

OPINION

The Horror Show that is FIFA 19

RUMMAN R KALAM

Ever since FUT came into the picture, the game has been a \$60 freemium game if not worse. Even if you buy the game at full price or more, there's very little chance you'll get to play with your favourite players in FUT unless you spend hundreds of hours grinding away to get a chance at it or use your credit card. The things that are wrong with FUT are a different, much longer article altogether but what I want to focus on is how a lot of us casual fans are pretty much left out.

RE-INTRODUCING OLD FEATURES AS NEW

In FIFA 16, they "introduced" player training in career mode, something that was there in FIFA 08, which they took out and then re-launched with just the addition of skill games. And now in FIFA 20, they have Volta Football which is just FIFA Street all over again. At this point, it almost feels like Electronic Arts intentionally holds back or removes features so they can sell the same thing twice.

GOALS FEEL WORTHLESS

Hitting the bar is not fun but sometimes you accept it because that's how football is, right? Wrong. FIFA 19 will tell you that you must hit the bar at least four times each match for it raise the stakes. Your thirty-pass move finally found a gap in the opponent's 3-depth drop back? You'll pass it to the wrong person even if the direction key was pointing the right way. After your opponent has held you back for 85 minutes doing nothing but chasing you with Kante, he finally lands his only perfect sliding tackle in the game for it to just bounce up back to YOUR player for you to score a cheap goal.

Welcome to FIFA.

IGNORING THE COMMUNITY

Just go on Reddit and the EA forums. There are issues with matchmaking, balancing issues and many other problems that EA just continues to ignore. One thing the community has been railing for years is the user interface. You have to select the language EVERY TIME you start the game and press X a bunch of times until you finally get in. Simple quality of life improvements are not made simply because, I am guessing, they don't sell FIFA Points.

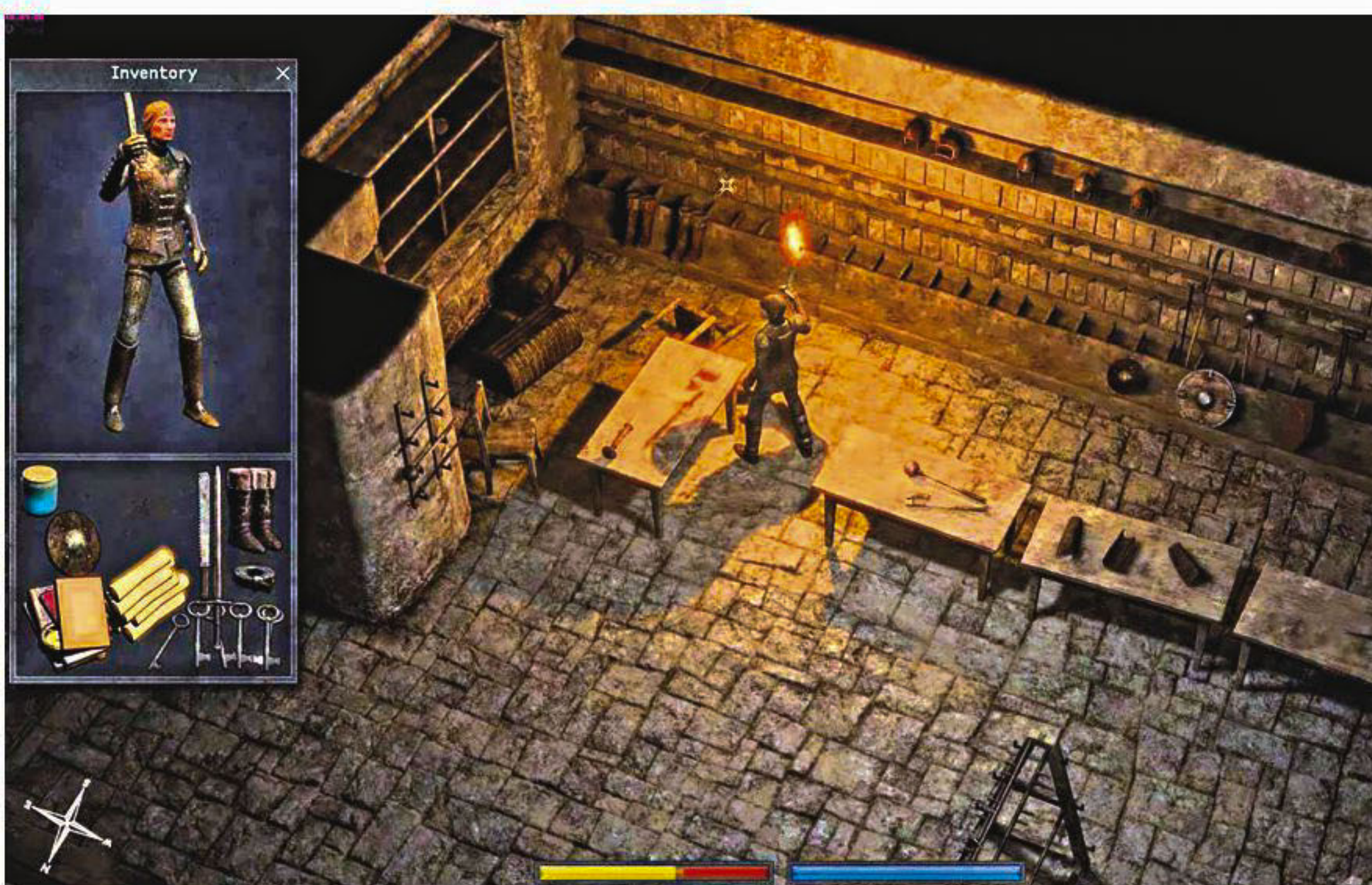
TRASH PHYSICS

Don't you love it when Van Dijk's knee bends backwards to tackle you? Or how when you trigger a run with L1 and your attacker runs straight into a CB only to crash into him then fall? Not to mention they have new buzzwords for the physics engine every year but the same old glitches.

SUPERPOWERED A.I.

Ever played a game in Word Class difficulty? MK Dons can have a passing accuracy above 90% and they will literally defend with 11 men behind the ball. On Legendary, the CPU actually bothers to attack, which makes the mode easier than World Class at times.

Of course people will say "Don't buy FIFA!" and that's not how it works. We love to recreate in the game what we see on TV and that's how EA holds us ransom with their stack of licenses of the players, teams and the leagues. However, buy the game but don't buy FIFA Points and especially don't buy the Champion/Deluxe/Super Deluxe/Ronaldo/Messi/Usain Bolt Edition. Don't buy it on launch either. If you do, you are incentivising EA to keep the game as awful as it is right now.

**GAME REVIEW**

Exanima: Isometric RPG meets Mordhau

WASIQUE HASAN

Okay, perhaps comparing this to *Mordhau* is a bit of a stretch. However, *Exanima* is such a unique game that I can't find a better comparison than that. Bear with me while I explain exactly why this game is so difficult to place into a category. One thing I can guarantee is that *Exanima* is extremely rewarding if you take the time to get used to its systems.

Exanima is an isometric RPG in the vein of classics that came out in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Its story mode starts off with you waking up in an underground dungeon with a single torch beside you and darkness all around. From there, you need to navigate your way through the darkness, figuring out how things work on your own. Right off the bat, you'll need to look through the in-game manual to get a grasp of the controls. To make best use of them, however, you'll need to understand that everything in the game is physics-based. All the items inside the game are fully 3D and interact with one another accordingly. This means you have to pull or push doors to open them, manually pull objects out of your way if they are blocking the path, and if you're not careful while walking, your character could trip on objects strewn across the floor and fall over.

Where the physics of the engine really shines, however, is in combat. Combat isn't just frantically clicking on enemies until they're dead. Damage is based on the momentum and impact zone of your hits, so you need to make sure your character's combat matches how combat works in the real world. If you take a huge swing with a sledgehammer, your opponent could walk closer towards you. This would mean that instead of the hammer end hitting them, they would only be struck with the handle and suffer no damage. This results in all fights being tactical, with you and your opponents weaving in and out of each other's range, trying to find an opening between your parries and feints to land a killing blow.

The nostalgia for classic RPGs doesn't mean the graphics have suffered. Quite the contrary, since *Exanima's* art style is incredible. The dungeons are ominous, and the darkness is forebodingly dark. This also allows for some incredible shadows, as every physical object casts different shadows which realistically grow larger and smaller as light sources change position. Even when you drop your torch, you'll see the uneven cobblestones casting tiny shadows along the ground.

The plot, while unfinished, is still quite interesting. It is revealed to you slowly and organically through notes, letters and books, augmenting the environmental storytelling all around you. In particular, the second area has a series of treatment rooms with medical equipment and then coffins, as little notes fill you in on how the world came to be filled with the walking corpses all around you. I was on edge all throughout that area, and little moments like this stick with you throughout its story mode.

Exanima was released in early-access in 2015, but is still being worked on by the developers, with the latest update coming out on July 14, 2019. However, even with the current features it is well worth the price tag of USD 6.99 on Steam. If you want an RPG experience a little different from the *Skryims* and *Assassins's Creeds*, I'd highly recommend checking *Exanima* out.

Wasique Hasan came back to Bangladesh to eat mangoes and get heat-stroke, and he hasn't found any mangoes yet. Send him information that will lead to the acquisition of mangoes at fb.com/hasique.wasan

