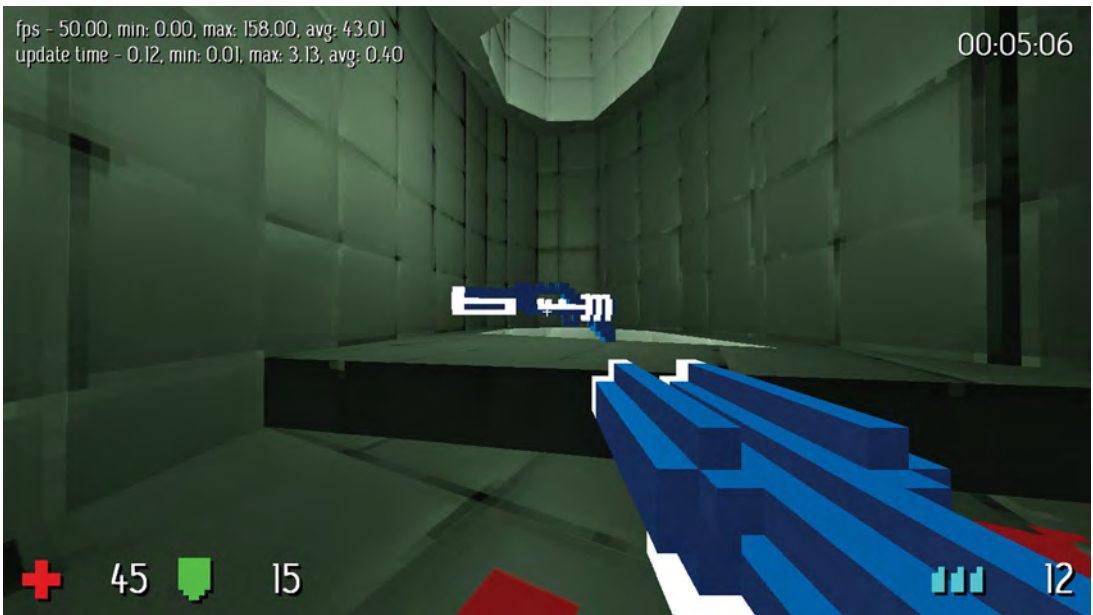


This room was hard to clear

where you will be able to store all the powerups that you have collected in the level and use them later.

FIGHTING MECHANICS

The fighting mechanics here are simple and get the job done. There are 4 weapons in the game as of now and we think that they get the job done completely. From defeating lowly oneshot enemies to defeating bosses, a combination of these 4 weapons is enough to make you clear the whole game without making you feel the need for any other weapon. The four weapons are:



Secrets can give you some guns early!

- Sledge Hammer
- Double Shotgun
- HyperBlaster
- Rocket Launcher
- Railgun

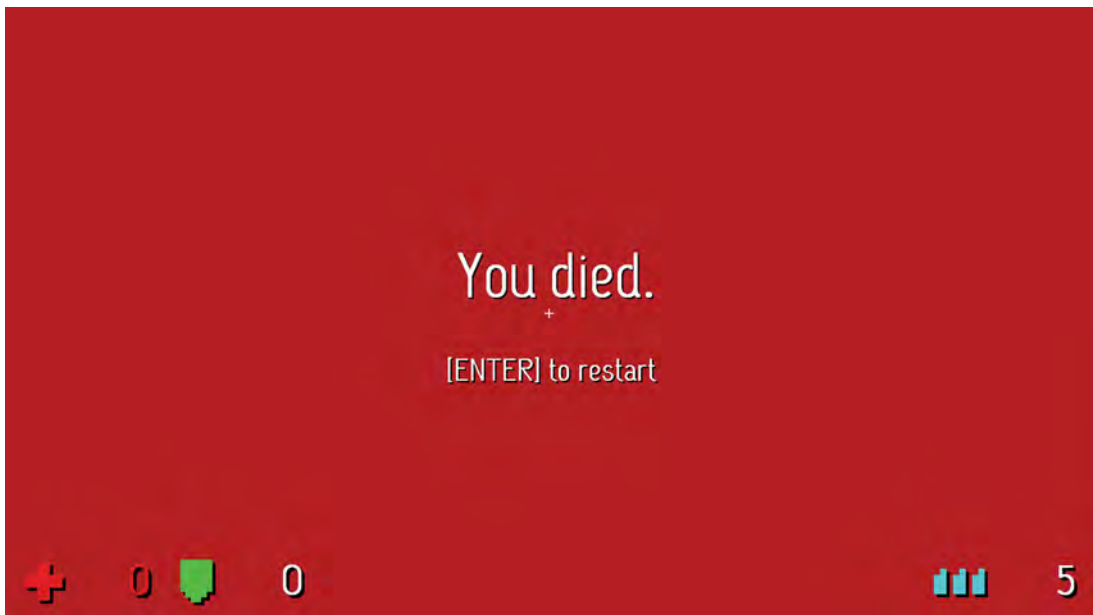
Yes, there are actually 5 weapons but the first one is just a pickaxe and a shield which is, to put it lightly, not very useful in most situations.

~_ (ツ) _ /~

Aside from this, you will get your usual dose of enemies ranging from one shot kills to bullet sponges and weapons to kill them must be chosen appropriately. Well, we're not saying that you use a specific weapon to kill a specific enemy but since we're reliving the classic era of gaming, some weapons work better on certain enemies than others.

LEVEL DESIGN

The level design in this game was all too familiar with us. As described in the objective, you basically have to kill enemies, get keys, open doors and get out. But wait, since the game does not display a minimap in your HUD, it is very easy to get lost in the map. Hence, just like the old games, you will have to memorize each door and where you came from. If you got the red key, you will need to memorize where you saw the red door and that is just another added challenge to the already challenging gameplay. Another thing that we liked about the levels is that they don't get repetitive. In some FPSes, levels or stages do tend to get repetitive after a point even though they are designed differently but here, it felt like we were actually playing a new level each time. There will be jumpscare when you are innocently walking through a hallway and the walls decide to open up revealing 5 enemies waiting to pounce on you. There will be rooms full of enemies or sometimes, you'll just be trapped in a room with the boss. There will be secret doorways and passageways in all the levels. Ofcourse, since they're secrets you are not required to discover them in order to complete the level. But if you do, you're in for a ride. You will be able to get some very useful powerups and even get secret access to later parts of the level which you would usually come across after unlocking a door or two.

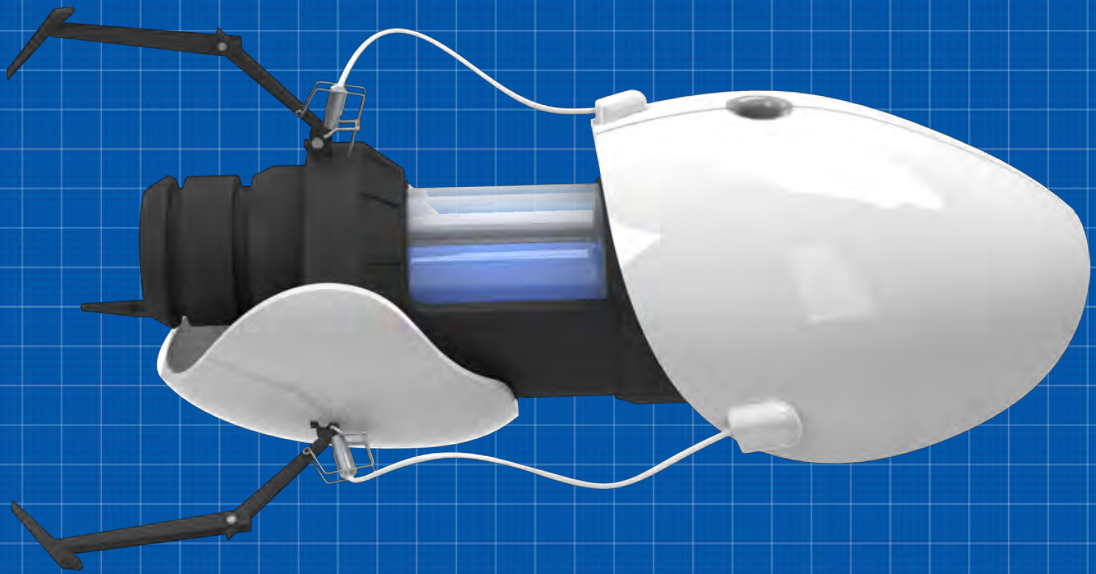


5 seconds into the aptly named 'Masochist' difficulty.

CONCLUSION

Gorescript is a really good game if you want to relive the feeling of playing an old classic FPS but with better graphics. The game has a huge replay value too. There are 5 difficulty levels with added Blackout mode and Permadeath mode which can be explored to your heart's content. We really recommend you to check this game out and challenge anyone to beat the game at its highest difficulty. *

Aperture Science Handheld Portal Device



[-- QUANTUM SHAPING PRONG --]

These three pointy bois will hold everything you throw at them. Storage cubes, companion cubes, redirection cubes and even those spooky franken-turrents! Just make sure not to fire your portal gun while holding something, or you might just cause the test chamber around you to implode in itself.



[--ZERO-POINT ENERGY FIELD MODULATOR--]

The power is supplied by the same zero-point energy field modulator that powers the gravity gun. This module manages the black holes and allows them to shrink and disappear as needed.



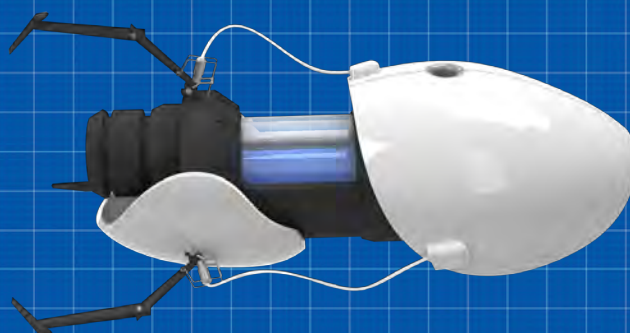
[--METACARPUS CAVITY--]

The ASHPD is held with a hand behind the weapon, holding the handle/trigger, with the other hand supporting the barrel of the gun. Now, with Aperture science Anti Perspiration ducts.



[--DYE TRAP --]

A dye trap at the front of the unit infuses the exiting black hole with the appropriate liquid gas (labelled dye) held at the edge of the electrical event horizon to give the portal the colour designation.





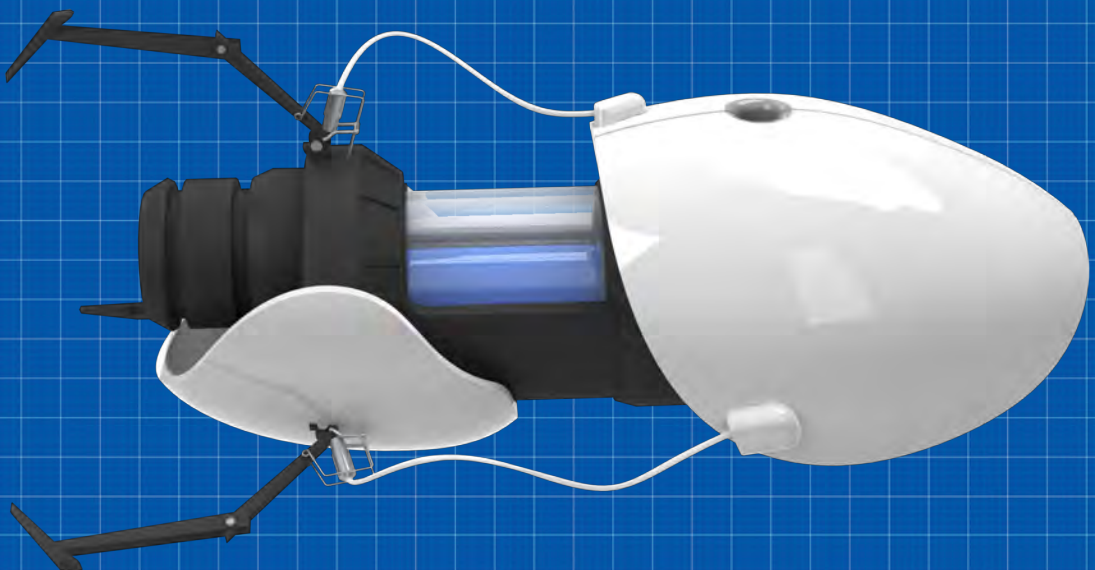
[--MINIATURE BLACK HOLE --]

A miniature blackhole encased inside the body powers the portal gun. It needs exhaust fans to stabilise it, and a failure of the exhaust systems could have unprecedented consequences. In such a situation, the gun should immediately be disassembled, and the event horizon estimation wheel should be retrieved gently. The user should run away from the gun and use the wheel to determine a safe distance.



[-- PORTAL INTAKE MANIFOLD --]

This is where the magic happens. The portals procured within the body finally come out of this barrel, eventually making their way to their desired wall. The subject will be able to shoot either a blue or orange portal out of this barrel, and the gun can only shoot one type of portal at once. If the test subject finds the portals to be of some other color, they shall seek medical attention immediately.





Playdate

THIS QUIRKY AND POCKETABLE
HANDHELD CONSOLE IS
MODERATELY EASY TO REPAIR

BY BY DHRITI ‘DEEDEE’ DATTA

FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

Images courtesy: iFixit



Playdate console

SPECS AND FEATURES



The Playdate is yellow, quirky and fun! It has a 2.7-inch display with 400x240 resolution and 173 PPI. You get a 180 MHz ARM Cortex-M7F CPU paired with 16 MB of onboard memory and 4 GB flash storage. The console also has 2.4 GHz Wi-Fi support, Bluetooth v4.2, USB-C connectivity, and a head-phone jack. Oh, and a mechanical crank, because why not? The crank serves as a control for some games BTW. No, it doesn't charge the device.

OPENING UP THE PLAYDATE



On to opening up this Game Boy-esque console! The screws holding the back panel come off pretty easily using a flathead screwdriver. Next, there are a few plastic clips that guard the innards. You can open these up with a triangular opening tool. The first thing you see when you open up the Playdate is tidy-looking insides and an easily accessible battery. There's a war-

ranty sticker on the battery that tells you breaking it will void your warranty though.

BATTERY REMOVAL



The battery is relatively easy to remove. It is glued down but the glue isn't very strong and comes off pretty easily. The battery clocks in at 2.74 Wh (740 mAh @ 3.7V). This equates to about 25 per cent of the battery capacity of the iPhone 12, as pointed out by iFixit, so that's pretty reassuring.

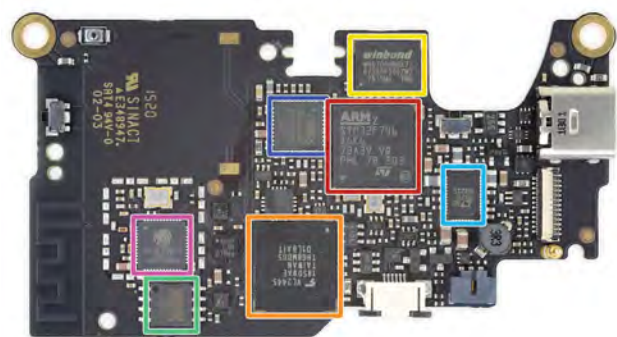
DIGGING INTO MORE COMPONENTS



Most of the components can be removed from inside the body for repairs. Everything topples out of the body once you use a driver and spudger, and remove some ribbon cables. You can also see how the crank inside the console works. There are no gears at all. When you remove it, you can see a cylindrical

magnet embedded in the shaft. As it cranks, the rotating magnetic field hits the Infineon TLV493D-A1B6 sensor which activates a particular control in your game.

CHIPS POWERING THE PLAYDATE

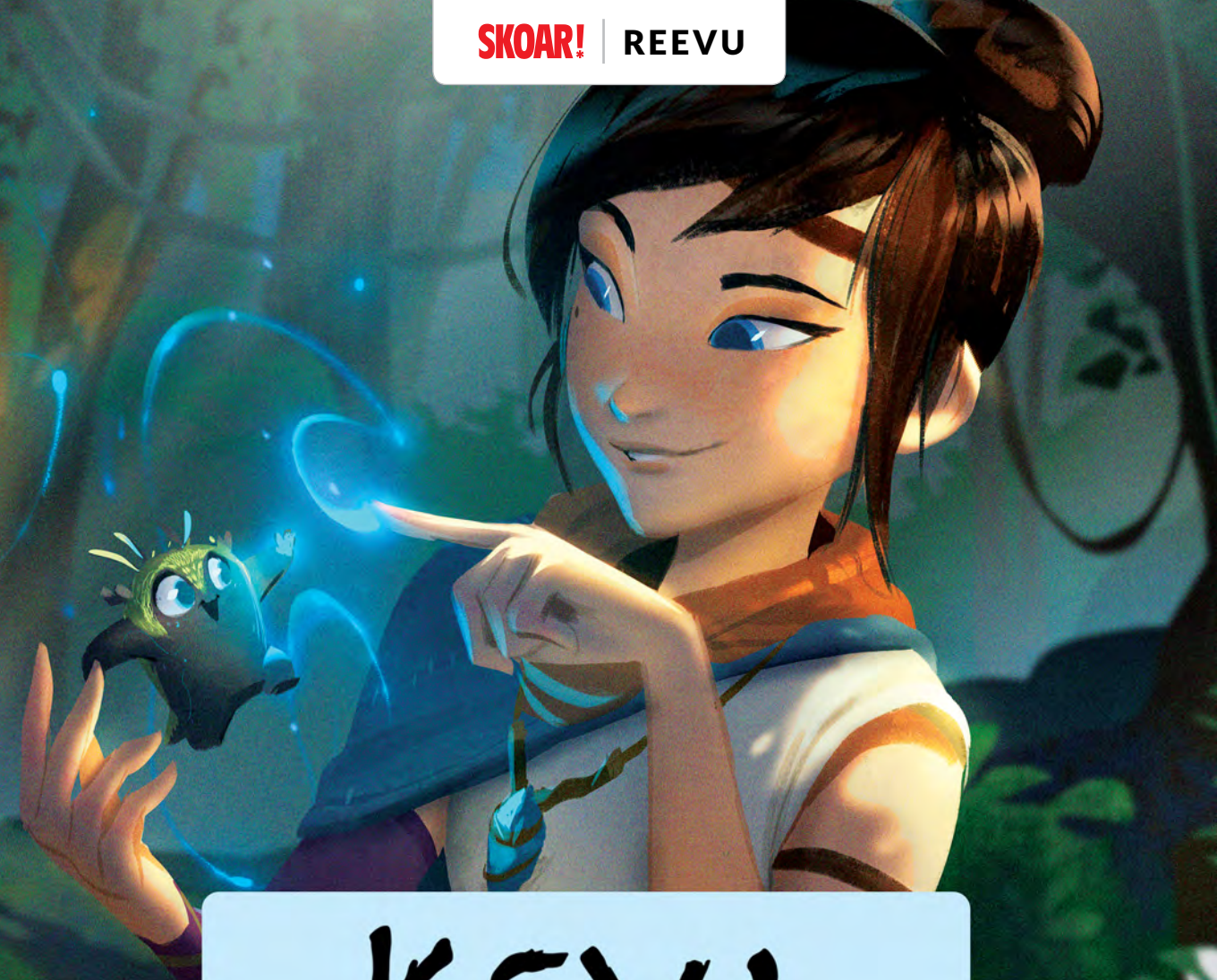


As mentioned above, you have an ARM Cortex-M7 based SoC, 4 GB of Kioxia (formerly Toshiba) NAND flash memory, 128 MB of Winbond low-power SRAM, 32 MB of Winbond NOR flash memory, a power management IC, Cirrus Logic audio codec w/ headphone/speaker amplifiers, and Espressif Systems Wi-Fi and Bluetooth SoC. There are numerous other chips present on the board as well, you can check those out on iFix-it's website if you wish.

SLIGHTLY TROUBLESOME DISPLAY



The 2.7-inch display is firmly glued to the front half of the console's plastic enclosure. So, if you need to replace the display, you'll probably need to replace the whole front plastic face since it is hard to separate the screen without destroying it. So, the Playdate is relatively repairable since the battery and many components are easily accessible. However, the display is glued to the plastic frame and the USB-C port is soldered onto the main board. *



KENA

BRIDGE OF SPIRITS

**A CLASSIC PLATFORMING ACTION-
ADVENTURE GAME FOR THE
MODERN GENERATION**

BY SAMEER “PSYCHOMANTIS” MITHA

FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN



Kena: Bridge of Spirits is a third-person platforming action-adventure game that can be defined as a AA game. In a world dominated by AAA games and Indie games, there is a void for AA games. AA games aren't full-priced games, offer AAA level of production and are a small package (can be completed in a weekend or about 8-9 hours). My ideal benchmark of a brilliant AA game has to be Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice. Kena Bridge of Spirits is yet another game to fulfil this definition of AA games and I am happy to say that it is an enjoyable ride for anyone that loves the platforming action-adventure genre.

I have enjoyed a lot of platforming action-adventure games growing up. A lot of these games started out as AA games before rising to AAA glory. These included Crash Bandicoot, Spyro the Dragon, Pandemonium and many more on the PS1. On the PS2, this list consisted of games like Jak and Daxter, Sly Cooper, Tak and the Power of Juju, Maximo vs Army of Zin, Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time and many more. Even on the Xbox 360 and PS3, there were games like Kameo: Elements of Power (on the Xbox 360) and I would





also consider the 2008 reboot of Prince of Persia in this list. So, if like me, you are an ageing gamer in your mid 30's or want to play a game that reminds you of simpler days of platforming action-adventure games, then Kena: Bridge of Spirits will definitely scratch that itch.

STORY

The story of Kena: Bridge of Spirits is a simple soulful tale, one that reminded me a lot of the movie Raya and The Last Dragon. The game follows the journey of Kena, a spirit guide and as her title says, she guides spirits that have not been able to find their way to the afterlife. She comes to the village at the foot of a mountain. She is in search of the sacred mountain shrine and to get to it, she needs to help the lost spirits in the village.



There is very little in terms of Kena's origin in this story, and the focus is more on the village, what happened there, why are these spirits restless and refuse to pass over and how Kena helps them achieve some form of closure before they can move on and let go of their loved ones in the real world. Each of the spirits you help is in some way related to the village in question and was on a personal journey not only to protect the ones they love but also to help a village that's suffering. The story is targeted at a young audience and works well. While I would have liked to see a bit more of Kena's origin into becoming a spirit guide or her setting off into the distance at the end of the game teasing a DLC or a sequel, the story is well contained in this mysterious universe.

GAMEPLAY

Kena: Bridge of Spirits is a pure platforming action-adventure game with exploration and puzzles thrown into the mix. The game isn't an open-world per se, but has new areas you can explore once you've unlocked certain abilities or gained a new "mask" that unlocks a new area. Each area has certain objectives you must complete before taking on the big bad foe of the area. It's a tried and tested formula that works well. We've seen great execution of this formula recently in a game like Resident Evil: Village.

Your weapon in this journey is the staff that you can use for melee combat and it also doubles up as a bow. The com-





bat in the game may be slow at the beginning offering limited moves, but once you get the ability to upgrade your moves, and the diversity in enemies increases, the combat becomes a lot of fun.

You have the “rot” which are these cute and cuddly creatures. At the beginning of any encounter, the “rot” gets scared and hides. As you deal more damage to your foes, you build up a courage meter that lets you perform a special move with the rot. This could be a ground slam, or the rot distracts an enemy or fetches health for you. You can only perform a single action until you find more rot, so whether you decide to use a special attack or regenerate health is a crucial decision in the early parts of the game. As you find more rot, the number of special moves you can do increases but you still need to build up for a



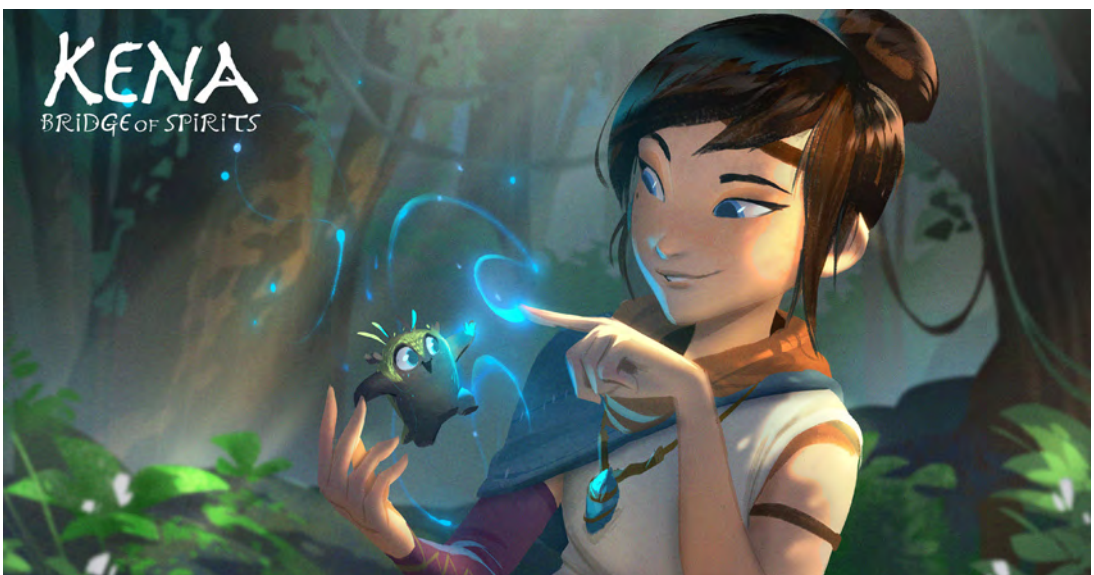
move by attacking enemies.

Speaking of enemies, they are quite varied in the game, especially the boss fights. There are quite a few of them, and once you have defeated a boss, they reappear throughout the game alongside normal enemies adding some challenge to the gameplay. This “recycling” of the boss isn’t overused and provides a welcome challenge, especially later on in the game when you have unlocked more combat moves.

Your traversal abilities also grow during the course of the game. While you start with abilities like double jump, you will gain the ability to throw a “bomb” at glowing objects in the world to build new paths. These are some of the most fun traversals in a platforming game reminding me of the glory days of Prince of Persia. The last act in the game has some of the best platforming sequences and kept me at the edge of my seat.

Kena: Bridge of Spirits is quite a challenging game even at the normal difficulty level. It’s challenging enough but not ruthless. For those that want to explore the world and enjoy the story, know that you can drop the difficulty anytime in the game. But I still recommend giving the game a go at the normal difficulty as the boss battles are truly engaging.

To help you navigate the world is a handy map that’s very easy to read and you can plot your movements by venturing via areas you may have missed. While the game offers fast travel, I’d recommend taking the long road. You never know when you



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come across a rot or collectable hat you have missed along the way.

GRAPHICS AND AUDIO

While the Pixar reference may be over-used to describe Kena: Bridge of Spirits, there is no better way to describe the cute and cuddly look of the game. It's nothing short of spectacular with bright vibrant colours spread throughout the village, characters with signature big eyes that are very expressive and the cute and cuddly rot that surrounds you.

Kane's character design and animations deserve special mention. From her purposeful run to the combat animation, it's all extremely well executed. Some of the bosses in the later part of the game also deserve special mention. From their ruthless design to their aggressive body language in combat, it's all so immersive.

While the game looks visually stunning on the PS5 (review), the only gripes I have with it are the few invisible walls I encountered and some stutters during the cutscenes. It felt as though the cutscenes were playing at a lower frame rate. But these are in no way any deterrent to the overall visual presentation of the game, which, as I said, is nothing short of a Pixar movie.

Moving over to audio, there is a signature flute that plays when you cleanse an area and the flute also has a signature tune for the foes once you've freed their spirits. There is also the high octave music that kicks in during combat and considering you are in a village; the game is also full of natural sounds adding to the immersion. The voice again is also spot on once again, nothing short of an animated feature film.

VERDICT

Kena Bridge of Spirits is a good AA platforming action-adventure game overall. It is surprising that the offering is

Ember Lab's first outing to develop a game. The game has an engaging story, fun combat and a setting nothing short of a AAA animated movie. While some will argue about the limited combat or the short campaign, I say, the game scratches an itch that gamers like me have - an affordable, fun, single-player game with engaging combat and head-scratching puzzles that can be beaten in one weekend. If you like any of the platforming games I've mentioned at the beginning of this review, then Kena will definitely appeal to you. *



TICKLE A FUNNNY BONE

Subverting expectations the fun way

BY OMANG “RESPAWNER” BAHETI
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Video games have long been a source of amusement. From over the top story-writing to cheeky easter eggs, developers have always incorporated humour in their games using any tools at their disposal. The narrative, the mechanics, and sometimes just the organic delight of playing against friends all contribute to the hilarity. Some games take this up a notch, with their main focus being the satirical and parody elements. Whatever the case may be, we can all recall games that had us doubling over our controllers, paralysed with laughter.

THE TYPING OF THE DEAD

Back in the 90s, with light gun rail shooter games being all the rage, with titles like Virtua Cop and Dead Space gaining a lot of traction and prominence in the genre, SEGA decided to make a parody of their House of the Dead series, called The Typing of the Dead. They decided to replace the light guns with -- keyboards. So now, the core gameplay loop involved typing your enemies to death with hammering keystrokes. This, combined with the humour of The House of the Dead series with its iconic voice acting and parodying cliché horror stories, makes it one of the most iconic satire games.



YAKUZA SERIES



The catch for Yakuza is its masterfully crafted storyline with stellar character design, which is then contrasted with over the top bombastic gameplay with fluid combat and comedic side quests (sometimes involving chickens managing real estate!), which are often out of character about the Japanese Mafia. Yakuza betrays its own serious tone and consequently draws in a wide variety of serious and casual players.

UNTITLED GOOSE GAME



Geese have a nasty reputation for being annoying and quarrelsome birds. What started as a joke sparked by a stock image of a goose in a company's internal communications gave birth to this satirical masterpiece about a goose and its shenanigans, often malevolent. The game is set in a tidy, minimalist English village whose inhabitants are the perfect foils for the game's goose. You'll find those who will fight back, waving arms to keep you at bay; others who will cover their mouths and shield their necks as they cower in terror and disbelief at the very thought of your antics. Being entrusted with the command of this feathery monster and given a list of funny, nefarious duties to fulfil is what makes this game an absolute comedic gem.

SURGEON SIMULATOR



If you go in thinking this is a “simulator,” you’ll be let down. To put it simply, Surgeon Simulator is 2008 flash game QWOP’s spirit applied to surgery. It’s about inept organ removal, with the player rendered comically ineffective thanks to an intentionally incorrect physics model making it outrageously dumb. Yet it manages to be annoyingly entertaining at the same time. When playing Surgeon Simulator, most amusement comes from watching how even the simplest of procedures go awry.

GOAT SIMULATOR

The game’s title, which had caused some amusing misunderstanding when it was first released, was due to the surge in



popularity of more detailed simulations like Euro Truck Simulator and Farming Simulator. It's both a spoof of gaming and a parody of itself. It is a joke of a game, which along with Surgeon Simulator, kicked off the joke simulator genre of games. It's tiny, unpolished, and buggy on purpose, with a basic design. It's a pretty amusing joke with lots of excellent physics-powered slapstick humour and surprises around every corner of its deceptively calm small-town map.

SAINTS ROW SERIES

The Saints Row series has anchored the comedic side of the spectrum since GTA IV pushed the franchise towards a more realistic style tale. Before Saints Row: The Third, the franchisee was regarded as a poor man's GTA. The Third



instalment revamped what the series stood for, with over-the-top gameplay involving an outlandish mafia tale.SR4 is essentially the same parody-filled third-person action game with an extra punch, with the narrative quickly escalating from trifling mafia matters to bringing down a nuclear missile and eventually fighting off an alien evasion. It succeeds because it is so ridiculous and generously sprinkled with well-executed jokes and allusions.

THERE IS NO GAME

The game contains a strong blend of meta-commentary on classic video game clichés and plain old-fashioned Lemony Snicket-style reverse psychology. The underlying joke of There Is No Game is that it is a video game trying to convince you that it is not a video game and should be promptly closed down



and removed from your computer. This is a point-and-click adventure game with appealing visuals and a lot of refinement. The game understands the clichés it is mocking quite well, and the way it allows you to fiddle with its interface can be downright amazing at times. There Is No Game necessitates logical yet lateral thinking as you attempt to solve its tangled puzzles while the AI natters and scolds your best attempts.

DEVOLVER BOOTLEG

The apparent vibes it gives off is that of a bootleg Famicom/NES multi-cart full of knockoffs. However, they are far superior.

It includes 8 of Devolver's most popular titles, each game being a little out of whack spin on a Devolver Digital franchise, with some being a touch more abstract than others. Each will give you 15-20 minutes of gameplay, but others will go into an endless mode, allowing you to grind up whatever scores you desire. The majority of their names are parodies or derivatives of the game that inspired them. Hotline Milwaukee, for example, is clearly intended to resemble Hotline Miami. *



MOBILE MADNESS

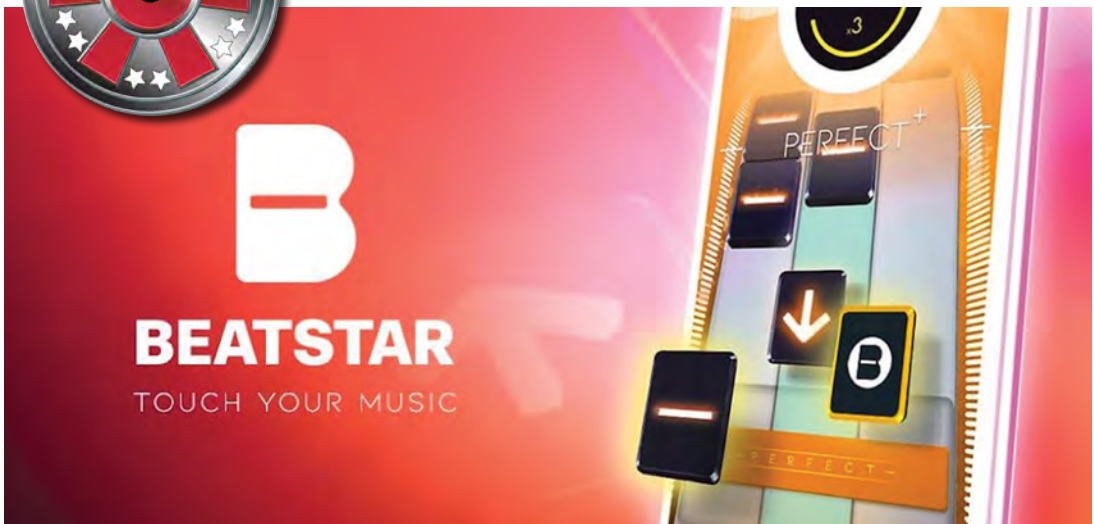
**YOU HAVE TO TRY THESE GAMES
OUT ON YOUR SMARTPHONE!**

BY TEAM SKOAR!
FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

Beatstar

One look at the screenshots and you will feel like this is just another Piano Tiles rip off. Now, don't get us wrong, some elements do resemble Piano Tiles but the way the app has been presented is very different. Beatstar is a rhythm game developed by Space Ape studios. The main motive of the game is to complete a given song without missing a single note.

The songs are a whole different story here. We don't know how but the developer managed to get all of the famous Pop, Hip-



Hop and EDM songs in the app without getting copyright striked to heck and back by the legal teams of the respective owners of the songs. Furthermore, it's not even that the songs are pitch shifted or are covers of the original song, they ARE the original songs.

Moving on, to actually play the game, you will have to tap the tiles coming towards you to the beat of the song. During almost 2-3 hours of playtime of this game, we found that the tiles were

synced to the lyrics (vocals) of the song instead of being synced to the beat of the song but we'll let it pass. Also, you cannot just randomly tap the tiles to the beat. They need to be right in the "Perfect" window.

You are awarded points and combos based on whether you hit the notes early, late or just on time. It is important to note here that you will only be able to hold a combo if you get "Perfect" consecutively. If you tap late or early then the combo will break and you'll have to rebuild it all over again.

One interesting mechanic that we found in this game is the difficulty progression through the level. In one song itself, the difficulty will increase throughout the song. With the scroll speed, the positioning of notes and the patterns will consecutively get harder too. The reason why we found this mechanic a bit different from other games is that almost all scroll based rhythm games will increase the scroll speed in order to increase the difficulty but very few will also change the patterns and make them harder too.

Coming to the things that we didn't like about the game. First of all, almost all the music in the game is locked behind an intense paywall. You see, the game doesn't just give you all the songs when you start out. You have to unlock them. In order to unlock them, you either have to get them through loot boxes (which will make you wait for x amount of time before getting unlocked) or you have to buy them using the game's in-game currency which in turn can be bought with real life money. Also, you may face a hard limit to how much you can play in a single sitting as all the slots for the loot boxes are full, you will have to wait for one of them to get unlocked and free up the slot.

All in all, when we first started playing this game, we were really hooked to it since it offered really fluid animations, good graphics and some pretty decent songs too. But slowly, as we discovered the aggressive paywalls around the game, it started becoming a bit undesirable to play. Still, if you just want to try out a rhythm game on your phone which is not Piano Tiles, you should give Beatstar a spin!

Murders on Budapest

Murders on Budapest is a novel based murder mystery. If you are fed-up with predictable mysteries, this game is for you. The game is based on your decisions and gives you wide opportunity to take the story forward according to your choices. There plenty of twists, turns and surprises.



To summarise the story, there is a guy named Doyle who goes hiking and gets lost in the mountains during a storm. He



later finds a group of people who are lost too. Walking a little further, they see a grand estate and take shelter there. The twist is when the group tries to leave the place, one of them turns up dead, now you have to find out who the killer is.

Not much to be said about gameplay since it's text-based, kinda like a visual novel. The only thing you have to do is to read the conversations carefully and try to find out who the murderer is.

In conclusion, If you love story-driven games, text-based games, choice-based games, and/or visual novels, this game is for you.

The Scary Tales - Creepy Horror Game

The Scary Tales is a horror game in which you have to rescue your character's wife, who is caught and locked up by monsters. As you move forward in the game, you have to keep collecting items along the way and use them; you have to collect keys and access cards to open doors, weapons to kill the monsters and other items like flashlights to help you in certain situations inside the game.

The game looks like it was made by a kid in 2015 who just learned how to make games in Unity. The controls are not user friendly at all. The button that looks like a pick-up item button, actually drops the item you are holding. The controls are not responsive, you have to exactly point at the item you want to pick and then click the pick-up button and then actually sort through the list of items you hold to know if you have picked it up or not, ughhhhh. There is no sound or vibrations when you click on a button while playing.

Coming on the story-line, not good either. It's such a predictable game that after some time you don't even wanna play it. After some time you just know what to do, the environment in which the story-line is set in, is very limited. The menu also looks like it was made in 2015. After seeing all the bad things, we



came across one thing we like in the game and that is the music track. The music track has a nice horror feel and is just about the only thing that keeps you playing this game.

Overall, if you want to play a horror game just to pass some time, and you really don't care about the graphics, story-line or anything that a game should have, this game is totally made for you. Enjoy!!

Purrfect Tale

Purrfect Tale is a purrfect way to pass your time with an amazingly cute yet engaging story and tons of mini games to compliment it with. The game begins with you receiving a cat to take care of and a basic tutorial through the game. Purrfect Tale is essentially two games packed into one package. There's the journal which is the story which follows a character named by you. She's a cute character who is initially a very good student but wants to pursue art and slowly



loses focus on her studies. She gets scolded by her teacher over it and soon her mother gets involved. The story progresses into a fantasy standpoint too when a cat we find on the streets turns into a human catboy uWu.

It's an amazingly engaging story which could only be written by someone who has actually been through what was told in

the story and you can tell that the person who wrote it most definitely had been through it all.

Apart from the journal, the game has a menu where you can have cats and take care of them and buy them things, and if you take good care of your cats, they reward you with cod fish which can be used to buy in game items such as clothes for yourself accessories for the cats you have and furniture for the room which displays in the home menu of the game where you can interact with the cats you've adopted.

Then there's WeCat, the fictional social media platform in the game from which you can earn hearts which are used to progress further in the journal. It's just another thing to scroll through in the game in order to progress but it updates its posts frequently as you progress through the journal so that's pretty interesting as well.

Overall, The game provides a very entertaining medium for us to put our time toward. The only downside is that you can't progress too fast in the journal as hearts a little bit difficult to come by compared to cod.

Outrunner: Forgotten King

Outrunner: Forgotten King is a 2D sidescroller game developed by Nortex Studios. The game doesn't have lore behind it or even the character's backstory. We imagine that it will be implemented in a future update but as of now, you will be just dropped into the game.

Coming to the levels, there are 18 different hand-crafted levels for you to play ofcourse with increasing difficulty. Out of these 18 levels, there are two boss levels - 11th and 18th where the game will get significantly harder to beat. Since this game has only around 10-50 installs and is relatively new on the Play-Store, there are only 18 levels to play but the developer has promised to add more and to even fine tune these levels based on player feedback.

Before we start talking about levels, the graphics here are top notch. The game follows a pixelated art style but even that



is pretty high quality. The developer has done a pretty good job at animating the character and the world around him.

Once you collect enough coins in the game, you can unlock different skins which can give your faceless character a whole new look.

The only bad thing that we found about the graphics (and we really are getting a bit nitpicky here) is that whenever you touch a star in the game, it explodes into a number of tiny pieces. Well, those pieces are vector (smooth) as compared to the pixelated world around them and they break the player's immersion in the game even if it is for a few milliseconds. Apart from that, graphics wise, the game is fantastic.

Although the movement mechanics in this game are a bit lacking, they get the job done. To move, you can press the left or the right arrow button and to jump, you press the up arrow button. You can also double jump and "double hold jump" by pressing the jump button two times or pressing and holding the jump button two times respectively. The levels are designed in such a way that even though they are a bit repetitive in the platform patterns, it will still be a challenge to pass them. During the 18 levels, you will start from the basics and encounter enemies, traps and even secret places and hence the gameplay is kept relatively fresh with a mixture of these elements. The one thing that we absolutely hated about the levels is that they were surprisingly hard to complete. Rage was a common thing

while playing this game since all the levels required very high amounts of precision to complete.

All in all, Outrunner is a decent game for anyone to play, especially those who have some control over their nerves. Being released just now and with such a low number of installs, this game packs some heavy potential, provided that the developer keeps working on it and improving the game. *

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