

PlayStation 3 Forever

A high-quality digital illustration of James Bond, portrayed by Daniel Craig, in a tactical black suit. He is holding a black handgun with both hands, aiming it upwards and to the left. He is wearing a grey wristwatch on his left wrist. The background is a modern, industrial interior with white and grey architectural elements and a window showing a cityscape.

James Bond Games
Yellow Light of Death
Heavy Rain
L.A. Noire
& More

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Meet the Team

Matt

Editor

What a busy time since Issue 1 was first released. I spent a lot of time finishing up the Platinum Trophy for LA Noire, you can read about that in the Trophy Hunter section, it really was a grind towards the end. I finally played Astrobot on the PlayStation 5 which really scratched that Platformer itch. Then I had this urge to revisit Parasite Eve on the PlayStation 1, perhaps because it is set at Christmas, and somehow I still found the time for the myriad of PlayStation 3 titles we cover in this months issue.

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Letter From The Editor

Gaming at Christmas



Winter is here. Short days, long cold nights but no big deal to us gamers, it's a perfect time to start chipping away at that gaming backlog that has built up over the summer. Whether it's checking out some old titles or finally getting back around to that game in which you need a few more trophies for the Platinum. And of course there is no need to fear being cold if you are still rocking your original Fat PlayStation 3 as that thing puts out enough heat for the whole house.

In this issue we focussed on all four 007 titles for the console which was a challenge. Playing four games for one article is perhaps not the best use of this editor's time but it was fun nonetheless.

Next I had really wanted to research the Yellow Light of Death and what caused it, so we have another feature trying to educate and inform on that one. Then we have a handful of reviews of some great PlayStation 3 titles before moving onto our Top 10 tips for the PlayStation 3 for 2025.

We really hope you are enjoying the magazine and please do get involved. We really want to hear about your Christmas games or games you play or associate with the Holiday season. You can email us at contact@playstation3forever.com, follow us on X.com or Bluesky too. From all of us at PlayStation 3 Forever we wish you a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and hope that 2025 gives you plenty of time for gaming!

James Bond games on the PlayStation 3

Nobody Does It Better?



007 console games used to be quite a big deal.

Goldeneye on the Nintendo 64 was the third best selling game for the entire system. Steady releases of either movie tie-ins or spin-off games have been around since the 1980's but stopped dead in their tracks in 2012 with the release of 007 Legends. There was always something enjoyable and reliable about a James Bond video game, they were rarely critically acclaimed but sold decent numbers and gave you a solid 7/10 experience and as a

Bond fan, I enjoyed them warts and all. The PlayStation 3 managed to release four Bond games, those four games were released in the space of four years, which seems unbelievable by today's standards.

Firstly we had Quantum of Solace in 2008 developed by Treyarch, a well known developer popular for the Call of Duty series. Followed by James Bond 007: Blood Stone which is an original Bond story, developed by Bizarre Creations,

a developer who also made the fantastic Blur game. Followed by Goldeneye 007 Reloaded, developed by Eurocom who developed the PlayStation 2 version of Quantum of Solace. Next we saw Goldeneye 007 Reloaded, a port of the Wii title with some extras. And finally we have 007 Legends, also developed by Eurocom, in 2012 to coincide with the Bond 50th Anniversary.

Quantum of Solace

Quantum of Solace is a first

person cover shooter, a genre that was very popular at the time with games like Gears of War and Uncharted. On harder difficulties you pretty much have to find cover immediately otherwise you are gunned down in a few shots. Cover is very binary, you are either in cover in which case you are largely immune from everything unless enemies flank you, and out of cover you are simply target practice.

The game covers the events of the Quantum of Solace film as well as Casino Royale which didn't receive its own dedicated game. Other mechanics such as mini games for hacking and quick time events are also very typical of the time and don't really add as much for me.

The levels are pretty basic, you just run through an area, enemies spawn, you do your cover based shooting until they



are gone and you move on. There are some sections of stealth merged in which have you avoid cameras and enemies and they are quite fun. Overall I find it to be the most middle of the road of all the games. It's not a bad game at all, in fact it's quite fun, but it is missing some of the extra elements that I think are required for a Bond title and it's missing reasons to come back and replay it.

Goldeneye 007 Reloaded



The original Goldeneye for the Nintendo 64 was a huge success and still is to this day one of the most strongly associated game and console pairing. It was the king of local split screen multiplayer. I personally wouldn't consider it the best Bond game but there is no denying its influence and popularity. In 2010 Goldeneye would finally return to a Nintendo console, the Wii. Online multiplayer was now an established part of gaming and it seemed a natural fit to try and bring the king of the local split screen into the space but with a twist. This Bond game would not feature Pierce Brosnan, the actor from the actual Goldeneye film, but it would be a modern reimagining starring the then current actor Daniel Craig. The game reviewed well enough and it made its way 1 year later to the PlayStation 3 with some improvements, a new graphics engine and

PlayStation move integration which is a neat feature.

Goldeneye 007 Reloaded is a first person shooter typical of its era. You hold L2 to look down the sights and to also lock your aim to the nearest enemy. I personally appreciate this feature as aiming with analogue sticks has never been great and this allows for really quick enemy take downs as you quickly zip between them.

Another trope in many Bond games is its unpredictable use of stealth. Typically Bond games have levels that alternate in sections of stealth and sections of all out attack. In Goldeneye 007 Reloaded you usually enter a new section undetected, you can try your best to skulk around, crouch-walk behind enemies and take them out, but more than likely you will be spotted fairly quickly and the all out attack will begin. There is no hiding and getting back into stealth mode again. Fortunately the different groups of guards don't talk to each other so once you have moved onto the next section they are all blissfully unaware that you just brutally murdered all of their fellow colleagues in the room down the corridor.



James Bond 007: Blood Stone

Blood Stone is a first in this series of PlayStation 3 Bond titles as it is the only one with an original story. Blood Stone features Daniel Craig as Bond again and also features Joss Stone, a famous singer, who not only sings the intro song but also plays one of the main characters. This one is a 3rd person cover shooter which marks a departure from the other titles, if Quantum of Solace was a Call of Duty inspired then this one leans more into the Uncharted style. Enter a new area, enemies spawn, get into cover or die. Another great feature of this game is the driving levels are back. You get to drive a variety of different cars in chase sequences, a feature that has been missing from the other entries so far. Bizarre Creations, the developer of this title, also

created Blur, a driving game, which released the same year, so I am assuming there was some cross-pollination happening here.

Driving missions are back. The graphics lack a little for me but the game does make up for it in solid and entertaining gameplay. It's also quite short but that suits me fine these days. The stealth works better than some of the other entries, you can normally make it through good chunks before the game 'forces' you into a confrontation. Stealth is important too as you need to use your takedown ability to build up focus points, which is a little mechanic allowing you to go into slow-mo and automatically target the nearest enemies head for a quick and fairly reliable headshot. This skill can get you out of trouble sometimes.



007 Legends

007 Legends released in 2012 the same year as the extremely successful Skyfall movie and the year marked the 50th anniversary of Bond films. I actually think the premise of the game is brilliant. The game takes the main plot, villains and henchmen from Goldfinger, On Her Majesty's Secret Service, Moonraker, License to Kill and Die Another Day. But instead of using period actors and locations they would all feature Daniel Craig and be re-worked in a contemporary setting.

Sadly the execution of this was not as great as the premise. Whilst replaying I did notice a lot of screen tearing and frame rate drops, worse than I had noticed in the other titles and the loading was extremely bad, up to 10 seconds. Many of the levels descend into non stop

war with Bond and allies fighting literal armies in an assault on a base. Another very poor decision was, what I can only describe as a "boxing" mini game which is a sort of quick time style mini game and usually how you dispatch the iconic villains of the game.

"The game that killed all Bond games"

This game received a lot of negative criticism and still has an aura of being the game that killed all Bond games, given there have been no more Bond

games since. I don't think it deserves all the negativity it gets. When games are new, we nit pick and compare to other titles to a much higher degree. We are all hyper sensitive to every detail, but when I step back now and look at these 10 year old plus games all the minor details seem less noticeable and important. This game was released in a year where we saw Mass Effect 3, Dishonored, Max Payne 3, Assassins Creed III amongst others. By the comparison of the day the criticism was probably more fair. But looking back today, with the eyes of wanting to play a fun Bond game, it's not too bad. The absolute gem of this game is the Moonraker level, saved right until the end, but floating around in 3D space shooting a laser gun is insanely fun.





Final Ranking

Looking back at these games with today's perspective, there isn't actually a lot between them. Mechanically they are actually quite similar and each one has something the other doesn't that makes it stand out. I personally like the driving missions from Blood Stone. I really enjoy the difference in levels from 007 Legends but the mechanics of Goldeneye 007 Reloaded are probably the best. But everyone loves a ranking. So here's mine.

4 Quantum of Solace

Absolutely nothing wrong with this one, and it gets extra marks for including missions from Casino Royale, one of my personal favorite Bond films, but it is just the most bland in appearance and mechanics.

3 007 Legends

This one might have the poorest execution graphically and mechanically but the ambition takes it up a notch for me. Combined with all these iconic villains, locations and soundtracks. I think it could have been something special and it is definitely polarizing, but it really isn't that bad.

2 Goldeneye Reloaded 007

This one is a solid FPS with some nice Bond-esq elements. It is one of the more fun ones to come back and re-visit, you can even try out the move controls if you really want to challenge yourself.

1 James Bond 007: Blood Stone

This one has to take it for me. It seems creating a Bond game in this era was difficult, they all follow a trend, mostly by being another First Person Shooter. My personal opinion is that genre does not quite fit for a Bond game. Bond doesn't typically do all-out assaults on waves and waves of enemies. To be a good Bond game I think you primarily need stealth, with small bits of enemies, you need meaningful gadgets, driving missions and exotic locations. Blood Stone is as close as it comes to that formula and I think it's the best Bond game on the PlayStation 3.

Heavenly Sword

A short but sweet hack and slash journey

HACK-AND-SLASH

EXCLUSIVE TITLE

RELEASED 2007



Heavenly Sword is one of those games that is just really strongly associated with the PlayStation 3. The lead character Nariko also appears in the PlayStation All-Stars game. It was released in 2007 and developed by Ninja Theory who are still active today and are producing well known and well received titles. It has never been re-released, remastered or ported to any other platform than the PlayStation 3.

King Bohan, the primary villain, his army and team of henchmen is laying siege to Nariko's village in order to try and acquire the mysterious weapon, the Heavenly Sword. Nariko is tasked with protecting the sword which can give you great power but at the cost of taking your life.

Heavenly Sword has the feel of the type of game you'd expect to find towards the end of the PlayStation 2's life but

everything has been ramped up to take advantage of the new hardware the PlayStation 3 had to offer. A lot of effort was put into making the game as cinematic as possible. Well known actors such as Andy Serkis played the primary villain King Bohan and Anna Torv starred as the lead role Nariko. It's clear to me that they really wanted to take advantage of the latest hardware and try to merge the worlds of cinematic visual effects and console



gaming. The Lord of the Rings movies had released between 2000-2003 and their visual effects department, Weta Workshop, shot to fame for many reasons, one of those being the amazing CGI work on the extremely life-like creature Gollum, who not coincidentally was played by Andy Serkis. Weta Workshop really honed the technology of motion capture and subsequently Ninja Theory worked with them to use the same technique here.

The game is primarily a hack and slash adventure game. It feels very like God of War at times, not a bad game to take inspiration from, you mostly do some very light exploring and interacting with environments before stumbling across the next wave of enemies where you must lean into your combat skills to take them on. You have 3 different fighting styles to use: speed, strength and range, each with their own combo list.

You progress through these sorts of micro stages where you are rated up to 3 stars based on your performance. This is quite clever as these stars or points are used to unlock things like artwork or behind the scenes footage.

Solid Mechanics

The fighting mechanics are pretty solid, very occasionally let down by the game's general performance issues. Some frame rate drops and screen tearing can be painful, but where the game really did something was unique was with the new Six-Axis controller.

Perhaps desperate to try something new or enforced by Sony executives to try and make use of the new technology, the fighting segments are broken up with these 'projectile' sections. Typically Nariko or Nariko's friend Kai, who you can also play as sometimes, will wield a cannon, rocket launcher or crossbow and you need to take down siege towers or waves of enemies at a distance. You can fire your projectiles with a simple press of a button but what the game really wants you to do is to press that button and then hold it. Holding the fire button down pushes you into the perspective of the projectile and it becomes a super slow-motion scene where you then need to move that projectile to its target using nothing but the six-axis motion controls. You have to park the part of your brain that wants to point out that this makes no sense because the projectile can't



take on a mind of its own once launched. Moving the projectiles with the six-axis motion controls is

very difficult, you can get quite good with it but there is a steep learning curve and it is very frustrating. I appreciate what they were trying to do with it, but it just doesn't feel like the right type of game to use it.

The game tells the story very much from

Nariko's perspective right down to her inner thoughts. There are many segments where she is looking into the camera and you are hearing that inner dialogue. It's really interesting to compare to *Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice*, a PlayStation 4 game that *Ninja Theory* also made years later, which did a lot of this style of story telling, but explored it much more deeply. Interestingly enough that game is also very short but it was hugely acclaimed, funny how things change.

Visually I really enjoy the game, they manage to create a beautiful, rich world, with plenty of design elements and lore that make you want to know more. It also manages to use the

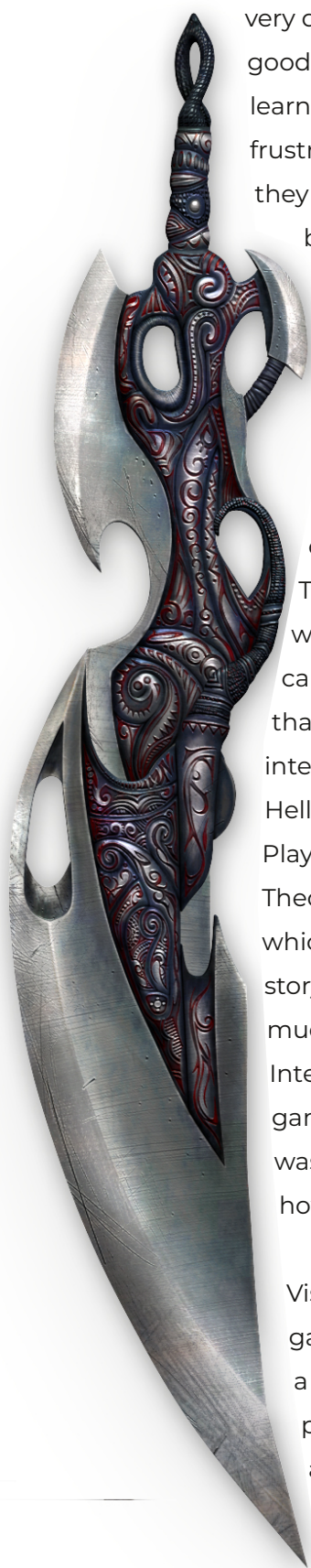
PlayStation 3 hardware to

create these incredible set pieces where thousands of enemies are on screen at once. The

behind the scenes footage claims they could do 2000 enemies on screen at once. These sequences very much feel like you are on a battlefield in a war, something that a lot of games really struggle with. Other aspects of the hardware were also put to interesting use, according to *Official PlayStation Magazine*, one of the six special processors available on the CPU was used solely for the physics of Nariko's hair which flaps around wildly at times. The hair is definitely doing a lot of things but whether or not that is a good thing, I will leave up to you.

A Must Own

At the time the game got positive reviews but did receive a lot of criticism for its short play time. This is not something that bothers me anymore, I understand if you paid full price back in 2007 and then were done with the game in a weekend it hits hard, but actually shorter games are quite preferable to me now, especially in the retro scene. The six-axis motion control segments are probably the most divisive segments. They are kind of annoying. Moving the whole controller and your body to try and get the projectile to turn left feels a little bit silly. I like the world, the lore, the combos. There was apparently a whole trilogy planned for *Heavenly Sword* but sadly, with the game's large budget failing to be recouped, this never materialized, but I would have liked to see more. You can pick this game up pretty cheaply, less than £10 and I think given it only exists on the PlayStation 3 for a PlayStation 3 enthusiast this game is a must own.



Yellow Light of Death Explained

Every PlayStation 3 Gamers Worst Nightmare



It was October 2010, I was playing *Enslaved: Odyssey to the West*. I had just finished a long session of gaming and took a break. A few hours later I decided to turn the console back on to check on my trophy progress. I pressed the power button only to hear, BEEP BEEP BEEP. The console turned off. The Yellow Light of Death had struck my 60GB PlayStation 3. What made it even worse, was the *Enslaved: Odyssey to the*

West disc was trapped inside, I couldn't retrieve it and it wasn't mine. I had rented it from Blockbuster, and I had to return it in 4 days.

(YLOD) takes its name from the color the power indicator light appears when the PlayStation 3 encounters a problem when starting up. The name is also a reference to the Xbox 360's Red Ring of Death, a very similar problem, where a hardware

failure causes 3 of the 4 ring segments on the front of the Xbox to glow red. The Yellow Light of Death would indeed be a death sentence however, some small hope remains as it is possible to attempt a fix which works most of the time.

Typical Startup Sequence

The PlayStation 3 has two indicator lights. The top one (When looking at the console

vertically) is the power indicator light. This is usually red if the console is in standby or green when operating. However it can also be yellow. The typical YLOD sequence is this:

Console is in standby and

showing the red light

Press the power on button

Console is starting up, the green light appears

The console makes 3 quick beeps and a yellow light is shown

The power indicator light flashes red

The console switches off and goes back to solid red

Then you cry or scream

System Hardware

General Hardware Failure

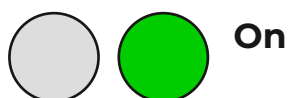
The yellow light does not signify a specific problem, officially it is only an error code to indicate a General Hardware Failure. At switch on, the PlayStation 3 will run some internal diagnostic checks to ensure everything is in working order and if not, the yellow light will occur and the system will shut down.

Theoretically there are a number of things which could go wrong to make this happen but in practice the majority of the problems, especially in the early units, are related to the GPU or the CPU.

Power Light Indicators



Standby



On



On, Disc in Drive

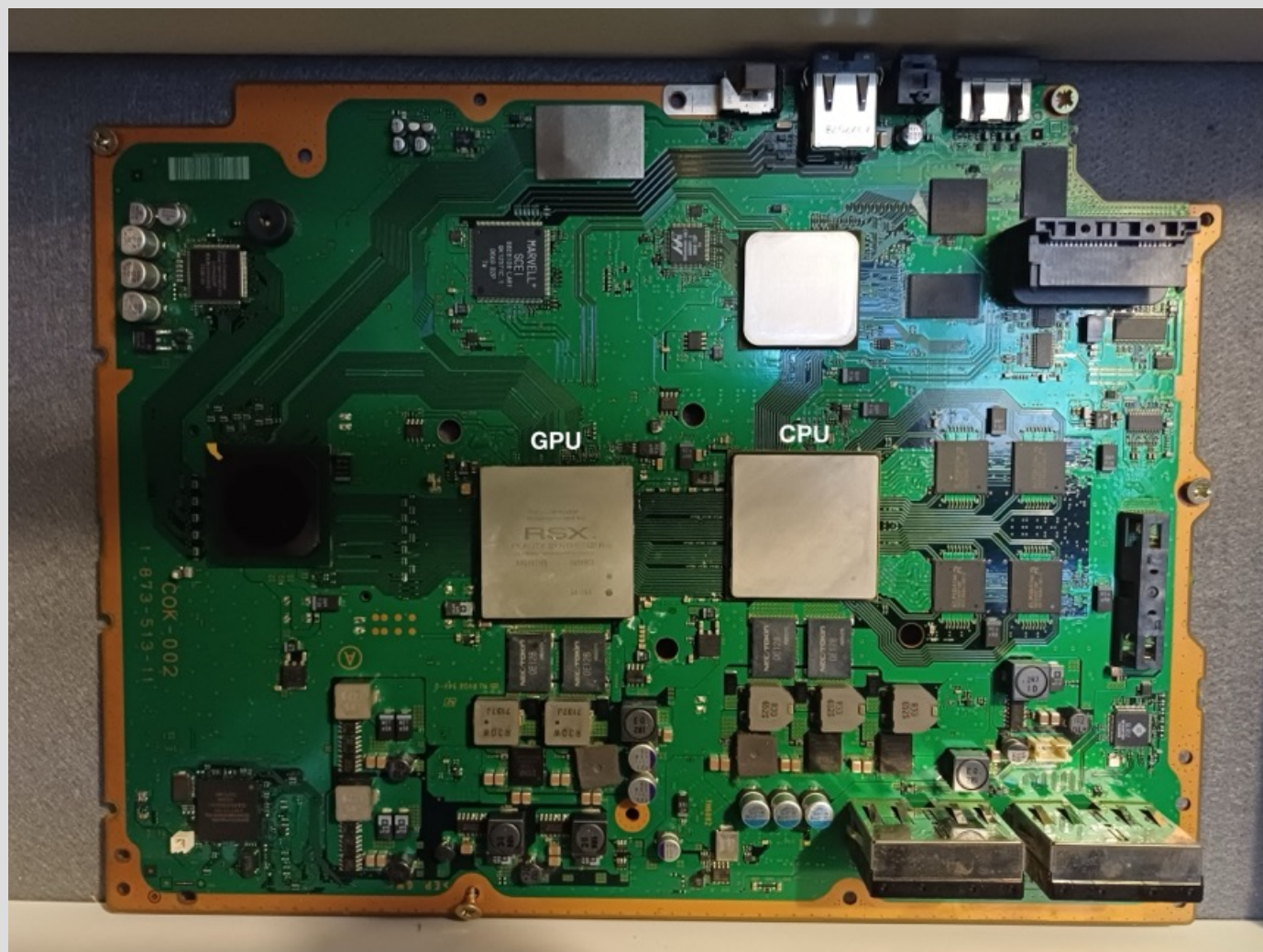


General Hardware Failure (Oh no, not again)

The real core of the PlayStation 3, under its shiny outer shell, is a single green board with lots of different components known as the motherboard - see the photo. There are 2 large squares on the center of the motherboard. One of them is known as the RSX, this is the Nvidia Reality Synthesizer, this is the GPU, and responsible for creating the graphics. The other large square is the Cell Broadband Engine, the CPU and is responsible for the majority of processing on the PlayStation 3. CPUs and GPUs are the backbone of all gaming computers and consoles, and the

design of a console is primarily directed at one thing - how to keep these as cool as possible for as cheap as possible.

As the CPU and GPU perform their tasks they get hot, very hot, they can reach temperatures of up to 90 degrees celsius. The gray squares you see in the photo are the primary heat sink, the actual chips live underneath. There are various different layers of metal which all conduct heat and the design uses the fan to extract this heat from the inside of the machine. The heat is an unfortunate but necessary byproduct of intense computer



processing but it is damaging to electronics and prolonged overheating can cause problems with all sorts of computer components.

Causes

There is some debate as to the exact nature of the problem here. Sony has never officially talked about this problem. There are various reports and theories out there, it is most likely a number of different elements that have gone wrong to create this situation. Firstly there are reports that some of the chemicals used inside the

silicon chip are just not the right ratio or that they are poor quality both situations result in a final material with poor thermal properties. Secondly, the solder used is very cheap and again poor quality. Solder is the special metal which “glues” electronic components to the board. When you are producing millions of consoles every penny saved on poor quality solder adds up, especially when your console is already one of the most expensive ones ever. Lastly, there are reports that the cooling design and the fan used is not optimal and cannot

cool the system down sufficiently. None of these claims can be substantiated but these are the most popular working theories online. Whatever the direct cause, it appears that over the lifetime of the console the intense cycle of heating and cooling of the solder can cause it to crack, this solder is essential for creating a continuous electrical circuit between the chip and the board, so a crack can cause a break in the circuit and thus the YLOD.

As far as the PlayStation 3 Forever team goes Sam and Jon have managed 0 YLODs and Matt is brining up the numbers with an impressive 2 consoles contracting the problem. He must have been doing something wrong.

Many desperate PlayStation 3 owners resorted to ridiculous techniques to try and fix their consoles or at the very least get them running again, methods like putting the console in the oven or using a hairdryer to heat it up. These methods were never long term fixes, I suspect they 'worked' because they caused the console to heat up and expand ever so slightly so that the pins of the CPU would be in contact again. The hairdryer method worked for me just long enough to retrieve my copy of Enslaved so I could return it to Blockbuster without a fine.

Solutions

There are solutions to fix the issue, some better than others. Ideally the whole CPU or GPU would need to be desoldered and re-soldered in a process known as a "reball", a specialized process requiring tools and skills your average person won't possess and it is harder to find a repair shop that does this. An alternative process, a "reflow", seems to be the most common option, which uses targeted heating to melt the solder and let it cool and set hard again. Prevention, however, is the best cure, if your console is still functioning normally you can try and prevent the problem from happening by opening up your console and replacing the thermal paste (the original thermal paste was another low quality material), giving the whole console a good clean out from dust, and if you want to take things further you can even upgrade the heatsinks.

The Yellow Light of Death is a fascinating problem that upset many many gamers during this time leading to all kinds of irrational repair attempts. I don't think it was quite as common as Xbox's Red Ring of Death, but there is nothing more heart breaking than your console failing in this way especially when you consider how expensive they were to buy. Fortunately this type of large scale failure doesn't seem as common in modern gaming. The closest thing I can think of is the "joy-con drift" problem on the Nintendo Switch, which provided you have proof of purchase, Nintendo were fixing for free, in the UK at least. If any of you are still rocking your original PlayStation 3 consoles and have yet to succumb to the YLOD. I wish you and your PlayStation 3 good health and many more happy hours of gaming.

Top 10 Tips for the PlayStation 3 in 2025

Keeping the console alive for another year

10 Upgrade that Hard Drive

When the PlayStation 3 first launched you had two choices. A 40GB version and a whopping 60GB version. How could one possibly need more space than that you might ask? Well if you are seriously into the PlayStation 3 you will get through that in no time at all, and disk space is a lot cheaper than it used to be. You don't want to spend time managing your disk storage and for other reasons I outline below, you want a hard drive big enough for you not to worry about the future.

There are other reasons for wanting to upgrade that hard drive. Early models of the PlayStation 3 used rather cheap hard drives that are known to fail, a decent quality one can last much, much longer. Another advantage you can gain is

slightly faster loading times if you swap from a HDD to an SSD.

So I would recommend a 500GB, 2.5 inch SATA SSD, these can be picked up for around £30 which is a great price. The maximum size a PlayStation 3 can recognise is 1 TB so definitely don't go any higher than that. If you want to upgrade you can make use of the PlayStation 3's "Backup Facility", which lets you store crucial data to an external drive. The backup process can take hours depending on how much data you have so make sure you have ample time. Then once you have swapped in the new drive, you can use the Backup Restore feature to load the data from the external drive back onto the PlayStation 3.

9 Take a hit on resolution for better performance

The PlayStation 3 is capable of a 1080p output resolution. However there are many reports and findings that suggest limiting yourself to 720p will give you a small performance boost on some games. The PlayStation 3 doesn't have to work as hard if its outputting a lower resolution. If you

look at the back of your game boxes, you will find quite a lot of them can only do 720p anyway. Your mileage may vary on this, but if you value better framerates and less screen tearing, try going into the Display options in settings and dropping back to 720p.

8 Taking Advantage of Prices

I believe we have probably passed the bottom in prices for PlayStation 3 titles, the days when even the rarest of titles were in the bargain bin in supermarkets, but compared to other systems the games are still cheap. You can build a solid foundation for a collection on a number of cheap titles. Some PlayStation 3 exclusives are still cheap like Heavenly Sword and the Resistance

trilogy. But there are a number of titles which are already going for big numbers on eBay and other retro game market places. Games like Folklore and 3D Dot Game Heroes are quite pricey and their value does seem to only be going up, but it might be worth saving up for them now if those look like games that appeal to you.



7 Check Your PSN Downloads

If you have had a PlayStation account since the early days of the PlayStation 3, you might be surprised to find what lurks in your purchase history that you can still download from the PSN Store. All kinds of DLC, Wallpapers, Digital Games, soundtracks. Download them all and keep them on that large hard drive whilst you still have

access.

Just open the PS Store and click "View Downloads". I found treasures such as the MGS4 Database, a Wipeout HD Theme and Bionic Commando Rearmed.

6 Patch it!

I really hope you listened to the first step in investing in the hard drive as now the real work begins. Most PlayStation 3 games have patches. Some patches are trivial, some are incredibly important, like adding trophies and fixing game breaking bugs. Who knows how long PlayStation 3 servers will be around to serve up these

patches. So take every single game you own and put in the disc, start it up and make sure to download those patches whilst you still can. I have around 350 PlayStation 3 games and spent a good few weeks just ensuring every single game had all the patches installed.

5 Always Ready to Go

Another quirk that this generation of consoles introduced was installing the game to the hard drive. The games are too big and the disc read speed too slow to read everything on demand so most games require installation. Some games have very long installation times. Metal Gear Solid 4 requires all 5 chapters to be installed, which can take up to 30 minutes per chapter. Fortunately a later patch does allow you to pre-install the whole game from the menu. Whilst you are going

through your games to install the patches, take the opportunity to also install the game data so that whenever you want to pick up a game off the shelf and play it, it's ready waiting for you. This is also a good time to make sure any DLC you may have in the store links up correctly and is installed. Each game handles this process differently.

4 Keep It Cool

If you are fortunate enough to still own an original, or "FAT", model PlayStation 3, and you haven't already, it's time to perform some essential maintenance. Opening it up and cleaning it out is the bare minimum, but if you can, take the opportunity to replace the thermal paste and heat pads. There are many good guides online for this but if you aren't too confident you can also find local repair shops who may do it. This task is crucial for keeping the PlayStation 3 running cool which not only stops it from sounding like a Jumbo Jet is taking off in your living room, but it should also help prevent

the dreaded Yellow Light of Death.

The next thing to do, and this doesn't matter which version of the PlayStation 3 you have, is to ensure you keep it and the surrounding area dust free, and keep the console in a place where it can breathe. Don't keep it stuck in a bookcase or on top of another device. All PlayStation 3's run quite hot so make sure they have the space to keep it cool.

3 Multiple Controllers

The battery life of the PlayStation 3 controllers isn't what it used to be. Over time the maximum battery life decreases and you can't have those marathon sessions that you used to. Although as a father of two children, the battery life is not the thing holding me back. Ideally you'd have two controllers. One for playing and one on charge, ready in reserve, and when the playing controller runs out you can tag in the next one. A charging station can be picked up cheaply too which helps to make sure you keep on top of this.

Sadly, prices for genuine dualshock 3 controllers have rocketted. If you aren't too bothered about vibration, you might be able to pick up the original "six-axis" controller, for cheaper. There are some third party controllers out there and you can even use a PlayStation 4 controller, although reports about its compatibility are mixed. Be careful though, there are a ton of fake controllers out there too. Worst case, you can pick up a replacement battery for the controller and attempt a repair yourself.

2 Trophy Hunting

Fortunately we can still get trophies on the PlayStation 3 and the servers are still around to sync up so we can show off our trophy collections to the world. There are lots and lots of great PlayStation 3 games with trophy lists that still allow you to get Platinitums.

I do have another tip around trophy syncing. This is where you click the trophy menu from the settings and it syncs to the cloud. On the PlayStation 3 this process is rather slow and gets

worse the more trophies you have. But be patient, let it do its thing. I have found that if you try to back out whilst it's still loading it can freeze causing you to do a hard reset and once, I had to do a few too many hard resets and the trophy list was corrupted and I had to factory reset the console. I recommend only syncing the trophies if you have time and avoid opening the menu whilst you have a game running.

1 Keep it for Games

This one makes me sad to talk about because part of the PlayStation 3's great history is its ability to be a multimedia machine. I recommend keeping the PlayStation 3 solely for playing the games. If you still use it for Netflix, YouTube or BluRays there are loads of other options out there

for you, cheap options too. It's probably best to keep the stress down on your machine so that you can maximize the game time.

HITMAN™

ABSOLUTION

Agent 47 is Silent but Deadly

STEALTH

RELEASED 2012

A Hitman game is a special type of beast. It's practically a genre all by itself and being a fan of the series I really struggled to understand Hitman Absolution at first. It reviewed pretty well upon release, mostly getting between 7-9/10 across the board. How high the score seemed heavily dependent on how familiar you were with the previous entries on the PlayStation 2. Hitman

Absolution was the 5th Hitman game in the series, but the only mainline entry on the PlayStation 3, and the Hitman formula was well established by the previous entries. So to really understand some of the criticism of this game you really need to understand its predecessors and if you have never played a Hitman game before, I am going to do my best to describe the formula for you.

In a Hitman game you play as Agent 47, a bald-headed assassin who wears a nice suit. Typically a game will feature a small number of incredibly rich, sandbox levels where you will have to assassinate one or more targets. The core mechanic of the game is stealth, not action. Levels often feature hundreds of NPCs going about their daily business. For example Agent 47 could be called to assassinate a rich person hosting a big garden party in a country house estate. Upon arrival there is no immediate threat to you at all, you can just walk around and soak up the atmosphere. But as you progress through the level to find your targets you will often find there are areas that you cannot enter without raising suspicion. In our garden party example, you probably





cannot enter the house without raising the alarm, unless you are part of the catering team.

Another essential part of the Hitman formula is wearing disguises, you could take out a member of the catering team and wear their outfit which lets you into part of that house without suspicion. Then you still need to find your target, ideally get them isolated, work out how to kill them, how to hide the body, or perhaps interact with the environment to create a trap, assassinating them and making it look like an accident. As the game likes to remind you, how you do it is completely up to you and there are so, so many possibilities.

Hitman Moments

Hitman Absolution features a classic Hitman moment where you can activate a mixing desk to play music and the Police Officers you are trying to evade come and have a dance, freeing

up the corridor you need to escape. Very believable.

Typically a Hitman game does have weapons, in fact it often has a lot of weapons, you can find vantage points and snipe your enemies or use silenced weapons, but the games very much do not want you to go out all guns blazing, and if you find yourself in a shoot out, you don't usually manage to take out more than a few guards

before being gunned down yourself. You can race through these levels fairly quickly but the true joy of Hitman was mastering the levels, coming back and replaying them again and again trying to be the perfect assassin, and the game encourages this by giving you a bunch of challenges to try. It was, and still is, the pinnacle in emergent gameplay and it is incredibly impressive. The series was successful on PlayStation 2 but also kind of niche, and in the PlayStation 3 era we saw a real push towards commercialisation in a way we hadn't in the previous generations, so the formula for Hitman had to change.

There was a barrier in the old Hitman games that put off a lot of people. It was considered too repetitive and too trial and

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error. This was intentional, these games wanted you to experiment, “What happens if I press this lever?” or “What happens if I walk through this door?”, and sometimes you will get spotted and your cover is blown and as we discussed, fighting your way out was usually not an option so you’d often be reloading a save or starting again. If this wasn’t frustrating enough for some people there was also a lot of standing and waiting. If you have set up the perfect trap for your target you may just have to sit patiently and wait for them to walk to it. That’s enough about the original Hitman games for now.

A Change in Approach

Hitman Absolution attempts to address this “problem” and appeal to a wider audience. Their specific goal was to try and keep some of the original elements, but condense them to keep the pace of the game moving forward in small bites and to also give you a viable option to shoot your way through a level if things go wrong.

Hitman Absolution, on a departure from the original formula, is a more linear game, focused on a mixture of micro sandbox areas followed by



more linear A -> B sections, which still keep the same core mechanics, but aren’t focused on targets and are more focussed on escaping. There are a few sections early on where you are simply escaping the police in a series of sections that have a few interesting moments but overall these sections can drag and I think putting them at the start of the game was not a great idea.

It’s quite easy to find the deluxe professional edition box out there on the second hand market, but the vinyl figure of Agent 47 is quite pricey. This game is usually one of, if not the, lowest ranked Hitman games amongst fans, due to this change and reduction of complexity but I actually think they did a really good job at setting out exactly what they wanted to do. As a veteran of the Hitman series I did find this change to be quite difficult. I

wasn’t sure how to approach the game and everything I was doing felt difficult. Hitman can be like this sometimes, you really need to experiment and accept that you will just be learning for a little while.

As a Hitman enthusiast the new combat mechanics made the game a bit too easy, and I was even playing on Hard. I wanted a more traditional Hitman experience and tried to remain hidden, take out a small number of people and hide their bodies and try and find some interesting ways to take out targets. This approach can be slow, as it requires learning. But on some occasions when I got caught I decided I would start trying to shoot everyone and found I was able to dispatch a whole area fairly easily and then just move on. Whilst this isn’t my play style, this is exactly what the designers wanted. To give

people who wanted it, an ability to just move on.

How does it hold up?

Hitman Absolution still looks good on the PlayStation 3, being a relatively late title they had the time to optimize the game to work well. There are levels with an impressive number of NPCs all doing their thing and the graphics are decent too. All of this combined with a story that is really interesting in my opinion and told pretty well. The story does impact harder for fans of the series due to the characters, but it still works as an introduction and stand alone story for new players.

I think that Hitman Absolution is a really fantastic game. As a fan of the series I agree that some levels feel a bit small, but I can appreciate this as something different. It's like a kind of micro-Hitman, where you can engage with the fun aspects in smaller localized areas. I think it's also a really good entry point to the series because you can try and engage with the core Hitman mechanics of stealth and disguises, but if all goes wrong you do have a solid plan B. There are still a good number of challenges and difficulty settings that give you plenty to

do and experiment with. The game is also very cheap on the second hand market and well worth picking up whether you are a hardcore fan or not. If you have never played a Hitman before, start with this one, watch some video guides if you get a bit stuck and if you find you like the cycle of watching, learning, perfecting your play style, then you can also pick up

the Hitman HD Trilogy on PlayStation 3, which is a HD port of the PlayStation 2 games which are much more like the modern Hitman games also.





L.A. Noire

TROPHY HUNTER

This one has been on my "Games to Platinum" list for quite some time. LA Noire is a fantastic, quirky, open world detective game, set in the 1940s and first released in 2011 but most importantly for me, no online trophies!

I originally played the game back in 2011 but since lost my original save file and so I played it again in 2016. After having just beat the game I put it back on the shelf and decided the platinum would have to wait for another day. I had acquired quite a lot of the trophies during the first and second playthrough and the main trophies I had left were achieving a five star rating on all of the cases, finding all of the collectables and then a few

trophies relating to some random specific activities. It was time to don my detective hat and get going on finding some trophies.

Cases

SHAMUS TO THE STARS

Complete All Story Cases With A Five Star Rating

This is the trophy for getting

five stars on every case in the game. To obtain five-stars in a case you have to, pretty much, find every clue, get every question right in the interviews, and cause very little damage to vehicles and the city property. This is quite a time consuming trophy because for some people it will require you to replay every mission in the game and you'll likely need a guide as some of the questions



and answers are not that intuitive and you can easily go wrong. Fortunately for me I only had a handful of cases with which I didn't have five stars so, using an online guide I was able to get through these and they were a fun refresher. The only challenge I was finding was that some cases had a car chase in. This is tricky when you don't want to damage your vehicle and rack up the costs to avoid getting five stars so most of my pursuits were very leisurely, fortunately if you just tail the suspect they will usually spin out and crash, you don't have to ram them off the road. If you have a lot to do make sure you look at your other trophies as it makes sense to collect some vehicles and make sure you use all the guns as you play.

THE LONG ARM OF THE LAW Complete All Street Crime Case

The game has 40 very small cases called Street Crimes, you can respond to these whilst you are driving around the city either on a case or in free roam. I had done about half already and managed to work through them in the free roam sections. They are all really simple, usually just shoot a bunch of people or do a car chase. Occasionally you'd have a few on-foot chases which can

become a bit tedious but another simple trophy in the bag.

Collectables

HOLLYWOODLAND / STAR MAP

Find And Inspect All Gold Film Reels / Discover All Landmark Locations Around The City

These collectable trophies are for finding all 50 gold film reels hidden throughout the city and for finding the 30 landmarks. The landmarks are much easier as they are tracked on the map so you can easily see what you have done. The film reels are

much more tedious. Nothing for it but slowly working your way through them. This map is really great for following along. Whilst you are driving around collecting all the film reels, take the opportunity to find the hidden vehicles and to keep commandeering vehicles as one of the worst trophies in the game is to drive all 95 vehicles!

AUTO FANATIC

Drive Every Vehicle In The City

This is one of those trophies where you wonder why you bother to platinum games. Drive all 95 vehicles in the game. In the main menu there



exists a "Vehicle Showroom" which does keep track of the vehicles you have driven. But there is a problem, to our eyes all of these cars look so similar. It becomes really difficult to tell which cars you have been in and which you are looking for. At one point I caused a 20 car traffic jam and I just systematically commandeered every single car hoping that one of them was one I needed.

Fortunately there is a trick. If you go into the vehicle showroom and hover over a car you need and then go back into the free roam for the homicide, it will load that car in the car park opposite. It's fairly reliable. There are some great guides online but sadly, another tedious trophy.

Random Activities

ROSCOE AND FRIENDS

Kill At Least One Bad Guy With Every Gun

This is by far the worst trophy in my opinion. You have to kill an enemy with every weapon in the game and there are only 9 weapons, should be simple. Sadly there is no way to keep track of what you need and most of the weapons are buried in specific locations during specific cases. For example the flamethrower only appears a few times. So I found myself replaying lots of cases to get back to the weapons. But the cases are not easy to speed through, you still have to find clues and perform interviews to

progress the cases. If you are planning a run, make sure you do this during your 5-star cases run as it will save a lot of time.

All in all I reckon it took me about 10 hours to come back and platinum the game and I don't think I can recommend this one. If you are a big fan of the game, which I am, and you enjoy just driving around then you will have a good time. I was enjoying my time with the game for the most part but a few of the trophies are just plain annoying. So this platinum is definitely for LA Noire enthusiasts.



PlayTV

ACCESSORY

In the previous issue of PlayStation 3 forever we spoke about how the PlayStation 3 was extremely ambitious when it came to home entertainment. The system very much wanted to be your single home for gaming, movies, music and with this new device TV too.

P



layTV V was a digital tuner which turned your PlayStation 3 into a PVR (Personal Video Recorder). The device connects to the console through the USB port and then connects up to a normal TV aerial with the appropriate lead and then you can schedule programs to be recorded onto your PlayStation 3's hard drive

although if you had an early 40 or 60gb machine with lots of games, you would probably find yourself running out of space even quicker as recordings were large.

The box also came with a disc which installed the relevant software and gave you a guide as to how to use it. Also included in the box was a sticker overlay you could put onto your PlayStation 3 Blu Ray remote control, as this control

also functioned for navigating the TV guide and other normal TV functions.

To add even more functionality, if you had a

PSP you could set programs to record from your PSP and even download and transfer recordings to your PSP to watch outside of the home at your convenience.

The device was extremely simple but clever and worked very well. It could even bring



your console out of standby to record a show and put it back into standby when it was done.

Now I am sure many of you are thinking "How have I never heard of such a thing?" Well this device only came out in Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

This device was fantastic for me when it came out. I was the first of my family and friends who had the capacity to record TV and it opened up so much more for me. Looking back I do worry it contributed to the downfall of my first PlayStation 3. It was already heavily being used for games and movies and now it was turning itself on and off recording TV shows all day. This cannot have been good for its hard drive. The device still works today but I cannot see why you would really need it any more. It is definitely a relic of its era.

