

VISUAL NOVELS

Looking to get into visual novels? Here's where to start

RAIAN ABEDIN

Visual novels often serve as the perfect blend between reading a book and playing a game. As such, the experience they offer can be varied, with in-depth stories written to feel fresh and to allow the players the ability to make meaningful choices that affect the outcome of the game. For those looking to experience a story that manages to be dense and lengthy, and still have a level of interactivity associated with it, here are three visual novels to check out.

Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney

Originally released all the way back in 2001, *Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney* follows our titular character working as a defence attorney swinging between investigating cases and defending his clients from the clues discovered through his investigations. As such, the game also employs a variety of puzzles alongside dialogue options that allow you to take charge of proving your client's innocence. The player is given plenty to do here, from examining clues to speaking to witnesses — the game does a fantastic job at laying out the whole process for the player to experience.

Steins; Gate

If you're familiar with the masterfully created



sci-fi time-travelling anime, then you probably already know the story *Steins;Gate* has to offer. The story follows Okabe Rintarou (also known as Hououin Kyouma) as he one day finds the body of a young scientist named Makise Kurisu covered in blood. This sets off a series of events involving time travel, conspiracy theories, and attempting to change a future that may be set in stone. Unlike *Phoenix Wright*, however, player interactions with this visual novel are generally kept to a minimum. While this can take away from the interactive aspect of the visual novel, the oddball narrative filled with

twists and turns more than makes up for any shortcomings *Steins;Gate* may have.

Disco Elysium

The narrative of *Disco Elysium* follows a police officer waking up from a period of unconsciousness with no memory of where he is or even who he is. The story then revolves around traversing the fictional city of Revachol, trying to uncover the mystery of a body hanging from a tree. The premise may seem simple, but the world it takes place in is the furthest thing from it — exploring themes of poverty, politics, civil war, and even personal trauma.

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DEADLINE: NOT MENTIONED



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