

CONGRATULATIONS

To the following Greek Freshmen who had a 3.5 or above in their first semester!

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'Nox' is simplistic fun

By Cliff Hicks

Staff writer

Let's get one thing clear up front — this game is probably not for the hardcore "Diablo" fans who are looking to kill time until "Diablo II" gets released.

"Diablo" fans are legion, and many have been firing up the original "Diablo" while pining for the beta-test "Diablo II." A few of them have shot glances over at "Nox" and wondered "Hmmm ..."

My response: This is not the game you're looking for.

If you really can't play "Diablo" one more time and want something new, go buy "Darkstone." It's enough like "Diablo" that you'll be able to get by.

Once that distinction is out of the way, "Nox" is actually pretty fun, although sometimes a bit simplistic.

There aren't really any statistics, the only thing built up over the course of the adventure are special abilities and equipment. There's also no random dungeon generator and no way to do the quests with a friend.

Get it? It's not "Diablo."

But "Nox" has a lot going for it.

The single player quests in "Nox" have a tinge of humor to them, which is good, because the fantasy genre of games needs to lighten up a little bit.

But the single player really isn't the focus of "Nox."

This isn't to say it doesn't have a good single player. There are three separate sets of interlocking quests, depending on which character class you choose — Warrior, Conjurer or Sorcerer.

Warrior is your basic hack-'n'-slash, gimme-a-bigger-sword type of muscled barbarian. The Conjurer charms and summons monsters to do the work for him. The Sorcerer pushes spells and stays as far back as possible.

Right away, the goal of the game designers was to blend the feel of "Diablo" with a combination of "Quake" and "Command & Conquer." They wanted a new type of multiplayer experience.

Sound odd?

Perhaps, but it is enjoyable.



REVIEW Nox

SYSTEM: PC
DEVELOPER: Westwood Games
GRADES: B
FIVE WORDS: Diablo meets Quake equals action.

"Nox" multiplayer is fast and furious, filled with several people, with all of the people trying to kill the nearest other person. Everyone starts with all the spells, and there's usually some equipment nearby to help you out.

Multiplayer also includes other variations like NoxBall.

It does take some getting used to, however. It's easy to get a game that feels too cramped and crowded.

Some people may like the overpopulated areas because it means more frags per minute, but it can get a little frustrating for my tastes.

If you're buying the game sheerly for multiplayer, my suggestion is download the demo and try it before you buy the game.

It's hit or miss, and not for everyone.

"Nox" is also a bit of a system hog, as my 450 AMD K6-2 couldn't run the game at an acceptable speed with all the options turned on. That's odd, considering the game is a 2-D affair, with no polygons to push around.

Still, if you're looking for a different kind of multiplayer experience and have the horsepower to push it, you might want to give "Nox" a look-see.

'Slave Zero' offers ambitious premise

By Cliff Hicks

Staff writer

Anyone who is both a gamer and a fan of Japanese animation was probably excited about "Slave Zero."

A game where players get to pilot a big-ass robot through populated cities? Sign me up!

While the idea was exciting, the problem is in the execution. The game itself is a mixed bag that disappoints more than it excites.

The weapons are of first and foremost importance with most gamers. The manual is a vague about strength.

The fact that players will automatically keep the most powerful weapon seems odd at first. But even giant robots can't carry around dozens of weapons.

"Slave Zero" does a lot of things right. Control is fairly tight, and players really do get the feeling of being in a giant robot. Cars are barely the size of the characters' feet. Stomping a foot down and watching any ground vehicle shake is always lots of fun. And the combat is fast and furious.

Also, players won't need a pilot's license to get around like they do for the "MechWarrior" games. This is more arcade appeal than simulation fare.

But it seems for all the things "Slave Zero" does right, it does quite a lot of things wrong.

At certain points, the game can be a little vague about where players are supposed to go and what they're supposed to do. I found myself wandering around one map for the better part of an hour before I figured out what I was supposed to be doing.

The PC version offers multiplayer after downloading a patch and then only over a LAN, not through the Internet.

No Internet combat? In the age of the online gamer? Damn shame.

The Sega Dreamcast version has its own collection of problems. When the introduction suffers slowdown, players



REVIEW Slave Zero

SYSTEM: PC & Dreamcast
DEVELOPER: Infogrames
GRADES: C & D+
FIVE WORDS: A lackluster giant robot game.

know they're not in for a great experience.

That slowdown comes back all the time, too. Any time more than four or five enemies are on the screen, the game turns into something of a slide show.

This is why I bought a Dreamcast?

The multiplayer on the Dreamcast isn't everything it's cracked up to be either with too-small arenas for fighting and slowdown up the wazoo.

The control scheme also takes a little bit of getting used to with the Dreamcast controller, which does nothing to make the game more playable.

In the end, if a player has a strong PC and wants the experience of playing one of the giant mechs you see in anime, that player may want to pick up "Slave Zero."

But I'd recommend getting "Shogo," a similar and much better title, first. Dreamcast gamers, don't get "Slave Zero" unless it's used, and even then, make sure it's cheap. Real cheap.