

Video Game Reviews: Turns out a pirate's life isn't as fun as it looks

by Jeb_Haught

Game: "Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End"

Publisher: Disney Interactive

System: Microsoft Xbox 360

Cost: \$60

ESRB rating: T

Review rating: 2 stars

'PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN' - Jack Swallow's back, and up to his tricks in 'Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End.' CNS Photo courtesy of Disney Interactive. GREAT VISUALS - Players of 'Pirates of the Caribbean' will not only be wowed by the gorgeous visuals, but also surprised at how much the characters in the game reflect their movie likenesses. CNS Photo courtesy of Disney Interactive. 'HEATSEEKER' - 'Heatseeker' is much more of an action-packed arcade flying game than a true flight simulation. CNS Photo courtesy of Codemasters. DOG FIGHTING - The choice from among 12 real-life aircraft, each capable of packing any of 40 weapons, makes dog fighting exciting in 'Heatseeker.' CNS Photo courtesy of Codemasters. Jack's back, and up to his usual nefarious tricks in the interactive rendition of the movie "Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End." The game is also inspired by the events that took place in "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest."

I can only hope that swashbuckling in real life isn't nearly as monotonous.

In the first few moments of the game, players will not only be wowed by the gorgeous visuals, but also surprised at how much the characters in the game reflect their movie likenesses. On further inspection, it's clear that players can interact only with a small portion of this attractive environment.

Call me spoiled, but these types of static surroundings seem so last generation. It took only a short while to

experience nearly every combat maneuver that Jack Sparrow has to offer. Only a few new attacks are acquired throughout the game.

Combat basically consists of alternating sword slices and punches to stun enemies, and then use finishing moves. Wash, rinse and repeat. It's also possible to grab and throw enemies, but this combat would be considered boring even by original PlayStation standards.

Some adventure portions - such as dodging the Kraken's tentacles while traipsing through the Black Pearl's hull - are really fun. It's just too bad that players have to endure hours of mind-numbing button-mashing to get to the good parts.

Game: "Heatseeker"

Publisher: Codemasters

System: Nintendo Wii

Cost: \$50

ESRB rating: T

Review rating: 2 1/2stars

While flying games used to be extremely popular, finding one these days seems to be more difficult than taking real-world flying lessons. So when Codemasters sent me its latest flight game, "Heatseeker," which takes advantage of the Wii controllers, I was eager to get airborne.

Budding pilots can choose between arcade and professional control schemes, but I suggest using the arcade setting until you get used to the Wii controllers. While players don't have true freedom of movement, it's easier to navigate with these simplistic settings. Believe me, I tried professional controls to start with, and became frustrated after failing several missions in a row.

"Heatseeker" is much more of an action-packed arcade flying game than a true flight simulation. Players have unlimited missiles at their disposal and don't have to deal with high-altitude blackouts, refueling or landing their aircraft.

What is a concern, however, is the high number of enemy aircraft, ships and land vehicles that want to blast the player out of the sky. But that's also the game's strong point, as virtual pilots must continually switch between bombing and dogfighting in order to stay alive.

A cool "impact cam" that follows flying projectiles into their targets adds a cinematic touch to the visuals. The choice from among 12 real-life aircraft, each capable of packing any of 40 weapons, makes combat exciting to the end.

On the downside, the Wii controllers make shooting enemies with cannons next to impossible. In addition, an irritating elevation ceiling limits altitude and sends million-dollar aircraft into deadly nose dives when reached.

Still, "Heatseeker" is a fun and novel approach to air combat.

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RATING KEY

4 stars - Must have

3 stars - Pretty good

2 stars - So-so

1 star - Don't waste your time
Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB)

E: Everyone

T: Teen (13 and older)

E10-plus: (Everyone 10 and older)

M: Mature (17 and older)

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