

NintendoWorldReport

ISSUE 5

POWERED  OFF

METAL GEAR CELEBRATION ISSUE

We tip our bandanas to everyone's favorite stealthy spy.

EXTRA LIFE

Metal Gear Solid: Ghost Babel

METAL GEAR PRIMER

Let NWR train you to prove your trivial Metal mettle.

METAL GEAR SOLID: THE TWIN SNAKES

Read the review inside!

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This Month

By Nicholas Bray

We finally have a mailbag page! This issue is Metal Gear themed, so we have a bunch of articles about the series.

First up again is James Jones. This month, he tries his hand at ghostwriting for Capcom's PR about a new Mega Man game. After that, we let the NWR Community sound off on their favorite launch games.

In blogs, we begin with Greg Leahy recounting an epiphany he had while playing Castlevania: Lords of Shadow - Mirror of Fate. Matt Walker goes over in detail an exhibition for Gunpei Yokoi that was in Japan a few years ago. Then, Karlie Yeung contemplates the cultural divide with pants, and Pedro Hernandez talks about storytelling in video games. Features this month include a primer on the Metal Gear series, why Gunpei Yokoi quit his job at Nintendo, and Staff Sez #1: The N64.

Our Interview for this month is a lengthy one. Back in 2003, Jonathan Metts, Daniel Bloodworth, and Rick Powers spoke with Denis Dyack about the recently announced Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes.

Reviews this month include Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes, Game and Wario, Silent Hill: Shattered Memories, and Metal Gear Solid: Snake Eater 3D.

Of course we also have Andrew Brown's monthly Nintendo comic, Staff Profiles, Extra Life and Fan Art.

Please enjoy the issue!

We need your questions for the mailbag! Send them to: poweredoff@nintendoworldreport.com.



MEGA MAN 2 ING

By James Jones

If you listen to Radio Free Nintendo (which you should), you're probably aware that I'm the world's foremost expert on being correct.¹ I'm also the world's foremost expert on abusive relationships with your favorite video game developers.

I am now, and eternally so, a victim of Capcom's abusive affection. While I like to think I'm "out" now, I know it's just a matter of time before it ropes me back in. I live in fear for the re-re-release of Mega Man X games. I am drawn like a moth to a flame. Need proof? I paid \$20 for the Mega Man Anniversary Collection on the GameCube despite owning most of the games on it and knowing it was horribly broken.²

Anyway, I think I can be indulged in the following exercise: I'm going to put myself in the shoes of Capcom – specifically a writer for its website who is incapable of telling lies (think Jim Carrey in "Liar Liar") and his editor. I'm going to write an open letter on Capcom's behalf, like the ones it posts to Capcom Unity. Granted, nothing in it has been announced, but if it were, I would probably pass out.³ To provide better insight into the mind of the company, as inferred from the perspective of an abused fan, I'll be writing a draft of the posting – with edits included. Notes from the editor will be in red. Strikethroughs are lines he removed.



Start Spreading the News: I'm Returning Today – Mega Man X Returns

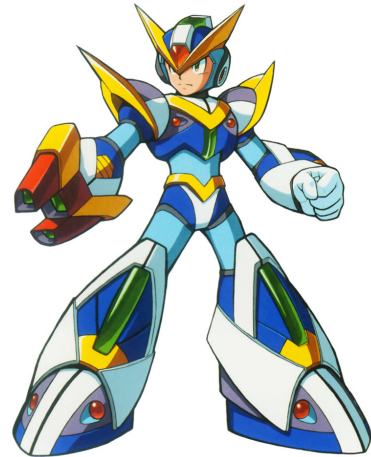
After nearly 10 years, we at Capcom ~~have finally decided to release~~ **are excited to announce** a new Mega Man X game – Mega Man X79. **MEGA MAN X9!**

~~This is a top-to-bottom reimagining of the software development process, to more cheaply produce a Mega Man game.~~ **(Rewrite this line please)**

~~This is a top-down reimagining of the Mega Man game design.~~ **(Not true)**

~~We're going to pretend Mega Man X7 never happened.~~ **(Stronger)**

Mega Man X7 never happened! **(BINGO!)**
Bamboo Pandemonium never happened either!
(Corp is looking to rebrand BP for toys in Japan, so this might get cut. Possible rename game to Mega Man BP)



~~We're going back to our roots and canceling this game soon before release~~ **(not funny)** and making the challenging 2D platformer/action title our fans have been clamoring for. We've learned a lot of ~~cost-cutting techniques~~ **(save for investors)** from Mega Man 9 and Mega Man 10 and we're committed to taking the Mega Man X series back to where it began: on the ~~Sega Saturn~~ **(Really?) Sony PlayStation** with Mega Man X4!

We are absolutely committed to ~~reusing as many assets~~ **(investors)** replicating the 32-bit sprite work that made that game really stand out. We promise this is more than just a pretty Mega Man 9. This is a game designed from the ground up to evoke the feeling of speed and the real challenge the X series is known for. ~~In fact, our early prototype is so difficult no one has ever completed it!~~ **(WE HAVEN'T DEVELOPED ANYTHING YET)**



X is back. I know he's dead, but he's back. So is Zero. Axl isn't because Axl is bad and everyone involved in creating Axl should feel bad.
(Corporate weirdly OK with this line)
The Ride Chaser is back! ~~You can play the entire game on it!~~ **(That's not true, and sounds like an awful idea)**

~~To prevent this game from getting cancelled, and to save on development costs, and because nobody in the company can be trusted to make it, we've elected to outsource development.~~ **(Oh God, what are you trying to do here?)**

~~Capcom is so motivated to do this right that we've conducted a quick survey of all the people making Mega Man clones and picked the one that cloned it best.~~ **(No!)**

Capcom is so motivated to do this right that we've cast a wide net, meeting with untapped independent development talent the world over to find the right team to bring this vision to life. (Much better) We are proud to announce that _____ (DO NOT POST THIS ARTICLE UNTIL WE HAVE A DEVELOPER AND DO NOT MENTION THE KICKSTARTER) will be creating Mega Man X9 and we'll they'll be doing it with your help!

Every week we'll be hosting a contest to design enemies for the game. We'll name the enemy's theme and then you design the Maverick. The winning design will be included in the game and will earn ~~Internet fame and~~ (as per legal, we cannot award "ethereal" prizes in New Hampshire) the stuff we found in Inafune's desk when he left (Just call them "historical artifacts from the development of Mega Man").



Everyone here is very excited. We hope you are too. Mega Man X9 is coming to Xbox, PlayStation, Wii U, 3DS, ~~Vita~~ (Cancelled this morning) and iOS devices (PLUG THE FREEMIUM CONTENT)!

Check back next week for our ~~last~~ first update!

Community Manager,
Capcom Unity

That came from a dark place. I almost feel bad writing it. To be fair, I probably need to add a few spelling errors and a watermark to it.⁴

Here's the truth—there are a lot of people out there making games inspired by Mega Man and its many spin-offs. Some of them are pretty good; some are even a worthy substitute. That said, none of them are Mega Man. Capcom, there's a market out there for this stuff—and you don't have to break the bank making it. So please, if you can



find it in your wicked heart to not kick Mega Man fans in the ribs, go take one last stab at the 2D action/platforming you got so right in the Mega Man X series.⁵

1. Here's a terrible spoiler: I'm actually in character during RFN. I'm a lot less insufferable in person. I think. Right? [Editor's note: Eh.]
2. For the uninitiated, Mega Man Anniversary Collection on the GameCube had really confusingly messed up controls. Jump was mapped to B and attack was mapped to A. This might seem like a minor concern, but to those of us who have spent literally decades in the trenches of the Reploid Wars, the normal control scheme was really hard to unlearn.
3. The day after I began drafting this article, news broke that Capcom had toyed with letting ex-Retro staff make a Mega Man X first-person shooter, with character design by the guy who did Iron Man's suit from the Iron Man films. There is not a single element of that story that did not make me feel queasy, except the fact it was killed.
4. ZING!
5. Until Mega Man X6. That game SUCKED.

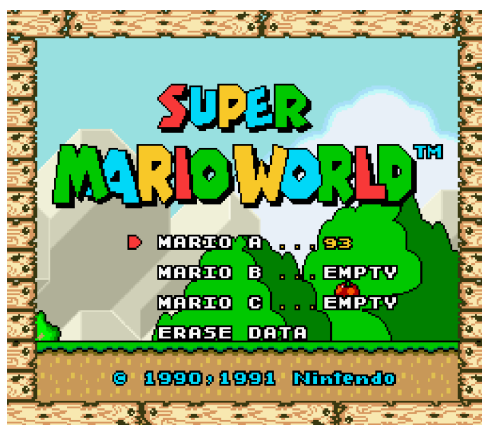
NWR Community Discussion

By J.P. Corbran & NWR Community

What's your favorite launch game of all time?

Ian Sane: "Super Mario World is my favourite. It lacks the influence of Super Mario Bros or Super Mario 64 but that actually helped it age better. It's a refinement of an existing gameplay design so it doesn't feel very dated while SMB and SM64 are raw and unpolished due to all the new

ideas they introduced. The Super Nintendo is my favourite system ever and Super Mario World is one of its best games."



ejamer: "Star Wars

Rogue Squadron II: Rogue Leader

Easy call too - this game is fantastic, and any real Star Wars fan needed to own/play it. There have been some solid launch titles for various systems... but this game blows them all out of the water."

Pixelated Pixies: "I think it's got to be either Super Mario 64 or Wii Sports for me. Both games were system sellers and aptly demonstrated what made those platforms great. If you really push me though, I'd have to say Super Mario 64 takes it. It was just such a mind blowing experience to play 64 for the first time. It was truly seminal."

Shaymin: "My choice is the game that basically made its system AND its form factor, and it's the only launch game in the history of anything I've gone out of my way to rebuy repeatedly.

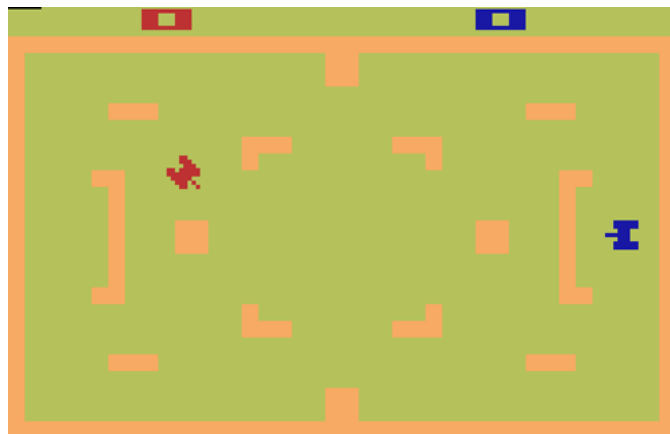
I speak of... Tetris GB."



Leo13: "To the shock and dismay of all of you...Nintendo Land!!! I prefer playing video games with other people and so it was either this or Wii Sports, but I got bored of Wii Sports much faster than I got bored of Nintendo Land"



Sundoulos: "Combat for the Atari 2600. :) I was really young, and I don't remember when my Dad bought our Atari, but, if I think about it, I probably spent more time playing that game against family and friends than I did with any game on any other system until the N64."



Castlevania: Lords of Shadow - Emissary of Fate

By Greg Leahy

Original Publication: March 28, 2013

How mashing together a series' design elements can produce single-player Smash Bros.



Castlevania: Lords of Shadow – Mirror of Fate launched on 3DS earlier this month to one of the most sharply mixed receptions yet seen on the platform, with critical responses ranging from "a monotonous, ugly attempt to reinvent Castlevania" (1UP.com) to "it might be the best action game we've ever played on a handheld" (Official Nintendo Magazine UK).

Now, disagreements in matters of opinion hardly qualify as puzzles to be solved, but I found it interesting to note the differences in how each writer contextualised Mirror of Fate's game design in their reviews. The Castlevania touchstones used for these critiques often varied, ranging from the NES original to the seminal "Metroidvania" Symphony of the Night, plus of course MercurySteam's reboot of the series, Lords of Shadow. As these examples straddle a number of genres as well as decades worth of game design evolution, this fact said as much to me about the convoluted nature of Mirror of Fate's intentions as it did about the different perspectives of the game's reviewers.

When I finally began playing the game for myself, however, I was a little surprised to find that Mirror of Fate did not evoke any of MercurySteam's professed inspirations in my mind very strongly. Being a side-scroller with a particular mix of fighting game mechanics (floaty jumping, blocking, air-dashing) and a staccato structure ("kill rooms" punctuated by minor platforming/exploration), it definitely reminded me of something I'd played before, but I just couldn't put my finger on what exactly it was. Only after a console multiplayer session segued from Nintendo Land into some old favourites did I suddenly have the following epiphany: "Oh my stars and garters, they took bits from nearly every kind of Castlevania game and somehow made The Subspace Emissary out of them!" (Yes, I share a Big Book of Idioms with Dr. Hank McCoy—I get to keep it on weekends).

Sakurai's tepidly received attempt to create a more substantial single-player campaign for Super Smash

Bros. Brawl seems like an unlikely candidate to enjoy the flattery of imitation in general, and it is surely unthinkable that The Subspace Emissary inspired the development of Mirror of Fate in any way, but the similarities are still there. What's fascinating about this improbable intersection of design is that each game comes to it independently from a completely different starting point, which is something of a rarity in the densely interconnected games industry of today.

With that being said, the similarities between Mirror of Fate and The Subspace Emissary are far from purely coincidental, for they both are the product of play mechanics that were crafted in a separate setting being implemented into the structure of a side-scrolling action game to which they are not especially well suited. Both games also succumb to the temptation of fattening their running times with a half-baked re-traversal element that simultaneously functions as a token nod to popular titles connected to the series (Symphony of the Night in the case of Mirror of Fate; Kirby Super Star's Great Cave Offensive in the case of Brawl).



At this point, I should be clear that I do not draw these parallels in order to condemn Mirror of Fate and vindicate its harshest detractors; as it happens, I'm one of those dreadfully boring people whose assessment of the game falls somewhere between the extremes of sentiment that I picked out earlier, and I even have some affection for The Subspace Emissary leftover from 2008 (despite its memorably tedious closing stages in "The Great Maze"). Also, it must be said that if The Subspace Emissary were to be considered the template for a genre, then Mirror of Fate is surely a significantly superior representative of that genre—just as one would expect given that it is the basis for an entire game without any "everything's more fun in co-op" crutches to lean on.



What this curious convergence of two unrelated games does demonstrate is that there are certain limitations to what can be achieved by merely cobbling together pre-existing design elements. However ambitious such projects may be at their inception, the results are unlikely to emerge as intended, for they will inevitably lack the intuitive elegance of their cherished source material, and so the whole becomes less than the sum of its parts. (Must resist urge to make predictable, franchise-appropriate Frankenstein reference here)

Ultimately, there is no shortcut for truly synthesising different concepts and building a game from the ground up where play mechanics and level design fit together organically. I can only assume this lesson was lost on MercurySteam because its employees all have enough friends to play Brawl exclusively in the way God intended. Now as to why Mirror of Fate proved to be so especially divisive with critics? I'm afraid I still can't fully explain that one...

Gunpei Yokoi Exhibit in Harakuju: "The Man Who Was Called the God of Games"

By Matt Walker

Original Publication: August 24, 2010

Over the weekend, I got an email from NWR's Aaron Kaluszka, who's been incredible at finding all kinds of awesome Japan-related content for our crew to check out or translate, informing me that there was a Gunpei Yokoi exhibit being held in Harajuku. Interested at the prospect of learning something new about the father of the Game Boy, I took the opportunity to check it out.



The event was held at a small art gallery right off of Meiji Street, just a couple blocks from Harajuku Station. Before even walking in, you could hear the sweet sounds of various NES-era soundtracks welcoming you in. I recognized tunes from Metroid and Zelda right off the bat. Up front there was a table with various books related to Nintendo and Mr. Yokoi, and just beyond that was the young lady in charge of taking the 300-yen (three-dollar) entrance fee. The exhibit featured lots of interesting old toys and games that Mr. Yokoi had a hand in designing, along with cards featuring comments and explanations of each.



The first thing you see upon paying your entrance fee is this table, prominently featuring a Famicom along with R.O.B. and several Famicom carts. Visitors are free to try out all the classic games they had laid out.

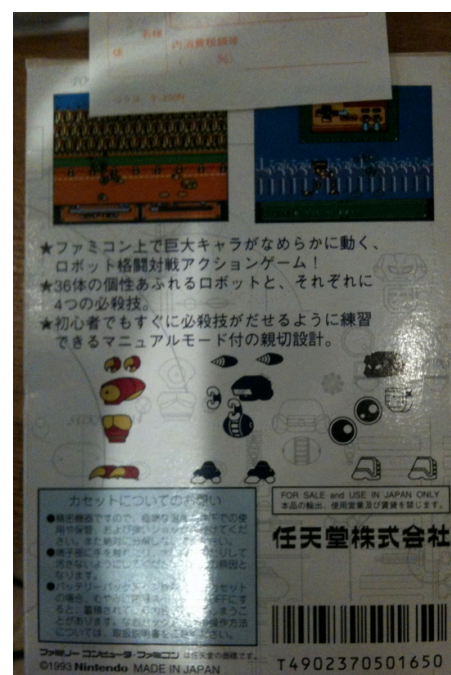
Along with R.O.B. and the Famicom, you'll notice that people were even welcome to try out a Virtual Boy, as well as another one of Mr. Yokoi's creations—the Wonderswan. The famed Nintendo Love Tester also sits by the television.



This is the Japanese instruction card for R.O.B.



This is a box for one of the Famicom games on loan to the exhibit: a mech fighting game. Apparently, in order to appeal to first-time gamers, the box states "this game was designed with beginners in mind by supplying a manual mode where players can practice special moves".



One of the big focuses of the exhibit was the display of a large variety of Game & Watches that were sold in Japan. Here you can see a large variety including "Multi Screen Mario Bros".



Here is a close-up of "Spitball Sparky" and "Mario's Bombs Away." Spitball Sparky is a game where you control Sparky to suck up the falling balls and destroy the blocks. Bombs Away is notable for "making the tabletop color screen compact."



In "Multi Screen Mario Bros," you control Mario and Luigi and stack the packages from the conveyor belt onto the truck. In "Multi Screen Oil Panic," the player is required to catch the oil falling from the ceiling into packets and hand it off to the person below.



The game is notable for requiring the player to pay attention to the action on both screens at once. Here we have "Multi Screen Green

House" and "Donkey Kong." "Donkey Kong" is notable for being the first to utilize the cross-design D-pad and was a runaway hit, selling over six million units.

"Super Color Crab Grab" (mistakenly-labelled "Crab Crab") and "Micro VS System Donkey Kong 3": Donkey Kong 3 featured simultaneous two-player gameplay and was also notable for easy storage that revolutionized the series. Allegedly, the gameplay is more or less the same as the arcade and Famicom versions.

Popeye: Popeye must evade Brutus' attacks while catching items sent from Olive Oyl. Fire: This gold version is a remake of the original hit game with a bigger screen and a colored background layer. Snoopy Tennis: Said to have been a big hit with girls thanks to the inclusion of the Snoopy character, this game was the first departure of button layout due to the inclusion of left-right buttons.





Wide Screen Mickey Mouse: A game where Mickey is required to save the eggs that come rolling down from breaking.

Mario's

Cement Factory: A game where you control Mario to use the hoppers on both sides of the screen and pack concrete into the cement mixer. Chef: Control the chef to pick up the falling ingredients. Occasionally a cat comes by and can throw off your timing.

Wide Screen Donkey Kong Jr, Fire Attack and Parachute.

Moving along from the Game & Watches, I came upon a display with a variety of toy guns Mr. Yokoi had a hand in creating. While these all had display cards, due to the fact that this area was roped off, the room was dark, and I have terrible eyesight, I was unfortunately not able to read the comments.



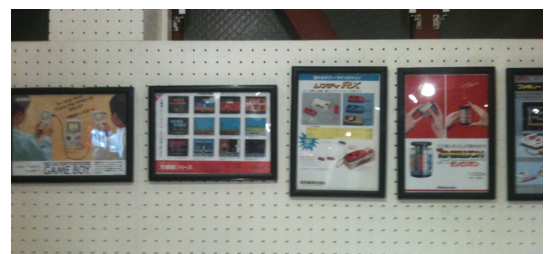
Back to video games. Here, you can see a collection of handheld and tabletop game machines Mr. Yokoi took part in creating. Notice the Snoopy licensed game up top as well as Donkey Kong Jr.



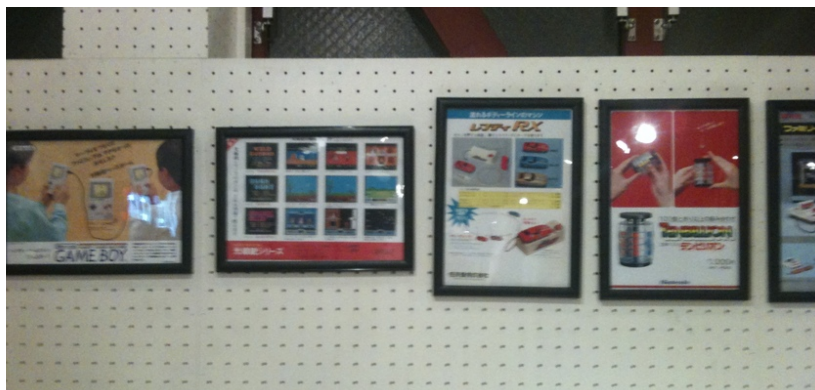
At this angle, you'll see a box for the R.O.B. as well as Wild Gunman on the bottom shelf.



The exhibit also included promotional flyers for many of the products Mr. Yokoi helped create.



The exhibit also included promotional flyers for many of the products Mr. Yokoi helped create.



Here are a couple of non-video game-related products. The radio-controlled car was said to have been cheap to produce by taking out the ability to turn right. It was still considered functional because it could still race in a circle. You'll also notice Star Tenbillion, a puzzle game that you can procure from Club Nintendo in Japan, and a board game called Time Shock.



This is a two-way radio that was said to communicate by light.



Another product Nintendo has referenced in recent years, this is the original "Ultra Hand."

Next to the Ultra Hand were the "Ultra Machine" and a driving game called "Drive Game."





Posted on the wall near the Ultrahand was the article, "Why I Quit Nintendo" by Mr. Yokoi. Check back to NWR for a translation in the near future.



In addition to the exhibit itself, visitors could also take home a piece of Nintendo's history by purchasing a Game Boy or Famicom cassette...

... As well as a Nintendo Love Tester for 3,150 yen!





The exhibitors we were also selling this book, "Gunpei Yokoi: The Father of Games. The man who created Nintendo's DNA."



A French Book: L'Histoire de Nintendo.

The last book the people at the exhibit were selling was "The Yokoi Gunpei Game Museum Returns."

The Gunpei Yokoi Exhibit was held at Vacant in Tokyo's Shibuya Ward and runs from the 18th to the 29th of August. For more information, visit the event site.



Pants vs. Pants, A Cultural Divide

By Karlie Yeung

Original Publication: August 30, 2010

Kirby's Epic... Trousers?

A recent preview of Kirby's Epic Yarn (or Epic Yam, as we like to call it) in Nintendo Power, showcased the story and background behind Kirby's latest adventure. It turns out that the sorcerer Yin-Yarn is out to cause mayhem by turning Dream Land's inhabitants into Yarn. Kirby, being the only one who can try to take action, ends up angering the sorcerer, and is sucked into the sock around Yin-Yarn's neck, leaving Kirby in Patch Land. The article included this screenshot from the game's story.



This begs the question: How can Kirby have any knowledge of pants, or their textural qualities, when he doesn't even wear them? It's the perfect, silly choice for a whimsical game like Epic Yarn.

It [...] like... pants will surely last until launch, when it will experience a resurgence, giving it immortality.

Whether that was the original intention of the Japanese story or was introduced in the translation, this is surely the best garment related exclamation since Pokémon's "I like shorts! They're comfy and easy to wear."

For clarification: In the UK, pants refers exclusively to "underpants," with the equivalent term being "trousers." It is also used as an adjective, but only in the form of an exclamation to convey that something is bad, in the form, "That's pants."

The division of the meaning of pants has come up before, in the context of former mascot for the survey page of former Rareware website, Mr. Pants. In this case, visitors from outside the UK were confused by the lack of pants on the mascot, who sported a pair of red Y-fronts as his trademark. Of course pants was in reference to his only clothing item, as UK English would describe; still, "but he doesn't wear pants!" was often heard.



Mr. Pants, old and new

Nonetheless, the rebranded Donkey Kong Coconut Crackers puzzle game for Game Boy Advance was given a European and North American release, with an ESRB rating of "E for Everyone" and the title It's Mr. Pants. This particular game used a crayon-shaded art style. From Crayon Mr. Pants to Thread Kirby, pants and characterised artwork seem to go hand-in-hand.

Once localised for Europe, the English edition of Kirby's Epic Yarn will surely experience a loss comparable to "SHINE GET!" being changed to the far less memorable, "SHINE!" of Super Mario Sunshine. I already mourn the loss. Do you think that we have reached the heights of pants in games?

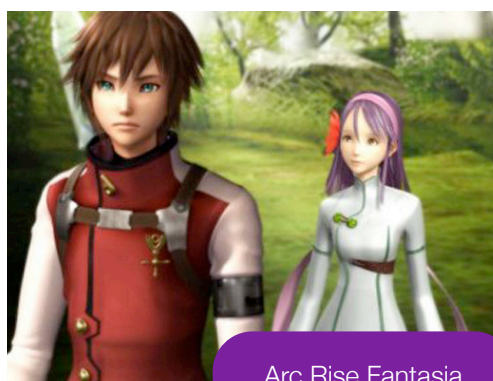
Why Storytelling Matters in Videogame Plots

By Pedro Hernandez

Original Publication: September 16, 2010

Pedro looks back at Arc Rise Fantasia and wonders what exactly went wrong with its story.

As you may have recently learned through my review, Arc Rise Fantasia has a terrible story. But what ruins it isn't the characters or the plot itself. In fact, despite many clichés common in the genre, I actually wanted to learn more about the characters and see the story through to its completion. It was how it was TOLD that truly killed any enjoyment I had with it. As I kept playing and writing the review, the phrase "It's not the story that's important, it's how you tell it" rang truer and truer with each hour of gameplay. What do I mean by this?



Arc Rise Fantasia has an interesting story told very poorly.

Like I already stated, at its core Arc Rise Fantasia does have a solid story. Each character has an interesting backstory that intertwines into the main narrative, creating intricate character development that pushes them beyond being common stereotypes. The world itself is also very rich in political intricacies and religious mythos that played a huge role in the destiny of its protagonists. But man, is it badly told.



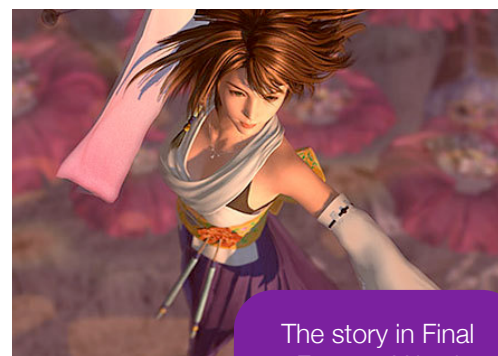
The cut scenes are very dull thanks to dry dialog and emotionless voice acting.

The first issue lies in the localization. There's nothing severely wrong with it, it's just that it's very basic in how it

interprets the plot. It

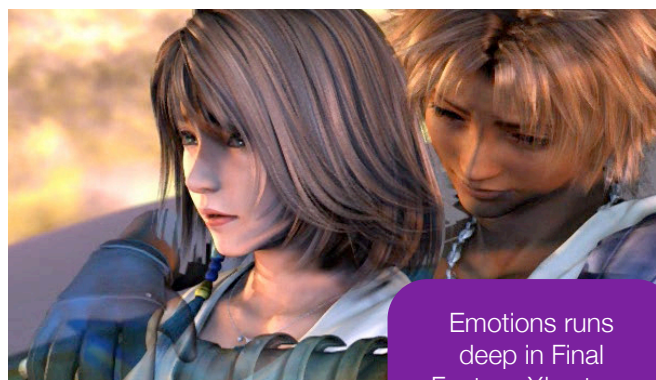
doesn't add drama and tension to the character dialogue, missing the opportunity to express the characters' more complex emotions. Of course, this isn't Arc Rise Fantasia's worst problem. That is the voice acting. I have never heard such poor voice acting in an RPG before. Line delivery is amateurish, failing to create human characters, and when they try to emote, it's pathetic. So combine the poor script along with a bad execution in acting and any potential the story had is gone.

Which is a shame, because I believe that the plot in Arc Rise Fantasia could have rivaled the likes of Namco's Tales series and even Final Fantasy!



The story in Final Fantasy X had problems, but it was very pretty.

Speaking of which, here's an example of how you tell a story makes all the difference in the world. Final Fantasy X was not only one of the first PlayStation 2 RPGs I played, it is one of my favorite games on the system. I remember playing it all day long until very late in the day for around a month. I put up with random battles and some very challenging bosses just because I wanted to see how it would end. I was so enthralled by it all that it wasn't until recently that I took notice of the story's flaws. I've been watching and reading detailed plot analyses that presents clear plot holes as well as dubious character development. Some of these I knew already (Tidus being a character no one would enjoy because of how whiny he is), others I didn't realize until these reviews pointed them out (like Yuna's plan to send Maester Seymour by accepting his marriage proposal halfway through the game).



Emotions run deep in Final Fantasy X's story.

Even with all of these truths being presented to me in such a harsh manner, I still love Final Fantasy X and I still enjoy the story. Why is that? Because Square Enix knows how to tell a story, despite how flawed and convoluted it really is. Yeah, I realize that this comment can be debated as well. Final Fantasy X did have many scenes of mediocre voice acting, but you could tell that the actors really put everything into their performance, and even if some scenes were melodramatic they effectively presented us some of the more subtle emotions found in the story's themes and we as players began to care for them. It was a spectacle, and many players, myself included, just couldn't get enough of it.



If you want a non-RPG example, take the story in Super Smash Bros. Brawl's Subspace Emissary mode.

Now, this is an example of both good and bad storytelling skills. On one hand, the plot manages to tell an interesting story without a single line of dialogue being uttered. Everything is done completely in pantomime and you clearly understand character motives as well the situation they are facing. It also stays true to the original Nintendo franchises. Since many of the characters are silent or don't have an active participation in the development of the plot, once again it is impressive that they managed to include them in the story while still acknowledging their origins. The cut scenes were also incredible and very pretty.

But even then, the Subspace Emissary mode features a complex mythology about the world of trophies, and unfortunately it isn't very well told. The lack of narration and dialogue puts a big damper in the plot development, often leaving players to guess what is exactly going on and missing several key elements. Combine this with weird character motivations as well as a villain that comes out of nowhere and at times the game becomes a test of patience.

This doesn't mean that just because you know how to tell a story that any and all plot issues will be forgotten and forgiven. Creating a story still remains a vital aspect of a plot-heavy game, and if you expect players to spend more than 50 hours with it then you better give them a story they can support up into the final credits roll. I'm just stating that it can make a world of difference and make it far more entertaining despite plot holes bigger than the ozone layer.

If you guys allow me to be humorous for a second, think of Arc Rise Fantasia being the serious war veteran that tells his story straight, and Final Fantasy X the crazy one. The serious war veteran will always tell the truth, but at times will stop, forget what he was talking about and often just end the story because he was tired. Meanwhile, the crazy war veteran will keep telling you lies and illogical events, and even when you know all of this is a lie you are greatly entertained and thus look forward to more war stories that likely never happened.

Is Final Fantasy X the pinnacle of storytelling in all of gaming? Of course not. Far better stories exist out there, making it hard for this Final Fantasy title to be on top. But is it entertaining? In my honest opinion, yes. Arc Rise Fantasia's plot could have been entertaining despite some obviously clichéd elements, but its insistence of telling it in the dullest way possible keeps it from being more than a failed experiment.

Super Smash Bros. Brawl is an example of good and bad storytelling.

Original Publication: March 28, 2013

After Neal picked his jaw up off the floor, he wrote this preview of Shovel Knight.

The logline for Yacht Club Games' debut work, Shovel Knight, is like something out of retro heaven. It's like Mega Man and the combat from Zelda II had a baby that was visited by some crazy uncles named Scrooge and Simon Belmont. You play as the spade-bearing title character and work your way through different levels while taking out the robot master-esque Order of No Quarter.

The game's structure is slated to be like U.N. Squadron, according to Yacht Club's Sean Velasco. What that means is that you might start off playing one level, and after you beat that, you open up two more. Those two can be played in whatever order you choose, which in turn might open up four more that you can play in any order.



The build at PAX East ran on PC (and was oddly playable with a PlayStation 3 controller), however, the game is slated to come to Wii U and 3DS. As for what will differ in those versions and how the second screen will be used, the team isn't quite sure. They assure us, however, that they might have some ideas and it will be "awesome." This can be seen as a clear indicator of how early in development Shovel Knight truly is. While the team is optimistic that they'll meet their September release window, the only playable section they have is the PAX East demo. Fortunately, that demo level is finely tuned and polished.

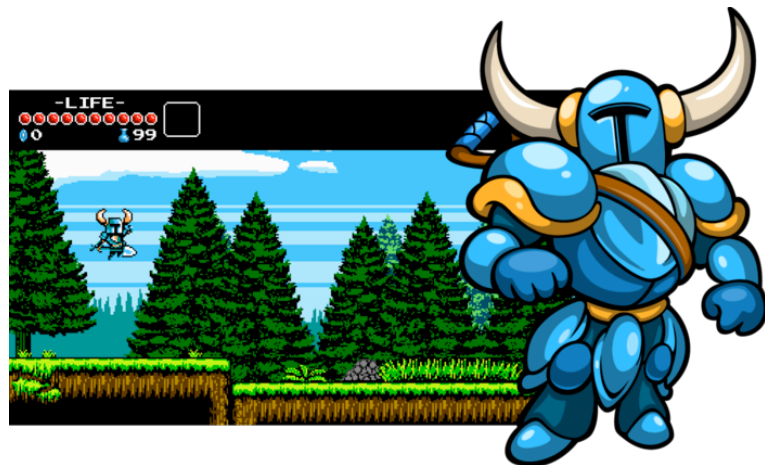
The demo highlights what you can do as the hero, such as digging up gold in dirt piles, poking enemies with your shovel, or bouncing off of the heads of enemies to reach hidden areas. One section showed a clever variation on the Mega Man trope of disappearing blocks. By bouncing off of a magical tome, you open its pages, and in turn reveal hidden blocks. The blocks disappear when the tome shuts,

which sets you off on a race to get past the blocks and open up the next book before you plummet to your death.



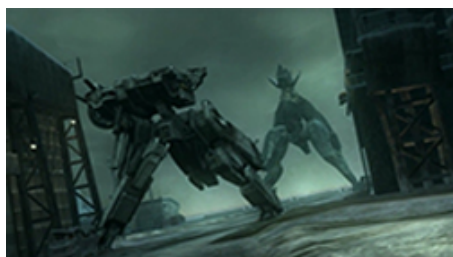
The enemy design in this early form was like something out of an old Capcom/Disney game, with knights and propeller rats being the highlight. The knights especially were interesting from a combat perspective. By using a mixture of all the ways you can use your shovel, you kind of feel like you are dueling them. The mechanics aren't complicated, but the fusion of good enemy A.I. and balanced character abilities makes these fights with regular enemies rewarding. The demo ended with a boss battle with King Knight, which played similarly to the other knights you fought with some added complexity. King Knight, being the pompous ass he is, would pause to bask in his glory, leaving him open to attack but also causing damaging confetti to rain down on the environment.

If Shovel Knight's Kickstarter gets funded (as of this writing, it is almost there), it will be coming to Wii U and 3DS shortly after the PC version, which is slated for September.



Get to know the world-endangering mechs of the MGS series.

Metal Gear Solid: Snake Eater 3D released this week on 3DS, and its story serves as the beginning of the entire MGS saga.



Nintendo fans have

only gotten a look at one other Metal Gear model, in The Twin Snakes. For fun, and to give some indication of how complex the plotline is in the MGS series, I've written this piece, which details the main Metal Gear archetypes across all the MGS games. This list is not exhaustive. For example, Metal Gear RAXA and Metal Gear ZEKE—both from the PSP games—are not included below, and neither are the original Metal Gear or its successor, Metal Gear D.

The Shagohod

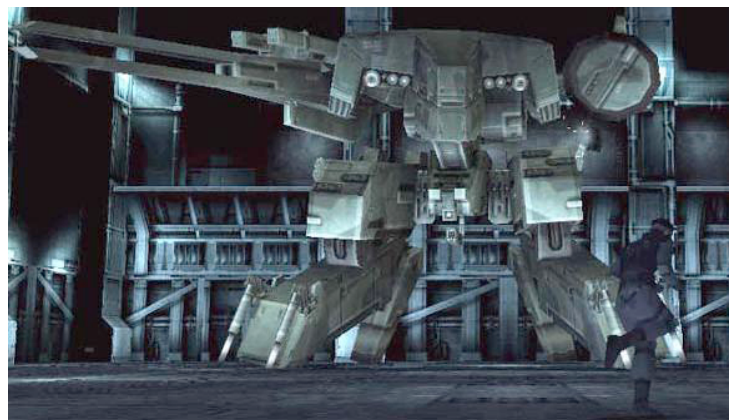
Surprisingly, the MGS series does not begin with a Metal Gear-type weapon. All Metal Gears are essentially bipedal tanks, and most of them are nuclear-capable. The Shagohod, designed by Soviet engineer Aleksandr Leonovitch Granin, was built by Nikolai Sokolov under the thumb of Colonel Yevgeny Volgin. Interestingly, Granin also drew up plans for a weapon that would later become Metal Gear REX. The Shagohod's purpose is to launch nuclear-capable IRBMs (intermediate-range ballistic missiles) without the need for a rocket. The Shagohod is propelled via Archimedes' screws for normal movement, but the rear compartment houses immense rocket boosters, allowing the Shagohod to build up considerable speed before launching its IRBM, which then has a range of some 6,000 miles. The Shagohod is also outfitted with machine guns, a volley gun, and surface-to-air missiles to stave off enemy forces in combat zones.



Despite its considerably capabilities, the Shagohod is gimpy by a number of factors: in order to be effective as an IRBM launcher, the Shagohod must have an enormous amount of flat land to achieve the proper acceleration. Additionally, since the Archimedes' screws are its only normal movement method, damage to those screws renders the tank immobile. Naked Snake and EVA eventually destroy the Shagohod, which left no descendants in the MGS series.

Metal Gear REX

Revolver Ocelot, working for the CIA, stole Granin's Metal Gear drawings. Developed in secrecy at Shadow Moses Island in Alaska*, Metal Gear REX was backed by DARPA and built by weapons firm ArmsTech. Hal "Otocon" Emmerich designed the mech, believing it would be used as an anti-nuclear weapon. REX has impressive specs: capable of walking over a variety of terrain types thanks to its bipedal legs, it is heavily armored and fully enclosed. It sports two 30 mm Vulcan canons, an electron laser, and anti-tank missiles to protect itself in combat zones.

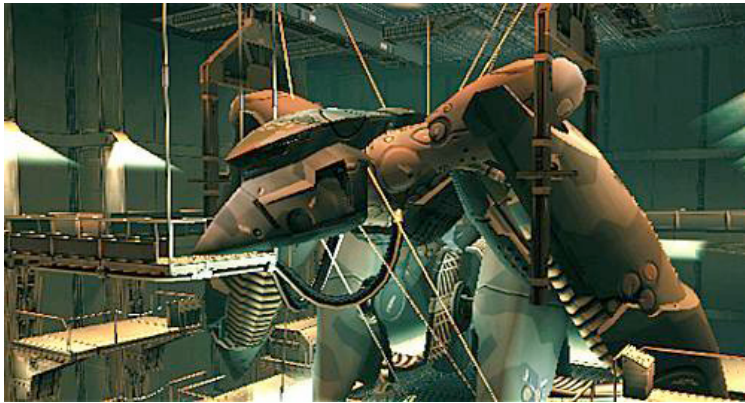


REX's primary purpose, however, is to use a magnetic railgun to launch untraceable nuclear missiles to any target in the world. Unfortunately, a design decision ultimately crippled the mech: as it is fully enclosed, REX's pilot relies on information gathered from a large radome—a satellite-shaped object on REX's left side—to drive the vehicle and attack targets. Damaging the radome forces the pilot to open the cockpit and drive unprotected. Despite being heavily damaged during the Shadow Moses Incident, REX was able to battle the technologically more advanced Metal Gear RAY to a standstill decades later.

**There is no such island. However, the archipelago that Shadow Moses is supposedly a part of—the Fox Islands—are real.*

Metal Gear RAY

Years after the Shadow Moses Incident, REX variants began cropping up around the world, as that mech's plans were leaked to the black market by Revolver Ocelot. The U.S. Navy built its own Metal Gear RAY as a sort of anti-REX weapon. RAY is larger, submersible, and includes a number of advanced weapons, including a high-pressure water jet cutter. Whereas REX was powered entirely through pneumatics and hydraulics, RAY was built with sophisticated muscle-fiber-like technology in order to make it even more maneuverable. Additionally, armor-patching black paste fills areas between cracks in the false muscle or armor, looking a bit like blood. RAY also originally had a long tail for balance while running and swimming. The Navy's version is a manned prototype, and was stolen by Revolver Ocelot at the beginning of MGS2. Years later, RAY reappeared in an unmanned, AI-controlled form. This new RAY was sleeker in design (the tail section is missing, for one), mass-produced, and used to defend Solidus Snake's powerful Arsenal Gear submersible. In addition to its water cannon, RAY is equipped with Gatling guns and missile launchers. Unlike its predecessor, RAY was never meant to be nuclear-capable.

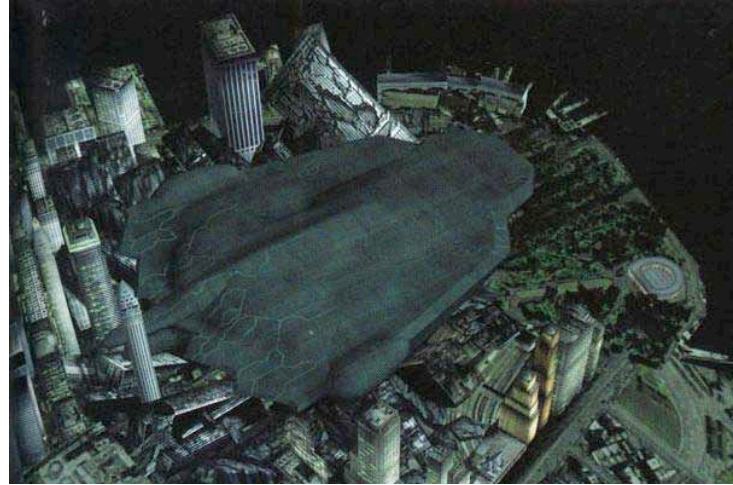


Liquid Ocelot further modified RAY during his attempted hostile takeover of the Patriots. These new RAY units protect his Outer Haven fortress (a stolen and modified Arsenal Gear). They do not differ significantly from their Arsenal counterparts, and in fact show a few features of the original Navy design. Despite its pedigree, the new RAY units are unable to destroy the prototype Metal Gear REX on Shadow Moses Island.

Arsenal Gear/Outer Haven

The Shagohod, Metal Gear REX, and Metal Gear RAY are all designed to be conventional weapons of warfare; Arsenal Gear was built to wage information warfare on the world. The number of Arsenal Gear units is unknown, but Solidus Snake took control of one in the events of MGS2, and Liquid Ocelot commandeered another during MGS4. Arsenal Gear houses one of the Patriot AI's, GW ("George Washington"), which has the ability to track and censor

global Internet information. Its purpose is to keep hidden any information the Patriots are unwilling to share with the world. It can modify, block, and tamper with digital information. Additionally, Arsenal Gear has complete control over the military's tactical network—giving the Patriots complete control over the United States' armed services. Arsenal Gear also carries a payload of nuclear weapons. To protect itself, Arsenal Gear is equipped with an army of 25 mass-produced Metal Gear RAY's, a legion of military personnel, missiles, and of course, its nuclear payload.



Solidus' Arsenal Gear was deactivated by a computer virus and crashed headlong into New York City. Sometime after this, the Patriots constructed an improved Arsenal Gear that doubled as a battleship. Liquid Ocelot, having recovered what he could of GW's components, stole one of these battleships, renamed it "Outer Haven," and used it to rebuild GW with the intention of destroying the Patriot's "main" AI core, JD. At that point, Patriot control would secede to GW, giving Liquid Ocelot control of the entire Patriot network. Solid Snake, with some help, managed to sneak into GW's mainframe and upload a new virus that destroyed not only it but the other Patriot AI's as well. As with Arsenal Gear, an army of modified Metal Gear RAY units, hundreds of Metal Gear GEKKO variants, Liquid's considerable PMC, and numerous security measures similarly protect Outer Haven.

Why Did Gunpei Yokoi Quit Nintendo?

By Matt Walker

TRANSLATE GET!

Feature

Original Publication: September 11, 2010

We translate an article that reveals the real reason behind the Game Boy creator's departure.

Had Gunpei Yokoi not been killed in a traffic accident, yesterday would have been the Game Boy creator's 69th birthday. There have been misconceptions regarding the

inventor's departure from Nintendo, so to commemorate his birthday, we're setting the record straight.

Matt's Note: I couldn't find the original article on the net as I was hoping I would, so I'm translating an article that paraphrases it. We're still trying to track down the original article, which was published in the Nov. 1996 issue of Bungeishunjuu.

The day before Gunpei Yokoi resigned from Nintendo, Nikkei Newspaper ran a report stating that he was resigning to atone for his failure with the Virtual Boy. However, that failure had nothing to do with his resignation (see quotations at the end of the article). According to Mr. Yokoi, after this was reported, requests from reporters and newspapers came flooding in.

Due to that report, many people were under the impression that Mr. Yokoi "bore resentment to the absolute nature with which Mr. Yamauchi ruled the company." However, Mr. Yokoi actually felt the opposite—he felt that it was Yamauchi-san's total control that led to the growth of the company.



There are many who hold a negative opinion in relation to the thought of one person having total control in a company; however, business isn't that simple. Furthermore, there is no one best way to run a company.

One of the strengths of Mr. Yamauchi is that he has always been especially gifted at sniffing out which products were destined to be a success. For instance, he was instrumental in

the introduction of the product that would change the destiny of Nintendo: the Game and Watch.

The product, which only came about because of Mr. Yamauchi's dictatorial attitudes, sold 50 million units. When Mr. Yokoi was 38 years old, he proposed the product to Yamauchi. The president immediately expressed interest in the product saying, "make it happen," so development began.

However, the consensus within the company was lukewarm. Over half of the people in sales and marketing had the opinion that "something like this can't sell." If this was any normal company, during the proposal process the sales and marketing teams would have expressed their displeasure, and after several meetings, the product would have most definitely been canned. But because the head of the company wanted it to happen, no one dared oppose. After going ahead with production as he had wanted, Game and Watch was finished and became a smash hit.

In one fell swoop, the company now was able to pay off their over 8 billion yen debt and ended up with around 4 billion left over. Nintendo put the rest of the leftover money into the development of the Famicom. Even Mr. Yokoi was said to have had the opinion that "it doesn't really have to happen." And yet, the Famicom was a huge hit. And it can be said that the Game Boy and succeeding products were born of the same situation.

Mr. Yokoi was hired into Nintendo in 1965. Although he graduated with the same degree in Electrical Transmission Engineering as his other colleagues, his grades were closer to the bottom than the top. He had not even been able to find a job after graduating.

And then one day he came upon an advertisement for a position in Electrical Transmission Engineering at Nintendo. Nintendo was in need of an engineer to handle the over 30 kVA electrical receivers that were new tech at the time. That equipment was situated in the plant, where the machines were located that were required for maintenance of the hanafuda and game card producers.



Yet, management of electrical machinery was boring for Mr. Yokoi, so he would use the machines and circuit boards at his disposal to make toys and play with them. One time the head of the company saw his toys and said, "you—bring that toy and come to my office". Mr. Yokoi thought he was in trouble; however, it turns out that Mr. Yamauchi wanted to make that toy into a product and produce it. Mr. Yokoi hadn't even been in the company a year and had no experience with production of toys, and yet he somehow learned the modeling design techniques required to put the products together.



That first product was called the "Ultra Hand." During the Tokyo Olympics, the name "Ultra C" had become a popular term, and so the head of the company came up with the name with that in mind. *[Ed. - "Ultra C" referred to an extremely difficult gymnastics maneuver that helped propel gymnast Yukio Endo to multiple gold and silver medals in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, and was punctuated by NHK announcer Bunya Suzuki's shout of "Ultra!" whenever it was performed. It referred to the fact that the difficulty exceeded the "C" score, which was the maximum score given.]*

The Ultra Hand was a huge hit, with 1.4 million units sold. At that time, if a toy sold 100,000 units it was considered a huge success. And so the head of the company created a development division specifically for Mr. Yokoi. It was originally just two people: Mr. Yokoi and Mr. Imanishi (currently head of marketing), who was added on to handle accounting. With that, the two-man development division created various toys such as the "Ultra Machine" and the light gun, changing the future of the game card-making company known as Nintendo.

At this time, Nintendo was more or less organized, but it wasn't such a strict organization. Mr. Yokoi was more or less considered a direct underling to the head of the company. Organizationally, development was one part of the manufacturing department, and in between the head of the company and Mr. Yokoi was the head of the manufacturing department. In reality, the head of the company would talk

directly to Mr. Yokoi about development, and Mr. Yokoi rarely ever talked about development with his direct superior. So the de facto structure was really one that consisted of the head of the company being the head of the development department, with development actually being separate from manufacturing.

Furthermore, Mr. Yokoi's opinions were valued more by Yamauchi himself than by other board members, so he was more or less in a "number two" type of position. Mr. Yokoi wasn't the only one holding this impression; everyone else in the company felt the same.

It is said that this was the most enjoyable period for Mr. Yokoi during his tenure with the company.

In fact, he was even scouted by various other industries. He was promised huge bonuses and the like; however, whenever he listened to what the job would be like, he always felt that in the end, staying at Nintendo would be better, and he never changed his mind.

Yet, Nintendo is a listed company. Once its profit exploded it had a responsibility to its shareholders to continue raising its profit levels. Once this was the case, one success is simply not enough. Mr. Yokoi began to feel his sense of self-worth dropping.

In other words, Mr. Yokoi wanted to continue his life forever coming up with new ideas and making new toys with them. He wanted to continue tossing around ideas based on



Nintendo's original policy of making cheap toys. However, as profits increased this became less and less possible. This was the only reason Mr. Yokoi left Nintendo.

Mass media insists on blaming it on some huge fight and subsequent breakup he had with Mr. Yamauchi. But for Mr. Yokoi, Nintendo was one of the parents that raised him, and its development ethic was his home.



Nintendo's PR concerning Mr. Yokoi's leave:

"It is reality that Mr. Yokoi has indeed left, but it has absolutely nothing to do with the failure of the Virtual Boy. There's no doubt that the Virtual Boy was a failure, but the head of the company himself has said that the blame for that rests on the decision to sell it to begin with. The D-pad and Game Boy that Mr. Yokoi developed are incredible. Such a man taking the blame for the 32-bit device and leaving the company is completely made up."

Additionally, Mr. Uemura, the head of Development Division 2 had this to say of the Famicom:

"Yeah, I had doubts. Actually, I was completely doubtful. Doubting that this thing could possibly sell... Even with my complete convictions as such, I knew that the only evaluation that mattered was that of the users. However, that was my feeling, and whether or not it would sell would be totally on the head of the company, who made the final decision."

Mr. Yamauchi makes it clear that the president has chosen to take responsibility for what makes or breaks the company from quite a way back:

"Once I've decided on something, I decide to go all the way - never faltering. That's because such is the responsibility of a businessman. Regardless of what happens to the company, the final responsibility is on me, and so it would be totally disregarding my responsibilities to run a business without my complete comprehension. If there's anyone that runs their business like that, they clearly aren't fit to do so."

By Karl Castaneda & Staff

Original Publication: October 3, 2011

In a brand new feature, the staff of Nintendo World Report gives you their quick and dirty opinions on their memories of the N64.



Hey there, folks!

Welcome to a brand new feature here at Nintendo World Report that we call Staff Sez. The rules are simple: Each week, I'll present the beginning of a sentence. Our all-star staff will then complete that sentence in 10 words or less, each showcasing their wonderful, and hopefully well-thought-out opinion.

This past week was actually the 15-Year Anniversary of the N64, so it seemed appropriate to kick off Staff Sez with this:

"When I think of the N64..."

Mike Sklens, Hardcore Nerdographer sez:

"...I realize it's when I became a multi platform gamer."

Pedro Hernandez, Exporter of Fine Mustaches sez:

"...I remember the countless hours I spent playing Ocarina of Time."

Neal Ronaghan, Jersey Shoreman sez:

"...I remember playing MK64 and GoldenEye until my eyes bled."

Daan Koopman, The Flying Dutchman sez:

"...I remember the Gym Leader Castle in Pokemon Stadium 2."

Zach Miller, Patron Saint of Large-Breasted Dinosaurs sez:

"....I remember blowing the heads off of raptors in Turok."

J.P. Corbran, Captain Fedora sez:

"...I remember figuring out balancing the Farsight in Perfect Dark."

Jonathan Metts, Co-Host on Box Office Poison sez:

"...I touch myself."

Carmine "Not Recommended... Except for Kairon" Red sez:

"...I remember spacecruisers with controller fighters and rumble pak tanks."

Nate Andrews, That Kid I Don't Really Know sez:

"....I'm back in my basement playing Mario Kart 64."

Josh Max, His Royal Badness sez:

"...I recall boundless joy accompanying each game purchase."

James Dawson, Fancy Free Since '93 sez:

"...I remember first playing Pokemon Stadium at my cousin's house."

Jared Rosenberg, Camera Manchild sez:

"...I remember that Yoshi is on the roof."

Karl "Red Velvet" Castaneda sez:

"...I recall Crash Team Racing being way better than MK64."

...and that was our first Staff Sez, everyone! Hope you dug it, but it's just getting started. Let us know how you'd finish this sentence in the comments section, and tell us what sentence you'd like the staff to finish next week!



Heavy Metal



Andrew Brown 2013

The Mailbag

You know, I would really like it if you put actual news in your Powered Off magazine. I know that there is already news on the Nintendo World Report website, but it would make Powered Off seem more like a magazine if you at least put "Previews" of upcoming games.

- nin10dofan



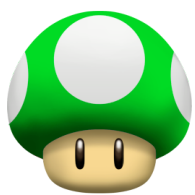
Hi nin10dofan.

One of the reasons we have not included a news section in Powered Off, is because we post news regularly on the website. Another reason is that by the time the magazine comes out, most of the news is old and everyone likely already knows what has happened. Although, having said that, if people would like to see a top stories page, or a news recap for the month, it is something we can look into.



As for having previews, we have included them in past issues. The main reason why they are not in every issue is that we simply don't always have new ones to include. Another reason is that sometimes the previews will be out of date because the game has released in the meantime. We have one preview included this month, Shovel Knight. When we can include previews we will.

Thanks for your question.



Metal Gear Solid By Nate Andrews

Ghost Babel (the Japan-only subtitle, used here in the interest of clarity) is a game of odd genesis. Taking selective mechanical and thematic inspiration from the preceding two entries in its franchise, Metal Gear 2: Solid Snake and Metal Gear

Solid (the latter of which had already lifted some choice traits from the former), the 2000 title would seem an unlikely candidate to produce a coherent and worthwhile experience from the combination, especially on the limited Game Boy Color platform.

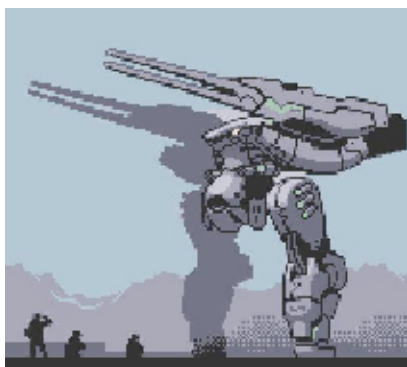
The previous step in the Metal Gear franchise, from Solid Snake on the MSX2 computer to Solid on the PlayStation, brought about a host of precedential alterations to what had been the structure of the series up until that point. While it certainly sampled select gameplay elements from Metal Gear 2, Solid also formed the new mechanical, thematic, and cinematic base for the series as it did so, creating a distinct separation between itself and the older games. Ghost Babel, consequently, occupies a sort of middle space between the two, with a balanced approach to both the series' brand of stealth-action and narrative grandiosity.

Ghost Babel is a bit of recondensed package of the elements effectively extrapolated and deepened by MGS, a structure created by equal parts necessity and ingenuity.



Like MG2, it employs a top-down, 2D perspective of the environments Snake works his way through, as well as a similar suite of tools (dynamic radar; gas mask; mine detector) and abilities (crawling; guided Nikita missiles) to

facilitate completing the sneaking mission. The addition of mechanics from MGS, such as flattening Snake against a wall to hide or move through tight spaces, or tapping against a surface to strategically lure enemies, complements



this traditional style, however, giving Snake a deceptively deep range of abilities that not only work smoothly, but do so within the four-button confines of the Game Boy Color.

As a sort of non-canonical companion to Metal Gear Solid, Ghost Babel inherently retains some of the former's tonal qualities. Characters, including Colonel Campbell, Mei Ling, and Solid Snake himself appear as their Metal Gear Solid selves, and even fresh faces like Chris and Jimmy fit post-MGS personality templates (Meryl and Otacon, respectively). Codec conversations and painterly cut scenes are used frequently to keep the plot in stride, and though conversation with a team member or adversary occasionally strays into the philosophical or existential, these resting moments are effectively pared down from their protracted MGS equivalents in the name of brevity and portability. Instead of a continuous flowing narrative, Ghost Babel segments events into stages of malleable length and type. Some involve carefully plotted treks across environments or through military structures, while others may simply be comprised of defeating a member of Ghost Babel's animalistic FOXHOUND equivalent, Black Chamber.



In the lineage of Metal Gear, we can chart characteristics of MG2 being blown up to precedential proportions in Solid, with a combination of the two then being distilled and streamlined in the mechanically sound and narratively swift Ghost Babel. A balanced and capable entry in a series often guilty of being heavy handed in both story and gameplay, Ghost Babel remains a tight combination of substance and necessary moderation.



Denis Dyack at E3 2003

By Jonathan Metts, Daniel Bloodworth & Rick Powers

Original Publication: May 22, 2003

Find out what happens when we send three of our elite after Denis Dyack for a "mafia style" interview, when he hasn't had sleep or time to prepare.

Denis Dyack, head of Silicon Knights, was able to take time to talk to Planet GameCube this past week at the Electronics Entertainment Expo. Denis always has interesting things to say, and this year was no different.

Denis: This morning we had tickets to go by and see "The Matrix" at five in the morning, and we went there at 4:30, got up, didn't get hardly any sleep... and they cancelled the show.

Daniel Bloodworth: No!

Rick Powers: Are you kidding?!

Denis: No.

Jonathan Metts: Why?

Denis: I have no idea why, we couldn't get in, some guy was cleaning the glass... He could tell we were tired, you know, 4:30 in the morning is pretty early to get up and go see a show. We just kind of looked at him, and he goes, "Aw man, sorry, it's not me. Come back later." Can you believe that?

Rick: I would be angry. *laughing*

Denis: With the night before too, you know, I could have used the sleep, so... but anyway, I don't want to take up too much time, I just wanted to tell you guys that story.

Jonny: I guess... first we want to know, what's the deal with Twin Snakes?

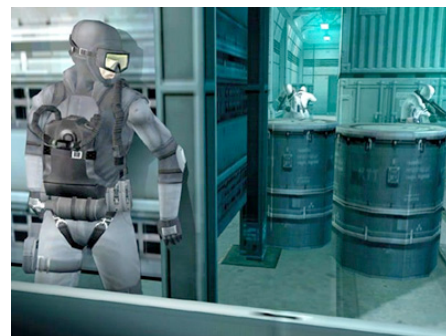
Denis: In which way?

Jonny: We know it's a remake of the original, with the graphics and gameplay of Metal Gear Solid 2, right?

Denis: That's correct.

Jonny: OK.

Denis: Well the graphics, actually, the graphics we've done a little bit more with... we've got a unified pipeline, we've got all different textures, bump-mapping, shine-mapping, all that stuff's in there too. It's not the "same" graphics as Metal Gear Solid 2 so much, but they're upgraded graphics.



Jonny: So would you say they're upgraded from the original Metal Gear Solid?

Denis: Oh yeah! Definitely, oh yeah.

Jonny: But not upgraded from Metal Gear Solid 2 graphics?

Denis: Uh, I guess it depends on what you mean by that question. It's not... the engines are similar, but it's obviously not the same technology, it's running on the Cube. The Cube's got some enhancements over the PlayStation 2, things that we can do that they can't. That's the best way to describe it. Does that answer your question?

Jonny: Yeah.

Denis: OK.

Jonny: What is the engine that it's running on? Is this something that you guys made yourselves?

Denis: It's a combination of some of our technology, and some of Konami's technology.

Jonny: OK, so it's not like a port of the PS2 engine, or something like that?

Denis: Uh, no... not really.

Rick: *jokingly* Is it running on a subset of the Too Human engine? *laughing*

Denis: No, no... No. *smiling*

Jonny: All right, well... What are the main things that you're changing? I guess that's what we're most interested in.

Denis: Well, hopefully it was clear from the presentation that the cinematics are all being redone.

Jonny: Are they being redirected?

Rick: Yeah, because some of the storyline elements that we've seen look different from what I remember of Metal Gear Solid.



Denis: I think the story itself is going to stay true to itself. However, with the power of the GameCube and the advancements in the technology that we have... we're going to be able to take it a lot further. That's definitely a change. The gameplay itself, all the stuff that you can do (I don't know if you guys have played Metal Gear Solid 2), you can definitely do in this. If you think about the first game and how it's all setup, and then think about the dynamics of the second game, it should be a completely new experience.

Jonny: Would you say it changes the way you play the game, the strategies, the way you beat certain missions?

Denis: Yeah, I definitely think so. Certainly there's a lot of things going on that I don't want to talk about, but there's going to be significant change beyond anything you've seen here. Obviously it's a very short demo. There'll be enhancements across the board. It's exciting because with the collaboration that's going on, we'll really have a chance to take what I consider to be one of my favorite games of all time, and really bring it to the GameCube. A lot of GameCube fans have not played the Metal Gear Solid series, so it'll be a great experience for them. And for those people who did play the first one, it's going to be a new experience too, because we've changed so much of it.

Rick: If there's one thing that I'd say Silicon Knights is most recognized for, it's probably the "Insanity Effects"

that were in Eternal Darkness. I know talking with you at one point, you had mentioned that one of the inspirations for those sort of effects was the Psycho Mantis battle from the original Metal Gear Solid, and some of the tricks it tries to play on the player. Is there any plan to expand on that in the new Metal Gear Solid game?

Denis: Well, I think it's safe to say that all of the major boss fights and, you know, all those sorts of exciting things are all being looked at and are being improved as much as possible and enhanced, so... without giving away specifics... you guys know what I'm like, I don't like to spill the beans on that stuff. Even from the video you can see that obviously some things have changes already. You have Psycho Mantis talking about Miyamoto-san, that definitely was not in the first one.

Rick: It seems like in the video that was shown there were definitely elements there that don't look like they would necessarily make it into the final game.



Denis: Everything you're looking at there is... probably going to be much improved by the time the final game is done.

Rick: Well, the reason why we're asking is that when you were first showing Eternal Darkness a couple years ago, a lot of the elements you had in that game were things that never made it into the final version.

Denis: Right. But this development path and because it is a remake, what's set is set. You're probably not going to see a lot of that this time. Don't forget, it's coming out fairly shortly. One of the things that I'm really happy about with this project, amongst many, many things which I've already talked about... you know, last year there was *Eternal Darkness*, this year there's going to be *MGS*, and in the future, next year, which I can't talk about... hopefully there will be others. If things go well, and they seem to be.

Rick: Is *Too Human* hopefully going to be one of those others?

Denis: I can't talk about those. I can't talk about 'em... so sorry! As soon as I started mentioning it, I was like, "Uh oh"...

Jonny: But you don't "cancel" games, right?

Denis: Uh, no... we don't like to. So... uh... No. *laughing*

Jonny: All right... well, what kind of input has Miyamoto had? We would expect Kojima to be working with you...

Denis: A tremendous amount with Kojima-san, all the time. We have a video-conference set up, and we pretty much talk to him every day. And there are people from Konami staying at Silicon Knights, actually, as well. Miyamoto-san is involved as well, and we speak often and it's really, you know, around the same level that we had with *Eternal Darkness*, really. He's pretty involved in just about everything. There's been these crazy rumors that he doesn't do development anymore, and that's just not true.

Rick: One of the things I was going to mention was that he has a reputation for being a stickler, for

having things just the way he wants them. Has he been difficult to work with in that regard, as far as giving you guys the freedom you need to create?

Denis: No, not at all... that's like saying, "Is Aristotle difficult to work with?" *laughing* No, not at all. I guess a comment like that has too many negative ramifications... to say stickler.

Rick: Maybe "perfectionist" is a better word.

Denis: He's driven to perfection in a way that's best for everyone, and he's never steered us wrong. And making a game with Nintendo, and Konami has the same standards, very high standards. At the end of the day you can't just do something haphazardly, it's gotta be quality, it's gotta be polished, and Miyamoto-san is one of the gatekeepers. So, he's going to look at something, and if he doesn't think it's up to par, he's going to tell you... not in a stickler kind of way, in a way that's going to help everyone. I really admire him tremendously and the way he does things is pretty awesome. He does a great job.

Jonny: What does "The Twin Snakes" mean? Is that entirely to do with the story?

Denis: Yeah, yeah.

Jonny: Entirely to do with the story?

Denis: That's sort of a loaded question, because "The Twin Snakes" means so much. There's a lot to that. Have you guys played the original *Metal Gear (Solid)*?

Rick: Yes.

Dan: Somewhat.

Jonny: Briefly.

Rick: I can't say that I remember a whole lot about it, but I did play it and I remember key points.

Denis: It's got key points to do with the story, there's going to be other things as well, other enhancements... as Miyamoto-san mentioned during the press conference, there's going to be "connectivity" things... so we've got a lot of stuff brewin'.

Rick: There have been rumor flying around that perhaps "The Twin Snakes" is alluding to some sort of a co-op multiplayer mode, or possibly a LAN connection between two *Cubes*...

Denis: We're looking into "connectivity issues"... I really don't want to comment on that particular rumor, but we definitely want to do something that takes advantage of the GameCube hardware.

Jonny: Can you say anything about the rumor that *Metal Gear Solid 2* for GameCube will be included in this package?

Denis: Yes. That is not true.

Jonny: Not true.

Denis: That's not true.

Jonny: Can you say if this is going to be a one-disc game, or two?

Denis: Oh! Uh... geez, I don't know. I'm not sure actually.

Rick: Well, historically, *Metal Gear Solid* was fairly FMV intensive...

Denis: Oh yeah, there's a lot... there's probably more in this than in the original. So, my guess is... it's got potential for two discs. Yeah, potential.



Rick: Will you be using your proprietary compression engine, or will you be using the DivX tools that Factor 5 developed?

Denis: We're going to be using a whole bunch of stuff. DivX is only good for video, it's basically FMV or FMA, and there's not a whole lot of that in this.

Jonny: The demo's great.

Denis: This is all real-time polygon demos. Like all the cinematics that you guys saw, those are all real-time, so you can actually move the camera around while that stuff's happening too, in the game.

Jonny: You can control the camera?

Denis: Yeah.

Jonny: You can control the camera, or we can?

Denis: YOU can.

Jonny: Really?

Denis: Yes.

Jonny: That's cool!

Denis: I think you can do that on the show floor here. Can you imagine if...

Jonny: I don't think I've ever seen that before.

Denis: Oh yeah. All the MGS stuff is all in game, it's real-time. It's amazing, it's good stuff. I'll tell ya, what a great experience, you know? And I said this in the press conference... having the opportunity to work with both Miyamoto-san and Kojima-san, it's... it's pretty amazing. Certainly for us, it's a pretty big landmark, but also for the industry. I think what it says more than anything is that Nintendo really cares about video games, and so does Konami, and they're looking to build relationships for the future of not only the relationship that we're forming, but for the future of video games. It's really important for us that games like Grand Theft Auto don't become dominant, quite frankly. It's a good game, you know? I'm not going to criticize it. I just don't like the direction where everything is going in that way. And I think that games like Metal Gear Solid that have a message, you know, Eternal Darkness, those kinds of things. That's where I want to see the future go. So we're working hard towards it.

Jonny: You guys are really into story, and of course, Metal Gear is very famous for its story. Is it difficult for you to look at their story, and know that within certain boundaries, you can't really change it?

Denis: Well...

Jonny: Because it's part of an established myth, and you can't really do much with that.

Denis: Well, at the end of the day, if it's not broken, you shouldn't fix it.

Jonny: Yeah.

Denis: The whole sort of idea of doing of doing a remake is not a re-write. It'd be the same kind of thing as changing things in Lord of the Rings. They've done some things with the movies, as an example, that they

had to do for time and space, but generally they've kept pretty true. A few exceptions here and there, and even then, there's always a big, you know, "What happened at the river? That wasn't right!" The answer is not really at all. I think really, in this particular aspect our job is to bring it to the system, to introduce it to people who haven't played the MGS series. For many reasons... to show that we're forming relationships, to build other things up for the future, and that's the goal... so not at all.

Jonny: What are you doing about the game's pacing? Are you looking at things in the original, where you play through a certain amount and you stop and read through a conversation, or you stop and you have a movie? A lot of people, myself included actually, find it difficult to get into Metal Gear Solid because there are so many movies, there's so much narration, that doesn't happen while you play the game. It stops you from playing the game, and you sit through all this.

Rick: Particularly, Metal Gear Solid 2 was famous for there being a rather lengthy, on an order or two or three minutes long FMV sequence, you walk out of the room, around a corner, go into another room, and now you're "treated" to an even longer FMV. And you had maybe a few seconds of gameplay in-between.

Jonny: Are you guys going to be doing anything about that? Is that something you're looking at changing?



Denis: Well, there are several things we're looking at changing to optimize the experience for the player. You know, at the same time, keeping true to the original. So I think that a lot of the things you guys are talking about... I don't think there were (any) large complaints about the first one, not to me, anyway. But there are definitely changes with the CODEC and how we're doing some things. I think you'll be satisfied with that. You tell me when it comes out.

Jonny: The CODEC in the demo right now, is that what you think will be in the final game? Or are you planning on making any changes to that?

Denis: In which way? 'Cause actually, nothing's final, so it would depend on what you're talking about.

Jonny: Well, from what I can tell, it looks pretty much like the original. You have these sprites...

Denis: Oh, you mean the 3D versus the faces?

Jonny: Yeah.

Denis: Yeah... obviously we could have done 3D with that, and the decision was made to go with more of a nostalgic approach, and stay with the 2D animated faces.

Rick: Some people around the floor have commented that the graphic quality of "The Twin Snakes" isn't up to par with a lot of the other titles that are being shown on the floor.

Denis: Oh, really?

Rick: Any comments?

Denis: No, I haven't heard that. Really, that's the comment? Oh, wow. OK. Sorry to hear that. *laughing*

Jonny: I would say... I only played it for a few minutes, not very long. I would say it looked much different than the video that we saw at the press conference. Would you say that's a difference between the gameplay and the cinema scenes, or maybe just a matter of the display technology?

Denis: No, it's the same engine... what were the differences.

Rick: It seemed to look a lot "cleaner" in the video presentation, and maybe it's the displays they're using on the floor.

Denis: Nope, it's the same, the same. It's the same, so... everything there is the same, all the polygon demos, and all of the cinematics that were there are using the same engine, so...

Rick: You had an interview with IGN back in January at the DICE conference...

Denis: *laughs*

Rick: I believe IGN asked you something along the lines of, "If you could go back and do *Eternal Darkness* differently, what would you change?" And I'm paraphrasing your answer here, but I believe you said something to the effect of... that you didn't think that *Eternal Darkness* had the flash or the flare of a game like a *Metal Gear Solid*, so that's the direction you're going to go in the future.

Denis: Yes.

Rick: Was that intentional?

Denis: Yes. *laughs*

Rick: Why did you do that?

Denis: I can't help myself? I don't know... I like dramatic foreshadowing? But... that actually

was meant on several levels, it was kind of a little nice hint for the future, 'cause obviously I knew what was going on, but beyond that, the statement in itself is true. I think if you look at say *Eternal Darkness*, and compare it to say, a game like *Metal Gear Solid*, the difference is between a Hollywood movie, and a foreign film. We're very happy with *Eternal Darkness* and the way we did it. But certainly, one of our changes was not to put flash in it, and in some ways, I think that because we went in that direction, it didn't get some of the attention it deserved. So, it was a multi-faceted comment.

Rick: I've always felt that the reason why *Eternal Darkness* didn't do as well as it could've is the fact that the subject matter, the themes, the literary references...

Denis: Very difficult.

Rick: A lot of that would go over the mainstream gamer's head.

Denis: Yes.

Rick: If you choose to do a sequel to *Eternal Darkness*, is that something that will be addressed at that time?

Denis: Uh... you know...

Rick: Or do you believe in the concept so much that you'd want to...

Denis: You know, I'm pretty happy with that stuff, and if we did another one, we'd probably stick to that. Maybe we would, I guess, raise the watermark. Make it maybe, some of the basic stuff a little easier to comprehend, but I think that the depth is still going to be there. It really wouldn't be *Eternal Darkness* without it. That really defined *Eternal Darkness*. Now we would change certainly a lot of other things, but that's something that we would really stick to.

Jonny: When is Twin Snakes coming out?

Denis: This Christmas.

Jonny: Do you expect that it will arrive on time?

Denis: I hope so. Yeah, I think so.

Rick: It looks like Nintendo has a large amount of titles all scheduled to come out around the winter season. Do you have any concerns about the timing with that, and that since Metal Gear Solid: Twin Snakes is much of a remake, that some gamers that maybe have played it on the PlayStation are going to pass on it, and pick up some of Nintendo's other titles that are releasing at the same time?

Denis: Well, you know... I haven't looked at the release schedule so much, but you know... generally things are usually planned out fairly well, and I think there's lots of room. If there's a lot of games coming out for the GameCube, that's a good thing, so... we're not concerned at all about it.

Jonny: Is Konami publishing this game?

Denis: Yes, yes they are.

Jonny: Being that Silicon Knights is a "second party" developer, does that mean that Nintendo is basically paying for the development of a game that Konami will publish?

Denis: Oh, I don't want to go into those details. It's definitely a relationship between Nintendo, Konami, and Silicon Knights. Going into the details of who's paying for what, it's not something I can go into. Make sense?

Rick: Sony announced that Metal Gear Solid 3 will be exclusive to PlayStation 2. Konami also seems to

have a way with... I won't say "getting around" exclusivity agreements, but basically managing to get exclusives on systems, and then releasing them later with changes, with enhancements, with a new title, maybe new gameplay additions added, and releasing them on other systems. Is there a possibility that you may collaborate with Konami again and bring a "version" of Metal Gear Solid 3 to the GameCube?



Denis: Well, getting into details like that is I think going too far at this point. But one of the things that I'm really happy about is that there is a strong chance that there will be further collaborations with Konami, you know, with us or with Nintendo, so things are looking very positive. That's one of the main goals, not just this one title, but the relationship for the future.

Jonny: Go for Castlevania next.
laughs "Dracula May Cry".

Rick: Would you say that right now, Nintendo is basically making small changes... well, I won't even say small changes, but is taking the steps now that they need to be a dominant force in the next generation?

Denis: There's no question... that's one of the things we're trying to do. Iwata-san said it very, very well... is that we're taking an aggressive stance

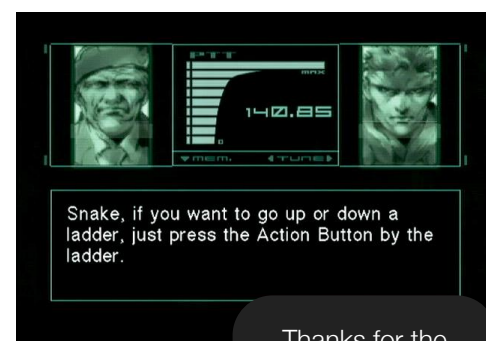
now, immediately, for this current generation, and definitely for future generations. There's big changes coming in our industry. You see it all the time, You see mergers, you see changes, companies that you'd expect to be around forever are gone, and they're going to continue to go. And out of all the first-parties, they all have their different agendas, and I really think that Nintendo is the group that really cares about video games, and the future of video games. Where the other first parties have other agendas, where Microsoft... it's not clear to me whether they're really that interested in video games or not. They definitely want to dominate the market, but whether it's about video games is not clear to me. Also with Sony, they have their ideas, they want to have their entertainment system station, they want to do more than video games. We want to do video games, we want to improve on video games. So we're making relationships that will improve on that in the future. I think the steps that we've taken, even this year, have been tremendous.

Have you guys gone to the other press conferences, the Sony one and the Microsoft one?

Rick: I didn't go to either of those, but I heard quite a bit about them...

Denis: What did you hear about them?

Rick: That "Grabbed by the Ghoulies" was the laughing stock of the show, and that Sony made the biggest splash with their PlayStation Portable announcement.



Thanks for the advice...

Denis: Oh, you mean the portable announcement where they didn't show it? Yeah, right. Interesting. Well, one of the things I've heard and I've asked around... what we had first and foremost was the software. We put it up there and we said, "This is what we're doing." And we had games, we had developers, and the list of developers that were up on stage, was pretty overwhelming for me. Within a couple of days I've met everyone. We went out, Miyamoto-san, Will Wright, and myself went out for shabu-shabu the other night, and we just sort of talked about general stuff. These are all really great game makers, and it's these kinds of alliances that make the difference.

You guys have probably heard me say this before, but as technology continues to escalate, maybe even at an exponential rate, we're going to reach a perceptual threshold where the noticeable differences between each leap in technology become smaller and smaller and smaller, to the point where the hardware itself is going to be such a small factor as compared to the software. So whether you're running 60fps or 120fps, or you're running 32-bit or you're running 48-bit, or whatever the difference is going to be, as far as graphics go. It's going to become less and less noticeable to the player, when we reach this technical threshold where it won't matter any more, it's going to come down to the games. And that's one thing that I know our group understands. And that's what we're focusing on, the software... that's where we're putting most of our effort.

Rick: I'm going to put you on the spot for a second. During the press conference, Iwata said that they aren't going to let Sony have a head start this time around, they're going to be there to compete wherever they have to. Some people would say that Nintendo has already given up the

head start again by dismissing online as not being profitable. How do you feel about that?

Denis: Well I certainly feel... first of all, it's not profitable. It's a huge money sink, and to see the blood loss there, just go talk to some Microsoft shareholders when they talk about Xbox Live, and they won't be very happy. Even if you look at the PlayStation 2 market, it's the same thing, they had very aggressive plans in the beginning, which they later abandoned and said, "Here you guys, just do what you want." That's basically how I saw it anyway.

Clearly, Nintendo is not ignoring the online market, but I think what we're saying is that we're going to get in when the business model is right, and we still have a long way to go. At the end of the day, to keep quality up there, you have to have profitability. You can't just continue to spend and spend money until you're out of it, or you stop having, like, parties at E3 or something. (Editor's note: Microsoft did not have a party at E3 this year.) I don't know. *laughs* I'm just kidding. You can't continue to do that, you've got to be responsible. I disagree that we're missing anything, except missing out on losing lots of money right now. If you ask me, I think that's pretty good.

When it comes to online stuff, let's face it. There's not a lot of rocket science in that, I don't think. You know, connectivity and creating gameplay is not overly difficult and I think that when the time is right, we'll be right in there, without any hesitation. It's just that the time's not right.

Jonny: Back to Metal Gear for a minute. The original Metal Gear Solid was followed by basically an expansion disc, that included... I don't know how many, but a lot of VR missions, I think it was called

Integral? Will those be included in Twin Snakes?

Denis: No, currently not, no.

Jonny: Would you like to?

Denis: Um, well, certainly depending on our schedule, we're going to do all we can, and we want to enhance the experience as much as possible. But that's where we're at with that stuff today.

Jonny: One problem here is that none of us are really familiar with Metal Gear, and of course, a lot of our readers aren't either. Give me an idea of what you think is the essence of Metal Gear. What makes it so interesting? What makes it so popular?

Rick: Why do you like it so much?

Denis: Why do I like Metal Gear?

All: Yeah.

Denis: Well, first of all, the story is amazing. It's a very, very good story. Secondly, the gameplay itself is very original and dynamic. And it is the first game where you go around "stealththing", and you do it in such a way, that... if you play it on the expert or difficult levels, you can really get into it. It's very hard and very challenging.

But beyond that, it's an experience like no other, I think. You know, the character development, the story itself, the way it interweaves... I think it's all done very well. It's very realistic, the weapons are all to spec. I think that the way in which the story develops as you play, also, is very, very interesting. I'll just leave it at that, I don't want to give the story away to you guys if you don't know the story, but it's very good. That's what I would say. It really in some sense, defined its own genre.

pause

You guys are smiling.

Rick: Well, I know more about the game than Jonny's giving me credit for.

Denis: Was that a good answer then?

Rick: *nods* I know one of Kojima's main influences for the Metal Gear Solid games has been the Escape from New York and Escape from L.A. movies, with Snake Plissken and those characters and whatnot. Has (Kojima) tried to get you to put any more of that sort of thing, or take references from other movies and stuff that he likes, and put that in the game?

Denis: That's a hard question to answer, because we're all influenced by the media we watch.

Rick: And what we read...

Denis: Yeah, I'll read a book, or I'll watch a movie, and I'll see some interesting camera work and I'll be like "Geez, I'd really like to do something like that, or similar to that, for our next project"... which I can't talk about now. You know, those kinds of things, so we all do it. However, for the game itself, it's going to have its own look, and there's going to be some new stuff with it. But I don't think that anything in regards to Snake Plissken, that we're going to see any more of that Escape from New York stuff. I don't think so. I think that's probably as far as it's going to go. Time will tell.

Rick: The reason why I asked is because I know that the Metal Gear Solid series, well, Metal Gear in general actually, borrows from those movies... and those genres of movies, quite a bit. Eternal Darkness borrowed very heavily from literary references... Lovecraft and Poe and whatnot.

Denis: We stand on the shoulders of giants. *laughs*

Rick: So for the next project that you can't talk about *smiles*, are you looking to borrow more from other sources of media, other forms of pop culture...

Denis: For future projects, uh...

Rick: Basically, is there something else you've seen that's possibly influencing the way you're going to approach your next project?

Denis: Well, yes... we've seen all kinds of things that we think are influential, but we're really... with our future titles that I can't go into detail with right now, we're really going to try to break new ground in areas that hopefully no one has ever seen before.

Jonny: Do you expect to release another game next year? In 2004?

Denis: We hope so.

Jonny: Has your development on other projects basically been suspended while you work on Metal Gear? Or are you working on multiple...

Denis: We're working on multiple projects right now.

Jonny: OK. I think I already know the answer to this question, but I think it's something our readers think about and talk about. And it has to do with the level of control and interaction between Nintendo and its second-parties. A lot of people look at a project like this, and they think that Nintendo really wanted Metal Gear on GameCube, so they went to Konami and said, "Hey, we want this, we can get somebody to do it for you, etc., etc." And Nintendo basically goes to you and says, "Hey, make this

game," and they pretty much order you to do it. Is it like that at all?

Denis: No, *laughs* Not at all.

Jonny: I think a lot of people assume that's pretty much what happens.

Denis: No. Well, people are going to make assumptions. When you think about Silicon Knights and you think about Nintendo... if you're gonna think about us as a separate entity or as a traditional second party, you're probably going to be wrong on most accounts. We highly collaborate with EAD all the time. In many senses, we're inseparable. I like to consider us basically a team that's inside Nintendo, that isn't located at NCL. That's really it.

Did they order us to do MGS?

Absolutely not. Did they ask us if we wanted to do it? Yes, of course. And it all happened very, very quickly. It's something that was not forced. That kind of relationship doesn't work out.

Rick: Do you know what sparked the conversation that ended up bringing the Metal Gear project into (Silicon Knights)?

Denis: The initial discussions I wasn't there for, but I was there shortly after the release of Eternal Darkness. I actually was in Japan and we were talking about stuff, and we were working on long-term plans for future projects. I sat down with Miyamoto-san and Iwata-san, and they said, "So, would you like to do Metal Gear Solid?" And I said, "Pardon?!" I had no idea. And they said, "Well, you could do Metal Gear Solid if you want for the GameCube." *laughs* And then they told me about the details, and they said, "Are you interested?", and I said, "Sure!" The next day we had a meeting with Kojima-san, and we started. One day! So it was fast.



Rick: Wow.

Denis: Things happen. Real quick. It was good, it was good. It's been very rewarding, we're very, very happy about it. Hopefully you guys will be too.

Jonny: I'll ask the obligatory finale, I guess. Have you played anything (on the show floor), and what's your favorite. What are you looking forward to out here?

Denis: I haven't played anything... at all. I've looked around... F-Zero

looks pretty cool. *pauses* Besides our title, right? *laughs*

Rick: What do you think of "Geist"?

Denis: I haven't played it yet, but I think the concept is very, very interesting. Beyond that, I haven't played it, so I don't know. What do you guys think of Geist?

Rick: I think it's an incredibly fresh and new... and it's something that I don't think a lot of people have seen before, the concept...

Denis: It's very interesting.

Rick: And it's very, very outside of the Nintendo norm. I think the whole idea of having ghosts possessing... is something Nintendo would never approach on their own.

Denis: Well, I don't know. We did Eternal Darkness, and you know... I think what is going to start to happen

over the next few years, you guys are going to start to be surprised. Certainly I think as a group, we're adapting and changing pretty rapidly. Quite frankly, our group, and Retro, we're doing pretty mature products. One of the goals is to have a really well balanced portfolio of games that everyone can enjoy, and I think that Geist fits in that pretty nicely, actually. That's really all, I haven't played it so it's really difficult for me to comment on it. That's interesting though... so you like it then?

Jonny: We're pretty interested in it.

Denis: Good.

Rick: It's a really... it's refreshing. It's very, very different from things I've seen before.

Denis: Cool.

Rick: Is there any message you want to leave with our readers... besides "Buy Metal Gear Solid"? *laughs*

Denis: Well, uh... Hello? How are you guys? I'm sorry I haven't posted that often (in the forums), but I do what I can. Not really, but I hope that people look at things that are happening now, and look at the long-term ramifications rather than even the short term. The short term is very important, and so you're seeing games like Twin Snakes, or the new Pac-Man... which I also thought was very, very cool. And Four Swords. I want to play both of those. Very, very interesting stuff. And Soul Calibur 2, God.

But it's the long-term stuff. The things that have been happening, and I think Iwata-san as President has done a fantastic job so far, and we're going to continue to see aggressive change and positive change for the future from Nintendo. It's good. So that would be the message, I guess.

Rick: Thank you, Denis.

Denis: Thank you.

Rick: It's been a pleasure as always.

Staff Profiles

**Joshua Max****Nickname:** Josh**Age:** 23**Location:** New York, New York**Favorite Nintendo System:** Gameboy Advance**Favorite Game Soundtrack:** Pokémon Silver**Nintendo ID:** It's a secret to everybody.**Game of the Month**

Easily Fire Emblem. I downloaded it on launch day and I'm beating it over and over again. I just can't help it! It's so good! So many support conversations to unlock! Not to mention all the new DLC and StreetPass teams I have to beat. I may have completed the story, but the game is far from over.

Worst Game Played

In recent memory? Crystal Adventure. It was like an unfinished beta test. I just... how could you beat that game without cursing at it every 20 seconds!? There wasn't even any decent gameplay, not to mention a story! I just... how could they... and the slime... I just... I'm going home.

**Kimberly Keller****Nickname:** Little Mac**Age:** 24**Location:** Los Angeles, CA**Favorite Nintendo System:** GameCube**Favorite Game Soundtrack:** Original Pokémon**Friend Codes:** 3381 5964 7741 0975 (Wii)
4596 9546 2095 (3DS)**Game of the Month**

Fire Emblem Sacred Stones. I just bought a new game, but it's still in its plastic wrapper. I can't seem to put the old Fire Emblem down; it's become an unhealthy obsession really.

Worst Game Played

Superman (N64). Sometimes I like a challenge, and sometimes I find reasons to deal with glitches, impossible controls, and crummy graphics. And sometimes I feel like throwing a game cartridge off a cliff.

**Scott Thompson****Nickname:** oksoda**Age:** 27**Location:** Crown Point, IN**Favorite Nintendo system:** Super Nintendo**Favorite Game Soundtrack:** Chrono Trigger/Cross. Oh, and Xenoblade Chronicles**Nintendo ID:** oksoda**Game of the Month**

Luigi's Mansion: Dark Moon. More charm in its first five minutes than some games have in their entirety.

Worst Game Played

Track down Dirt 2 for the Wii if you want to see a game that looks on par with Mario Kart 64. Actually, don't.



Original Publication: March 17, 2004

Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes

By Mike Sklens

REVIEW

This isn't a training exercise. Our lives are riding on this.

Metal Gear Solid may not be a new game, but The Twin Snakes will introduce the series to a whole new audience who have never played the original, including this reviewer. As such, this review is written from the point of a Metal Gear Solid neophyte and obviously will not be taking into account any changes made between the original and this update.

Solid Snake, the legendary warrior, has been pulled out of retirement for another mission. On the Alaskan island of Shadow Moses, a group of terrorists led by the Special Forces group FOXHOUND has taken over a nuclear disposal facility. They've got a nuke aimed at the White House and a nice list of demands. It's Snake's mission to infiltrate the base, rescue the hostages, and prevent the terrorists from launching the nuke. That's the basic plot given at the beginning of the game. However, as the story unfolds, Snake will find out that there is a whole lot more going on than he originally thought.

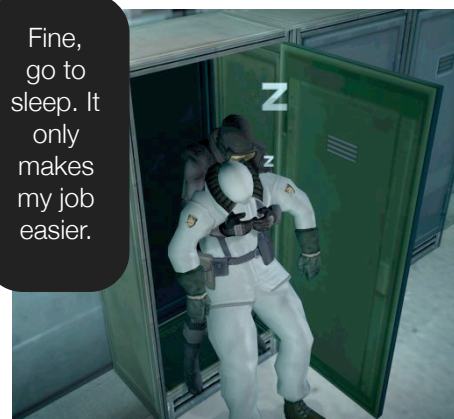


Much of The Twin Snakes is spent sneaking around rooms and trying to avoid detection, a drastic change of pace from many other videogames. Although weapons are involved, it is often a better move to take out the bad guys silently or just plain avoid them. Snake is equipped with a Soliton Radar

system which gives him a map of his immediate surroundings and also monitors enemy movement. This radar is the key to not being spotted. As well as staying out of sight, Snake also has to make sure he doesn't alert the guards by making too much noise. Firing a weapon that's not silenced or running on certain noisy surfaces is sure to alert the guards to his presence. If a guard senses something is wrong he'll go over and check the area out. Even worse, if Snake is spotted, the guards will call for backup.

The enemy AI in The Twin Snakes is ruthless. Guards patrol areas very well, and Snake will have to be very sly to outwit them. Certain guards radio in with status reports every so often, and taking one of these guards out will raise suspicion when the scheduled report does not come in. Being spotted puts the game into alert mode. Reinforcements will be called in and Snake's radar will be jammed. The guards will clear the room searching for any trace of an intruder. Snake will have to stay out of sight, often hiding in a locker or a cardboard box until the guards are satisfied that nobody is there. The tension created by the game while in alert mode is fantastic. The clearing teams will slowly move through a room inspecting every nook and cranny, creating a real "edge of your seat" feeling while Snake is crammed in a box hoping they don't notice anything out of the ordinary.

Fine, go to sleep. It only makes my job easier.



With all this sneaking around one might think that The Twin Snakes lacks action, but that statement is far from the truth. It's actually possible to go through the game like a commando, taking out almost every enemy along the way. However, it will still have to be done stealthily because if Snake is spotted it will be quite difficult for him to take out a whole squad of soldiers at once.



Even if Snake does stick to the shadows, he'll have to contend with several amazingly strong boss characters. Throughout his adventure, Snake will take on a master sniper, a psychic powered madman, and an M1 tank. And those are just some of the crazy bosses this game contains. Almost all of them are fantastic battles that will really push Snake to his limits. The fights are quite inventive and require brains as well as skill to complete them. The sense of accomplishment gained after taking down some of the bosses is invigorating.

While Metal Gear Solid's gameplay is fantastic, the story is what propels it to the level of "next-generation classic." It's well written and rife with plot-twists. The adventure has a good mix of gameplay and story segments and flows incredibly well, with only a few story sequences that drag on just a little too long. The cinematics, which have been directed by famed Japanese action director Ryuhei Kitamura, are absolutely jaw-dropping. Many of them feature bullet-time style effects similar to those seen in The Matrix. The voice acting is very good as well. Sometimes the dialogue is a little stilted and the delivery a bit campy, but it often fits the game's somewhat over-the-top nature. The characters are all filled with wonderful personality and really keep the player involved. In other games, story is sometimes just a vehicle to deliver gameplay, but here the two are woven together so masterfully that it really becomes an experience that must be played to be properly appreciated.

Keeping all this varied gameplay tight is a difficult job, but the control system designed for The Twin Snakes does an excellent job. Much of the controls are context sensitive, giving Snake a lot more abilities. For example, moving Snake towards a wall will cause him to turn around and put his back flat against it so he can hide from foes and sidle across narrow ledges. The controls are wonderfully thought out, and after getting used to them, everything will become second-nature. The only snag comes in pausing and bringing up the communications codec. The two are accomplished by pressing both Start and either A or B. It would be more natural to simply press Start to pause the game and then select the codec or map from a pause menu.

Metal Gear Solid can be approached from two major angles, and this really helps to add to the replay value of the game. The choice to play through the game as a kill everything commando or a hidden and dangerous stealth agent is absolutely fantastic and gives multiple ways to complete certain objectives. There are also multiple endings as well as various extras to be unlocked throughout the course of the game. On top of that, this game is packed to the brim with all sorts of zany Easter eggs to be discovered. And of course there is the brilliant story that can be relived time and time again.



Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes accomplishes what few games can do by bringing a perfect mix of story and gameplay to the table. The two components complement each other so wonderfully that neither would be nearly as good without the other. This is a game that simply must be played to be fully experienced, standing at the forefront of truly wonderful storytelling in videogames.



Score

9.5

Pros

- + Story and gameplay are excellently balanced.
- + Superb controls
- + Two words: Psycho Mantis

Cons

- A few story sequences last too long.
- Button combo for pause/codec is slightly bothersome.
- Occasionally shaky framerate



Game & Wario By Daan Koopman REVIEW

A modern rendition in a very classic formula.

I have to be very blunt: Game & Wario is not a new WarioWare title. While the game borrows from the franchise in some respects, Intelligent Systems' first Wii U venture offers a very different experience. It brings back the feeling of classic arcade action, but it is presented in a modern shell, which is not easy to convey. Game & Wario is not a single concept, but various ideas put into a blender. There are pitfalls along the way, but there is also certainly fun to be had.



Game & Wario has a total sixteen different experiences going for it and some work better than others. For all players, the game begins with Arrow. In this mode, you hold the Wii U GamePad sideways and move in various manners to shoot at objects on the television screen. You will have to attack various Wario themed robots with your arrows while surviving. It is a fun, albeit brief, experience lasting only five stages.

Some of the games in Game & Wario offer an Endless Mode, allowing you to attempt new high scores. An exception is Pirates, a motion-control rhythm game in which no scores are present. While these are wacky and fun levels to

play through, you are only rewarded with a rank at the end, which lessens the incentive to replay. A better example of a game with the Endless feature is Ski. This game, like several others in Game & Wario, has players holding the GamePad sideways and using the motion sensors to play. After a brief five-stage tutorial, the game shines in Endless mode, offering fun elements which keep it from growing stale. Between every section you can pick up cheerleaders, which is not only creates a cool conga line, but also nets you additional points. A similar thing is done with the game Kung Fu, where you use the GamePad for an overhead view. You move the controller around to make sure that the Young Cricket lands on safe ground and can prepare for this next jump. Along the way, you pick up Japanese style buns, which is where the similarities are. Both games require sharp skills to net a highscore, which is rewarding and very enjoyable.

Some of the games in Game & Wario contain objectives which continually change every time you play the game. An example can be found within Shutter, where you use the GamePad as a camera and have to photograph various folks. The specifics of who you will have to get on camera is a mystery before you start and this change in rules helps keep Shutter from ever going stale.





In another game, *Gamer*, 9-volt is told to go to sleep by his mother, but he would rather continue playing microgames. The GamePad display will show *WarioWare* style microgames, but on the television you will see 9-volt's mother attempting to catch her son sleeping. She tries to worm her way in through electronic equipment, the outside window and sometimes just by going through the door. When this happens, you will have to press ZL and ZR to ensure you are sleeping. It's fun, but the selection of microgames is rather limited. This becomes even more apparent when you unlock the option to play the games outside of the context of *Gamer* and attempt high scores on them.

Taxi stands out with its unique relationship between the television and the controller. You use the GamePad to view your close surroundings and shoot spaceships down with ZL and ZR buttons. On the television, you will see a broad overview of the environment, giving you advance notice of events in the game. This is certainly needed, because the player will only have a limited scope on the controller. In the complete opposite side of the spectrum is *Patchwork*, which is a gigantic puzzle adventure for you to play through. There are roughly 90 stages, in which you have various patches to stitch together on the playing field. The end result varies greatly, from animals to classic Nintendo sprites.

The final two games in the regular adventure are possibly the weakest. In *Ashley*, you guide the young witch through three colorful stages, filled with cookies and deserts. The game doesn't feel unique, as the gameplay only requires you to steer the Wii U GamePad left and right. More or less, it feels a short version of a mobile phone game or something that could have been easily done with a Wii Remote. The GamePad shows a close-up view of Ashley, which isn't useful at all. The other is *Design*, in which you draw lines and

objects of various sizes on the GamePad screen. While not necessarily boring, it lacks variety. After playing a few times the element of surprise is lost.

After you finish the required games, two more options will be made available: *Bowling* and *Bird*. *Bowling* may not seem exciting, but is surprisingly interesting. You hold the GamePad sideways and with a solid flick of the finger, the ball will roll across the screen. After the fact, you will be able to tilt the GamePad and give the ball the right amount of weight. *Bowling* offers also a few challenges to complete, as well as some regular bowling match-ups. It's a surprisingly enjoyable experience, with a secret amount of complexity. *Bird* makes a re-appearance, having previously appeared in many *WarioWare* games and as a DSiWare-only title. On the GamePad you will see a *Game & Watch* style grid and on the television a *Claymation* variant. Neither view feels right; I would rather see the pixel graphics back in place. The game plays still quite alright and when you get in the zone, you can have a good time with it nonetheless.

As you play, you are rewarded with special chicken coins which can be spent at a toy capsule machine. Across the various capsules, you can unlock roughly 240 little trinkets, such as special hint cards, which will not only provide you with a piece of the soundtrack, but also give you an extra reason to replay the games. There are also plenty of special gadgets like mirrors and other items, extra games and so much more. It is a big grind to unlock every single thing in your cabinet, so by the end of the campaign, you will be far from done with *Game & Wario*.



Game & Wario includes four dedicated multiplayer modes. The most intriguing one is by far Islands, which supports up to five players, which you throw 3D Frunk creatures to platforms. The game contains a lot of ways to hold your interest, such as the seagulls, which steal Fronks or drop them at regular intervals. They will also change up the ways you score points, which can be a real detriment if you are currently in the lead. Another five-player game is Fruit, in which one of the players is a thief who steals apples. The other players will have to cooperate to find out who is the thief in a crowd filled with many people by watching the television closely as the person with the GamePad is plotting their next move. It is another enjoyable affair. Another game, Sketch, is very similar in concept to Pictionary and this game is likely to attract the same bunch as the popular drawing party game.

Game & Wario is a weird collection for the Wii U, and it won't appeal to everyone. Most of the games have at least some enjoyable ideas, which makes playing them worthwhile. Not every idea will keep you engaged for long and there are some which are a bust. The large number of collectibles requiring many coins will keep players going for completionists. If you are in the need for the next big thing, don't expect Game & Wario to deliver upon this, but if you are searching for an arcade hall experience and can you accept a few shortcomings, the game does offer fun. Sometimes, that's enough.



Finally, there is a two-player rhythm game called Disco. The game is best suited to be played on a table. Both players will sit opposite each other and control one side of the GamePad. The idea is that one player lays down various notes on the rhythm of the music and the other player will have to perform these perfectly. With every mistake made, the players who layered the notes will receive points. It is a cool concept, though the soundtrack is rather limited in scope which unfortunately makes this game not last longer than a couple of rounds. There are still plenty of ways to complicate matters with the other player, which does make a return appealing.

GAME & WARIO

Score

7.5

Pros

- + Enjoyable arcade-style experience
- + Fun multiplayer modes
- + Replay value and collectibles
- + Unique uses of the GamePad

Cons

- Ashley and Design slightly weak
- Collecting coins is a grind
- Some games are too short



Original Publication: January 19, 2010

Silent Hill: Shattered Memories

By Andy Goergen

REVIEW

Making its long-awaited debut on Nintendo platforms almost 10 years after the series began, Silent Hill has come to Wii.

Silent Hill: Shattered Memories was originally billed as a remake of the first game in the series, which came out in 1999. In reality, Shattered Memories is really something else entirely. The game feels detached from the rest of the Silent Hill franchise, and more like its own unique story, itching to be told. The game shares the same setup as Silent Hill, but very shortly takes a left turn and never looks back.

Like the original Silent Hill, the game puts you in control of Harry Mason, a writer who has a car accident on the outside of town. He gets knocked unconscious, and after waking up, realizes his daughter Cheryl has gone missing. From that point forward, it is up to you to explore the strangely vacant city of Silent Hill as it endures a crippling blizzard. The atmosphere, as in other Silent Hill games, is one of loneliness and despair, and constantly has you guessing as to what is real, and what is merely in your character's imagination. The game quizzes you as you play, building a psychological profile that it uses to alter the gameplay experience ever so slightly. Characters will sometimes look or act differently depending on how you



answer. The monsters will begin to take different shapes depending on your answers to the quiz questions. These questions are presented in the form of a therapy session, where your therapist demands to know how you will respond to specific scenarios. These scenes break up the action well, using the Wii Remote to nod or shake your head in response feels natural and appropriate. The game features five different endings depending on your responses to these questions, giving you plenty of incentive to replay the game.

As the player behind the character, you use the Wii Remote to shine the flashlight on the environments that Harry comes across. This works incredibly well, and really puts you in a position to truly explore and notice the world around you. Every room has little details that are waiting to be discovered, and the core gameplay mechanic of the flashlight really puts you in a position to discover them. As you zoom in to read posters and signs, Harry will comment on them without needing to be prompted. This bit of polish really draws you into the experience as you will often find Harry echoing your own thoughts as he comments on the surroundings.

Occasionally, the game will have you move the Wii Remote to mimic the motion to unlatch a door, or open a purse. These moments are fairly sparse, but well done and add yet another layer of immersion to the game.





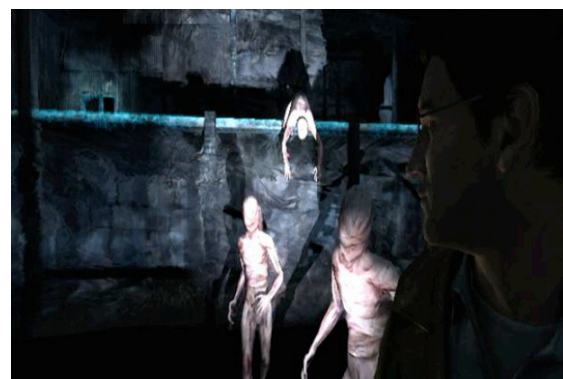
Every so often, the town will go from blizzard to deep-freeze and you will see the walls ice over. These tangible scene changes become one of the few frustrating moments in the game. During the icy scenes, the game goes from atmosphere exploration to pulse-racing chase sequence. The game will give you a waypoint on your GPS, and you will need to race there through the altered landscape while being chased by faceless, agile monsters. When they latch onto you, the game prompts you to shove both of your hands in the direction the monster grabbed you from to simulate shoving the monster off of you. This motion works most of the time, but what is frustrating is that if you do not immediately return your pointer to the center of the screen, you will find Harry running in a circle, or turning around unintentionally. This is very frustrating, considering how easy it is to get lost when your prime goal is to run as fast as you can. It is very difficult to find a chance to check the map without getting attacked, so getting turned around due to control issues adds to the frustration and takes away the thrill of the chase.

Soon into the game, once you realize that it's only during the icy scenes when you are truly in any danger, much of the natural tension from exploring the atmospheric town begins to melt away, which is unfortunate. The game does its best to try to unnerve you, and it has moderate success, but it's still always in the back of your head that there's nothing to worry about until the walls turn blue. That said, there are definitely some absolutely chilling scenes in the game that have nothing to do with the monsters or the creepiness of the town. One in particular occurs about halfway through the game and had me almost gasping for air.

The audio in the game is particularly well done. The game's use of the Wii Remote as a cell phone receiver helps to immerse you in the story, and although the audio is hard to understand at times, you can turn on subtitles if so desired. The voice acting is top notch, featuring about a half-dozen characters. The music is nothing particularly epic, but adds to the overall environment of the game.

The cell phone that Harry carries with him does a very good job of acting as an in-game menu. Pressing the minus key to pull up your phone doesn't bring you out of the game, as Harry can still walk around with the phone out. The phone acts as your save screen, map screen, camera, communication device and also plays into the story as you will receive occasional phone calls and voice messages. Part of the exploration of the game consists of looking for ghosts, taking their photo, and hearing their story play out via voice mail. It's a neat device, and it adds to the game considerably.

Visually, *Silent Hill: Shattered Memories* is stunning. The game pulls off some fantastic tricks all while



maintaining a good, if not necessarily consistent, framerate. There are occasional stutters when Harry pounds through a door, but during the non-chase scenes, you'll barely notice them. The way the flashlight illuminates the environment really impresses, and is even more noticeable if you decide to turn the flashlight off. Your eyes will usually adjust to the darkness and you'll be able to see around you momentarily. The graphical fidelity isn't lessened just because the light is out. The character models in the game are rendered carefully, with detailed facial expressions and realistic body language.

Silent Hill: Shattered Memories fills a gap in the Wii's horror lineup, and it does so with finesse and substance. It is a game that can be appreciated by anyone craving a good psychological thriller that makes good use of motion controls and in doing so, appeals directly to the Wii's core audience.



Score

9

Pros

- + Fantastic production values
- + Great use of motion controls
- + Interesting story and effective atmosphere
- + Multiple endings gives you several reasons to replay

Cons

- Chase scenes can be frustrating
- Removing the danger from the exploration sequences also removes some of the tension



Original Publication: March 7, 2012

Metal Gear Solid: Snake Eater 3D By Zachary Miller

REVIEW

Do you have a Circle Pad Pro? Because you're gonna need one.

Right off the bat, I have to confess my love for Metal Gear Solid 3. It is my favorite entry in the series and one of my favorite games of all time. It is insanely replayable, rarely drags, and is surprisingly emotional. I've bought the game three separate times—the original release (Snake Eater), the enhanced remake (Subsistence), and the new HD collection. Now I have yet another way to play this epic one-eyed Snake adventure: the 3DS. Now then, given that MGS3 uses every button on the PS2 controller, I was a little wary (as was everyone who played it at E3 2011) of how Snake's tropical traversal would translate to the 3DS. You need a Circle Pad Pro if you want to play MGS3DS, as the controls without it are reprehensible, but once you have it, the game becomes very playable.



Since MGS3 is, chronologically speaking, the first in the Metal Gear Solid saga, it makes sense that it's the first game in the series on 3DS. The short version is that Naked Snake is sent on a sneaking mission to Russia to recover a kidnapped Soviet weapons engineer (who had previously

defected to the USA) and, later, take out an American military defector. On the way, you'll encounter fascinating characters, learn the basis of the entire series storyline, eat lots of unique jungle wildlife, and ogle a bikini-clad blonde spy. There's also a scene straight out of *The Fugitive* ("I didn't kill my wife!"). While fundamentally insane, the storyline is actually the most plausible and grounded of the entire series, which helps the emotional scenes hit home.

This 3DS game is a port of the Subsistence campaign with some nice gameplay tweaks from newer MGS entries, namely the addition of crouched walking and CQC icons. Enemy alert phases don't last nearly as long anymore, either. Whether the gameplay is switched up any more based on your favorite MGS game (a choice at the beginning of the game), I can't really tell, and it's interesting that Portable Ops isn't one of your choices. Of course, there's no Metal Gear Online or Snake vs. Monkey this time around, only one of which is somewhat (but not really) disappointing, but the core game is long enough, replayable enough, and features enough unlockable stuff to reward players.

I'm not even going to discuss the default controls because they're so terrible, so ill-suited to MGS3, that you shouldn't even play the game if you don't have a Circle Pad Pro. I don't know how many of you experimented with Portable Ops or Peace Walker on the PSP; the former was barely playable and the latter was wholly unplayable. MGS games need four shoulder buttons and two sticks—period. With the Circle Pad Pro, MGS3DS is great, though I'm not a big fan of using the touch screen to equip items and weapons, as it seems clunky. You can use the D-pad to open your item and weapon windows, and that's okay, but it's still not as smooth as it is in other versions. Still, it's a minor complaint.

If you've played MGS3 before, you should know that the irritating journeys into menus have remained unchanged. You'll often find yourself digging into your backpack to equip or unequip things,* going into the survival viewer to heal wounds, going into the camouflage menu to change your appearance, going into the food menu to eat something and regain your stamina, and going into the radio menu to call one of your off-site teammates. You'll spend a big chunk of the game navigating these menus, and it can become tiring. I appreciate the depth of gameplay, but it gets a little ridiculous sometimes.



The game looks good, but it is no better than Subsistence did on PS2—this is most definitely not the HD version. Framerate drops during cut scenes are still present here and textures still look blurry. It's easy to get turned around in certain jungle areas as well. The 3D effect doesn't add as much as you'd think because nothing is differentiated like it was in, say, Super Mario 3D Land or Mutant Mudds. This is a consequence of having full camera control in MGS3D, so I just ended up playing with the 3D off most of the time. One 3DS-specific aspect of the game bothered me: walking across wooden suspension bridges requires you to mess with the gyroscope, which is WAY too sensitive. It's made up for by another 3DS-specific feature: in a nod to Twin Snakes, the Kero Frogs have been replaced by Yoshi dolls.

The game has so many awesome moments it's difficult to leverage any real complaints against it. My favorite sequences are the game's HALO-jump introduction, the fight with The End (so many options), and your escape from Groznyj Grad, but the infiltration of the Shagohod hanger and the final Boss fight are also major highlights. Of course, Kojima's trademark inability to edit his cut scenes to a reasonable length sometimes cuts into the game, specifically the final boss' lengthy diatribe about everything in the world, which really kills the momentum. Oh, and Ocelot has never been more embarrassing ("Rawr!"). However, unlike the stories of the other games in the series, MGS3 is

not backloaded with mythology and is much easier to follow, though series fans will still get the most out of the subtle nods to the story's future.

For people who've never played an MGS game before, MGS3 is going to take some work—it's an open-ended type of gameplay that's hard to get used to, but once you become acclimated to how the world works and how many options are at your disposal, it's incredibly rewarding. You're definitely being led down a specific path, but the trip is enjoyable and full of choices. This is a great introduction to the series and a great game period. If you have a Circle Pad Pro, I can't recommend it higher.

*The game doesn't tell you how to equip new items. I kept finding guns and items and then opening up my backpack and not seeing them. You have to open your backpack, tap an empty slot, and then choose the item you want to put in that slot. It's tedious, but you should know how to do it.



Score

8

Pros

- + Epic story with wonderful characters
- + Lots of unlockable content
- + Minor, though appreciated, gameplay improvements
- + Moving musical score
- + Watching Snake kick Ocelot's ass at every opportunity

Cons

- 3D effect doesn't really do anything for me
- Downright unplayable without the Circle Pad Pro
- No improvements to the game's overall performance
- Some lengthier-than-necessary cutscenes



By Crystal Chappell



By Nat Silva



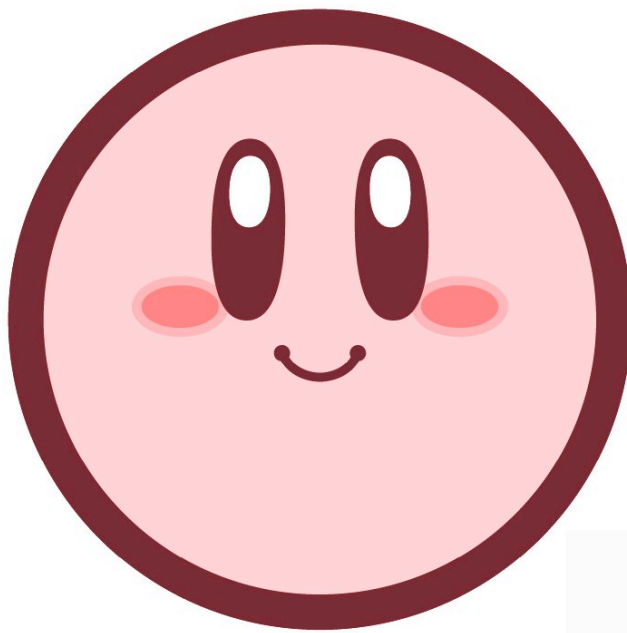
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The original RFN shirt design features "character art" of Jonny, Greg, James, and Lindy, all provided by listener David Ochart. The overall graphic design is by Amanda Albert. The front features all four beloved RFN personalities arranged in the style of the classic "black box" NES packaging; the back says "NintendoWorldReport.com" and "Est. 1999".



NEXT ISSUE



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