SKOAR!*

LIVE TO GAME

FARCRY6 ON PS5

4 things we loved
and 2 we didn't



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OCTOBER 2021



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What's New



NO TITANFALL 3

After rumours and leaks suggesting that there might be a Titanfall 3, a Respawn dev told fans not to get their hopes up, there's nothing in the works. While the first Titanfall fell victim to the hype train, Titanfall 2 is a game that's beloved by the community (and it's pretty damn good). Unfortunately, it's plagued with hackers and server issues. Ultimately, Respawn would come out with Apex Legends (which was codenamed Titanfall 3), which borrows a lot from the Titanfall games. According to the dev, they've got too many games in the works (none of which are the new Titanfall), and they're still working on what they've already got, i.e., trying to fix Titanfall 2.



KONAMI SET TO RAMP THINGS UP

According to anonymous sources, Konami is all set to get back into the premium gaming space, after a rather slow past few years. Following a restructure to the game dev division in the company, Konami is going to "reimagine" and release their biggest franchises, starting with Castlevania. Another remake in the works is Metal Gear Solid, which has been taken up by an external studio, Virtuos. They're the same studio that worked on Switch ports of Dark Souls Remastered, The Outer Worlds and The BioShock Collection. There are also reportedly multiple Silent Hill games in the works at various external studios.



SPIDER-MAN 2 WILL BE "DARKER"

Insomniac's upcoming Spider-Man 2 game will be a darker follow-up to the original, according to Marvel. Making a comparison to Star Wars, creative vice president Bill Rosemann said on the This Week In Marvel Podcast, "If the first Spider-Man game was Star Wars, Spider-Man 2 is kind of our Empire. It gets a little darker."

Spider-Man 2 will feature both Peter Parker and Miles Morales take on Venom, and the game is set to release in 2023 for the PlayStation 5, so we've got some waiting to do. Insomniac aren't normally known for doing "darker" games, the first Spider-Man and even the spin-off Miles Morales are pretty lighthearted. Other titles from them, such as Ratchet & Clank, and Sunset Overdrive also can't be categorised as dark. However, it'll be interesting to see this "darker" material, especially considering they're also working on a Wolverine game.



XBOX FTW

Xbox is taking steps to make it easier to find accessibility information on games; they made the announcement at their Accessibility Showcase. Players with disabilities will be able to make informed decisions when buying games, by being able to check whether they have all the features and support they would need to play them.

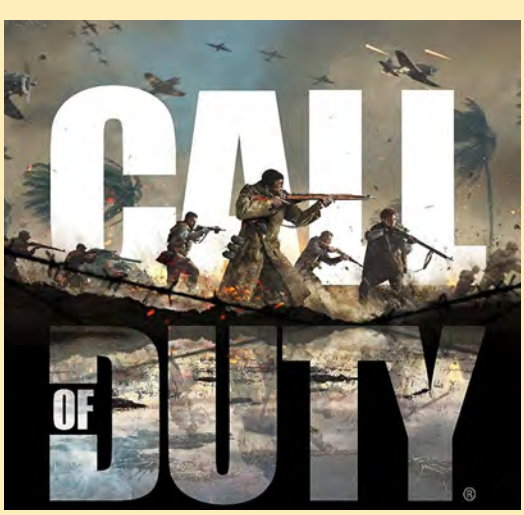
Players with disabilities would normally need to do quite a bit of research before investing in games, and this isn't usually information that's easy to track down or easily available online. With the new tag system, which has already been rolled out, it should now be much easier for them to find the right games. Xbox will continue to gather feedback from users over the month to improve the system and expand availability. For now it's an Xbox Insiders League thing only.



THE XBOX MINI-FRIDGE

Sure it started off as a meme, but it's a thing now. The XBox Series X Fridge, is a 6-foot, 180kg, 1:1 scale replica of the console, and an actual, functioning, mini-fridge. The fridge was designed by Xbox in collaboration with Ukonic!, and comes with all the design details that makes an Xbox, an Xbox. The main tower can hold up to 12 cans of your favourite beverage, while the door has two shelves which you stock with your favourite snackables. The mini-fridge also has a USB port, which you can use to charge devices. It's also got a DC power adapter, so you can use the fridge on the go. The mini-fridge is expected to be available globally in December, and is already on pre-sale for $100.

UP AND COMING



CALL OF DUTY: VANGUARD

It's the clash of the FPS titans, with CoD Vanguard going back to WWII, and this time it's all about special forces.

Release date - November 5



FORZA HORIZON 5

The next installment in the Forza series is all set to blow your rigs up with its hyperrealistic graphics. This time in Mexico.

Release date - November 9



BATTLEFIELD 2042

The other titan in the upcoming clash of the FPS titans. Unlike CoD, Battlefield 2042 will not feature a single-player campaign.

Release date - November 19



THE TURTLE ROCK COMEBACK WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR

BY MANISH "TRIGGER-HAPPY" RAJESH

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When Left 4 Dead first dropped, it became THE co-op run-and-gun zombie survival game. You'd be hard pressed to get a similar experience from any other game out there. Unfortunately, thanks to Valve's innate fear of the number 3, we never got anything beyond Left 4 Dead 2. Until now. The same studio that worked on the original Left 4 Dead has now come out with Back 4 Blood, a game that could potentially dethrone the zombie king. Key word being potentially, let's get into the review.

GAMEPLAY

We usually start with the story in these reviews, but we'll start with the gameplay here, which is the core of Back 4 Blood. Thankfully, things are still as fast-paced as they were back in 2009. Pumping bullets into swarms of zombies with your friends is still incredibly fun, but that's not all Back 4 Blood has to offer. With Back 4 Blood, you also have deck building, looting, hero abilities and even roguelite elements. There's a lot to unpack here, and we're going to go through it all.





The first big difference you'll notice with Back 4 Blood is that you're no longer playing as helpless survivors trying to make it through the night. This time around, you take on the role of hardened mercenaries who hunt down zombies, look for survivors and scrounge for supplies. Levels begin with your party leaving from Fort Hope, which is a gathering hub for zombie-hunting mercenaries.

These mercenaries, or Cleaners, are immune to the Devil Worm parasite, which is basically what's turning people into brain-chomping zombies. This makes them ideal for taking on the zombie hordes, and fortunately, these eight characters also have plenty of tools in their arsenal to kill zombies and boost teammates. You've got melee specialists like Holly who gets stamina back with melee kills, support characters like Mom who gets one free revive per mission, utility characters like





Hoffman who provides extra ammo for the entire team etc.

Each character has something unique to bring to the table, and brings a semblance of roles to the game, i.e, being able to play with a supportive, defensive, or offensive playstyle. All of this ties in really well with the next aspect of the game we're going to talk about, the deck building.

DECKBUILDING

Players can build 15-card decks between runs, and these cards can have minor benefits like slightly increased health, to major game changing bonuses. There are more than 100 unlockable cards, so you've got plenty to choose from. Every player picks a few cards at the start of a mission, after which you only draw one card per level. If the run ends, then all decks are reshuffled.





Early on, the cards you have don't have too much of an impact and only provide small stat boosts. Eventually though, you can unlock some pretty powerful cards. Combat Knife for instance amps your basic melee attack with a powerful knife attack, Down In Front! will prevent you from taking or dealing friendly-fire while crouching. However, a lot of the powerful cards are also double-edged swords, for instance, the Ammo Mule card will add 75 percent to your ammo capacity, but entirely disables your support slot, i.e, you can't carry medkits or bandages. The Quick Kill card increases your hipfire accuracy by 50 percent, but entirely disables aiming down-sights.

Deckbuilding adds an entirely new element to gameplay and strategising, allowing you to experiment with different playstyles. Plus, it compliments the game's core gameplay really well.

THE GUNZ

The arsenal has also gotten a major upgrade over B4B's predecessors, with new guns and a gun customisation/attachment system. The gunplay between them is unique enough to warrant a different feel with each gun, allowing you to pick the style you want to go for. At the start of each mission players can visit a store to buy upgrades, grenades, healing items and more.

Attachments in B4B don't have any drawbacks, but you're limited by how many you can use with a gun. If you decide to



use a suppressor for the sneak attack damage, you're going to have to forgo the fast mag to speed up your reloading. There's an attachment to offset every gun's weakness.

On harder difficulties it becomes important to prioritise the team over yourself, and resource management becomes a lot more important.

THE MAIN CAMPAIGN

Back 4 Blood has a pretty long campaign with around 30 levels. These are literred with difficult finale missions between Acts. Unlike Left 4 Dead, environments are less linear, and there's more room for exploration, however, you might not exactly have the time for it before the next horde comes along. When you do have time though, it is nice to be able to scavenge around for extra resources.

The missions are also varied, with the card system causing variations in maps. Corruption Cards can modify the world and the zombies in it, like fog to reduce visibility, or armoured zombies for instance. There's quite a bit of randomness and variety, which is what brings in the roguelite elements to the game. Naturally, things only get harder the further you progress, with the zombies becoming nastier and faster. This becomes even more evident when you turn the difficulty up, and suddenly resources become scarce and health restores which were otherwise free now cost copper.



PVP

Back 4 Blood has a PvP mode which we didn't really explore too much of, called Swarm. This is basically the Ridden vs the Cleaners. Cleaners need to hold out as long as possible, and when they all die, they switch sides. Best time wins. Ridden get increasingly powerful as time passes (which kinda makes sense) to the point of becoming overpowered. Being overpowered is fun, being on the opposing end, not so much. This is however a feature of the game mode. Why one half of the game mode being unfun is a feature we don't know, but it is what it is.

VERDICT

If you're someone who enjoyed Left 4 Dead and have been waiting for the third installment, look no further, Back 4 Blood has you covered. There are certainly some kinks that need to ironed out, in the networking front and the balance of it all, but they've definitely captured the co-op fun and chaos that the original Left 4 Dead games had. Makes sense considering it's the very same people working on it. Back 4 Blood has even more to offer, with new content, Cleaners and even Ridden types in the works. So yes, we recommend the game. *

MOAR!

DEVELOPER
Turtle Rock Studios

PUBLISHER
Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment

PLATFORMS
Xbox Series X and Series S, PlayStation 4, Xbox One, PlayStation 5, Microsoft Windows

PLAYED ON
Microsoft Windows

PRICE
₹2,999 (Steam)



FIFA 22

MORE OF THE SAME, AGAIN

BY SUSHANT TALWAR
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EA's latest edition of its football simulator is finally out, and in our opinion, it's just more of the same we've been served over the past years. Despite being called the first next-gen FIFA game by EA Sports, the reality is that FIFA 22 does not do much to change what has held the series back.

But we get ahead of ourselves. So, before we get to where we think FIFA 22 doesn't do enough, let us tell you where it does. To begin with, EA has tweaked the gameplay to make FIFA 22 more of a simulation and less of an arcade-style goal banger. With this in mind, EA has not only added new features including HyperMotion technology, which brings in 11v11 motion capture and uses a proprietary machine-learning algorithm to enable more fluidity and realism within the gameplay.

There's also a revamped machine learning engine which EA claims learns from over "8.7 million frames of advanced match capture, then writes new animations in real-time to create organic football realism across a variety of interactions on the pitch." One of the by-products of this is more in-depth tactics on display from the game's AI, which in turn makes playing against the computer not feel like a repetitive chore anymore.

In our experience, this made playing Squad Battles matches within the Ultimate Team mode, more of an enjoyable experience than ever before, as the computer-controlled teams now felt more aware of our tactics and play to not only do better in defence but also make smarter runs in attack and generally do more in build-up play to give these matches a more competitive feel.

WHAT'S NEW IN FIFA 2022?

EA has also done a good job of improving ball physics and adding new animations in the game, which overall gives it a more realistic feel. For example, players now make more life-like additional touches before actually controlling the ball or even attempting to make a 60-yard long pass. Another thing we really love about FIFA 22's gameplay is the through balls.



MOAR!

TESTED ON
PS5

DEVELOPER
EA Vancouver; EA Romania

PUBLISHER
Electronic Arts, EA Sports

PLATFORMS
Xbox Series X and Series S, Google Stadia, PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5, Nintendo Switch, Xbox One, Microsoft Windows

PRICE
₹4,400 (PS5), ₹3,999 (PS4) ₹2,499 (Nintendo Switch), ₹2,999 (PC)

While we would agree they are a little too overpowered at times, generally, they feel well-weighted and can unlock defences from difficult angles.

However, this is pretty much all we liked about FIFA 22. While there are a lot of positives to the gameplay, EA has made some absolutely ridiculous choices that appear to have taken the gameplay back several years. For example, the shooting system in-game is completely broken, with finesse shots getting a marked advantage over overdriven shots. In fact, as people who have been playing FIFA football simulators for over a decade now, we'd say the finesse shot system hasn't been this bad since FIFA 13 when we could simply loft the ball up to the likes of Arjen Robben and Frank Ribery to score outrageously unreal goals from virtually impossible areas on the field.

Apart from this, the game still relies heavily on pace, with the likes of Timo Wer-

ner and Leicester City's virtually unknown striker, Daka, enjoying an advantage over other more complete players such as Harry Kane and Edison Cavani. This is quite disappointing as the overreliance on pace completely breaks down EA's attempts to turn FIFA 22 into a simulator.

FEATURES

Oh, and let us not forget about the keepers in the game. For some reason, all keepers in-game are now a curious mix between prime De Gea and Jordan Pickford each and every time they set foot on the pitch. While they will make outrageous stops, both from long-range shots and near-goal attempts, they for some strange reason, cannot understand the flight of the ball anymore, and almost any finesse shot from outside the box now ends up going over the head of the keeper and into the goal.

Away from the gameplay, and into FIFA's money-spinning Ultimate Team mode, some significant changes have also been made here. Changes that we're not sure are entirely for the good of the game. This is because, with FIFA 22, EA has completely revamped the Division Rivals and FUT Champions mode. Now, players aren't forced into the weekly grind of quali-





fication matches. Instead, now you focus on progression between division and ranks based on winning and losing games. It's an easy system, however, it makes you play more than what you did in the previous iterations of Ultimate Team. Apart from this, the usual issues, including what feels like scripting within games (EA calls it momentum shift) still remain an issue in competitive FUT games.

VERDICT

Overall, FIFA 22 is a mixed bag in our opinion. There are definitely things to like about the game, including its slightly revamped gameplay that attempts to focus on the slower build-up and slicker passing. However, EA's inability to fix certain long-standing issues such as overreliance of the game on pace as well as the infuriating momentum shift system, make sure FIFA 22 remains held back. Add to that the fact that EA has also managed to break the shooting system in-game, which makes us think hard before recommending FIFA 22 to anyone.

But then again, this comes from long-standing fans of the series who have been hopelessly sending money EA's way for each iteration of the game since FIFA 2010, all because there is no real alternative. So once again, EA, take our money, because, well, there really isn't an alternative. *

FARCRY6 ON PS5

4 things we loved and 2 we didn't



BY SAMEER "PSYCHOMANTIS" MITHA
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Far Cry 6 has been released and for those of you wondering whether the game is worth it or not, in our PC review, we said, "Far Cry 6 is a Far Cry game through and through, which is not necessarily a bad thing. It's got all the things you would expect from a Far Cry game, and then some. Yara is beautiful and lots of fun to explore, and the story is pretty good as far as Far Cry games are concerned. Overall, if you enjoy the Far Cry format or open-world games in general with a decent but fairly predictable plot, then Far Cry 6 is an easy pick up".

We've been playing the PS5 version of the game for some time now and thought we'd break up some things we loved about the game and some things we didn't.

WHAT WE LOVED

A great villain

A hallmark of the Far Cry games has always been its villains. From the chilling Vaas Montenegro in Far Cry 3 to the intimidating Joseph Seed in Far Cry 5 and even Far Cry 4's Pagan Min, the series has some villains that will go down in history as some of the best villains in video games. Adding to that list is Antón Castillo AKA El Presidente played by the legendary Giancarlo Esposito. But you may better know him as Gus Fring from Breaking Bad. His performance is top-notch in the game and some of his motivations though sinister, selfish and outrageous, has grounded roots. His son in the game doesn't agree with dear daddy's ways and brings about an interesting element to the story. Overall, there's nothing more engaging than



taking down a great video game villain and while the path to that may be padded, it is definitely a fun journey.

Rule number 9

Throughout the game you will learn about the various rules a “Guerilla” will live by and the most important is rule number 9 - the right equipment for the right job. There are work-benches scattered throughout the map that you can use to customize the guns at hand and they are all located in very handy places. Early on the game has a tutorial where you scan a base with your smartphone’s camera to judge the enemies and based on whether you want to take the silent approach or go guns blazing, know that your arsenal probably has the right tool for the job, even if that’s a launcher that shoots pirated Macarena CDs or is a machine gun powered by a motorcycle





engine. Not only is the arsenal diverse but you have the option to switch your loadout, bullets, and weapon customisation by visiting one of these workbenches before a mission. Add to it the fact that you can play the game with friends and you are in for one heck of a ride!

It's a Far Cry Game

If you have played a Far Cry game in the past, then you will feel right at home. Actually, scratch that, if you've played Ubisoft games launched in the past, be it Assassins Creed, Ghost Recon, The Division and more, you'll feel right at home with some of the mechanics. From safe zones that you can explore in third person, to stealthy clearing out a camp, to bass building, sending allies on missions, playing tabletop games, to a cockfighting minigame, so on and so forth, there are elements from other Ubisoft games at play here as well and it shows. You have companions in the form of amigos to help you in your mission which we have seen in action in previous Far Cry games.

Open-ended approach

There are a lot of vehicles for you to drive in the game from cars, tanks and even a horse, which to be honest was my favourite mode of transport. Coming from Far Cry 5 a lot of elements feel familiar and that's not necessarily a bad thing, especially when you add the new elements like holstering your gun to sneak by enemies undetected in plain sight, or bribing ene-



mies for information or simply setting things on fire. The sky's the limit for the way you want to progress in the game.

WHAT WE DIDN'T LOVE

Padding to prolong the game's life

Just like we've seen with so many Ubisoft games in the past, there is a lot of padding, and grinding required to progress. While there is no recycling of missions (yes Metal Gear Solid 5, that still hurts), you do need to go through a bit of a grind to proceed and that can get a little off-putting in the game.

Some buggy AI

While these are things that will get fixed via updates, there are times when the AI was so buggy, it was frustrating. In an early mission with an AI companion, I climbed a small guard tower to get a better view of the mission at hand and my AI companion stood right in front of the ladder blocking my exit and I couldn't escape. I even started a firefight in the hope that the AI companion would move but nothing happened. Similarly, the Amigos did not respond to my commands and at times. These are small niggles, but happened often enough to warrant a mention.

Bottom Line

Overall Far Cry 6 is a fun game for Far Cry fans and will appeal to those looking for an engaging shooter with quirky



one-liners and an intriguing story. The map you explore is HUGE and there is a lot to do in the game if you want to wander off the main path. The weapons arsenal is diverse and the fact that there are proper cutscenes involving your character and not just in the first-person view adds a bit more flavour to the story. The opening sequence of the game reminded me a lot of Uncharted: The Lost Legacy's opening and that's a very good thing. Despite its niggles, Far Cry is a fun game for those looking to venture into the fictional land of Yara and fight for the revolution! *

Avast Ye! Hack'rs vs c'rp'rations

Stories o' treasure hunting video games

BY OMANG BAHETI
FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

Piracy. The word takes its root from the kings of the seven seas, the robbers scouring the waves, plundering and looting from the rich and living a life of criminal adventure. Of course, the modern pirates are a lot less glamorous. They surf the waters of the internet, combing it methodically, to find and crack paid software and redistribute it illegally, available for anyone to download and utilise without spending a dime.



The early piracy scene began from the split-up of Bell System, breaking AT&T's monopoly on the telephone and modem industry in the 80s. The infrastructure change that resulted gave many smaller parties access to the inner workings of these systems and the subsequent techniques of breaking them and bypassing them. Circulation of video games burnt onto unmarked floppy disks began in these parties. Over time the parties grew in size and influence, and eventually, they were collectively referred to as the "Warez" (pronounced wares), deriving from the term Soft'wares'. With the introduction of peer-to-peer (P2P) networks and Torrents, Warez grew in popularity and demand, and the older physical systems of sharing declined slowly. The modern piracy scene runs almost purely on Torrents, and any step to neutralise it is rendered useless due to its decentralised nature.



But that isn't particularly interesting now, is it? A single click, a bit of waiting and the game of your choice are just there, ready to play; there isn't a story to tell. So let's talk about the more fascinating counts of piracy.

3DS:

Nintendo is an interesting company to talk about when viewing from the lens of piracy. It's a company that solely makes games for its consoles and has produced some of the most notable and historical series of handheld consoles and video game franchises. They have one of the most robust catalogues of awe-inspiring games, making them a very high priority target for cracking both the games they release and the



consoles themselves. The security of the 3DS was designed keeping in mind the breach of the Wii. However, it had one major loophole: The 3DS was capable of backward compatibility with DS games.

GateWay, a company involved in cracking games, released chips to break the 3DS entirely two years after its launch. The technique they used was clever: Using the pre-existing hacks available for the DS, they took control of the DS portion of the 3DS. From there, they overloaded the parent system being the 3DS, with information that was more than the hardware of the 3DS could handle. While in this vulnerable state, the chips would crack the whole system and make it capable of running ROM hacks and other chips without paying for the copies of the game. There were patches by Nintendo and subsequent counterplays by GateWay, who eventually stayed on top of this



Linux Arch on 3DS

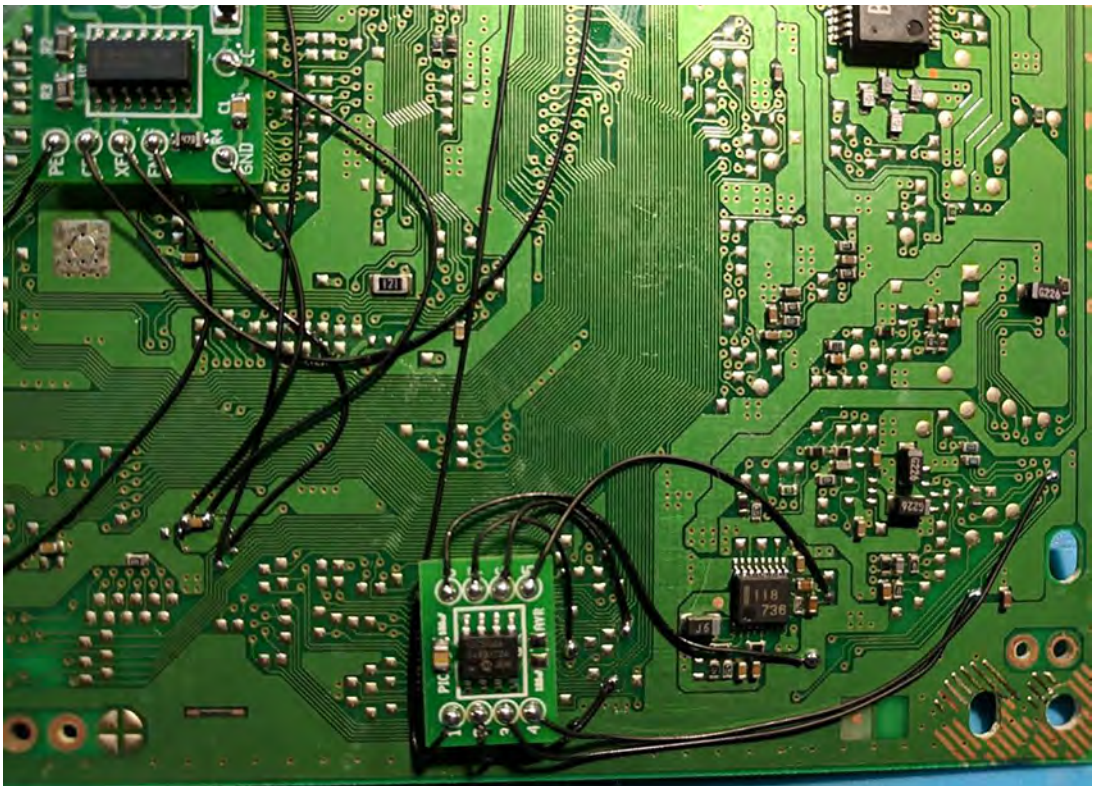
cat and mouse game. Any competition to GateWay was also crushed by including measures for bricking devices that used said competitor's cracking techniques, which ended up putting GateWay in a negative light, and people began looking for alternatives. Another issue was the lack of support for HomeBrew, the launcher for games made by solo devs for the 3DS, which bypassed the hardware restrictions created by Nintendo to prevent unauthorised development.

During the release of the new Nintendo 3DS, consisting of minor software and hardware upgrades, a new exploit was discovered, and it involved a poorly programmed game called Cubic Ninja. The newly named Ninjhax utilised a similar tech-

nique to exploit the security of the 3DS. Cubic Ninja allowed for user-designed levels, and there was no code to validate the actual size of these levels. So by "creating a level" that was ridiculously large, the system would once again be overloaded and put into a vulnerable state, which would act as the entry point for even stronger hacks. The difference between this and GateWay was that Ninjhax allowed the launching of HomeBrew games. The cracking war would continue to be waged, but these two significant events marked the early days of hacking the 3DS. The entire history of hacking the 3DS up to 2021 can be found in this forum post by user Zoogie.

PLAYSTATION:

Sony's PlayStation is iconic as one of the most powerful and accessible consoles in the modern era. The first PlayStation used a region lock to confirm if the disk was made for the specified region and check if it wasn't a duplicated disk with the contents of an original game. The way to bypass this was crude but simple: by switching an original disk with a fake disk after the region check, the console would think the game had passed the region check, but in reality, the switch had loaded an entirely different game. Mod-chips eventually automated this, which were easily soldered onto the motherboard.



Mod Chip on a PS motherboard

As the chips grew rampant, Sony struck back with a patch. The mod-chips were always active, and they would return information about the region location whenever triggered. So by checking for the region when the system should return nothing, it could detect its presence and invalidate the game being played. There was an additional 16-bit key that was on the ROM itself and added as a backup piracy check. However, both measures were soon overcome, which brings us to Spiro, Year of the Dragon.

Every other game with the new set of protections would instantly fail if the console caught the run disk as a fake copy. The crackers would simply bypass that, and once the game would boot and the first few minutes would play, they would be satisfied that crack was successful. However, Insomniac Games had a clever checksum system to recognise if the copy of the game was a pirated one. It would be quiet about it till a little further down in the game, something the cracking community didn't check. At that point, one of the characters in the game would inform the player that the game was a pirated copy and they could continue playing it, but they might experience some strange issues. The player would lose gems, their egg collection progress, and the game would randomly crash and save data would be lost. The goal was to make the experience of trying to play this incorrectly cracked copy as infuriating to play as possible. And that wasn't even the most annoying part in all this. The hidden protection system had checked, checks for those checks, red herrings, and obfuscated code, making breaking the system all that more difficult. The leading cracking group at the time, ParaDox, took an extra couple of months to bypass all the hidden checks and protection and even thanked the developers and programmers on the game for giving them such a challenging task.

PLAYSTATION 3:

Sony was no stranger to piracy and modding, and with the release of the PS3, they were determined to make sure they created the ultimate "unhackable" console. The PS3 and the Xbox 360 had a hypervisor set up, which acted as an all-mighty gatekeeper, protecting the console from hacks. Hackers shredded the Xbox protection pretty early on with hardware attacks, but the PS3 was safe for around three years. It



was considered a successful launch of a console, probably the greatest in video game console history. But it was about enough time for some expert hackers. George Hotz (aka Geohot) was a renowned security researcher who decided to dive headfirst into breaking the PS3.

The PS3 supported a framework called OtherOS, which treats the PS3 like a regular machine capable of running user-installed software, including Linux distributions. The most popular of these was Yellow Dog Linux, and Geohot theorised that this could be the entry point for the hack. Sony instantly went into a state of panic, and they believed that this compromised their hypervisor and instantly nuked the OtherOs functionality with further updates. This was a massive blow to the PS3 as OtherOs was one of the major selling points for the console.

Furthermore, Sony hadn't adequately explained why they removed OtherOs from the PS3 since there was no actual hack available yet. It resulted in a class-action lawsuit being launched against Sony for being "unfair and deceptive" and a "breach of good faith". Sony was willing to separate from millions of dollars to patch out the last potential source of a breach.

However, this was the only further incentive for people to take hacking the PS3 much more seriously. A PS Jailbreak

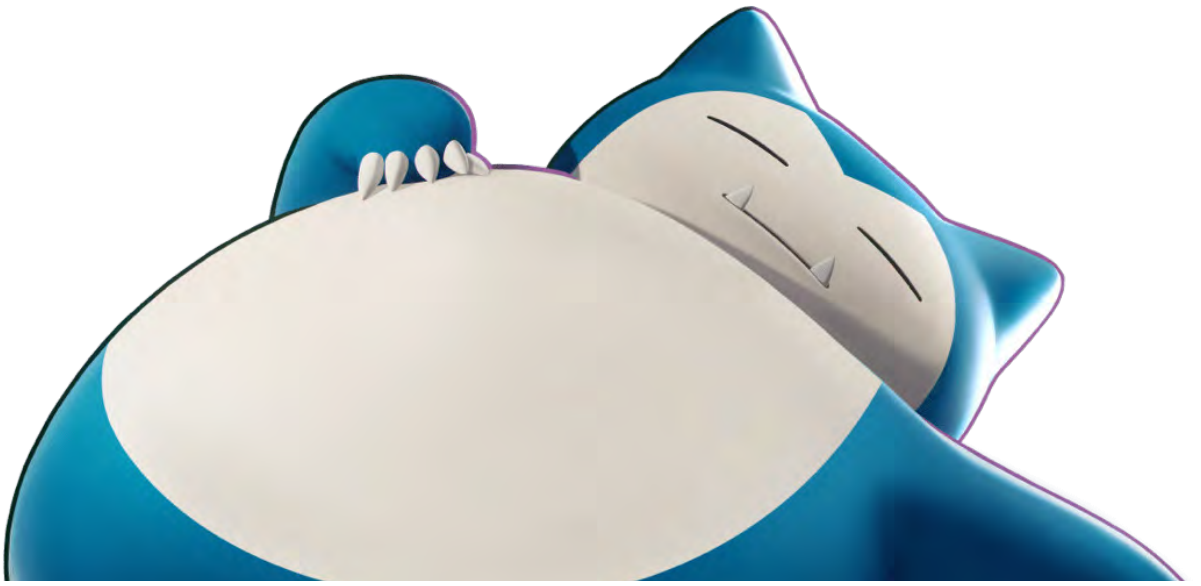


Accessory to jailbreak PS3

device was released into the black market and sold a few months later, running cracked and unsigned code on the device. The exploit was based on Sony's same principle to set the PS3 into a factory service mode. Subsequently, the hack would later even allow rolling back versions, allowing users to access OtherOs. The price of the PS Jailbreak device was incredibly high for the service is provided. Still, others in the community eventually reverse-engineered the hacking process is performed and made it open source for anyone to execute on their PS3 for free.

CONCLUSION:

Piracy is ever-pervasive and omnipresent in the ocean of the Internet. The Warez scene will forever remain active for many reasons, ranging from the accessibility of games in regions to not being able to shell out the exorbitant amounts charged for modern triple-A titles. It's a battle of minds and code, and only time will tell which side will genuinely reign supreme. *



“Unputdownable”

BY NAYAN “AESTIVIAL” PANDA
FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN



If you put ample amounts of Pokémon and MOBA in a cauldron and stir it with a sprinkle of competitiveness, you get Pokémon Unite. Pokémon Unite is a free-to-play, multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) video game developed by TiMi Studio Group and published by The Pokémon Company for Android and iOS and by Nintendo for the Nintendo Switch. It's a one of a kind cross-platform game straight from the franchise, debuting into the MOBA genre. And for the love of God, it's not Basketball with Pokémon!

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

To be honest, when we got our hands on the mobile version, we were quite sceptical with rumours of the game being a heavy pay2win title, but this was far from being evident when we tried the game ourselves. What we instead couldn't overlook was the attention to detail and how polished the game mechanics looked and felt.

Personally, I was neither fascinated nor a veteran of the MOBA genre, yet Pokémon Unite greeted and encouraged me to check out everything they had to offer, all without making it





appear unnecessarily ambiguous. The tutorials are easy to grasp and given the games emphasis on simplicity, you cannot possibly do anything wrong anyway. We found it a fairly good choice for anyone looking for a casual yet enjoyable MOBA.

GAMEPLAY

The game is pretty univocal and easy to pick up for beginners. Anyone who has played any MOBA before would find themselves right at home. The game fascinates the common PVP 5v5 matches where players try to dominate their opponent's team, but here by scoring goals. Navigation is pretty intuitional and easy too, wherein you can access most settings from the main menu screen by clicking on your profile. The game allows you to intensively customise your avatar as well as your fellow Pokémon by unlocking new skins/gear items. New Pokémon Licenses and items can also be purchased from the shop ingame in exchange of Aeos coins, gems or tickets. All available Pokémon fall into one of five categories: Attacker, All-Rounder, Speedster, Defender, and Supporter.

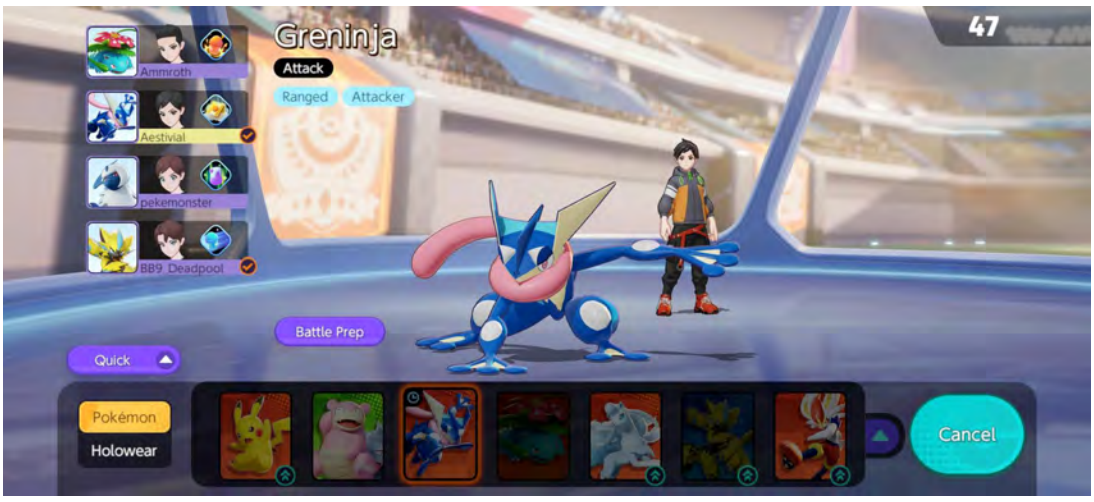




The game heavily emphasises on a mechanism that balances out the game for all the players. They are allowed to choose their favourite Pokémon from their available Licenses, where every player has to pick a unique Pokémon to play as. Every match also allows you to do some battle preparations. This includes choosing a single battle item from your unlocked ones, which you can use indefinitely during the match, however with a certain cooldown once it has taken effect. There are also held-items that can be assigned to your Pokémon beforehand, in order to enhance certain attributes of it during a match. And this is where we realised why the game has been chastised for being a pay-to-win game. Apparently, these items, unlike the battle items, can be upgraded. However upgrades to held items, which are the foundation for all your Pokémon, can get ridiculously expensive. The greater the level, the more expensive it is, which does not justify the high entry hurdle.

Matches are basically of three types: Ranked (Competitive), Standard (non-ranked full scale matches) and Quick (faster paced short matches). You can easily call in friends to your lobby and play together, which is all the more fun





with mic availability, which is turned off by default, in each match. In-game, the standard maps are divided into three lanes that players can traverse, each of which is occupied by randomly spawning Wild Pokémon NPCs. Players earn points (Aeos Energy) by defeating (and capturing) wild Pokémon or enemy Pokémon, and scoring in the opponent's goals. To score points, Pokémon must transfer their stored energy to an opponent team's goal and "dunk" it through the hoop. The dunking sequence is fantastic, with the Pokémon crashing the energy down through the hoop with such intensity and excitement that it will make you cry (with excitement XD). Your own team's goals offer you similar benefits as temporary shields and healing, while the opponent team's area slows down your Pokémon's mobility. Antithetically, every Pokémon starts at its lowest evolution (Level 1) and depending on how many wild Pokémon are acquired/defeated, the player's Pokémon also evolve over time. Not only that, players also battle other enemy Pokémon for points. Throughout the match, some boss wild Pokémon (like Rotom and Drednaw in the Mer Stadium), will spawn on the map, which can be defeated for bonus Aeos Energy and add-on buffs.





Around the last few minutes into the match, Zapdos reigns down from the match right in the middle of the battlefield and provides likewise benefits to the team who defeats it, followed by a temporary stun to the opponents. When the timer runs out (10 mins in a regular match) the team with the most points wins.

CONTROLS

Talking about the mobile version, it does take some time to get used to the touch screen controls, especially for those new to mobile MOBAs. However, after a few hours, the muscle memory kicks in and the game feels a lot more natural. Although, the ability to customise the controls to your fancy would have been much appreciated as well. Key advanced controls like looking through the mini-map and prioritising targets are placed carefully too, to offer maximum accessibility to the player. Players can also manoeuvre their view and swiftly scan the stage by dragging their screen on the phone. These are handy as map knowledge is quite important in MOBAs.





SWITCH VS MOBILE

We were excited to compare the two against each other and here's what we settled on. The first prodigious differences we saw were the enhanced experience on the mobile, thanks to high resolution graphics preset and soaring high frame rates. Combine that with real time haptic feedback from vibrations, and the game feels awesome to play in-hand. Not only that, using the touchscreen on mobile instead of the analogue stick on the Switch to target crucial skill shots becomes significantly more convenient. The analogue stick on the Switch doesn't have enough sensitivity options or modifications to accommodate a variety of various choices.

MOAR!

TESTED ON
Android

DEVELOPER
TiMi Studio Group, The Pokémon Company

PUBLISHER
The Pokémon Company

PLATFORMS
XNintendo Switch, Android, iOS

On the Switch, to even control the Pokémon's auto-targeting, users must use something called a lock-on icon wheel, where the right analogue stick must be used to correctly navigate the wheel to the correct Pokémon. This makes sense, but during the times when players are amidst the heat of a hectic battle, properly navigating the wheel with the control stick gets pretty tricky (not to mention there are a total of six options to decide). The mobile version, on the other hand, relies on a simple touch instruction for the same. Players can select which Pokémon they wish to focus their attacks on by clicking on their mini portraits on screen, and the system appendages the rest. The aiming problem does not exist on mobile

devices either, because the aim simply follows the player's finger placement.

Overall, we found the smartphone version is significantly more comfortable and easy to get used to. However, apart from that, the game does justice to both the platforms.

VERDICT

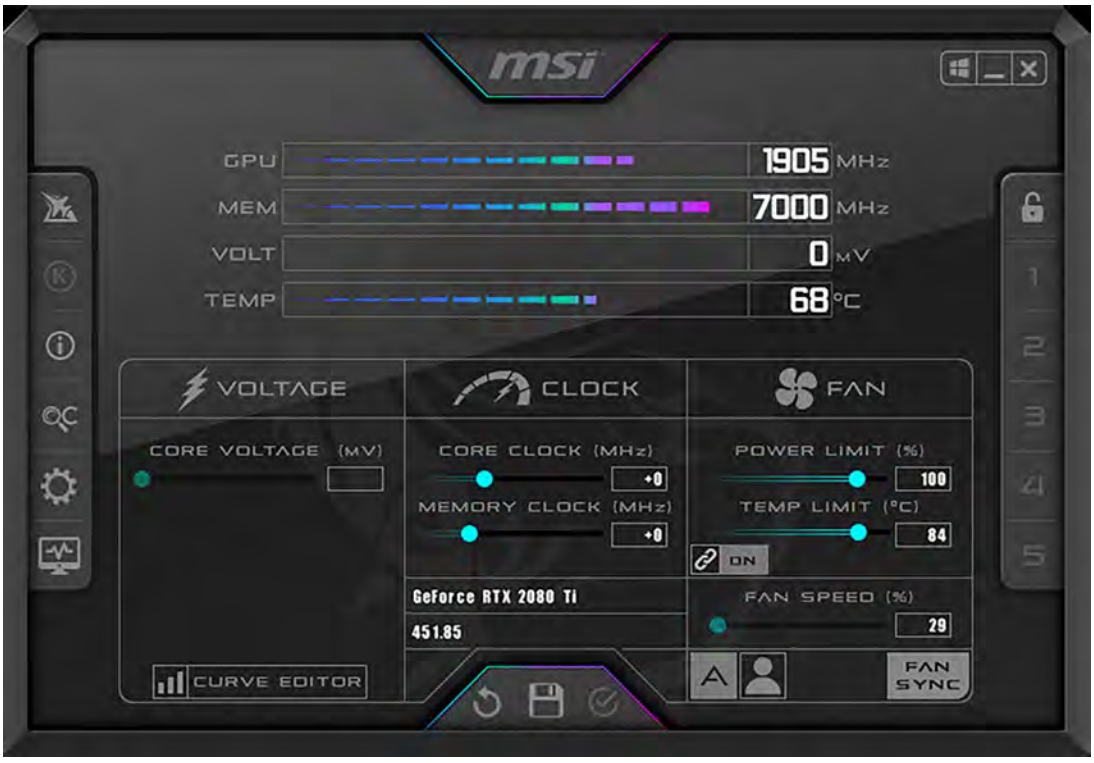
The game is already a pretty well designed concept of a MOBA featuring Pokémon, and is super gratifying to play (Um, we definitely didn't slack off from work to try this game out more than we needed oki). It might not exactly be revolutionary, but it does tick off the right boxes in our list. A little renovation here and there is all that it needs in future. Nevertheless, regularly introducing new items, Pokémon and balancing changes helps to keep the game interesting and trenchant while staying true to its roots of a casual MOBA. There's absolutely no reason why Pokémon enthusiasts shouldn't dive right in and enjoy this enchanting and fascinating MOBA already. Charmander is red, Squirtle is blue. We enjoyed the game, and hope you do too! u.u *



ABSOLUTE ESSENTIALS FOR A PC GAMER

Gaming on PC? You better have these software installed

BY SATVIK PANDEY
FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

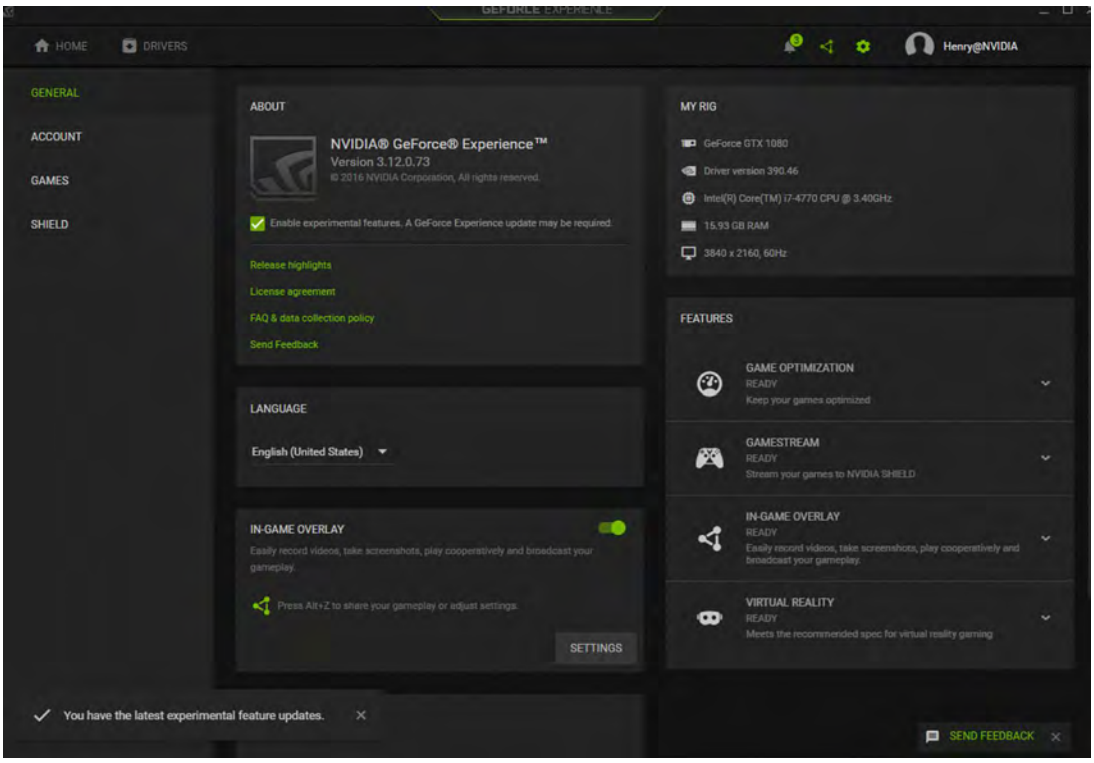


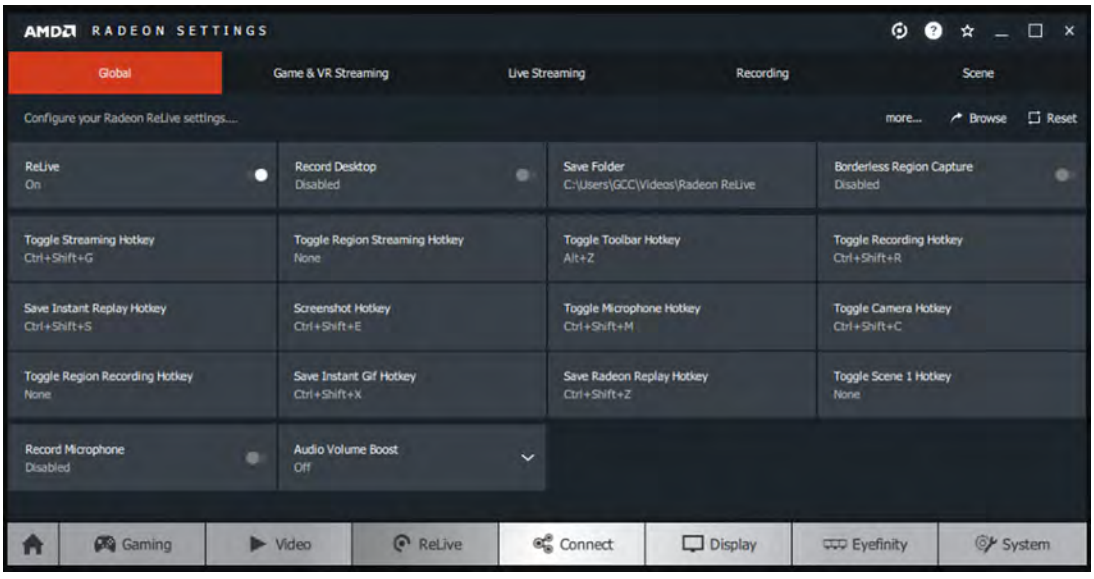
MSI Afterburner

Evergreen software to measure the performance of and monitor your PC hardware. The MSI Afterburner is a tool simple enough for the starters to use, and also has the capabilities that can be of use of a seasoned professional computer user. It can also be used as an overclocking tool.

Nvidia GeForce Experience / AMD ReLive

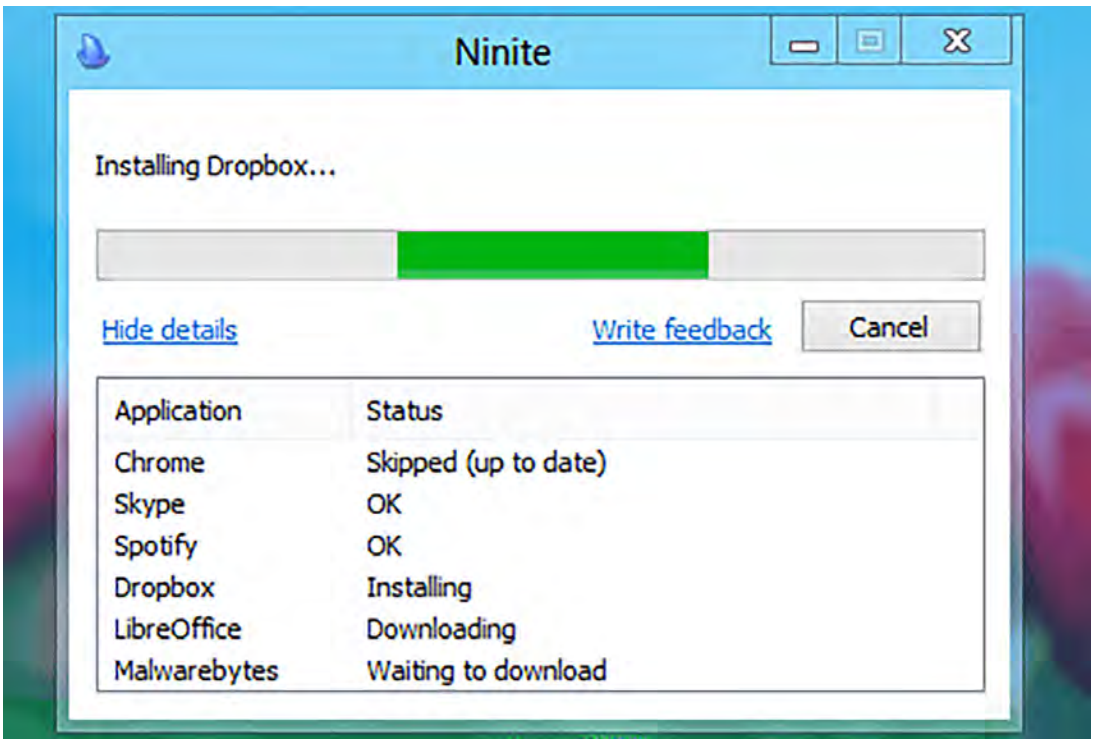
Inbuilt screen recording and game appearance utility for Nvidia and AMD GPUs. These utilities for being a manufacturer-provided piece of software, are polished for the most part and, just like the Afterburner are great for all levels of PC users for tinkering around with their display settings.





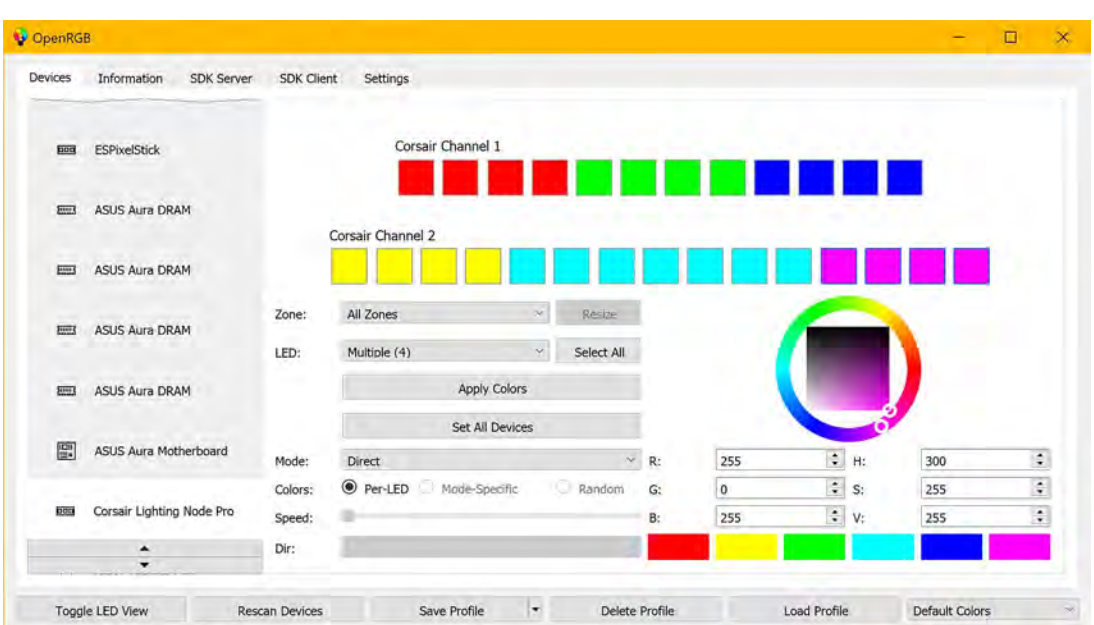
Ninite

Ninite is a tool for installing/updating some essential PC applications. There are a lot of times where you are unsure of which place to get a software from, especially if it is an open source project with no dedicated webpage. And, going to those sketchy websites can be risky business. So, in that case, Ninite is your best and safest bet.



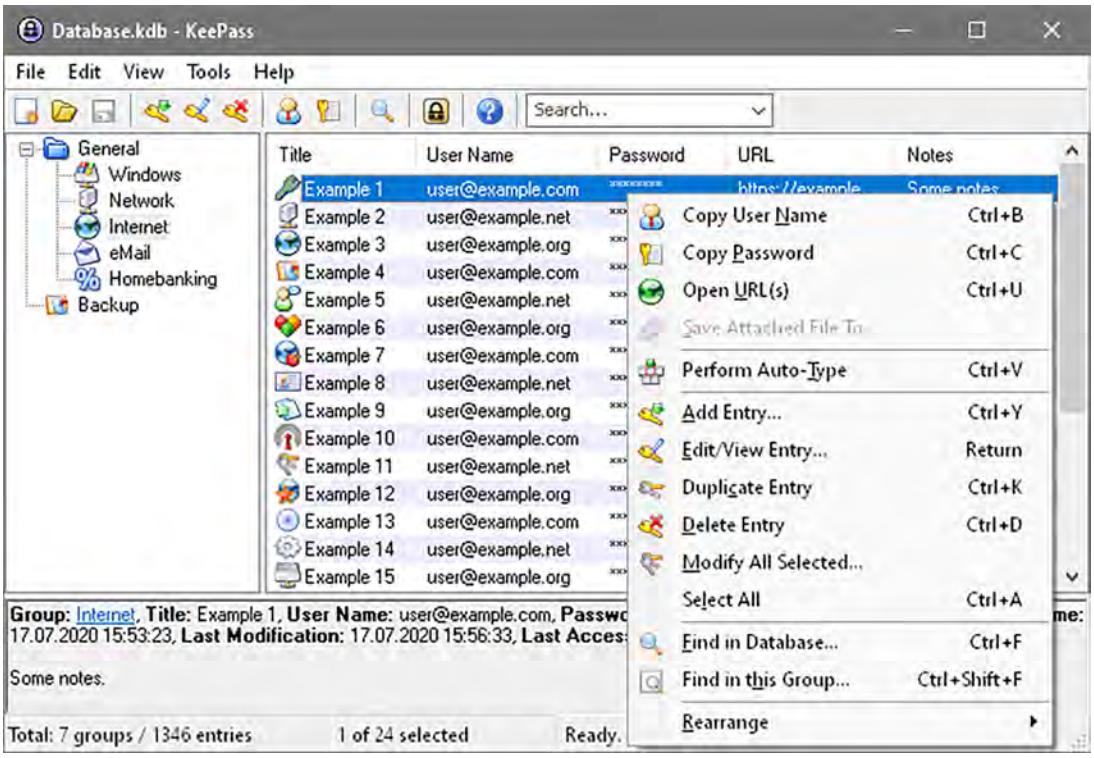
OpenRGB

Making all the components of your dream gaming PC light up in sync or in a set pattern, when they are not centrally managed can be a tough task for even the most experienced builders. And OpenRGB, an open-source software, lets its users to customise and calibrate different RGB components of your PC altogether.



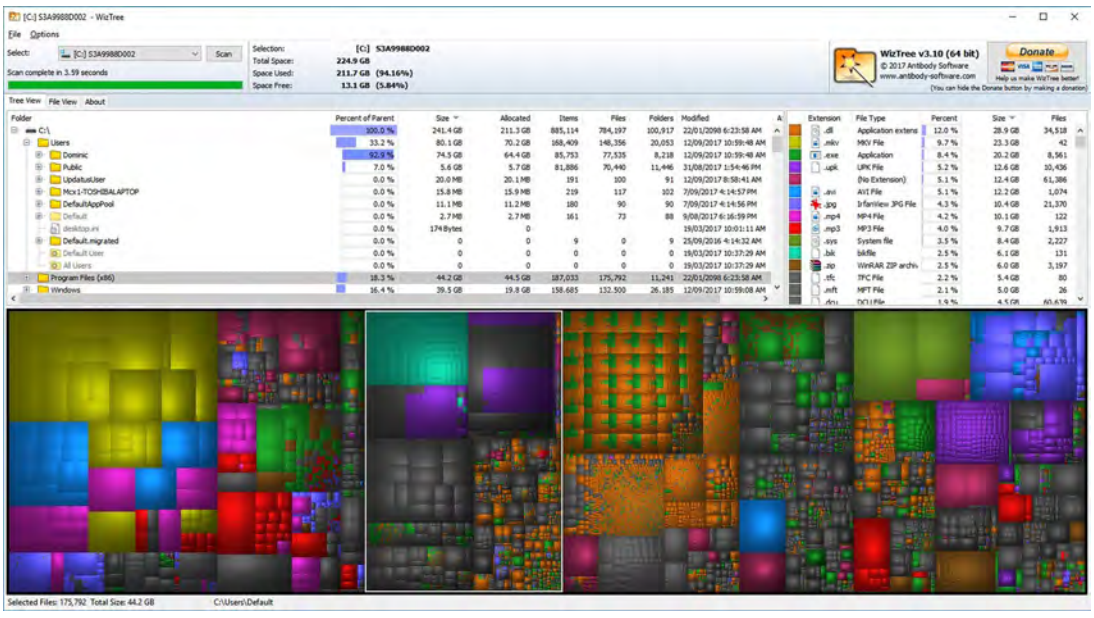
KeePass

KeePass is a one stop solution for all your password storage needs. It is a safe space for storing all your passwords, which you can use to make sure that you never have to click that forgot password button again, or write the password down on a piece of paper and stick it on your monitor bezel.



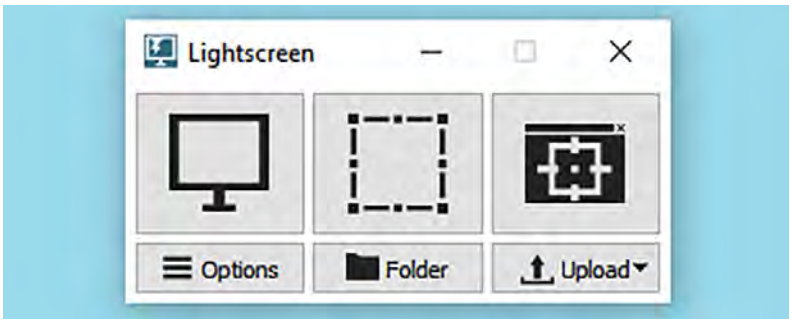
WizTree

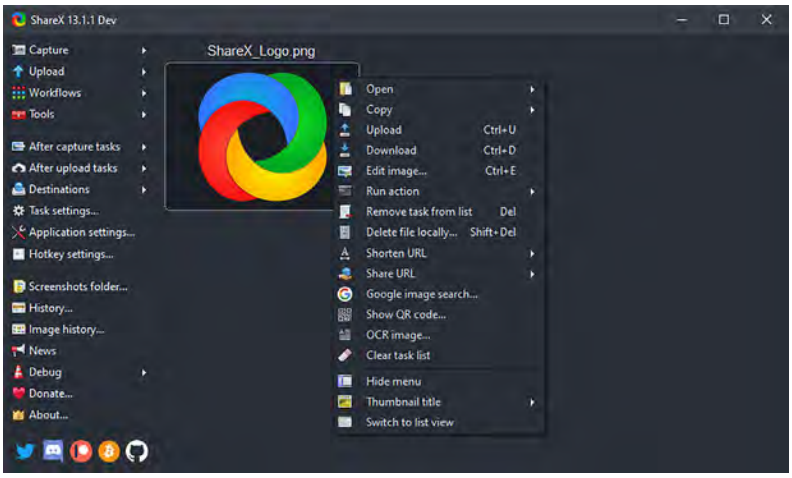
With games and softwares from all the different genres becoming bigger and bigger in size, and the cost of fast and reliable storage on the rise, it is very important to take control of your computer storage and manage it effectively. A multi-use storage analyser, WizTree helps you take gauge of the storage space distribution on your computer system.



Lightscreen/ShareX

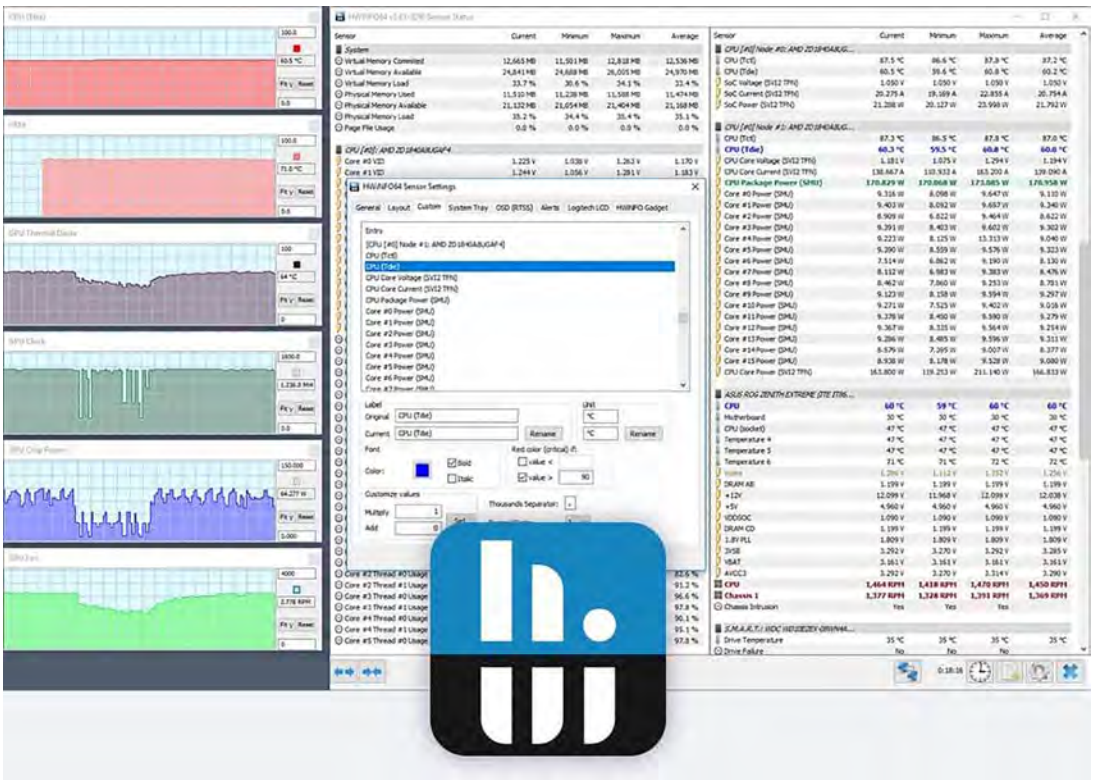
Game modding has been something that is as old as the concept of computer games itself. Even one of the most fabled open world game franchise, almost applied a community mod, and re-released the game with a remastered label. So, we are pretty sure you might also have wanted to download a mod, but could not find it. Well, with this bit of tiny software with a claimed database of about 1500 games and their related mods, all of your mod download related queries can be put to rest effectively.





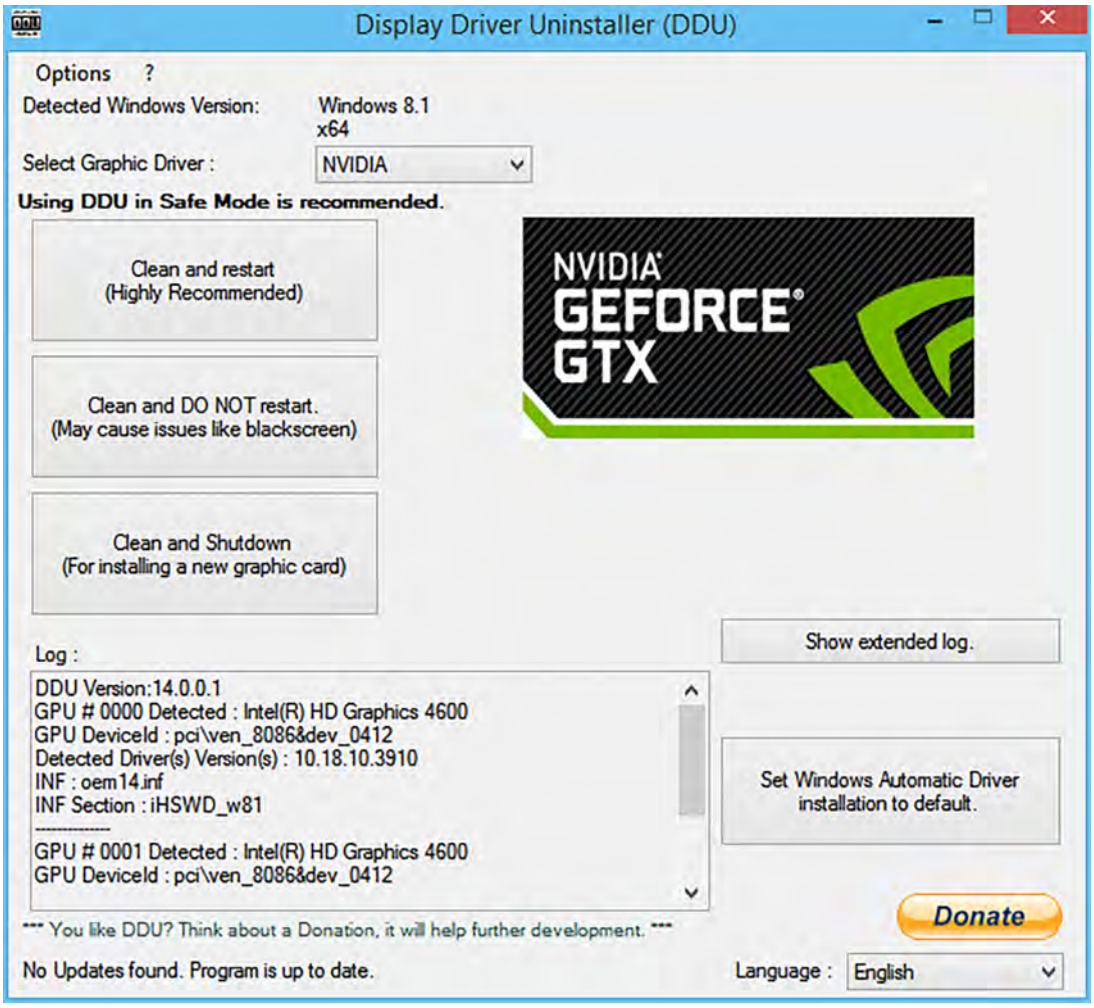
HWinFO

It performs task that the Afterburner does, and is a popular alternative to its MSI counterpart. The only place where HWinfo lacks, due to which it drops behind the Afterburner is its lack of overclocking capabilities.



Display Driver Uninstaller

Display driver issues, especially if you are the one who is into getting their hands on the latest releases of the display drivers for your graphic card, are becoming increasingly common. There are many times where you get display glitches after installing a graphic driver, but fixing the driver is a big challenge. Dispaly Driver Uninstaller, helps get rid of your display drivers incase the new updates suck.



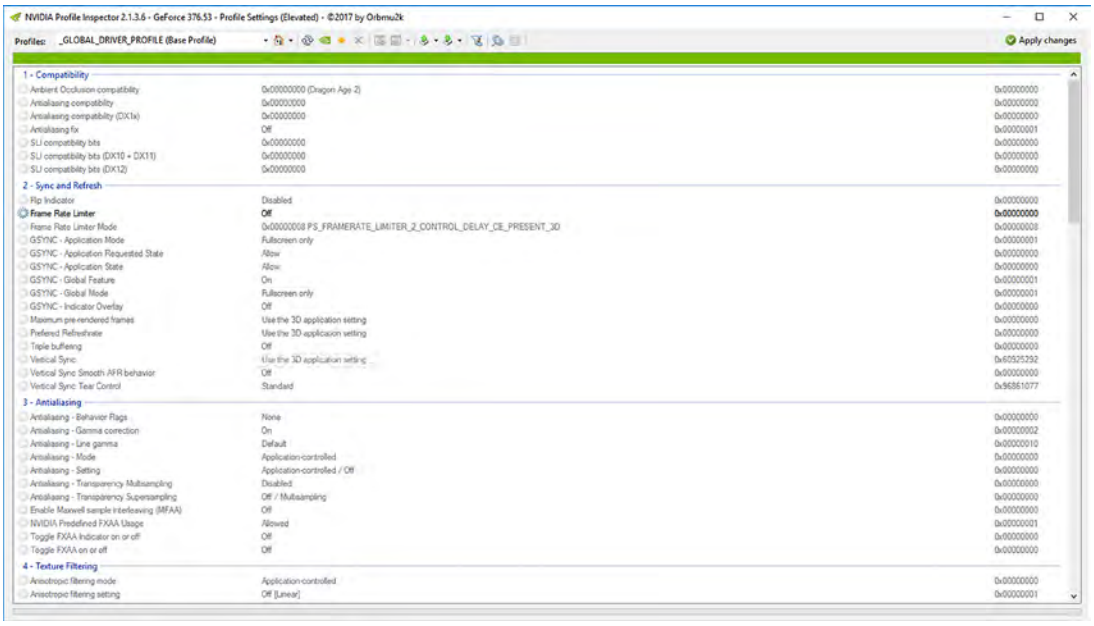
Vortex: Nexus Mod manager

Game modding has been something that is as old as the concept of computer games itself. Hell, even one of the most fabled open world game franchise, almost applied a community mod, and re-released the game with a remastered label. So, we are pretty sure you might also have wanted to download a mod, but could not find it. Well, with this bit of tiny software with a claimed database of about 1500 games and their related mods, all of your mod download realted queries can be put to rest effectively.



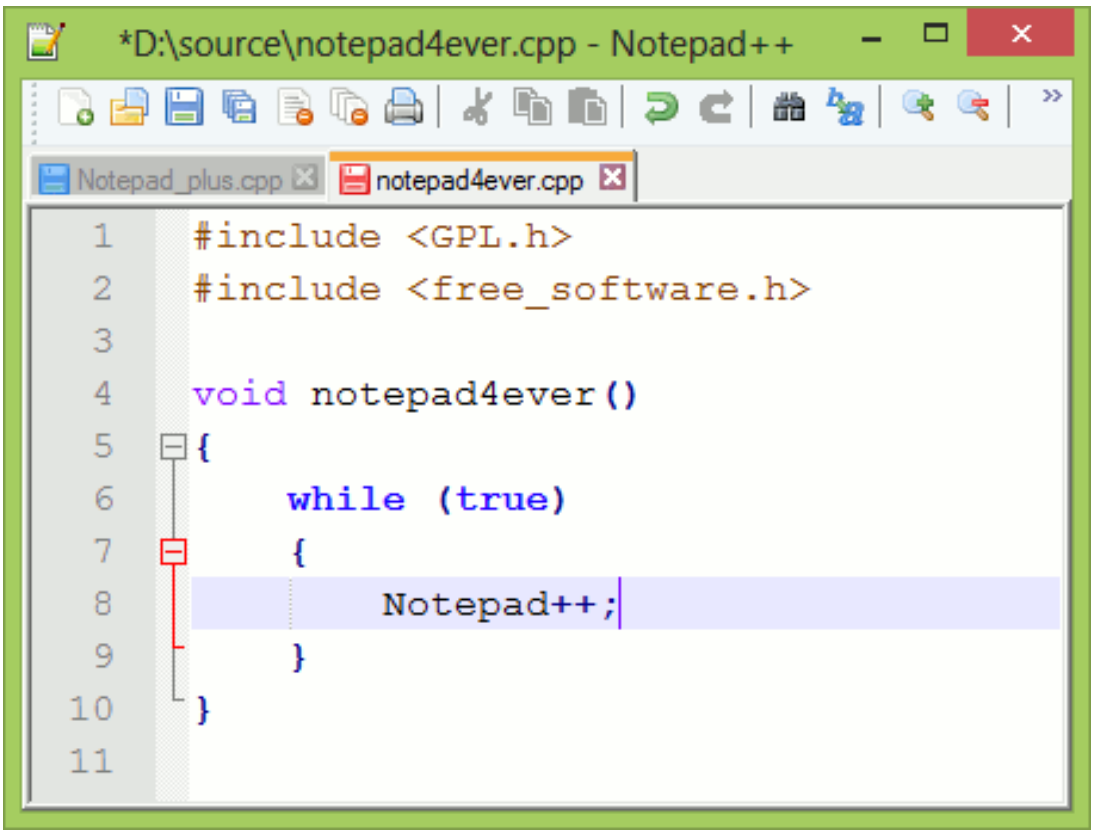
Nvidia Profile Inspector

Limited by the features of the stock Nvidia control panel and want to spice up your graphic settings to extract the maximum viewing pleasure and performance out of your graphics card? Then Nvidia Profile Inspector is your best bet. It is an open souce alternative of Nvidia Control Panel with added options.



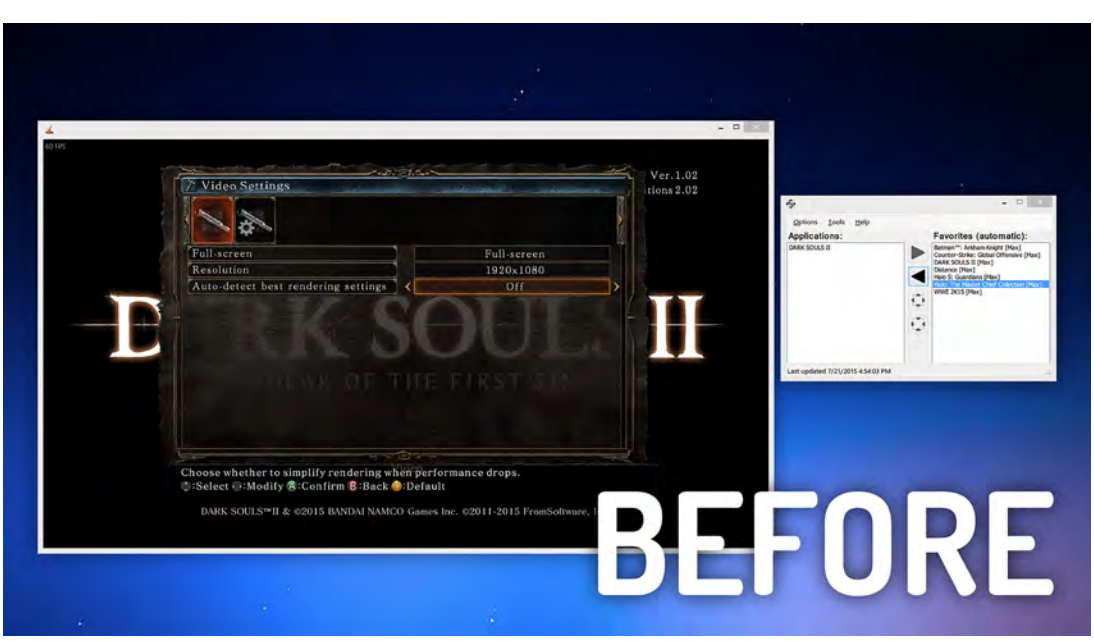
Notepad++

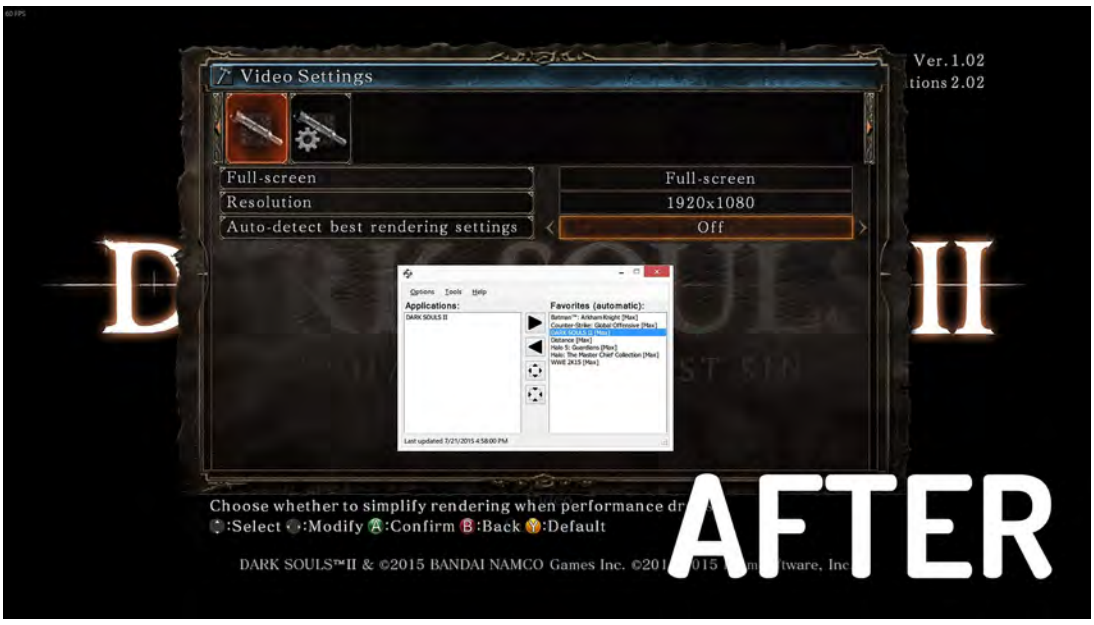
Improved alternative for notepad. Does everything that the older notepad does, but better and adds a wide array of other functions too. You can edit source code of programs, and do all sorts of coding activities with this small piece of software, which from the broader looks of it, replaces the Notepad on Windows. And, as the creators of this software say, “Notepad++ is trying to reduce the world carbon dioxide emissions. When using less CPU power, the PC can throttle down and reduce power consumption, resulting in a greener environment.”



Borderless gaming

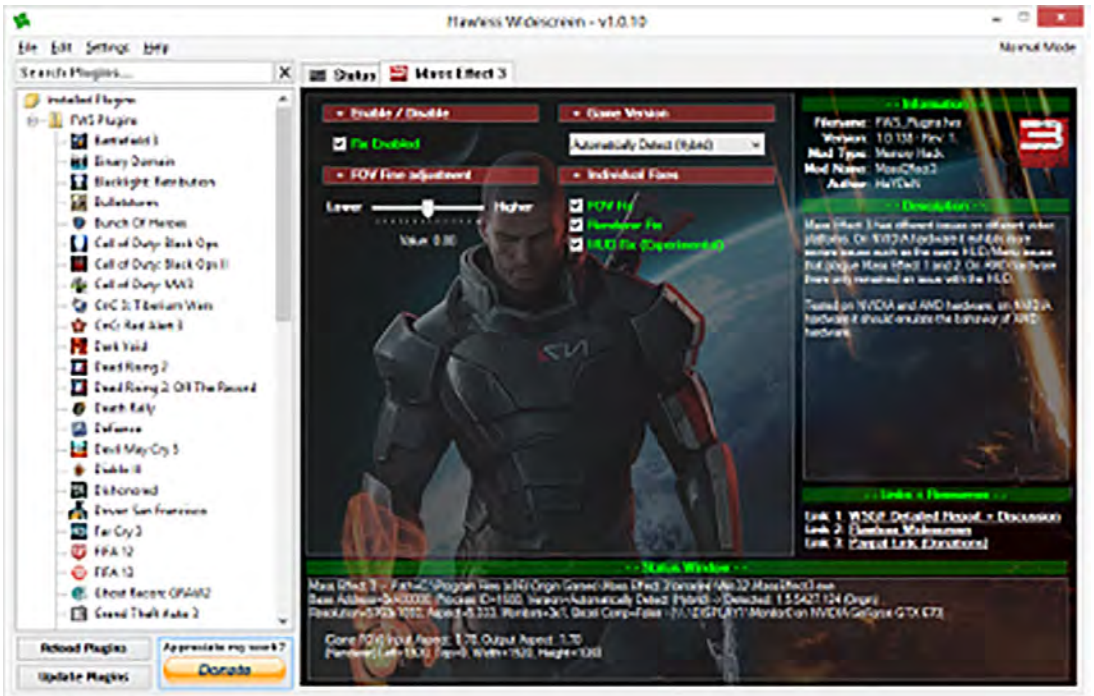
Borderless gaming enables the users to force any application in a smaller, bordered window, to go into a full screen mode, with ease. That is what the name says and the software does.





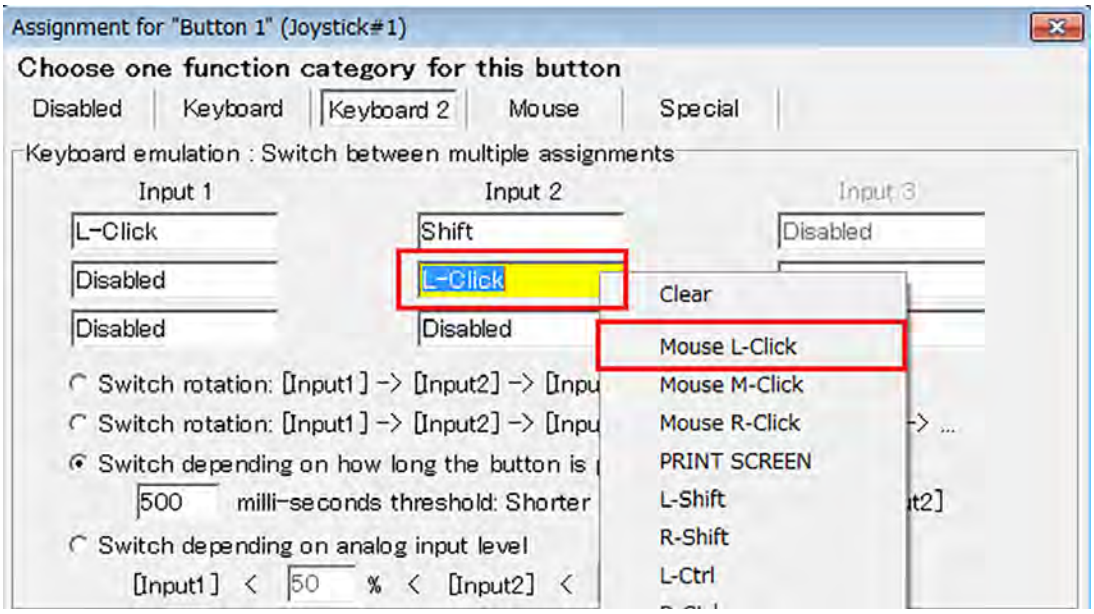
Flawless Widescreen

To play games, made for a smaller native aspect ratio, in widescreen. A great scaling tool to run legacy game titles. There are a lot of scaling issues in games, especially the older ones and borderless gaming is like the one stop solution for all the gamers who are willing to run the fabled title from the 90s or planning to use an ultrawide monitor or a monitor setup which the developers of the game, could not even think of, while coding their way through each mission.



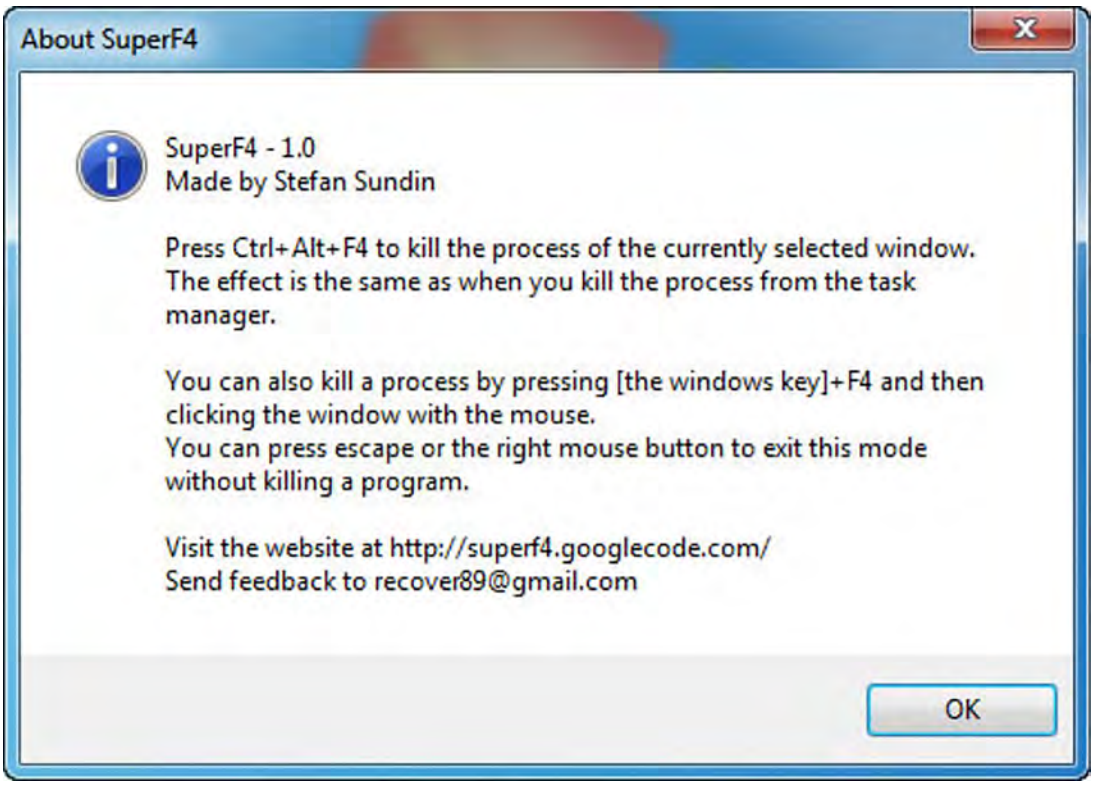
JoyToKey

For mapping keys to your controller. Want to play a PC game with a controller? Use this! Yeah, you read it right. Some games specifically made for PCs do not support controllers natively. By using JoyToKey, you can easily map your keyboard keys to that of the controller that you are using to have a seamless controller gaming experience.



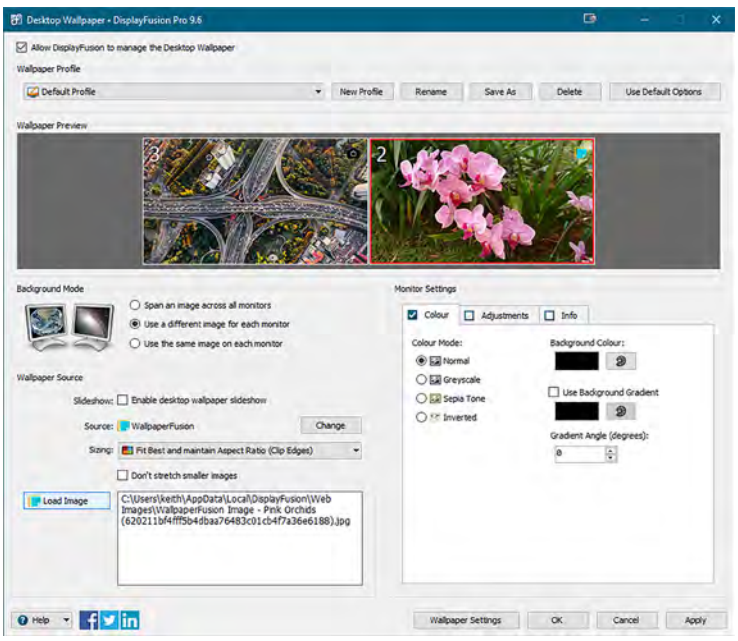
SuperF4

Smashing your monitor or your keyboard might not be the best option to rage quit games. SuperF4 helps you bind one key to the famous Alt+F4 key shortcut, so that you can peacefully click that one escape button and get out of that excruciating GTA Online session.



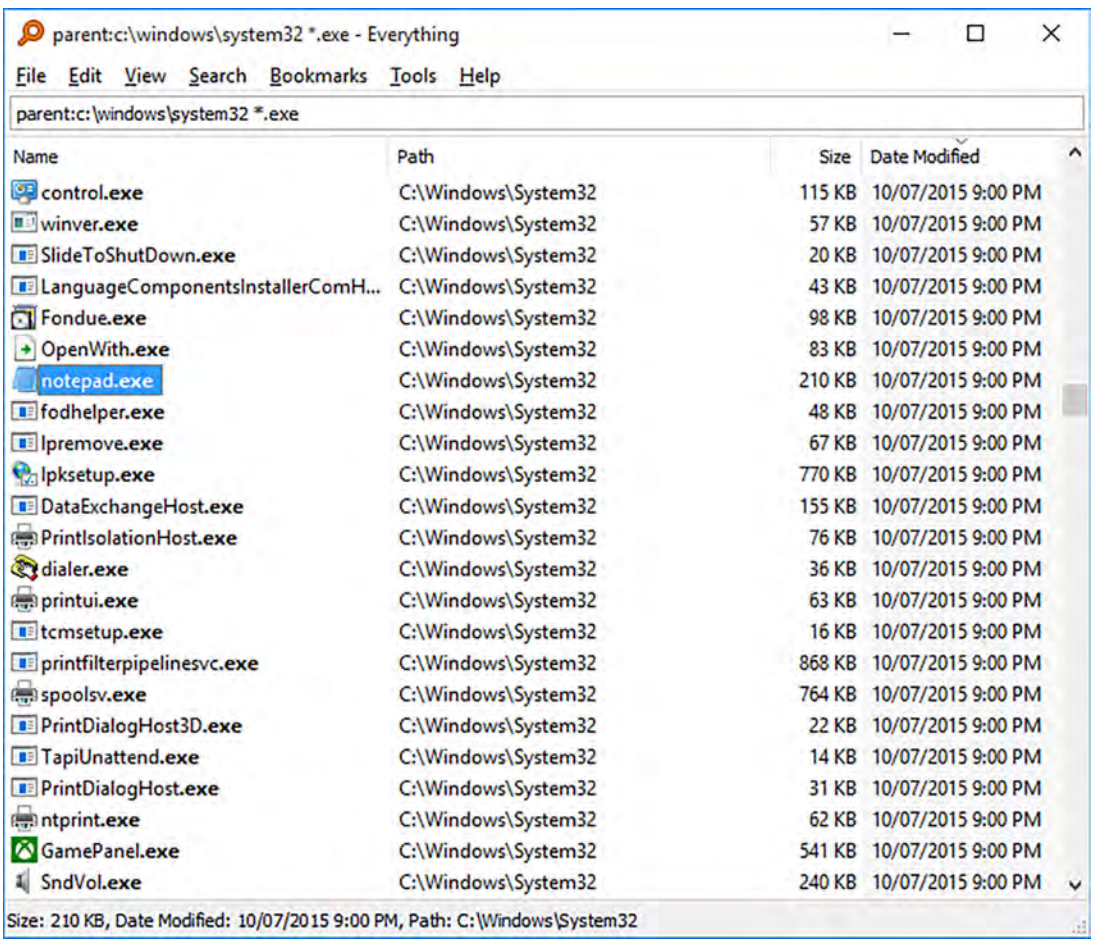
DisplayFusion

Some games are best experienced in a multi-monitor setup, and with more and more users coming in to upgrade their set-ups, adding some spice to it by adding more than 1 monitor, window management has become an issue, especially while playing games, because of the host of limitations that comes along, when using Windows. But DisplayFusion is like an answer to all the prayers of the gamers who have been fiddling around for hours to get that perfect setting for their multi-monitor setup.



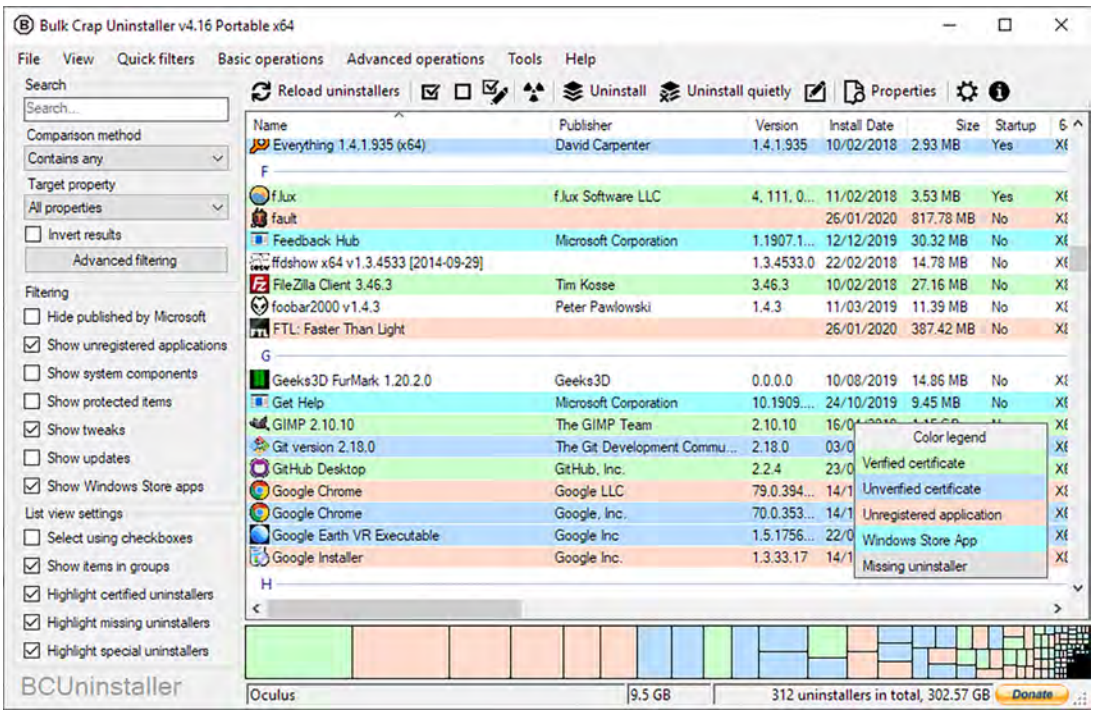
Everything

Windows search in many cases is not the wisest choice, when it comes to searching through large pools of data stored on your computer. Everything takes every problem that the stock windows search has, and chucks them out of the window making your searches faster, when you use this software.



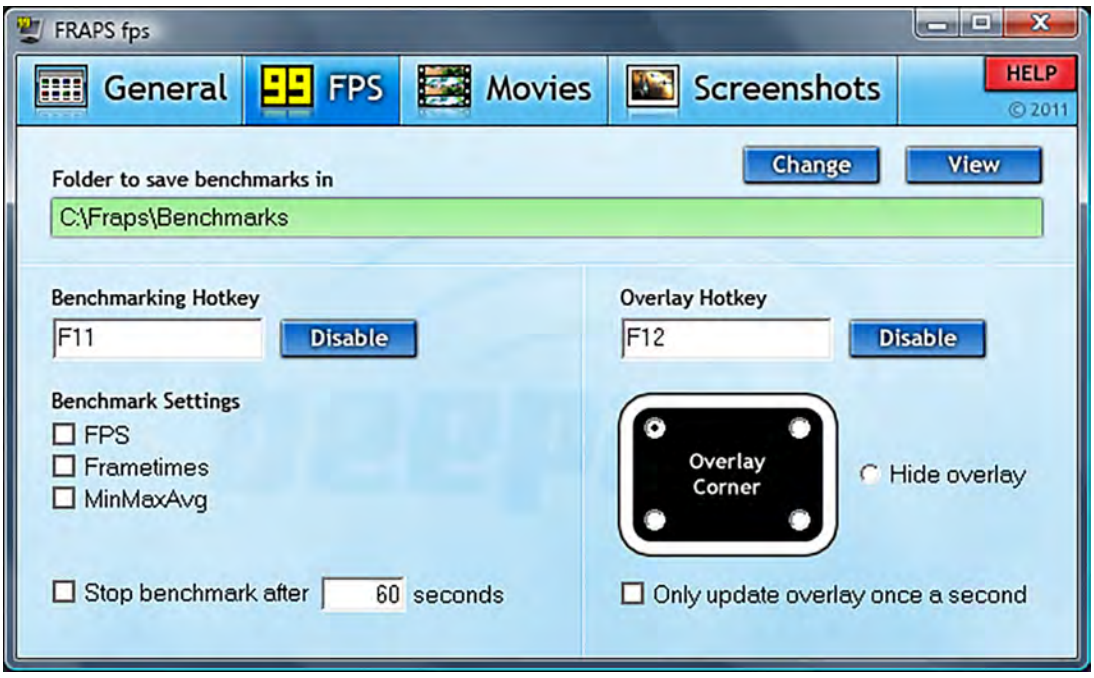
Bulk Crap Uninstaller

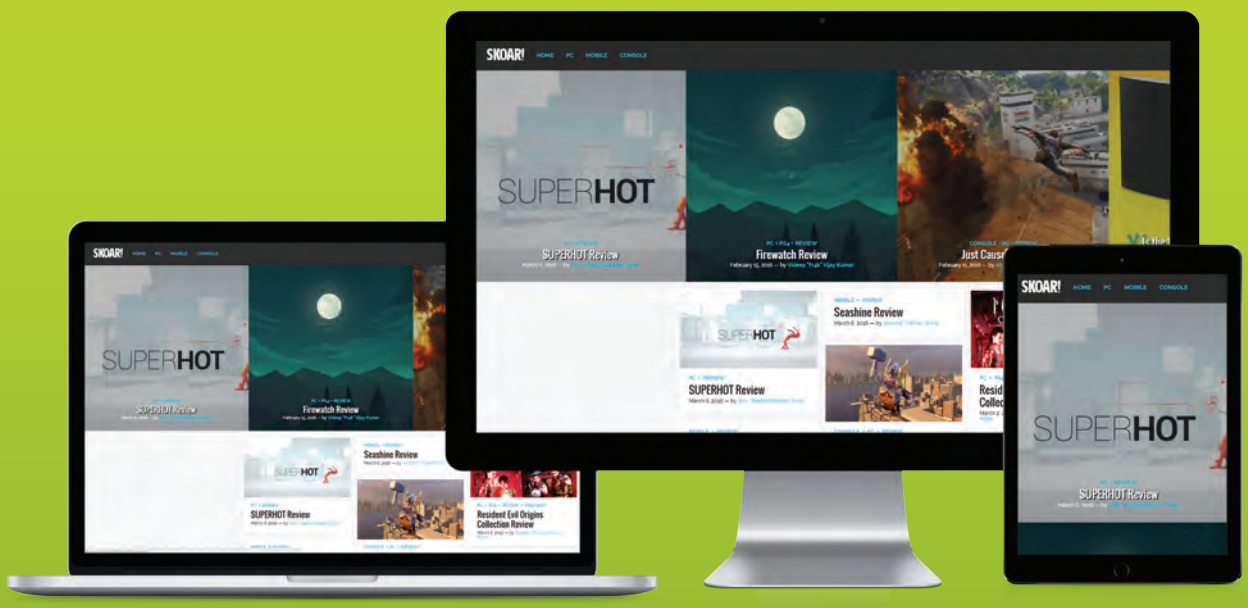
Just like many other softwares on this list, the name of this software is enough to indicate, what its core use is. Bulk Crap Installer, helps you uninstall crappy sofrwares on your computer in bulk, to free up space for that latest Warzone update.



Fraps

Frame rate related statistics, are the best way to flex on your friends, when firing up that latest AAA title. But, getting hands on accurate, and properly logged frame rate statistics is a challenge for all of us. But, with Fraps, you can get all your FPS related stats in a single place along with decent customisation options. All of this without sacrificing much of your computer's resources, which could take a toll on your FPS count. *





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