

WHY I LEFT THE MASTER RACE

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My entry into the magical world of gaming was through a Pentium III computer back in 2001. Ever since that, I had been an avid supporter of the "Glorious PC Gaming Master Race". I remember falling from my chair laughing at how bad GTA IV looked on my friend's Xbox 360 compared to my PC. Last year, however, I left the Master Race and joined the dark side of the consoles by buying a PS4. It wasn't an easy decision to make but these are some of the key points that triggered it –

Saturated Hardware Market
The first time my PC Gaming experience started going sour was when my PC got outdated and I needed to buy a new one. I was dumbfounded by the abundance of hardware options in the market. Intel kept releasing new processors every year with negligible improvement in benchmark tests. However, each generation of processors were specific to particular models of motherboards so my choice of processor would also limit my choice of

motherboard. On the other hand, there was AMD whose processors, despite having more cores and higher clock speed, kept lagging behind in benchmarks. There was also the dilemma of choosing between the existing DDR3 and the then-upcoming DDR4 memory. Overall, building a new rig seemed much harder than it had to be.

Absence of a Unified Marketplace

PlayStation and Xbox have a single, unified marketplace for their users. Sadly, this is not the case for PC gamers. Besides Steam, there are several other marketplaces such as EA's Origin, Ubisoft's Uplay, GOG, and Microsoft's very own Windows Store. Even though the presence of multiple marketplaces ensures competition and often rewards us with great discounts, managing so many accounts can get a bit tedious.

Inconvenience of Trading Games

Most DRM technologies assign the Serial Number of the disc to a particular account so it becomes near impossible to

trade retail games on PC. Digital downloads can be shared through Family Sharing or giving away the login details of your account, none of which are very convenient methods.

Lack of Quality Exclusives
While the PC does have some great online games up its sleeves, it doesn't have much to offer for those who prefer a single-player experience. Microsoft is trying to solve this issue by releasing Xbox One exclusives on the Windows Store but there aren't enough system sellers just yet.

Optimisation Woes

In recent times, there have been some abysmal PC ports despite repeated postponements. Sometimes games don't run

smoothly despite meeting the system requirements. Bugs, glitches and crashes are more commonplace in PC versions compared to their console counterparts. Even though the developers are mostly at fault here, their clumsiness can be justified by the difficulty of optimising games for PCs having innumerable hardware combinations compared to consoles which generally have a fixed configuration.

Nony Khondaker is an introvert with immense passion for tech and music. Feel free to send your constructive feedback at nonykhondaker@live.com or follow him on twitter.com/NonyKhondaker

GAME REVIEW

Return of the Yakuza

FARDEEN ZAREEF

SEGA's trademark Yakuza series is well-known for its critical acclaim and revolutionary installments. Detailed environments and intricate plots along with stellar game play have made the series a must-play for everyone. January 22, 2017 saw the worldwide release of the series' newest installment, Yakuza 0, amidst massive hype.

Yakuza 0 serves as a prequel to the main timeline of the series. Set in December 1988, the game focuses on the series' two main characters: Kazuma Kiryu and Goro Majima, and their origin stories as they find themselves entangled between a major fight for territory amongst rival clans.

Right off the bat, Yakuza 0 stands out for its emphasis on detail. While its map scale might seem small when compared to the vast area of recent open-world releases, Yakuza 0 outshines them all with its attention to detail; every single little object is done to perfection. The 80s Japanese retro vibe is majestic, while it might not be as nostalgic as another famous 80s sandbox title GTA Vice City, it makes quite a good impression. The atmosphere of 80s Tokyo and Osaka is quite riveting and there is a beautiful mix between gorgeous and gore.

Further intensifying the game is the vast array of side missions and activities. Traditional to the series, the game features



retro arcade games and can be even played by two players. Activities range from gambling, fishing, betting, dancing to even underground fight clubs. While the side missions are as silly and hilarious as it can get. From teaching members of a punk rock band to be tough in a meet and greet event and feeding them the wrong answers to being the producer of a television show, the side missions/quests managed to keep me engrossed for long hours.

But the standout for me in Yakuza 0 was the storyline. The prequel allowed the game to not take up any prior burden and smoothly tells us an invigorating story about the Yakuza. A tale drenched with

betrayals, secrets and the consequences of going against the clans. Yakuza is a gangster story told right. Deadly mob bosses, blackmailing, contract hits and car bombings serve as the conventional plot points. Another highlight for me were the long cutscenes and each cutscene served as a way to further advance the plotline and develop the characters even further and the situation was helped with the amazing writing and brilliant acting performances.

The traditional fighting system of the Yakuza series comes to play once again. And it's as brutal as ever. Each opponent taken down means more cash but it feels

like the developers could have done a little bit more with the fighting mechanism of the story given how this is the sixth installment in a long running series. But it's fun nevertheless.

A small letdown was the dated character animations which came off as a little wooden to my taste and while the multi-console release (including the PS3) is understandable, but compared to recent open world titles, I had better expectations.

As a whole, Yakuza 0 is a solid release and is a title I am looking forward to replay again. It has style, elegance and yet it is one of the most brutal video games that have been released in recent times. With a strong emphasis on details and beautiful storytelling and engaging side quests, the game is indeed a classic which could have been helped to further up the ante if the fighting system was tweaked at least a little bit and the animations were given more focus on.

Yakuza 0 is out on the PlayStation 3 and PlayStation 4 and I suggest you to grab a copy and delve deep into the world of the Yakuza.

Fardeen Zareef is sarcastic, in spirit. He supports Manchester United and spends his free time telling people Chandler Bing jokes and fighting carbohydrates but his love for Doritos manages to overwhelm him. You can send him your love/hate at fzareef666@gmail.com