

SHOULD YOU PLAY NO MAN'S SKY?

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As anyone who is professionally attached with the video game industry might argue, hype is a dangerous thing. It can lead to bloated expectations to capitalize upon which developers might resort to slapped-on features and ridiculous marketing to fuel the hype train.

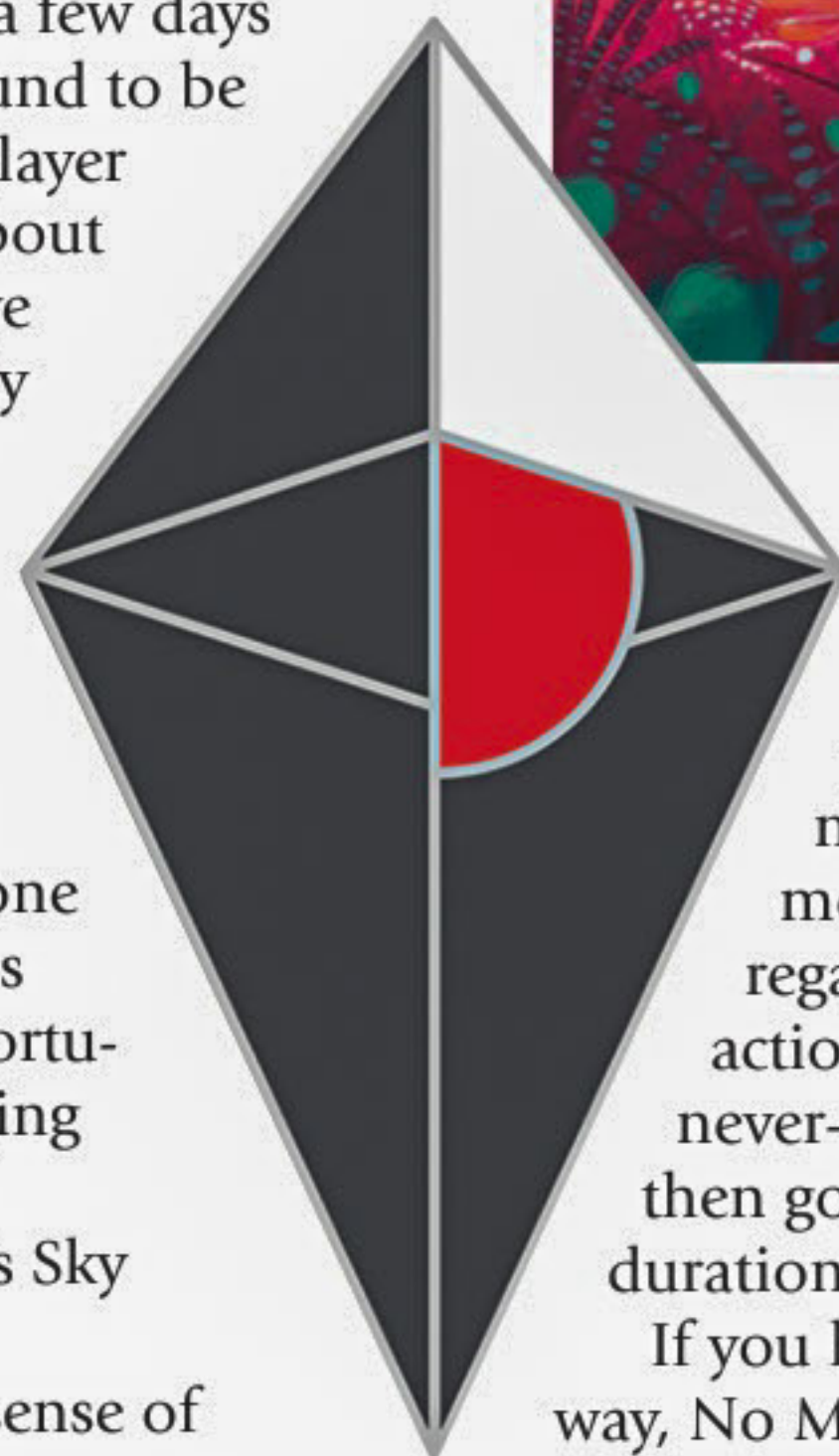
No Man's Sky is a textbook example of such a travesty. When Hello Games first announced the title, they made a lot of gamers go berserk in anticipation. Strangely enough, this sort of massive attention to the game lingered on to the point of its release thanks to clever snippets of gameplay released periodically, and Sean Murray's (Founder of Hello Games) charismatic interviews. Many were not swayed by this, however, as they began to question the ultimate purpose of the game itself. It goes without saying, they were quickly shot down by people who were blind in their passion for No Man's Sky – a game they hadn't even played yet.

No Man's Sky was subject to a multitude of delays before its eventual release on August 9th; a few days before, leaked copies of the game were found to be circulating among various retailers. One player even reached the centre of the galaxy in about 20 hours, an endeavour which should have taken no less than 50 hours. He apparently abused a trade commodity that could be sold over and over again for lucrative gains which fuelled the monetary requirements for getting a hyper drive that would be enough to cover a vast swath of space.

Promptly, the developers issued a day-one patch that sought to improve upon various fallacies. The patch did eliminate the opportunity to abuse the trade system while bringing along several improvements to the world.

But it was not enough to save No Man's Sky from utterly failing to meet expectations.

When the game is first booted up, the sense of scale will entice even the most scrutinizing critic. You will want to explore the vast reaches of the enormous universe. The prospect of finding bizarre, unique planets



and wildlife, all procedurally generated courtesy of a simple algorithm that takes bits and pieces of existing game assets and meshes them together, is alluring. However, as hours pass, you will come to know that all the animals look like plastered-on Frankenstein experiments. There is nothing interesting about them regarding how they behave or respond to your actions. The game, sadly, throws the player in a never-ending cycle of farming resources, upgrading, then going to the next system. This repeats for the duration of the game.

If you like to grind, and I mean a LOT of grind by the way, No Man's Sky will pique your interest for a good 50 hours or so. After that, the mundane combat, lackadaisical resource farming, and boring creatures will start to strain your enjoyment. The game, arguably, has a solid

base upon which periodic improvements can be made to turn the game into a much more fun experience. Destiny did it as the jump from Year 1 to Year 2 was so drastic that it made Destiny a very "complete" game compared to what it was during its release. Developer Hello Games have already promised new features coming to No Man's Sky. Will they be enough to retain players and give them enough motivation to keep coming back? Or will the new content crash and burn like the Division? Too many questions, no concrete answers in sight. If you want to try the game, I'd say borrow or rent it first. It might not be your cup of tea.

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KING OF FIGHTERS XIV DEMO ROUND UP

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The demo for King of Fighters XIV is out now on the PlayStation store across all regions. Players are already uploading some crazy combo tutorials on YouTube. I was looking forward to this divisive entry to the series myself for quite a while and it does show great potential as a fighter.

But first, let us address the giant elephant in the room.

There is much that has been spoken about the game's aesthetics, not all of it terrible, but King of Fighters XIV sorely lacks the visual polish of its peers. A newcomer to a pioneer franchise by all means should have better visuals than its predecessors or the previous entry. Take a glimpse at how far Capcom's Street Fighter V has come, or even Tekken for that matter. Their artworks are, to describe in one word, astounding! King of Fighters XIV may seem to look better while playing due to detailed textures that aren't always apparent while watching online, but the stark reality is that the game looks bland.

Worse, the SNK flavor that is lost in the 3D transition is criminal. For instance, Kyo looks atrocious as his facial features are unrecognizable.

Moving on, things tend to get better as

I delve deep into combat. It's made apparent through a succinct tutorial. A familiar four-button setup, alongside meter-inhibited supers and cancel systems are retained from previous entries.



This is where the game really starts to shine. Indeed, the potential of the combat is so vast that, within mere hours of the demo's release, players across the globe have uncovered the touch-of-death

combos. Contrarily, the opposing player can do nothing but watch as their character is beaten to a pulp- sometimes knocked out in a single, unstoppable combo chain. YES! I'm talking about the

ceaseless corner juggles, mix ups, cross up setups that enable us to finish the opponent in one. Although the past games also had such monstrous maneuvers, here it is far more balanced.

Whether or not this is a good thing remains to be seen but speaking personally, it's not anything new to a KOF entry. One good reason I can think as to why this feature has been implemented is for making great comebacks. After all, it's a 3v3 team battle. If a player is down to his last man while the opponent has 2 or more characters at disposal, the former player would definitely want to eliminate his current opponent in a single combo string provided the opportunity. Crucially, the combat feels very good. The combo system is neatly designed; team battles and freshly presented new characters bring exciting possibilities to the table.

Those itching to get a taste of KoF XIV can just download the demo and play. Smattering stages, new characters, and old faces to try out, are just some of the factors that act as incentives for playing the demo. The only other problem with the demo is that it has no online functionality at all.

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