

PlayStation 3 Forever

Folklore™

Mirror's Edge

Splinter Cell: Double Agent

The Curious Tale of Other OS

Christmas Quiz

& More

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Answers to the Christmas Quiz

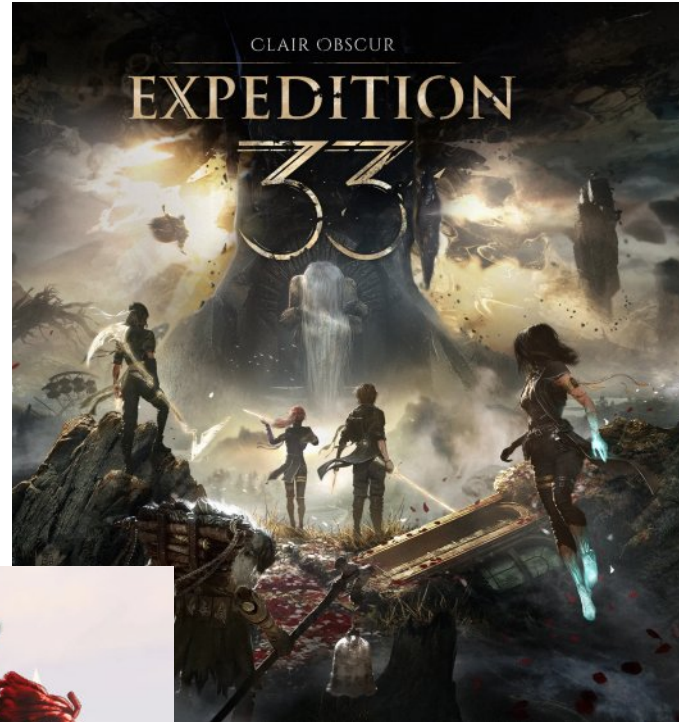
1. C, 2. B, 3. B, 4. C, 5. A, 6. A, 7. B, 8. B, 9. C, 10. A

Team Update

Matt


Editor

I've been busy playing some PlayStation 5 games for a change starting with **Clair Obscura: Expedition 3** after hearing such great things - and I have to say, the great things I heard were totally justified. I've also started **The Outer Worlds 2** - the first one was something I looked back fondly on. I've also still been chipping away at my first ever playthrough of **Final Fantasy IX** on the PlayStation Vita when I get a chance which I am absolutely loving.



Letter From The Editor

Games for Christmas



Greetings PlayStation 3 fans. It's Christmas again, a time I know that many of us associate with gaming. Whether it's having nothing else to do but spend those dark, cold nights inside playing a game, opening that new gaming console on Christmas Day and setting it up on the big TV, or perhaps playing a family game like **Buzz** and having arguments about who has the dodgy controller.

I remember Christmas 2008. I was fortunate enough to get **Quantum of Solace** and **Fallout 3** for my PlayStation 3. I spent the whole of Boxing Day (the day after Christmas Day in the UK) playing **Quantum of Solace** in particular - I think I had decided it would be easier to get the short shooter game 'out of the way' so I would have more time for **Fallout 3** later, which I knew would be much longer.

Occasionally, I still get PlayStation 3 games for Christmas from my family members, but it gets harder every year now that they can only

purchase them on eBay and have to check my spreadsheet to ensure it isn't one of the 324 PlayStation 3 games I already own.

I am still on the lookout for what I call a Christmas Game. Most of us have a movie or two that we try and watch every Christmas as part of a tradition, and I feel like there should be something similar for games, but I need one short enough that I can fit it around work, family, and the general busy-ness that this time of year creates. Something snowy like **Skyrim** comes to mind, but it's way too long to completely comfortably. So perhaps a game like **Lost Planet**, which is short and snowy, but perhaps the central gameplay of fighting aliens doesn't feel all that Christmassy.

If you have any suggestions on 'Christmas Games' or want to share your gaming christmas traditions, please follow us on our socials or send us an email. See you all next year!

contact@playstation3forever.com.



For the past ten years, I don't think I have seen a 'PlayStation 3 Hidden Gems' list that does not contain Folklore. I'd say it is the quintessential hidden gem for the console.

It is a complete PlayStation 3 exclusive, no remaster, no re-release on later consoles, and not even a digital version on the PlayStation 3 store. The only way to play it is with a physical copy, and as such, those demand high prices. It's been a long time coming for me to try this one, and I want to know if it is worth all the hype and cost?

After the initial install and boot-up of Folklore, I have to say I was impressed. For an early PlayStation 3 title (being released in 2007), it is remarkably well polished. It runs well without too much stuttering, loading times are decent, the FMVs are really nice, and the menus and overall design are very charming. I did notice if you navigate the menu, there is an option to install the game data, which reduces loading times even more, so if you pick this up, definitely do that step. Folklore is a game of two

halves. Half detective story/visual novel and half fantasy action. I have always enjoyed games that have such a clear 50/50 split; some of my other favourites are Persona and Catherine, where there are natural break points in the gameplay to swap between fighting and exploring. It really helps to break it up and prevents the gameplay from getting too repetitive or stale.

The game is set in a remote, coastal Irish village called Doolin. Your two characters are brought to this mysterious



The exploration part of the game has you explore the village and speak to the residents.

place, which is said to have connections to the realm of the dead. Whilst in Doolin, the gameplay takes the form of this detective/visual novel style. You walk around, talk to people, look for items, and explore. I quite enjoy these sections; it's fun to explore the village and begin to try and unravel the mystery about what is going on here.

The story is told through a mixture of a small number of pre-rendered FMVs, which are voice-acted, comic-book-style images with text, and then really simple text-based dialogue interaction.

The main bulk of the game, however, takes place in the fantasy realm of the dead—the Netherworld—where you fight monsters using... other monsters. It **reminds me a lot**

of The Legend of Zelda:

Echoes of Wisdom, which I played recently, where Zelda can absorb monsters and items and then re-create them at will to solve puzzles and fight other monsters. In Folklore, you fight monsters using monsters that you have previously captured and can summon for later use.

The system works well, and in a lot of ways, navigating the big list of monsters and assigning them to buttons works better

than *Echoes of Wisdom* - released more than 15 years later. You can even save groups of monsters that work well together to let you swap between sets quickly.

The combat is basic, but it is amplified by a weakness mechanic. A lot of enemies are invulnerable to attacks from certain monsters, so you have to learn the weaknesses and use the right type of monsters for each fight. These weaknesses can be learnt by trial and error, but they are also discoverable through the Faery compendium. As you progress through the game, you collect pages from this book, which show you pictures - not words. The pictures take some interpretation, but they show you enemy weaknesses if you can manage to decipher them. This is such a great design; instead of simply telling you



The design of the monsters is fantastic.



Some of the bigger "folk" are more like mini boss battles.

what they are weak to, like many games would, they allow the player to work it out, giving you this extra sense of achievement.

I was quite impressed with the tutorial system. A game of this age is right in that spot where some games really started to put an effort in creating decent tutorials, and some still did not. I'd say Folklore handles it well by making the tutorials optional; you can talk to some Faerys early on who provide you with more information if you need it, and they pop up a lot where you can check in from time to time. But this also prevents the game from being too heavy-handed to get going.

The Netherworld is split up into seven different realms, each with its own unique theme and monsters - it's quite creative, albeit a bit jarring in places. The first realm is a more typical folky woodland realm, and the next is essentially a modern war battleground.

Folklore has two main characters: Ellen, a university student, and Keats, a journalist, and you get to play through the game as both characters. Each character has their own story, although they criss-cross throughout the game; the game gives you quite a lot of flexibility in deciding which order you wish to do these levels. Do you do all of Ellen's

followed by all of Keats? Or alternate between them? Choices like this really help prolong those play sessions as you don't get as tired when you have the option to mix it up.

I also have to bring up the **wonderful soundtrack**. In Japan, the game got a three-CD box set called FolksSouls (the name the game released under in Japan). I really wish I could find a physical copy of it, but the only one I could find was listed on Amazon for £85, so perhaps not at that price.

My biggest problem with the game is the use of the six-axis. As an early, first-party game, you can be assured they had to



Keats

Keats, a reporter for an occult magazine, is drawn to the village after he receives a mysterious phone call.

Ellen

Ellen is a 22-year-old student who is called to the village after receiving a mysterious letter from her dead mother.



make use of the six-axis. The monsters don't let you catch them without a fight. Once weakened, you have to physically jerk the controller up and towards you to capture them, and some of the other monsters also need some other six-axis interactions. It works

OK, but personally, I still don't like it. It just kind of stalls the gameplay a bit for me, and I wish you could turn it off.

Folklore also has a bunch of extra DLC. At the time of writing, a bunch of extra packs can be purchased from the PS

Store for free, with a few extras requiring payment. For PlayStation 3 completionists, it's almost certainly worth going through the effort to acquire these now whilst you still can.

Overall Folklore is a really fun game. It is a unique experience and when collecting for an old console, exclusive titles with unique experiences are usually what it's all about. I think the game can grow a bit stale as it unfolds and the gameplay doesn't have too much depth but I personally found it to be very charming.

In the UK at least, the cost isn't too bad - you can **pick up the game for around £40-50** which is steep for an old game but comparable to modern releases at least. If you are a serious PlayStation 3 enthusiast and you like quirky Japanese games I would definitely recommend checking out this title.



Mirror's Edge

Stylish, slick and performs fantastically on the PlayStation 3

ACTION PLATFORMER

RELEASED 2008



In the early 2000s, DICE was knocking out successful games in the Battlefield series of first-person shooters, yet for some reason, they decided to take a huge gamble and go all in on releasing their next game — a parkour simulator.

I'm not exactly sure where it started, but putting parkour (or free-running as it's sometimes known) into pretty much everything seemed rampant in the mid-2000s. The opening sequence of the James Bond film *Casino Royale*, released in

2006, is one that sticks in my mind, and *Mirror's Edge* would be the video game embodiment of this trend.

Mirror's Edge was released late in 2008 to positive reviews. It was a real breath of fresh air into what had become a bit of a beige catalogue of AAA games. *Mirror's Edge* offered a shiny, bright, and colorful world where combat was a secondary objective for a change, and pure speed-based platforming took centre stage.

Skill Based Controls

Upon replaying it, I do find so much satisfaction in the platforming mechanics. I find a lot of modern platformers are almost too easy - many jumps are well indicated and have almost magnetic light attraction to the nearest handhold— but here everything feels more analogue and variable. This creates the perfect landscape for a skills-based game - it's very easy to get going and get through the game, but if you take the time

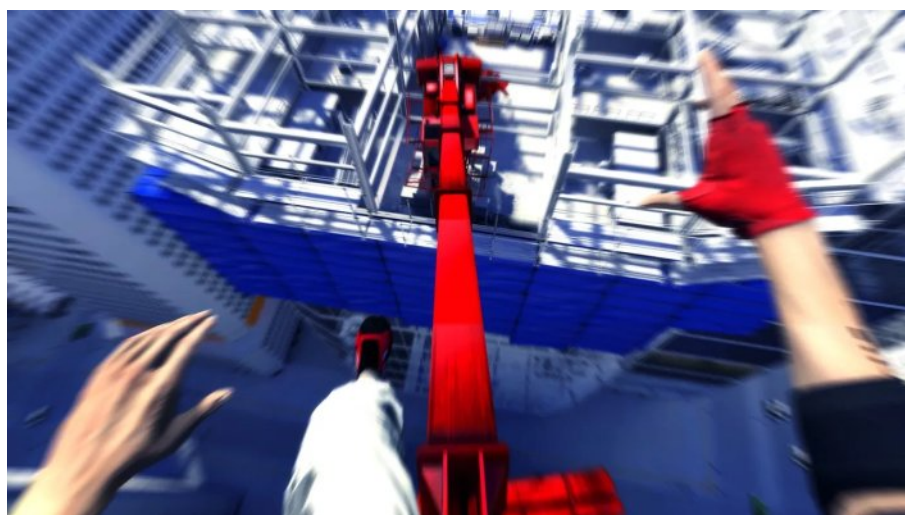


to master the controls and really embrace your creativity with the environment, there is a great depth to discover, and this is something you need to explore if you tackle the time trials.

I know that whilst this game is impressive, the gameplay is not for everyone. It can feel very trial and error, and I definitely got stuck in a number of places where I just didn't know which way to go and what jumps were available to me. Combat in particular is a tricky one. I would say the game largely discourages you from using it, but then there are sections in which it is most definitely mandatory. One part of combat requires you getting close enough to an enemy for them to try and hit you, so that you can counter and steal their weapon. There is a slo-mo you can activate to help you get the timing on the counter. Without

that, it is extremely difficult, as one or two hits and you are dead. There were times where I kept dying and I just had to put the game down out of frustration, but it wasn't long before it called to me again and I wanted to give it another go. Even when I am falling to my death over and over again, the audible crunch Faith makes when she falls off onto the ground below is funny enough to keep my spirits high for a surprisingly long time.

I was also very impressed at just how good the game played on



the PlayStation 3 in particular. We have talked at length about how a lot of games were just not optimized for the PlayStation 3 and sometimes ran worse than the Xbox 360 version. There are definitely a lot of better ways to play this game today, and it is a game which really does benefit from being played on a more powerful modern machine, but all of that being said, it still works very well on the PlayStation 3. The load times are fast - which is extremely important as you will die - a lot, the visuals are incredibly impressive for the machine, and the extremely bold and over-saturated color palette is such a breath of fresh air when lined up against the rest of the PlayStation 3 catalogue.

Technical Achievement

As I played through the game, I tried to put my finger on just

how this game manages to achieve it. The game is actually taking place in relatively small local locations, either rooftops or fairly small inside locations. The city streets below you and the buildings in the distance can get away with being fairly low resolutions, and actually, the lower resolution of these actually makes it feel more realistic. There also isn't a lot of movement of scenery or players. It's just the camera of the player that is moving for the most part; this definitely saves on some memory and CPU.



that the story and world-building are really great and help complete the game as a well-rounded world.

I believe the smaller sections where the player dips into a building and runs through unremarkable corridors are likely small but interactive loading scenes to mask the loading of small outside areas, and of course, the game makes use of the classic hidden loading screen - the elevator. I believe a lot of the lighting effects were done using new techniques above and beyond what were offered by the physics engine and this helped them achieve the visual style whilst using less memory. The bright and overly saturated color palette also can mask less detailed textures, and the modern city in general is designed in such a way to prioritize sleek design so it all fits. It is the perfect example of designing your whole game around your technical constraints. That being said, these are small tricks that may well help but the real credit should go to the team for their sheer skill in solving these technical problems.

I won't go into too much detail about the entire game, as it's well-documented at this point. I suspect you're familiar with it, whether you're a fan or not. However, I do want to briefly mention

Mirror's Edge does have trophy support, and looking at the list is as far as my Platinum journey with the game goes. You really need to master the controls to get this Platinum, and I think that is a fair challenge that this game deserves. You have to beat the game on Hard mode, do all of the time trials, and finally the speedruns. These require you to know the levels inside out and have that mastery over all of the controls in order to execute it perfectly. These are for real hard-core fans, as that sounds like an awful lot of trial and error to me.

Mirror's Edge really was a lightning-in-a-bottle moment for video games. It perfectly captured that free-running modern trend and combined it with this really unique and innovative gameplay that wasn't like anything we had seen before, all set in a well-crafted world with memorable characters. There are definitely better ways to play this game in 2025, but the PlayStation 3 version is extremely cheap to get hold of, so if this is your only option, it is still worth looking at.

The Curious Tale of OtherOS

From Supercomputers to Lawsuits



At PlayStation 3 Forever, we are constantly talking about the unusual features of our beloved system, and it doesn't get more unusual than for a console to allow you to install your own operating system.

Other OS

Sony's support for allowing other operating systems to run on their consoles actually goes back to the PlayStation 2 with the release of Linux for

PlayStation 2. It came with a disc in the usual PlayStation 2 case, which contained a suitably prepared Linux distribution, plus a hard drive on which you would install your operating system and keep your files.

When it came to the PlayStation 3, Sony no longer needed to sell this as a separate disc; the machine already came

with a hard drive, so they simply provided the OtherOS feature from the settings menu. Before proceeding with an install, you would need to download a Linux distribution from the internet and either burn it to a CD or put it on a USB stick, which you would then insert into the PlayStation 3. You'd then select the OtherOS feature and follow the instructions to create a dual-boot, where half

Operating System Linux

An operating system is the base layer software that interacts and manages the hardware and allows you to run the programs you want to. On desktop computers, this is often Windows or perhaps MacOS, but modern video game consoles also have their own bespoke operating system, which is the layer between the game and the underlying hardware.

Linux is a type of operating system. Linux is a little bit confusing as it comes in many different 'flavors'. Popular ones are Ubuntu, Fedora, and Debian, but they are all very similar in underlying behavior. Linux operating systems are mostly free and open source and, for that reason, are very commonly used by technology companies. Although progress has been made, most Linux operating systems still have a reputation for not being quite as user-friendly as the other big operating systems.

of the hard drive was partitioned for the PlayStation 3 and the other half for your new Linux computer.

Once installed, your PlayStation 3 was now a functioning Linux machine, and with the ability to plug in a USB mouse and keyboard, you could create documents, run programs, and browse the web.

Hacking

There might have been a reason that other console developers didn't usually support this type of feature. The problem with allowing your customers to install their own operating system on a machine means they can often get deeper into the hardware than perhaps you would like. Sony

had implemented certain restraints on the PlayStation 2 and 3. They had attempted to lock down certain parts of the hardware to prevent you from copying discs, evading region locking, or circumventing a number of the different security and privacy mechanisms they were both obliged to and desired to implement. But once Pandora's Box is open, it can be very hard to close it, and the

collective intelligence of the community was able to bypass most of these over the coming years.

Purpose

So why did Sony add this ability given the potential for problems? It was hardly a mainstream feature; I can't imagine many people bought the system specifically for this





reason (although we will see some later). Well, there is a popular online theory which does at least seem to hold some truth.

Linux for PlayStation 2 was released in 2002, about two years after the system's release. Around this time, both Europe and Japan were applying less tax, in various forms, to computers than to video game consoles, and Sony had gone to court in an attempt to get the PlayStation 2 reclassified as a computer, which would result in a tax rebate of over £30 million, but the case was rejected.

It is possible that Sony developed Linux for the

PlayStation 2 in advance specifically to try and bolster their claim and have some tangible proof by showing the PlayStation 2 was a computer by the sheer definition of allowing a hard drive and a different operating system to run on it.

It's plausible that Sony launched with the OtherOS feature for precisely the same reason. You could even make the argument that PlayStation 3's entire positioning in the market at launch as a multi-purpose, multi-media computer was to really push hard on this classification issue to make sure they didn't miss out like they did with the PlayStation 2, and it might also

explain why in 2010, after the removal of the OtherOS feature, they decided to give up on this avenue and go "all-in" on when they re-branded the machine much more towards video games.

PS3 Original Box art.

The original box for the PlayStation 3 was definitely not as gaming focussed as others but it hardly resembled a computer either.

Personally, I have a hard time believing the entire positioning of the console would have been for that classification reason and I cannot find any evidence to suggest that they even did attempt to be classified as a computer when it came to the PlayStation 3. If we take a less cynical view and assess the feature on its own merits, it's possible if you were a teenager or young adult who didn't have a laptop or computer in your bedroom, installing Linux on your PlayStation 3 could give you that computer in your bedroom, and perhaps you could learn to make video games by getting involved in the homebrew scene.

Performance

Reports vary from place to place as to whether running Linux on the PlayStation 3 was even that

useful. Ultimately, I believe that the PlayStation 3's unique architecture probably made it a fairly poor general-purpose computer when a standard Linux distribution was installed on it. The PlayStation 3 was not a powerful machine for general-purpose activities as it had limited RAM, and most of its power would not likely be used by most of the applications you could run on Linux.

Supercomputer

It is well known that the US Air Force purchased around 1,760 PlayStation 3 consoles and linked them together to form a supercomputer cluster. It is quite common for consoles to be sold for less money than it takes to buy the components and assemble them, the theory being you can easily make your money back on the sales of the video game software later, which is often more profitable. This cheaper than market price, combined with the ability to run your own operating system and the unique architecture which specializes in parallel number crunching, meant it was an extremely attractive prospect when deciding how to build your next supercomputer. (See this article for more information on the PlayStation 3 supercomputer [https://](https://www.warhistoryonline.com/war-articles/ps3-supercomputer.html)

www.warhistoryonline.com/war-articles/ps3-supercomputer.html)

University departments also made use of the cheap number crunching capabilities with a number of them opting to build their own clusters too. A fascinating research paper (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11227-012-0814-6>) explains in detail a method for configuring them and performing calculations. They used a total of 9 consoles to demonstrate different techniques for calculating many digits of pi; if they can make a decent supercomputer with 9, and the US Air Force had over 1700, you can only imagine the difference in scale of simulations. I myself have 4 working PlayStation 3s in my house, so I like to think I am

about halfway there to owning my own supercomputer cluster.

Removal of OtherOS

When the PlayStation 3 Slim was in development, Sony decided the newer models would not support the OtherOS feature. The time had come for them to stop selling consoles at a loss, perhaps rein back on some of the wild features and put the focus back onto gaming. But initially there was no plan to remove the feature for the models that already supported it.

Then came firmware update 3.21 released in 2010 which would signal the end of OtherOS. Sony simply cited "Security concerns". What exactly these concerns are is unknown, but I can speculate a



The PlayStation 3 supercomputer

[<https://www.warhistoryonline.com/war-articles/ps3-supercomputer.html>]

Settings > System Settings > Install Other OS



Install Other OS

This feature is not available on the CECH-2000 series systems.



Install other system software on the hard disk. For information on types of compatible system software and obtaining the installer, visit [Open Platform for PlayStation®3](#).

Notices

- Do not turn off the PS3™ system or remove the disc or storage media during installation. Doing so may cause damage to the system software.
- During this operation, the power button on the system front and the PS button on the wireless controller are not active.

1. Insert the disc or storage media that contains the installer in the system.
2. Select  (Settings) >  (System Settings).
3. Select [Install Other OS].
The system searches for the installer. When the installer is found, its content and location will be displayed.
4. Check the contents of the installer, and then select [Start].
After the installer has been checked, installation will start automatically.

Hints

- To start the newly installed system software, go to  (Settings) >  (System Settings) > [Default System], and then select [Other OS] to restart the system.
- An appropriate USB adaptor (not included) is required to use storage media with some models of the PS3™ system.

Settings > System Settings > Install Other OS

few reasons such as possibly trying to prevent users from jailbreaking consoles through exploits in this feature or simply to protect its users, as if the user installs their own operating system they then become liable for configuring it properly and keeping it up to date with the latest security patches, and there might be a grey area here in responsibilities.

The removal of this feature sparked a class action lawsuit against Sony with some users claiming that the OtherOS feature was a reason they purchased the system in the

first place and others who were already using it felt it was unfair that they would have to remove it to get the latest updates. After much back and forth in court, Sony did eventually agree to settle with customers who were affected by this change. Customers who could prove they actively used the feature could claim \$55 and those who had proof of purchase and possibly with some intent they wanted to use the feature could claim \$9.

Full Circle

If the theory that Sony intentionally added the

OtherOS feature to ensure they were classified as a computer instead of a video game console and thus save money by paying less tax, then how funny it is to come full circle on the issue and potentially pay all that money back due to a class action lawsuit following the removal of said feature. The journey of the OtherOS feature is another fascinating tale in the history of the PlayStation 3. Another story of the console who dared to do something radical and push the boundaries of what it was. I don't think we'll see another video game console be turned into a supercomputer again.

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Why the PlayStation 3

A controversial console?

Matt

I am often asked, Why, out of all the consoles in the world, have you decided to make a magazine about the PlayStation 3? and it's a pretty fair question.

The console clearly has a lot of flaws. If you look at a lot of online forums, people are quite dismissive of the PlayStation 3; they see it as a console that failed and underperformed, and I see posts about how many of the cross-platform games, the PlayStation 3 versions, are the worst. To be honest, they are mostly right, but that doesn't really matter to me.

It is clear that the first half of the PlayStation 3's journey was rough; the price was extortionate, and the library of exclusive games was not stacking up against its competitors. Whilst fans of the Xbox 360 were already getting stuck in with the console-defining Gears of War in 2006, the PlayStation 3 was only just launching. It was also quite common in the earlier days of the system to find that PlayStation 3 gamers had to wait longer for cross-platform games to come out for their machine due to the added complexity developers had to tackle when porting to the PlayStation 3's unique architecture.

Sony appeared to drop the ball ever so slightly on gaming by focusing on the system's multi-media

capabilities. But the system's focus as an all-in-one entertainment system is one of the key reasons why I like it. It was so overly ambitious, the early 60 GB model is probably still up there in the list of machines with the highest number of capabilities. It could play CDs, DVDs, Blu-Rays, SACDs (a Sony proprietary format) plus tons of digital file formats too. This was the era when digital videos on computers started to become more common and copying files to and from the machine was quite the novelty. Not forgetting that early model also played PlayStation 1 and 2 games natively with onboard hardware and allowed you to manage virtual memory cards - you could even copy save files from your old memory cards using an adapter. The Xbox 360 also had a lot of similar functionality but the PlayStation 3 just took it to that extreme.

I do think the PlayStation 3's overall story from rough beginnings to completely rebranding itself with the launch of the PlayStation 3 slim is just fascinating and this is another of the reasons I am drawn to it and want to learn and write about it, and I think that this transformation paved the way for a lot of what came in the generation that followed.

The next big reason I like it is it was just the console that was there for me at my formative

time. I played games quite a lot as a child, but it wasn't until my late teens and early twenties that I really started to define myself as a gamer and I became obsessed. I think the cinematic storytelling that started to come out at this time just really struck me and I felt that gaming was offering me experiences that TV and film just couldn't match. I started renting new PlayStation 3 titles weekly from Blockbuster and racked up hundreds of titles in my time with the console. This was also when I first started writing about games because I was finding the experiences so profound that I just had to get my thoughts down in digital ink.

All About the Games

Finally, what other reason is there to like a console than for its library of games? The PlayStation 3 has a large variety of games. They are also quite cheap and often in good condition. The smaller Blu-ray cases seem quite sturdy compared to the flappier DVD cases, and the discs are much more scratch-resistant than DVD-based ones.

The library is full of short and sweet titles that are cinematic and exciting and that allow for multiple playthroughs. Just a few short issues ago, I wrote about the Uncharted trilogy and needed to play through a bit of each game, but I



Video > Types of files that can be played

Types of files that can be played

The following types of files can be played under  (Video).

- Memory Stick Video Format
 - MPEG-4 SP (AAC LC)
 - H.264/MPEG-4 AVC High Profile (AAC LC)
 - MPEG-2 TS(H.264/MPEG-4 AVC, AAC LC)
- MP4 file format
 - H.264/MPEG-4 AVC High Profile (AAC LC)
- MPEG-1 (MPEG Audio Layer 2)
- MPEG-2 PS (MPEG2 Audio Layer 2, AAC LC, AC3(Dolby Digital), LPCM)
- MPEG-2 TS(MPEG2 Audio Layer 2, AC3(Dolby Digital), AAC LC)
- MPEG-2 TS(H.264/MPEG-4 AVC, AAC LC)
- AVI
 - Motion JPEG (Linear PCM)
 - Motion JPEG (μ -Law)
- AVCHD (.m2ts / .mts)
- DivX
- WMV
 - VC-1(WMA Standard V2)

Hints

- Depending on the data type, some files may not be playable or some control panel options may not function during playback.
- Some video files distributed over the Internet have playback restrictions. For details, contact the content provider.
- To play WMV format files, you must go to  (Settings) >  (System Settings) and set [Enable WMA Playback].
- When using a USB adaptor to play video files, you may need to use a USB adaptor (not included) that supports copyright-protection features (to play copyright-protected files).

became so enthralled with Uncharted 2 that I just played the entire thing. It's short, action-packed and totally stands the test of time. Admittedly, I picked a particularly strong title as an example, but my point is the system has loads of such games that make it easy to keep coming back to.

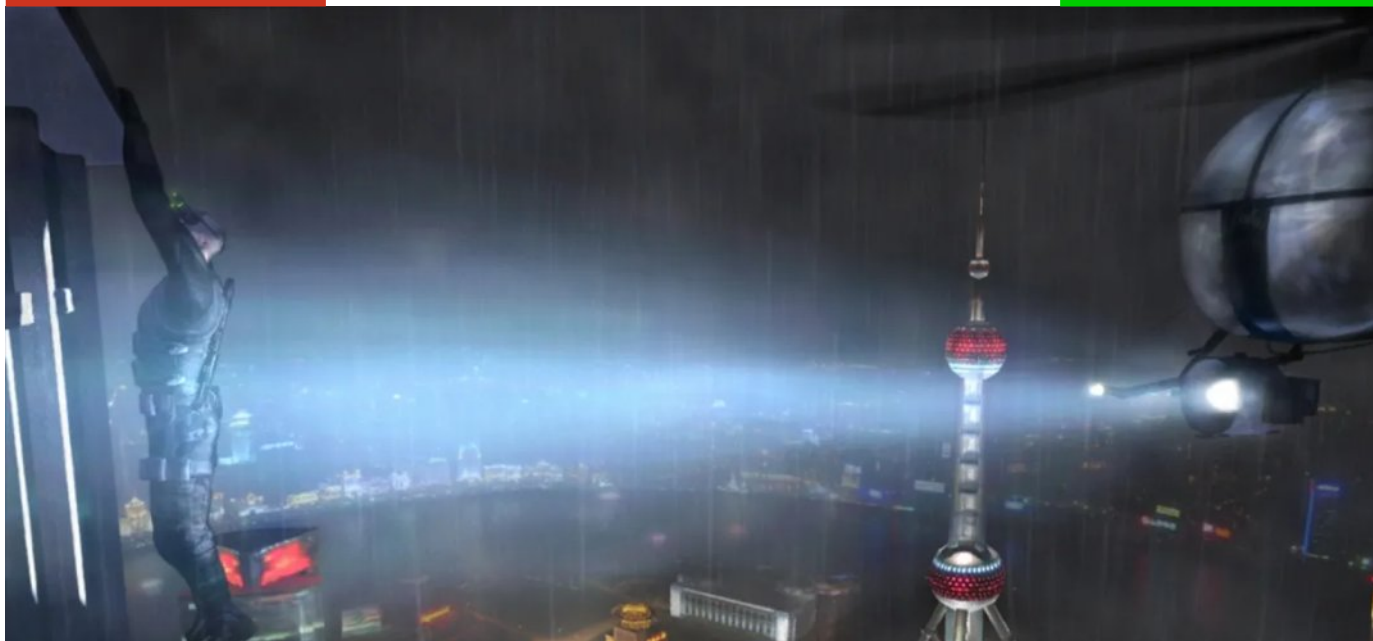
Part of the reason I started this magazine was to document my journey exploring the rich catalogue of PlayStation 3 games and to replay lots of the old games that I loved when I was younger. If you have read this far, I am guessing you are a big fan of the system too, so please get in touch on social media or email and let us know what you love about the fascinating PlayStation 3.

Splinter Cell: Double Agent

Intriguing concept that didn't quite fully execute

STEALTH ACTION

RELEASED 2007



As a life long Metal Gear Solid fan, the Splinter Cell series is one which I have always been meaning to get into. It is often recommended on lists like: "If you like Metal Gear Solid... try this". But I did not own an original Xbox at the time of Splinter Cell's original release. Many years later I eventually acquired them and enjoyed them. I also have the Splinter Cell HD Collection for the PlayStation 3 but unfortunately it is a terrible port of the games and they do not run very well at all.

With the success of the original Splinter Cell in 2002, Ubisoft started the conveyor belt on producing as many sequels and spin offs as they could. In 2004 we got a direct sequel Pandora Tomorrow, which was quickly followed up in 2005 with Chaos Theory and, without wanting to break a trend, we got Double Agent in 2006. It always blows my mind at how fast they were producing sequels in this era of gaming.

Splinter Cell Double Agent had two different versions to accommodate the release of

the game across Xbox, PS2, GameCube, Will, Xbox 360, PS3 and the PC as well. As is so often the way in the early days of the PlayStation 3, that version was released last, in 2007, presumably because of the issues of dealing with porting the game to the cell architecture.

For a series that, at the time, was often compared with the Metal Gear Solid series I did notice the opening of this game shared some similarities. It starts with Sam Fisher in a plane in his tactical gear ready



to jump off, similar to the opening events of Metal Gear Solid 3, you are dropped into the sea where you infiltrate a military base wearing a diving suit - not too far removed from Snake in Metal Gear Solid 1.

However these comparisons that I was thinking about were not great for Double Agent as I felt Metal Gear Solid 3, released a few years earlier but for the PlayStation 2, both looked and played much better than the opening of Double Agent.

Graphical Issues

The graphics are not great. They do get a bit more tolerable later in the game, I don't think the dark and murky opening level quite does the game any favors, but the textures seem to be to be quite low resolution and there is an overall lack of polish. I will say if the developers favored performance over graphics then they made the right choice as performance in

these stealth games is key and for the most part that works quite well. But there are many segments where I do feel like I am

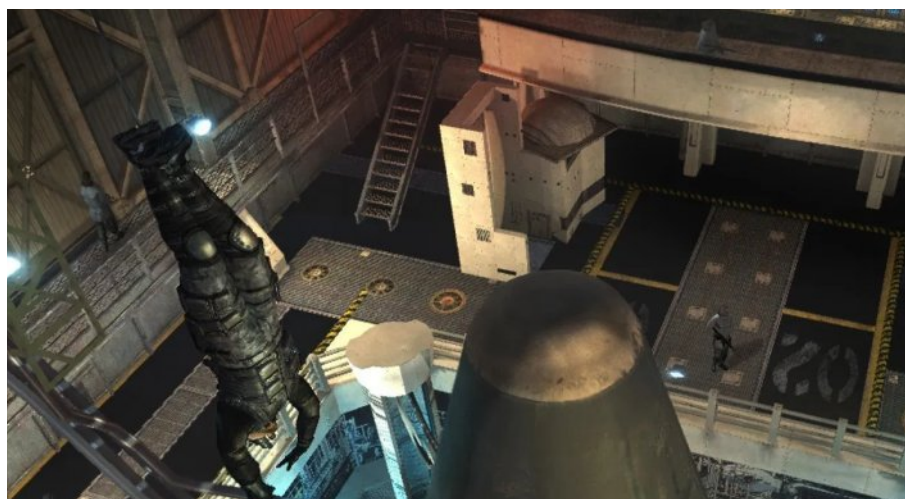
playing a PlayStation 2 game on the PlayStation 3. The other review for this issue, Mirror's Edge, released at a similar time, looks much more impressive.

Being a bit of a stealth veteran and enthusiast, I started the game on Hard mode and I am happy to admit, this was a terrible choice for me. On Hard mode you are discovered very quickly and killed even faster, it turned the game into a much more trial and error play style where I felt your stealth approach had to be pretty much perfect or you would be spotted and killed. This may be OK for some, but restarting the

game on Normal created a much more enjoyable experience for me.

Once you get through the opening tutorial level, the core mechanic of the game is introduced. As the game title implies, Sam, who is an agent for the NSA, goes undercover to work for a criminal gang. During the whole game you have two "Trust Meters". One for the NSA and one for JBA, the criminal group you are working with. The actions and choices you make in the game affect both meters and you have to decide how to balance it. There are certain actions in the game where the choice is a direct conflict between the two. If you decide option A, the NSA will lose trust in you, option B the JBA will lose trust in you.

So it's up to you to balance these out and make the right choices. In the third mission you are hit with, what I felt was, a





pretty tough choice straight away and there were many more tough choices to come. The way you balance these out has impacts on the story and the overall end which is fun too.

Suprising Mechanics

I was particularly impressed early on when a character wanted Sam to follow him, and when I decided I wouldn't and I would go and explore instead, the trust meter immediately started to dip and the character started getting angry that Sam was not complying.

A lot of games that feature choices like these do so with fairly binary choices that are often presented in a dialogue choice or press X or press O. But here all the choices are in-game, it's about which primary and secondary objectives you decide to go for and how you

go about doing them.

The levels have a good handful of options when you consider how you want to play it. Objectives are usually non-linear and you can go about them in any order, and areas have lots of hidden passages, locked doors, grates and other things to interact with and find different ways around. There are also tons of equipment and items to play with.

This game did release with an online multiplayer which is no longer functioning and the game never got a patch for trophies but the Xbox 360 version does have achievements, so it's a real shame we never got any.

Looking online, there doesn't appear to be a lot of love for this game in the Splinter Cell community. I think perhaps it

doesn't quite play like a regular Splinter Cell game, it almost plays more like a Hitman game (which is not necessarily a bad thing). That accompanied with some poor performance and graphics is probably what let's it down. As someone who was not

a die-hard fan of the original Splinter Cell games, this didn't put me off and the central trust mechanic was a really interesting idea.

Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Double Agent is a definite departure from the series' typical formula. I personally think the trust system is rather unique and interesting and the game has a ton of different mechanics to engage in. There are moments where the gameplay can be a bit clunky, and areas where it feels like this is a PlayStation 2 game with some PlayStation 3 elements. I wouldn't strongly recommend this one, but it is fairly cheap, so if you have run out of Hitman and other stealth games on the PlayStation 3, this is definitely one to consider trying out.

Christmas Quiz

Test your knowledge

Who doesn't like a nice quiz for Christmas? Test your PlayStation 3 knowledge and let us know how you do on BlueSky @PS3Forever.

1. WHAT IS THE CPU CHIP IN THE PS3 KNOWN AS?

- A) Emotion Engine
- B) Reality Co-Processor
- C) The Cell Processor

2. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WAS AN OFFICIAL LAUNCH TITLE FOR THE CONSOLE?

- A) Uncharted
- B) Genji: Days of the Blade
- C) LittleBigPlanet

3. HOW MANY USB PORTS DID THE 60 GB VERSION OF THE CONSOLE HAVE?

- A) Two
- B) Four
- C) Six

4. WHICH IS THE ONLY MODEL OF THE CONSOLE TO OFFER A 12 GB VERSION?

- A) Original (Fat)
- B) Slim
- C) Super Slim

5. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS NOT A CHARACTER IN PLAYSTATION ALL-STARS?

- A) Lara Croft
- B) Fat Princess
- C) Raiden

6. IN THE RESISTANCE SERIES WHAT ARE THE ALIEN SPECIES KNOWN AS?

- A) Chimera
- B) Infected
- C) Akrid

7. WHICH PLAYSTATION 3 GAME WAS MOST ASSOCIATED WITH THE PHRASE "GIANT ENEMY CRAB"?

- A) Lair
- B) Genji: Days of the Blade
- C) Legendary

8. IN THE LAST OF US WHAT IS THE NAME OF JOEL'S DAUGHTER?

- A) Ellie
- B) Sarah
- C) Bella

9. WHO IS THE PROTAGONIST OF THE INFAMOUS GAME?

- A) Alex Mercer
- B) Isaac Clarke
- C) Cole MacGrath

10. WHAT IS THE NAME OF THE FIRST BOSS IN DEMON'S SOULS?

- A) Phalanx
- B) Asylum Demon
- C) Margit

Answers on Page 2

