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Deus Ex Invisible War ("How not to make a sequel", long) Subscribe

Stumpokapow
listen to the mad man
(09-03-2010, 03:44 AM)
Quote

Deus Ex Invisible War ("How not to make a sequel", long) #1

Deus Ex: Invisible War is the sequel to the original Deus Ex, which was a very widely acclaimed cyberpunk RPG released in 2000 on PC (and later ported, poorly from what I understand, to the PS2). Deus Ex was a long, involving game that executed a number of fantastic ideas very well. Invisible War was released in 2003 for the PC and OG XBOX. It is not acclaimed, it's not really cyberpunk, and it's not an RPG. It's not long or involving and it doesn't have many ideas and those that it does have aren't executed well.

Premise
The basic premise is that the Earth has undergone an event called the Collapse. Twenty years after this event, a terrorist attack annihilates the city of Chicago. You play as Alex D (you choose the gender of your character), a student at Tarsus Academy, which is an organization that nominally trains gifted students and places them in companies and other powerful organizations at the end. Alex studies in Chicago and is evacuated to Seattle as the Chicago is destroyed. Very quickly after arriving in Seattle, things go to shit there as a religious cult called the "Order" attacks the Tarsus Academy.

The Order, you see, are protesting against biomechanical implants that are given to Tarsus students. After escaping the Tarsus Academy in Seattle, Alex is contacted by his former schoolmate Billie (female--I have no idea if she's male if you play a female) who reveals that she sympathizes with the order. Alex is also contacted by the WTO, who are like a sinister version of the actual World Trade Organization. The story launches from here, as Alex navigates the various factions of the game to figure out what the real motivations behind the attack and the various groups were.

My review is directed towards people who have played Deus Ex (the original). If you haven't, let me recommend that you play it and very quick answer your next question:
Should I play this game if I haven't played Deus Ex?
No. It's not a particularly interesting game from a gameplay point of view--all of its best ideas were used earlier in Deus Ex--and the story is a complete and utter mess, the back half of which only makes sense if you've played Deus Ex. The game has also aged very poorly. I'll make a note of many of the technical problems later, but the short version is that it doesn't play very well by modern standards, the technical performance is horrible, the game is in locked 4:3, it has a horrible UI (really it's an example of making an awful UI for consoles, and then porting that UI wholesale to PC and it being ten times as horrible there).

Deus Ex (the original) is a really excellent game. It was ugly even at release and it's hideous now, but setting that aside it's really something special. Both games cost $9.99 on Steam, but they've been on sale for $4.99 before. Go play Deus Ex. Skip this game.

For everyone else... **Gameplay**
The original Deus Ex was an open-ended FPS-RPG. Your character could level up--experience was earned through missions, incentivizing you to check out side missions and explore nooks and crannies. You could modify your weapons. You could learn abilities. You could buy items. You could modify your body. You could play stealthy, hacker, melee, run-and-gun, smooth talker. You could do no kill runs. Dialog frequently materially impacted the way missions unfolded and was pretty well written from a

game point of view. I won't say that the balance between all these gameplay styles was perfect, but it worked enough that you never felt like putting nails in your eyes. Damage was location-based, so enough damage to your legs and you'd have to drag yourself to safety.

Deus Ex Invisible War ditches almost all of these things. There's no more experience. There's still money but you need very little and there are only a handful of stores in the game. You can still modify your weapons, but the system has been streamlined significantly and for the worse--although I put upgrades in both slots of every weapon, I never felt like they did anything besides the silencer, which was so essential that it went in pretty much every weapon. Location based damage is gone.

Ammo has been made universal--every weapon uses the same ammo, although the larger the weapon the more ammo it uses. Because ammo is universal, you generally end up picking one or two weapons and using them 100% of the game. The shotgun and SMG and pistol are useless. In the end you get a rocket launcher that is drastically more powerful than anything else and has an unlimited distance user steerable rocket so you can clear out an entire level without walking through it at all.

Enemies at the end of the game are largely either explosive or emit poison gas when killed, and almost exclusively fire rocket launchers or flamethrowers. This is annoying because it basically means that the only viable build in the end game is to use the guided rocket launcher or headshot with the sniper rifle, since anything else either gets you killed from their rockets or their death actions. The game suffers from uneven difficulty and clear chokepoints, expect to easily defeat "bosses" and die every so often to ill-placed grunts.

There's no reason to try a no kill run--the stealth system is busted as hell (enemies hear from across the map) and non-lethal weapons are just weaker versions of the lethal weapons you already have. There is absolutely no plot or mission reason to ever use a non-lethal takedown.

Dialog still impacts missions, but only in the most base and robotic of ways. "Do you want to ally with me? 1) YES I LOVE YOU 2) PREPARE TO DIE". There's no subtlety at all, and there are virtually no conversations where you have more than two options. Even the game is binary--you start out taking missions from the WTO and the Order Church, and literally every mission is "Do the opposite of what the other guys ask you to do!" One sidequest involves you getting in the middle of a turf war between two coffee shops, and every mission you can do for them is basically "Do you choose shop A or shop B?". This is not choice. Any video game that allows choice probably boils down to this in the end, but that's what this game is--a purely boiled down version of choice. It's almost like a Madlib. You just pick the faction you side with and their name gets filled in to the story.[redacted]

The modifications you can give yourself are pretty boring. You get five slots--each slot gets one of three upgrades (two "legal", one "illegal"). The upgrades are almost all boring. Hacking, healing, healing by killing enemies, silent running, fast running, super strength, stealth against robots, stealth against humans, remote controlled drone with guns, remote controlled drone that defends against rockets... uh... I can't remember the rest, but they're pretty dull. Three of my five skills ended up being passive, only health regeneration and fast running ended up being active usable skills.

There are no consequences to choosing illegal upgrades. There's nothing about the concept of the illegal upgrades that makes them seem more illegal. The problem is that they replaced a complex, elaborate system of modification from the first game with this stupid binary one. And like every other binary gameplay system in Invisible War, there's no distinction between the two sides. Ugh.

Like Deus Ex, the game has multiple endings, but the ending is chosen in the last 10 minutes of the game and differs only by providing you a different final mission (kill the groups you don't like on the tiny little map that isn't different depending on the faction you choose) and a different end FMV.

Mission Design
Deus Ex allowed you to approach any mission from dozens of ways. Break in, hack in, socially engineer, go in guns blazing. In Invisible War, most mission objectives have at least two entrances. But the entrance you choose rarely matters. Fight dudes and go in through the basement or fight dudes and go in through the roof? See, hacking, lockpicking, disabling security cameras, etc all boil down to pressing a button and waiting 2 seconds, so ultimately even when you are given a choice between different styles, it boils down to "Press right mouse to use <item x> to manipulate <widget y> to finish the mission".

This is the first point I'd like to call out reviewers. Reviewers generally praised that the game preserved Deus Ex's heritage of letting you do things in different ways. One review used as an example a mission where you can choose to break into a guy's apartment through the skylight, pick the front door lock, or socially engineer him into giving you the key. This occurs about 15 minutes into a 10 hour game and it's about the most varied quest in the entire game. I have no idea if the reviewer only played 15 minutes or was just trying to avoid spoilers, but it doesn't represent the game. This is not a diverse or varied game the way Deus Ex was.

I'd also at this point note that virtually every novel piece of level design is also used in the first hour of the game (the "Seattle" level). There were a few segments that made me say "Woah, neat". It goes downhill from there.

There are very few levels: Seattle, Cairo, Trier Germany, Antarctica, Cairo again, and then a frozen version of [redacted]. Each level will generally have one or two main buildings consisting of a few floors of walkways, and one "dungeon". Seattle has an elevator between the upper and lower halves, Cairo has a few airplane hangers and a farm, Trier has a sort of tower thing and a lab, Antarctica is basically a series of corridors and then a temple, and the final mission is a tiny, watered down version of a level from the first Deus Ex.

The real-world settings are nice, but the game is set so far in the future that none of them feel like the cities they are, in a contrast to Deus Ex, where everything feels like a noir modern version of itself. I'd have no idea that Cairo was Cairo if it weren't for indoor palm trees and the fact that the church is called a Mosque.

Writing, Voice Acting, and Characters
Deus Ex had a pretty colourful cast of characters. I won't pretend they were interesting or deep since each basically filled out the role of a one-dimensional stereotype representing a given faction.

Deus Ex: Invisible War does not have a colourful cast of characters. Virtually every living character from Deus Ex returns as a hollow cardboard cutout of themselves, asked to spout two or three lines of dialog and obnoxiously call out fans of the original game. The exception is maybe the hero of the first game, JC Denton, who has a pretty substantial role and has some good lines.

The new characters are feeble. "Cartoonish" would be an understated adjective to use to describe the new people.

The single new standout character is an AI pop singer you can interact with in most levels. When you first meet her in Seattle, she chats you up a bit and asks you to give her some information. As you continue to give her info about corruption and ne'er-do-goods in the city, you get more rewards and begin to realize that she doubles as some sort of police informant AI. In each subsequent level you run in to her again. Near the end of the game, [redacted] It's a pretty witty scam.

This is a typical example of Invisible War's dialog, voice acting, and characters.

Plot
So, the original *Deus Ex* is a bit silly. Betrayal after betrayal, increasingly less plausible intersections of boogeymen and secret societies. I'd basically put it on par with "National Treasure" meets "The Matrix". *Deus Ex: Invisible War*... yikes.

[redacted]

[redacted]

One thing that's exceptionally dumb about the story is that no one gives a shit. Fuck over the Order Church and seriously damage their infrastructure and research? You get a voiceover that says "HOW DARE YOU... but you are forgiven if you do the next mission for us". Hell, the fucking Knights Templar VO told me that I was worthless and subhuman, but that they'd still like me to help them. Err, okay. Apparently I should go to a tent to receive further instructions. Then ten feet later a bunch of Knights Templar tried to kill me, because of course that's their objective. Wait, how can I get my further instructions that are necessary to help the Knights Templar achieve their objective if some grunt rocket launchers me into oblivion? This persists to the very end of the game. If you make 200 choices in a row favouring one side, all the opposing sides will still ask you to pick them up until about 5 minutes before the ending.

Making matters worse, your characters automatic response to each party until the very end is "I'll think about it". Even if you've screwed over that faction 100 times and called their leader a terrible person and vowed to bring them to justice, you'll still end up saying "I'll think about it" until you choose which ending you want. As a result, your character never seems to have an inquisitive or astute mind. JC Denton, in Deus Ex, seemed like he was genuinely learning things about the world and applying critical thinking to make the choices he made. Alex D just says "I'll think about it" and eventually pushes a button to make a decision. Occasionally he offers the token resistance ("Wouldn't you agree that enslaving the entire world sounds like a dictatorship? Well, I'll think about it.")

In an effort to make "shades of grey", every faction end up being insufferable assholes. The WTO asks you to destroy a family farm because the family doesn't have the right permits. Destroy, really? I can't just write them a ticket? The Order asks you to publicly assassinate research scientists supporting the WTO. Err... I can't just shut down the research? The Illuminati openly want you to turn the world over to them. The Knights Templar call you subhuman from the first time you talk to them and still ask you to help them.

Technical Issues
As I mentioned, the game runs in 4:3 on PC. I found a guide online to hack it into 16:9 or 16:10. This requires a few changes to INI files and the use of a hex editor. Once you get the game running in 16:9/16:10, prepare to run into a wide array of technical issues.

First, Steam does not properly record your playtime on this game. This is because the game uses a launcher app which launches the main game as a separate process. Every single time you move between levels, the main process dies and the launcher process launches a new main process. I have no idea if this is universal, but for me what would happen was that the game window would disappear (leaving me on my desktop) and then about 1.5 seconds later, the load screen would come up.

The load times are long. Probably 10-15 seconds on my triple-core system with 4 gigs of ram. The maps in this game are tiny. I have never seen a video game with smaller maps. Expect to move between maps constantly. You might get a quest in lower Seattle which will require you to go through 4-5 map transitions to fetch a widget in upper Seattle and then 4-5 to bring it back to get some credits. Expect to spend a lot of time watching load screens.

The game's last level takes place on [redacted], a location from Deus Ex. In Deus Ex, the map is huge, open, and seamless. In Invisible War, it's cut up into three or four tiny segments and each is tiny and bland. Totally totally embarrassing.

Another great aspect of this is that if you die, you're instantly returned to the main menu. Load your save game, and you've got to sit through another load screen. In a few particularly tricky parts I died five or six times in a row. Losing minutes to loadtime when it's the same 100 square foot area I just died in is obnoxious.

I also ran into a few bugs. One mission involved me having to listen to a holo-recording in an office. Apparently I must have saved at the wrong time, because when I loaded my save, the holo-recording had spawned but wouldn't play. Since it wouldn't play, I couldn't complete the mission, and since it was spawned, I couldn't spawn it again. I ended up modifying some files to enable a debug mode and forcing the game to delete the holo-recording object, and then triggered it again.

Grabbing items is kind of buggy. When you kill a character, they drop items. First, they normally drop items under themselves, so you pretty categorically have to pick up the dead body, throw it somewhere, and then pick up the item. If multiple items are near each other, it's easy to pick the wrong

one. Because your inventory is tiny (another console limitation?), you spend most of the game with a full inventory and it's annoying to be told "Inventory full, can't pick up noise making grenade" when you actually want the ammo clip next to the grenade.

Items don't stack properly and you can't merge them. I frequently had cases where I'd have 5 health kits and get another one; the health kit would take up a second slot in my inventory (you only have 12 slots). Then the next health kit I'd get would stack on top of the first 5. This also happened with energy packs (which recharge your biotics) and omnitools (which pick locks and other devices).

The game crashed four times in the ~8-10 hours I played it. These were instantaneous hard crashes to the desktop.

It was one of the first games to use Havok to give objects their own physics models. At the very beginning of the game, you get a basketball, and it's kinda neat that you can actually throw it. The problem is that nothing in the game has weight; either it's too heavy for you to lift and you can't, or it's light as a feather and you can throw it across the room. Corpses are a joke. Bang into an object and it'll go flying. Half-baked.

The thing is that the levels are so small, the load times so long, the interface so poor, the physics so half-implemented that it just feels like a much more modest, smaller game than Deus Ex, which makes it feel older. Say you want to read a book on the shelf? You go to do so and discover that the book consists of three or four lines of flavour text... three or four lines in a game contemporary to Morrowind where there were hundreds of mini-essays and novellas? Really? Every time I go to interact with anything in the game, I keep thinking either "This is a worse Deus Ex", "This is a worse System Shock 2", or "This is a worse Morrowind". It feels really old. I can't describe it. I think the last game I played that aged this poorly was Red Faction, and Invisible War feels about as old as that game despite being three years newer and looking much nicer.

Conclusion
I'm sure someone is going to quote this and say "That's a lot of words for a game that everyone knew sucked"). Feel free. But the case I want to make here is that the game sucks as a sequel to Deus Ex, it aged terribly, it's a technical mess, it has no novel gameplay ideas, and the gameplay ideas it does have were all implemented elsewhere. It's not a good RPG, it's not a good FPS, it's not a good game.

The storyline is silly, the characters forgettable except when they're so stupid that you'd remember them, the plot milquetoast and so "small" feeling compared to the original game. What a disaster.

In the words of Harvey Smith, the key designer on the title:

> "We fucked up the technology management, we had bad team chemistry, we wrote the wrong renderer, we wrote the wrong kind of AI and then we shipped too early. The story was even bad... we moved it into the future, and we didn't realize this at the time, but it undermined a lot of what made Deus Ex great--the familiarity, the groundedness. We moved it further into the future and it started to feel like the Jetsons.
>
> I think we made an 85% rated RPG that was not a worthy sequel to the original game."

Despite all of this, the game is made by talented individuals. I have no doubt that the team could have made a worthy sequel to Deus Ex, and I have no doubt that both Warren Spector and Harvey Smith are still able today to make game-of-the-generation quality games. But this is absolutely, positively not one of them.

Last edited by Stumpokapow; 09-03-2010 at 03:47 AM.

Jerk
Banned
(09-03-2010, 03:53 AM)
#2

Quote

> So, the original Deus Ex is a bit silly. Betrayal after betrayal, increasingly less plausible intersections of boogeymen and secret societies. I'd basically put it on par with "National Treasure" meets "The Matrix".

I love you for saying this.

With that said, I agree with this 110% (I would have to be insane not to).

> Should I play this game if I haven't played Deus Ex?
> No. It's not a particularly interesting game from a gameplay point of view--all of its best ideas were used earlier in Deus Ex--and the story is a complete and utter mess, the back half of which only makes sense if you've played Deus Ex. The game has also aged very poorly. I'll make a note of many of the technical problems later, but the short version is that it doesn't play very well by modern standards, the technical performance is horrible, the game is in locked 4:3, it has a horrible UI (really it's an example of making an awful UI for consoles, and then porting that UI wholesale to PC and it being ten times as horrible there).
>
> Deus Ex (the original) is a really excellent game. It was ugly even at release and it's hideous now, but setting that aside it's really something special. Both games cost $9.99 on Steam, but they've been on sale for $4.99 before. Go play Deus Ex. Skip this game.

I agree with this, but I must say that **Deus Ex** has also aged poorly as well.

I mean, the *design* is still pretty damn impressive (shames most 'RPGs' released today), but just about about everything placed on top of it has not suffered the ravages of time gracefully.

I say this as someone that only played the game about 2 years ago. It is like reading Joyce; structurally the game is elegant, and it makes for great conversation but it really is not all that enjoyable when you get down to it.

---

jtb
the walrus
(09-03-2010, 03:54 AM)
Quote

#3

You really hit the nail on the head. Vastly inferior to Deus Ex in every way possible - yet, of course, praised by reviewers because it's linear, simple, and didn't feature the horrid horrid voice acting of Hong Kong nor the ugly visuals of the original (even though the voice acting was still bad and the game is plenty ugly and even buggier than the original).

The thing I miss most is the sheer attention to detail from Deus Ex. Every little decision you made would be referenced later on, and the world really felt dense and alive. The game never restricted you do from doing anything: [redacted]. Invisible Wars felt way too sterile - both in the atmosphere and general lack of content.

---

rollingstart
Member
(09-03-2010, 04:07 AM)
Quote

#4

About the tech on PC:
Not to defend Invisible War, but Invisible War has a number of fixes. Widescreen, fov changes, better textures, tweaks to the UI, and other ways to 'fix' the game are out there.

I see you mentioned some. Personally, I had no problems when 'replaying' it. I say replaying it but I only did it to finish it at least once in my life. I took four attempts to finally play the entire game once. Oh, but the loading time is obnoxious as hell no matter what you do.

---

wolfmat
Member
(09-03-2010, 04:07 AM)
Quote

#5

I liked it.

Zeliard
Livin' Man
(09-03-2010, 04:21 AM)
Quote

#6

The original Deus Ex makes my top 5 all-time.

Invisible War is one of the two most disappointing games I've ever played (the other being Quake 2, as relative to Quake 1, not necessarily to other online shooters).

Stump here has pretty much said all there is to say, so there isn't much more to add. Hit the nail on the head with every facet.

I know there's still relatively little info on it, but how do you feel about Human Revolution, Stump?

> Originally Posted by **Jerk 2.0**
>
> I agree with this, but I must say that **Deus Ex** has also aged poorly as well.
>
> I mean, the *design* is still pretty damn impressive (shames most 'RPGs' released today), but just about about everything placed on top of it has not suffered the ravages of time gracefully.
>
> I say this as someone that only played the game about 2 years ago. It is like reading Joyce; structurally the game is elegant, and it makes for great conversation but it really is not all that enjoyable when you get down to it.

I re-played the game a couple of years ago as well and I wouldn't say this; however, it is difficult to come at it from the same perspective since Deus Ex was a game I had originally played the same week it came out, and was almost instantly one of my favorite games.

I've re-played it a few times since then, and when I last went back to it in '08, it didn't feel terribly aged at all. Stump brought up the point that even back in 2000, Deus Ex's visuals were seen as relatively primitive, but so was its gunplay. These are the two things people tend to bring up these days as having poorly aged, along with its A.I., which was also never at all considered one of its great attributes.

Perhaps I'd feel the same if I had never played it until a couple of years ago, but regardless, I really think it's a game that people need to check out. It's hugely important in terms of game design, particularly as a showcase (along with System Shock 2) for the direction shooters *could* have gone in the past decade, but very sadly did not (in fact, they went the complete opposite way, simplifying and streamlining everything to the point of utter shallowness and adding a stifling sense of gameplay and environmental linearity).

Stumpokapow
listen to the mad man
(09-03-2010, 04:32 AM)
Quote

#7

> Originally Posted by **Linkzg**
>
> About the tech on PC:
> Not to defend Invisible War, but Invisible War has a number of fixes. Widescreen, fov changes, better textures, tweaks to the UI, and other ways to 'fix' the game are out there.

Yes, I made it widescreen and fixed the FOV. I didn't use better textures although the texture work was pretty decent in general. I didn't look for UI tweaks because it's so fundamentally broken (the iris design is awful, the bind set of v to inventory, b to biomods, n to quests/images--which you will never use because who needs maps when the map is only 15 seconds from end to end is dreadful, there's no hotkeys or information provided about any items, etc)

> Originally Posted by **Zeliard**
>
> I know there's still relatively little info on it, but how do you feel about Human Revolution, Stump?

I don't think there's even a chance it'll be seminal the way Deus Ex was, but I think so far they've struck a good balance of making their own ideas and really really understanding why people liked Deus Ex.

I also think setting the game before Deus Ex is a good idea too because it means that they're not burdened with trying to deal with the consequences of the first game like Invisible War was.

I'm optimistic.

Last edited by Stumpokapow; 09-03-2010 at 04:36 AM.

Gravijah
Member
(09-03-2010, 04:33 AM)
Quote

#8

I played this piece of shit on the original xbox for all of 20-30 minutes. Soured me towards the series...

onken
Member
(09-03-2010, 04:45 AM)
Quote

#9

Yeah awful game, first one is one my all time favourites but I've never actually been able to stomach finishing the second.

Also the game has terrible joypad support, on certain menus and confirmations it just stops working, so you have to put the controller down and pick up the mouse just to tick a box. I ended up using joy2key and doing a better implementation myself.

Monroeski
Member
(09-03-2010, 04:49 AM)
Quote

#10

I enjoyed this game. Didn't stand up to the original, obviously, but a pretty solid game overall.

I'd even wager that it has aged better than the first game, because the first game has aged TERRIBLY. Without the nostalgia factor I don't think I could play the first Deus Ex for longer than an hour anymore. Haven't played The Invisible War since release, though, so I could be totally wrong.

Commanche Raisin Toast
Member
(09-03-2010, 04:57 AM)
Quote

#11

EXCELLENT write-up OP! too many of us here get riled up and ramble too much to be of any use in any of these "IW sucked" conversations. glad to see it all organized.

> Originally Posted by **Jerk 2.0**
> I agree with this, but I must say that **Deus Ex** has also aged poorly as well.
>
> I mean, the *design* is still pretty damn impressive (shames most 'RPGs' released today), but just about about everything placed on top of it has not suffered the ravages of time gracefully.

DeusEx is like a T-800 unit Terminator with a cardboard box coating instead of a realistic human shell. that said, it's STILL an absolute blast to play, and shocks me to this day how much effort and thought went into every little thing about it.

it's easy for me to look past graphics of my classic favorites though, so i could care less about the "shell" of the game. it's the innards that keep pulling me back. :D

Stallion Free
Cock Encumbered
(09-03-2010, 04:59 AM)
Quote

#12

Deus Ex was the only game I played for about a month (I was in middle school and my parents limited my game time). It was an amazing 40 hour experience for me.

I couldn't even finish Invisible War. I tried it twice. I might try again soon.

Jerk
Banned
(09-03-2010, 05:00 AM)
Quote

#13

> Originally Posted by **Commanche Raisin Toast**
> it's easy for me to look past graphics of my classic favorites though, so i could care less about the "shell" of the game. it's the innards that keep pulling me back.

Well it is much more than just the 'shell,' but as Zeliard points out, having played the game when it was

released helps.

Sciz
Member
(09-03-2010, 05:10 AM)
Quote

#14

Deus Ex has not aged in any significant way that would impede its status as a wildly enjoyable landmark game, coming from the perspective of someone who picked it up a couple years ago in a Steam sale.

edit: and on a non-design related note that the OP didn't cover, DX's soundtrack beats the pants off of IW's.

Last edited by Sciz; 09-03-2010 at 05:34 AM.

rollingstart
Member
(09-03-2010, 05:16 AM)
Quote

#15

One of the top failures of Invisible War, and something that has gotten me excited about Human Revolution, is how they handle hacking. Finding a key code or username/password, inputting it to use a computer or open a door is one of the greatest feeling in games for me. It's a small thing that goes a long way in making you feel like a part of that world. Invisible War took that away from Deus Ex and changed it to bloody keycards and tools. Bullshit. Human Revolution has you entering codes you can find around the levels. It's on consoles, so numbers are as far as you'll get; a step down from Deus Ex and Vampire Bloodlines, step up from almost everything else.

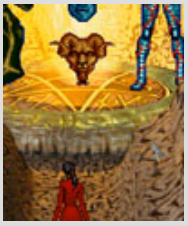
Inkwell
Member
(09-03-2010, 06:42 AM)
Quote

#16

I started playing this a little while ago. I got to Cairo, and lost interest soon afterward. By that point I had nearly all the biomods I wanted. I didn't have them all upgraded, but that didn't matter. Part of the fun of Deus Ex was choosing how to play the game using many different augmentations and skills to choose from.

I just got bored. I really didn't have much more progression to go with my biomods, the gameplay felt way too simple, and the game was a bit too linear and felt downright claustrophobic. I'm not sure how everyone feels about the difficulty, but I was playing on the normal difficulty setting and felt like a bullet sponge.

charsace
Accidental Member
(09-03-2010, 06:54 AM)
Quote



#17

IW was a good game, just not as good as the first one. Both games have aged poorly because neither game has good combat.

EviLore
Expansive Ellipses
(09-03-2010, 07:17 AM)
Quote

#18

Should we have a mandatory "why Deus Ex: Invisible War is a bad game" thread for each person on the NeoGAF staff? :D

My recent thread on the subject: http://www.neogaf.com/forum/showthread.php?p=21407056

Good review, stump. You had a hell of a lot more patience with DE:IW than I did. I managed to get into Seattle and screw around for a while, before realizing as you did that all those binary choices were essentially meaningless and that the game is made completely irrelevant by its predecessor.

charlequin
Loving Husband. Caring Admin. Secret Octopus.

#19

> Originally Posted by **EviLore**

(09-03-2010, 07:46 AM)
Quote

> Should we have a mandatory "why Deus Ex: Invisible War is a bad game" thread for each person on the NeoGAF staff? :D

please don't make me play invisible war

PuppetSlave
Member
(09-03-2010, 08:04 AM)
Quote

#20

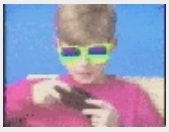
I liked the game and finished it. I did not really care about the story. But then I did not care about the story in the first one either.

TheSeks
Blinded by the luminous glory that is David Bowie's physical manifestation.
(09-03-2010, 08:07 AM)
Quote

#21

I never finished it. Rented it. It wasn't that bad. But my major complaint is that I don't get to go terrorist and kill a major city like the opening FMV/fleeing Atlanta scene made you believe in trailers. :|

Night_Trekker
Member
(09-03-2010, 08:25 AM)
Quote



#22

I love Invisible War. It's inferior to the original game in almost every way, but it's worth playing if you enjoyed the first one.

And anyone who bothered putting time into IW honestly ought to go ahead and finish it and get all five endings (which you can do by making a pretty conspicuous choice near the end). I am serious when I say some of them still haunt me, and looking back on the entire game after having finished it, I would classify the story as "pretty damn good." [redacted]

> Originally Posted by **Sciz**
>
> edit: and on a non-design related note that the OP didn't cover, DX's soundtrack beats the pants off of IW's.

Definitely. IW's soundtrack is just sorta... there. Like the streamlined, sleek futuristic design of most of the locations in the game, it's functional but featureless and mostly uninteresting. But I will say the theme gave me goosebumps the first time I heard it.

Last edited by Night_Trekker; 09-03-2010 at 08:37 AM.

---

harriet the spy
Member
(09-03-2010, 08:43 AM)
Quote

#23

I loved Deus Ex, but I have a hard time believing the story of IW could be much worse. I didn't think Deus Ex's story was silly, i thought it was insultingly bad. The second half, especially.

On topic, I am always tempted to try this game - between the insane amount of hate that it gets, and the few defenders that inevitably say the hate is not deserved, I feel I'll either know if I don't like it within minutes, or I'll actually unexpectedly enjoy it - there doesn't seem to be any kind of middle ground here.

Plus, I am starved for anything cyberpunk-ish...

> Originally Posted by **Sciz**
>
> edit: and on a non-design related note that the OP didn't cover, DX's soundtrack beats the pants off of IW's.

God do I love DX's soundtrack. I finally checked who wrote it, and it's partially the same guy who wrote unreal's soundtrack. I always loved that 'flying over castle' intro to Unreal. Such a talented composer - wish I could find stuff like that in modern games.

thetrin
Hail, peons, for I have come as ambassador from the great and bountiful Blueberry Butt Explosion
(09-03-2010, 08:46 AM)
#24
Quote

DX1 is a masterpiece that melds first person immersion and a cyberpunk sandbox so effortlessly, you can't help but love it.

Invisible War is so fucking bad, it almost made me not want another DX.

> Originally Posted by **PuppetSlave**
>
> I liked the game and finished it. I did not really care about the story. But then I did not care about the story in the first one either.

Really? That's too bad. DX1 had an awesome story, even if it was pretty much every conspiracy theory known to man, threaded together into one big futuristic quilt.

Crazymoogle
Member
(09-03-2010, 08:48 AM)
#25
Quote

Pretty much agree with everything you had to say, Stumpokapow. I think the clinchers for me, though:

1. The feeling that if you killed 3 guards, you'd pretty much wiped NPCs off the map.
2. Frequently, going the wrong direction meant not so much going in a "new" direction so much as accidentally discovering the 2nd or 3rd way to solve a problem, immediately after you succeeded the 1st way.

Not an actual scenario, but I always had this strong impression of "great! you hacked the computer to open the door," only to find the password sitting on a shelf for that same computer, next to a vent (to circumvent the door entirely).

I still sorta enjoyed that first playthrough back in the day, but it was pretty clear what was wrong even while I was playing it. My playstyle from the first game stretched out the experience here, and left me wondering why I didn't just barge through.

REMEMBER CITADEL
Banned
(09-03-2010, 08:51 AM)
#26
Quote

> Originally Posted by **EviLore**
>
> Should we have a mandatory "why Deus Ex: Invisible War is a bad game" thread for each person on the NeoGAF staff? :D
>
> My recent thread on the subject: http://www.neogaf.com/forum/showthread.php?p=21407056

I was just about to say we had the exact same thread a couple of months ago. I disagreed then, and I don't feel like reading all of this, but I'm going to go out on a limb and say that I also disagree now.

> Originally Posted by **thetrin**
>
> Really? That's too bad. DX1 had an awesome story, even if it was pretty much every conspiracy theory known to man, threaded together into one big futuristic quilt.

Deus Ex had an awesome *beginning* of the story. The further it went, the more silly it got.

Last edited by REMEMBER CITADEL; 09-03-2010 at 08:55 AM.

Zeliard
Livin' Man
#27

(09-03-2010, 08:54 AM)

Quote

> Originally Posted by **REMEMBER CITADEL**
>
> I was just about to say we had the exact same thread a couple of months ago. I disagreed then, and I don't feel like reading all of this, but I'm going to go out on a limb and say that I also disagree now.

You've mounted a powerful defense for the game.

Mr_Zombie
Member
(09-03-2010, 08:56 AM)

#28

Quote

> Originally Posted by **Jerk 2.0**
>
> I agree with this, but I must say that **Deus Ex** has also aged poorly as well.

I disagree. I'm playing it right now for the very first time and after the first "shock" I don't feel its age. Sure, the game isn't pretty anymore (although hi-res texture pack helps a lot), but gameplay-wise it is still spot-on.

And I'm worried after hearing complains about DX1 story, I'm enjoying it. :(
[redacted]

REMEMBER CITADEL
Banned
(09-03-2010, 08:59 AM)

#29

Quote

> Originally Posted by **Zeliard**
>
> You've mounted a powerful defense for the game.

As powerful as the attack.

Zeliard
Livin' Man
(09-03-2010, 09:02 AM)

#30

Quote

> Originally Posted by **REMEMBER CITADEL**
>
> As powerful as the attack.

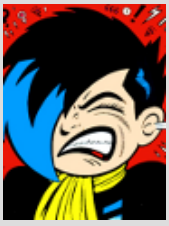
The attack you admitted you didn't even read?

Stump and EviLore have collectively launched a thorough lambasting of the game. I understand if you don't want to step into that minefield.

REMEMBER CITADEL
Banned
(09-03-2010, 09:07 AM)

#31

Quote



> Originally Posted by **Zeliard**
>
> The attack you admitted you didn't even read?

I was referring to the last thread. And also general grievances about the game.

Bear
Member
(09-03-2010, 09:54 AM)

#32

Quote

I thought the IW hate was just fan hyperbole, since it was reviewed well but fans hated it, but god damn was I wrong. I expected something at least decent, but I couldn't stand playing it. It just felt like a badly designed game in every respect. It just wasn't fun at all. It might just be because it was shortly after I finished playing Deus Ex for the first time, but the drop in game quality is just staggering.

I was expecting it to be Warrior Within bad, not *genuinely* bad.

water_wendi
Water is not wet!
(09-03-2010, 09:58 AM)
Quote

#33

Invisible War is basically the Exorcist 2 of video games.

Zenith
Banned
(09-03-2010, 02:17 PM)
Quote

#34

Nothing will ever make me forgive DE2 from having *worse* graphics than DE1 (multitool, dragon's tooth, liberty island (how fucking embarassing was that?) and unatco hq).

Prime crotch
Member
(09-03-2010, 02:20 PM)
Quote

#35

Nanomachines, they do *everything*.

truly101
I got grudge sucked!
(09-03-2010, 02:21 PM)
Quote

#36

The PS2 version of Deus Ex is ugly and glitchy at places, but its playable and worth the experience if that is your preferred means.

Gattsu25
Formerly Wakune
(09-03-2010, 02:32 PM)
Quote

#37

Great Scott!

[IMG]http://i56.**********/6xrw1y.jpg[/IMG]

Stallion Free
Cock Encumbered
(09-03-2010, 02:33 PM)
Quote

#38

> Originally Posted by **REMEMBER CITADEL**
> As powerful as the attack.

When even the devs are willing to admit the game was a pretty big fuck up, then the game is a fuck up. No sane person would defend IW if they had played OG Deus Ex.

Prime crotch
Member
(09-03-2010, 02:36 PM)
Quote

#39

One common defense over IW is that the game's concept is about the illusion of choice, which is a fair point and even perpetuated by some of the in-game fiction you can read; but the problem is it does not mantain an apt illusion or manages to even create one.
Surprisingly, or not, even this illusion of choice idea was done better on Deus Ex.

Jerk
Banned
(09-03-2010, 02:39 PM)
Quote

#40

> Originally Posted by **Mr_Zombie**
>
> I disagree. I'm playing it right now for the very first time and after the first "shock" I don't feel its age. Sure, the game isn't pretty anymore (although hi-res texture pack helps a lot), but gameplay-wise it is still spot-on.

I never cited the gameplay as being an issue; gameplay was actually the best part of DE (not including the poor gun-play or the pathetic stealth).

> Originally Posted by **Stallion Free**
>
> When even the devs are willing to admit the game was a pretty big fuck up, then the game is a fuck up. No sane person would defend IW if they had played OG Deus Ex.

I think you would be hard pressed to find people to defend IW even without playing DE.

Last edited by Jerk; 09-03-2010 at 06:11 PM.

Xater
Member
(09-03-2010, 02:43 PM)
Quote

#41

> Conclusion
> I'm sure someone is going to quote this and say "That's a lot of words for a game that everyone knew sucked"). Feel free. But the case I want to make here is that the game sucks as a sequel to Deus Ex, it aged terribly, it's a technical mess, it has no novel gameplay ideas, and the gameplay ideas it does have were all implemented elsewhere. It's not a good RPG, it's not a good FPS, it's not a good game.

And to this day I wonder how it got favorable reviews. I remeber buying the PC version back then, taking it home all excited and quickly being pissed of. But I thought to myself "This can't be it right? Let's play it out until the end maybe it will get better." SUPRISE! It didn't. In fact just like you described it the finale of the game was also the final kick in the nuts.It demonstrated how fucking pointless decision making in Invisible War was. Just thinking back to this experience makes me furious.

I also still remember selling the game right after I saw the end, which didn't even take long.

Stallion Free
Cock Encumbered
(09-03-2010, 02:44 PM)
Quote

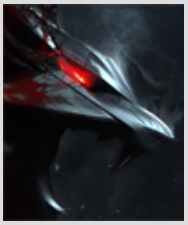
#42

The pistol in Deus Ex sounded a million times more badass than the one in two.

LiquidMetal14

#43

hide your water-based mammals
(09-03-2010, 02:51 PM)
Quote



> Originally Posted by **EviLore**
>
> Should we have a mandatory "why Deus Ex: Invisible War is a bad game" thread for each person on the NeoGAF staff? :D
>
> My recent thread on the subject: http://www.neogaf.com/forum/showthread.php?p=21407056
>
> Good review, stump. You had a hell of a lot more patience with DE:IW than I did. I managed to get into Seattle and screw around for a while, before realizing as you did that all those binary choices were essentially meaningless and that the game is made completely irrelevant by its predecessor.

Now I want to play the game :P

But it's interesting how this gets brought up with some nice text to back it up. Never going to even dabble into that one.

kashwashwa
Junior Member
(09-03-2010, 03:11 PM)
Quote

#44

> Originally Posted by **Prime crotch**
>
> Surprisingly, or not, even this illusion of choice idea was done better on Deus Ex.

The illusion of choice in Deus Ex is still something that pisses me off... Everyone fellates the hell out Deus Ex - I'll happily agree that it did so many things right - but then just looks over the fact that all of the huge decisions you made through the game meant absolutely nothing at all...

I got right to the end of the game, and was so utterly disappointed that the game basically tricked me into thinking I was making any impact on the world at all throughout my playthrough, I didn't even finish (by making one of the three big decisions).

Stallion Free
Cock Encumbered
(09-03-2010, 03:15 PM)
Quote

#45

> Originally Posted by **kashwashwa**
>
> I didn't even finish (by making one of the three big decisions).

Uhh, why? Did it really upset you that you couldn't play 15 more minutes of the game?

Sciz
Member
(09-03-2010, 05:49 PM)
Quote

#46

> Originally Posted by **harriet the spy**
>
> God do I love DX's soundtrack. I finally checked who wrote it, and it's partially the same guy who wrote unreal's soundtrack. I always loved that 'flying over castle' intro to Unreal. Such a talented composer - wish I could find stuff like that in modern games.

Alexander Brandon is, in most cases, a musical god. Even his briefly heard, one-shot themes are fantastic.

See also: Tyrian, Jazz Jackrabbit 2, Jazz Jackrabbit 3 (canned), a bunch of old tracker scene stuff under the name Siren

> Originally Posted by **Night_Trekker**
>
> Definitely. IW's soundtrack is just sorta... there. Like the streamlined, sleek futuristic design of most of the locations in the game, it's functional but featureless and mostly uninteresting. But I will say the theme gave me goosebumps the first time I heard it.

The unfortunate part about this is that it was still Alexander at the helm, but he was specifically instructed to take the music in a more ambient direction.

> Originally Posted by **kashwashwa**
>
> The illusion of choice in Deus Ex is still something that pisses me off... Everyone fellates the hell out Deus Ex - I'll happily agree that it did so many things right - but then just looks over the fact that all of the huge decisions you made through the game meant absolutely nothing at all...
>
> I got right to the end of the game, and was so utterly disappointed that the game basically tricked me into thinking I was making any impact on the world at all throughout my playthrough, I didn't even finish (by making one of the three big decisions).

Even now with Epic Mickey, Warren Spector has never tried to hide the fact that his games have a linear, non-branching narrative. If you really want some degree of consequential narrative choice in Deus Ex, go play The Nameless Mod.

kashwashwa
Junior Member
(09-03-2010, 05:54 PM)
Quote

#47

> Originally Posted by **Stallion Free**
>
> Uhh, why? Did it really upset you that you couldn't play 15 more minutes of the game?

Actually if I remember correctly, I died a few times in a row doing some really stupid shit on the last level resulting in me just kinda rage-quitting. And my motivation to play had basically disappeared when I realized the whole game came down to "Complete one of these three tasks" - so I just didn't load it up again.

Foliorum Viridum
Banned
(09-03-2010, 06:00 PM)
Quote

#48

I recently played Deus Ex for the first time and it instantly went in to my top 10. Maybe top 5.

I bought the double pack on Steam, so I thought I might as well play Invisible War since I loved the original so much and I got about two hours in before I gave up. I expected it to be bad, but there was nothing in it that came close to touching the quality of the first game. I figured it was better to bail out early rather than soldier on and end up hating it even more.

discoalucard
i am a butthurt babby that can only drool in wonder at shiney objects
(09-03-2010, 06:17 PM)
Quote

#49

> Originally Posted by **Stallion Free**
>
> When even the devs are willing to admit the game was a pretty big fuck up, then the game is a fuck up. No sane person would defend IW if they had played OG Deus Ex.

Despite his harsh language, ultimately what he said boils down to "we made a pretty good game but one that just didn't stack up." He's not declaring it a total waste or anything.

I actually really enjoyed Invisible War. That being said, I can't disagree with anything written in the OP, I just don't find the flaws as reprehensible. I'd much rather play it than practically any other Xbox-era shooter -- I'll take a flawed RPG shooter over a standard shooter, in other words -- but given the choice, I would still much rather play the first one.

Dipswitch
Member
(09-03-2010, 06:42 PM)
Quote

#50

Hmmmmmm. I somehow own two copies of this game (PC and Xbox) and have played neither. This thread is not exactly encouraging me to either. I'll get around to it when my current backlog has been exhausted.

[redacted]

nexen
Member
(09-03-2010, 06:47 PM)
Quote

#51

> Originally Posted by **Stumpokapow**
>
> If you make 200 choices in a row favouring one side, all the opposing sides will still ask you to

> pick them up until about 5 minutes before the ending.

Correct me if I'm wrong, but didn't the original Deus Ex do this as well? Maybe I'm getting the two mixed up but I remember it shattering my immersion pretty hard.

Meh. I just don't think Deus Ex deserves the praise that it gets and I feel that the hate Deus Ex 2 recieves is largely due to this love for Deus Ex 1. Had it been a totally different franchise I highly doubt we'd be continually reading hate threads about it years later. I thought that first was good but not great and that the second was mediocre but not horrible.

I was hyped and played DX1 day one to completetion and liked but didn't really love it. The over-the-top-conspiracy plotlines just left a sour taste in my mouth. Also I felt that the rpg elements were just flat out weird and stealth wasn't as usable without the light gem from Thief. It really was a little ugly when it shipped and the levels were more constricted than I expected. Underworld II was a far better FPRPG and predated DX by a number of years.

Sciz
Member
(09-03-2010, 06:59 PM)
Quote

#52

> Originally Posted by **nexen**
>
> Correct me if I'm wrong, but didn't the original Deus Ex do this as well? Maybe I'm getting the two mixed up but I remember it shattering my immersion pretty hard.

DX1 doesn't give you the choice to work for different factions at any point throughout the game up until the end. They'd planned a separate branch where you could stick with UNATCO instead, but it was scrapped in development.

Stumpokapow
listen to the mad man
(09-03-2010, 07:04 PM)
Quote

#53

> Originally Posted by **nexen**
>
> Correct me if I'm wrong, but didn't the original Deus Ex do this as well? Maybe I'm getting the two mixed up but I remember it shattering my immersion pretty hard.

No, and if they did, it'd be bullshit. The endings of Deus Ex 1 are bullshit specifically for this reason.

> Meh. I just don't think Deus Ex deserves the praise that it gets and I feel that the hate Deus Ex 2 recieves is largely due to this love for Deus Ex 1. Had it been a totally different franchise I highly doubt we'd be continually reading hate threads about it years later. I thought that first was good but not great and that the second was mediocre but not horrible.

Most of what's in this "hate thread"--seriously, read the OP--is a dissection of what I think Deus Ex 2 gets wrong. I kinda feel like your response and several others in this thread basically amount to "I didn't read the OP, but I heard someone else criticize Invisible War once and I didn't agree with him".

charlequin
Loving Husband. Caring Admin. Secret Octopus.
(09-03-2010, 07:04 PM)
Quote

#54

> Originally Posted by **nexen**
>
> Had it been a totally different franchise I highly doubt we'd be continually reading hate threads about it years later.

Had it been a totally different franchise it would've been a forgettably mediocre title that no one cared about enough even to hate and the most we'd ever hear about it now is "hey remember that game Goose Sex Invisible War? No? Me neither...."

nexen
Member
(09-03-2010, 07:50 PM)
Quote

#55

> Originally Posted by **Stumpokapow**
>
> No, and if they did, it'd be bullshit. The endings of Deus Ex 1 are bullshit specifically for this reason.

Yeah it was the ending I'm remembering - you could basically switch sides right at the ending even if you'd been sticking it to the other sides the entire game from word 1.

> Originally Posted by **Stumpokapow**
>
> Most of what's in this "hate thread"--seriously, read the OP--is a dissection of what I think Deus Ex 2 gets wrong. I kinda feel like your response and several others in this thread basically amount to "I didn't read the OP, but I heard someone else criticize Invisible War once and I didn't agree with him".

Sorry dude, I wasn't really criticizing you. I was only stating my opinion. I agree with most of the points you brought up at the surface level but not the overall tone of "sequel that gets it wrong". You could probably find many games that are worse sequels to their predecessors than DX2 was - this one just gets unecessarily bashed imho. If it were Near Future Game 1 it would've been forgotten now and that is just plain odd to me because I never saw the appeal of DX1 to begin with.
For example: Ultima 8 and Ultima 9 are way worse sequels than DX2 was.

> Originally Posted by **charlequin**
>
> Had it been a totally different franchise it would've been a forgettably mediocre title that no one cared about enough even to hate and the most we'd ever hear about it now is "hey remember that game Goose Sex Invisible War? No? Me neither...."

Which was exactly what I said and a key part of my point. DX2 wasn't really a bad game for the time. That coupled with the fact that I feel DX1 is severely overrated leaves me scratching me head at the hate DX2 receives.

---

stuminus3
Never buying another games console. Ever.
(09-03-2010, 07:55 PM)
Quote

#56

I can't argue with what's wrong with this game, because it really does suck.

Yet somehow, for some reason, I was compelled enough to play though it 3 or 4 times. Even as I type this I've got this strange itch to play through it again.

Weird. Same thing with Postal 2, another dreadful game from a similar period of time that for some reason I find utterly compelling.

Prime crotch
Member
(09-03-2010, 08:03 PM)
Quote

#57

> Originally Posted by **nexen**
>
> Which was exactly what I said and a key part of my point. DX2 wasn't really a bad game for the time. That coupled with the fact that I feel DX1 is severely overrated leaves me scratching me head at the hate DX2 receives.

Even if we set the name and legacy aside, it's just an okay game at best and deserving of all criticism even if only because there were no pcs that could run it smoothly back in the day.

Sciz
Member
(09-03-2010, 08:04 PM)
Quote

#58

> Originally Posted by **nexen**
>
> Yeah it was the ending I'm remembering - you could basically switch sides right at the ending even if you'd been sticking it to the other sides the entire game from word 1.

You never take sides or stick it to anyone prior to the ending, aside from being diametrically opposed to Majestic 12 the whole time. It doesn't matter whose ideology you agree with prior to the end because there are bigger things at stake.

Stallion Free
Cock Encumbered
(09-03-2010, 08:06 PM)

#59

> Originally Posted by **nexen**

Quote

> Which was exactly what I said and a key part of my point. DX2 wasn't really a bad game for the time. That coupled with the fact that I feel DX1 is severely overrated leaves me scratching me head at the hate DX2 receives.

It might have been fine on Xbox, but it was a slap in the face on PC. It ran poorly, had ridiculously small areas compared to the original, and removed/stupified a ton of features that people enjoyed.

If you thought the levels in Deus Ex one were constricted, I don't know how you managed to get more than 10 minutes into Invisible War.

nexen
Member
(09-03-2010, 08:09 PM)

#60

Quote

> Originally Posted by **Prime crotch**
>
> Even if we set the name and legacy aside, it's just an okay game at best and deserving of all criticism even if only because there were no pcs that could run it smoothly back in the day.

I never said it wasn't above criticism. I said it was a mediocre but not horrible game. I can, and often do, criticize games I find fantastic. I just find it perplexing that DX2 is the game that keeps getting pulled out of the dusty archives for derision. The number of better targets available out there are absolutely legion.

Actually the more I reflect on it I think that the root of my discomfort with this topic is just that I dislike the ongoing canonization of DX1.

Either way I'm starting to feel like I'm unfairly pulling this topic off course so I should just shut up.

> Originally Posted by **Stallion Free**
>
> If you thought the levels in Deus Ex one were constricted, I don't know how you managed to get more than 10 minutes into Invisible War.

I agreed from the get go that DX1 was better. I just didn't agree that it was so much better as warrant roasting DX2 over the coals for all of eternity.

charlequin
Loving Husband. Caring Admin. Secret Octopus.
(09-03-2010, 08:15 PM)

#61

Quote

> Originally Posted by **nexen**
>
> Which was exactly what I said and a key part of my point.

But all you're really saying here is that this bad game isn't *so* bad that it would be infamous on its own, it took being really bad *and* being one of the most disappointing sequels ever to be infamous. That's not much of a selling point!

> DX2 wasn't really a bad game for the time.

No, it was definitely a pretty bad game for the time. There were much, much better shooters and RPGs coming out on both consoles and PCs in 2003.

> The number of better targets available out there are absolutely legion.

I don't know that that's true. What you can learn from your run-of-the-mill garbage game is often limited to "don't make a game that's garbage," but looking at a failed sequel lets you isolate the elements that worked in a game's predecessor and dig into how changing them hurts the game in particular.

nexen
Member
(09-03-2010, 08:17 PM)

#62

Quote

> Originally Posted by **charlequin**
>
> But all you're really saying here is that this bad game isn't *so* bad that it would be infamous on its own, it took being really bad *and* being one of the most disappointing sequels ever to be infamous. That's not much of a selling point!

Not trying to sell the game. I keep saying I think it is mediocre. I simply disagree that it is one of the most disappointing sequels of all time. I know I'm at odds with the world on this one.

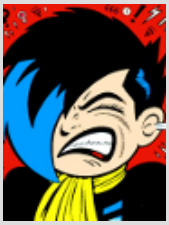
> Originally Posted by **charlequin**
>
> No, it was definitely a pretty bad game for the time. There were much, much better shooters and RPGs coming out on both consoles and PCs in 2003.

There were many better shooters and RPGs. There were many, many worse ones too. It was mediocre.

> Originally Posted by **charlequin**
>
> I don't know that that's true. What you can learn from your run-of-the-mill garbage game is often limited to "don't make a game that's garbage," but looking at a failed sequel lets you isolate the elements that worked in a game's predecessor and dig into how changing them hurts the game in particular.

No, what I meant was that we could a better example of a "sequel that gets everything wrong" than DX2. I'm disagreeing that the quality drop from DX1 to DX2 is all that severe.

REMEMBER CITADEL
Banned
(09-03-2010, 08:19 PM)
Quote



#63

> Originally Posted by **nexen**
>
> Yeah it was the ending I'm remembering - you could basically switch sides right at the ending even if you'd been sticking it to the other sides the entire game from word 1.

Like Sciz said, up to the very end you had *no choice whatsoever* about who you wanted to align with. It was predetermined and linear. You could make some simple decisions (kill or spare some characters, save Paul or not...), but they had no real bearing on the story development. In that way, I found IW an improvement over the original because it at least gave you the illusion of choice, however poorly executed.

---

charlequin
Loving Husband. Caring Admin. Secret Octopus.
(09-03-2010, 08:25 PM)
Quote

#64

> Originally Posted by **nexen**
>
> No, what I meant was that we could a better example of a "sequel that gets everything wrong" than DX2.

Not a lot of options come to mind. Ultima 8 was definitely disappointing but most of its mistakes were pretty superficially obvious (and it was coming in after four consecutive successful entries, not a single lightning-in-a-bottle game.)

> I'm disagreeing that the quality drop from DX1 to DX2 is all that severe.

I would like to see someone who claims this actually try to sort of justify it with examples and evidence, the way stump did for the opposite in his OP.

> Originally Posted by **REMEMBER CITADEL**
>
> In that way, I found IW an improvement over the original because it at least gave you the illusion of choice, however poorly executed.

I don't get this at all. How is it better to be lied to by the game about what choices it's offering you than to have a scenario where you can't change everything but each thing you can change is a legitimate choice?

VGChampion
Member
(09-03-2010, 08:41 PM)
Quote

#65

I'm really glad I decided to play Invisible War first. I remember getting the demo in OXM years ago and playing the hell out of it. Fast forward some time, I play the game and really enjoy it and pick up the first one. Like it even more but because IW was my first game in the series, I enjoy it probably as much as the first one.

REMEMBER CITADEL
Banned
(09-03-2010, 08:48 PM)
Quote

#66

> Originally Posted by **charlequin**
>
> I would like to see someone who claims this actually try to sort of justify it with examples and evidence, the way stump did for the opposite in his OP.

I would gladly do that if I had the time to replay both games. Unfortunately, I don't and it's been years since I've played them.

> Originally Posted by **charlequin**
>
> I don't get this at all. How is it better to be lied to by the game about what choices it's offering you than to have a scenario where you can't change everything but each thing you can change is a legitimate choice?

Not everything, in the original you can't change *anything* as far as your alignment goes. Not until the very end.

And Invisible War wasn't lying to you about possible choices, you were really able to make them and feel like your input did matter. However, the consequences of your actions weren't being handled realistically, that's why I said the execution was poor, but I still prefer that to no choice at all. [redacted]

Prime crotch
Member
(09-03-2010, 08:51 PM)
Quote

#67

> Originally Posted by **REMEMBER CITADEL**
>
> Not everything, in the original you can't change *anything* as far as your alignment goes. Not until the very end.

That is exactly why the original maintained a better illusion than IW; the sequel didn't manage to create one, long enough to set in at least.

Last edited by Prime crotch; 09-03-2010 at 08:57 PM.

tiff
Banned
(09-03-2010, 08:53 PM)
Quote

#68

> Originally Posted by **REMEMBER CITADEL**
>
> Like Sciz said, up to the very end you had *no choice whatsoever* about who you wanted to align with. It was predetermined and linear. You could make some simple decisions (kill or spare some characters, save Paul or not...), but they had no real bearing on the story development. In that way, I found IW an improvement over the original because it at least gave you the illusion of choice, however poorly executed.

i guess it's a matter of whether you praise a game more for being ambitious and failing or playing it safe and succeeding (or the the case of DX1's story, it's probably more "not fucking up too bad").

REMEMBER CITADEL
Banned
(09-03-2010, 09:01 PM)
Quote

#69

> Originally Posted by **Legendary Warrior**
>
> i guess it's a matter of whether you praise a game more for being ambitious and failing or playing it safe and succeeding (or the the case of DX1's story, it's probably more "not fucking up too bad").

Sure, but I'd much prefer for Human Revolution to try and follow IW's lead while (vastly) improving upon

it, than to give us another safe, linear (story-wise) experience.

nexen
Member
(09-03-2010, 09:03 PM)
Quote

#70

> Originally Posted by **charlequin**
>
> I would like to see someone who claims this actually try to sort of justify it with examples and evidence, the way stump did for the opposite in his OP.

I gave a few examples previously of why I thought DX1 was overrated. I'm afraid I do not have the time to mount an epic assault on the game as Stump has done for DX2 and I apologize for that. I'll add a little detail to my stance though:

Design:

* I thought stealth in DX1 was poorly implemented. There was very little way to tell when you were in or out of shadow. To me this ruined the stealth game, especially since I was coming off of the most excellent Thief.

* The much vaunted RPG elements of DX1 were already pretty watered down and the upgrades had lots of useless chaff. Also having magic spells masked with the word "nano-augmentations" does not a sci-fi system make. There were also too few of them imho.

* Levels felt constricted. (I'm sure this was a technical limitation)

* Gun combat was extremely clunky.

Writing:

* Dialogue was hamfisted. It felt like a poor imitation of X-files. I couldn't care less about the characters because nothing they did or said felt genuine to me.

* The world was far too convoluted and the factions felt more like "Sekrit Klub - No Gurls Allowd!" than overarching, global power structures.

* Underutilized fiction. There are some genuinely interesting stories lost in the maze of conspiracy nutter's folklore. Deus Ex took the names and jargon from this culture but very little of the fun stuff and really nothing that hadn't been represented better in other media.

Art:

* General art direction of DX1 was a weird fusion of robocop and the matrix. There was nothing original about it and it was so obviously cribbed that it just felt lazy to me.

* The animation was very clunky and the character models looked terrible.

And since I know I'll have to say it again: I liked DX1. It was pretty good despite its faults. I kind of liked DX2. It was mediocre but not terrible.

edit: I kind of feel mean picking on the art direction. I really liked what they did with ed-209 walker things. The sunglasses+trenchcoats thing was offputting to me though.

Last edited by nexen; 09-03-2010 at 09:12 PM.

bhlaab
Member
(09-03-2010, 09:17 PM)
Quote

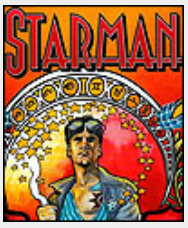
#71

> Originally Posted by **Stumpokapow**
>
> Location based damage is gone.

Keep in mind that this means a FPS with sniping and stealth elements, that was released in 2003, did

NOT include headshots. I think they patched in headshots later but even then it didn't work too good.

Splatt
Member
(09-03-2010, 09:44 PM)
Quote



#72

> Originally Posted by **Jerk 2.0**
>
> I agree with this, but I must say that **Deus Ex** has also aged poorly as well.
>
> I mean, the *design* is still pretty damn impressive (shames most 'RPGs' released today), but just about about everything placed on top of it has not suffered the ravages of time gracefully.
>
> I say this as someone that only played the game about 2 years ago. It is like reading Joyce; structurally the game is elegant, and it makes for great conversation but it really is not all that enjoyable when you get down to it.

I have to say, as someone who has finished Deus Ex only last week, it didn't age as poorly as I thought it would. The beggining of the game, when you have no upgrades is a bore to get trough, but as soon as I upgraded pistol and started stealthing my way, things started picking up, mostly because of the great level design. Later on in the game I just sniped everyone in the head, and threw LAMs at robots.

Snuggles
erotic butter maelstrom
(09-03-2010, 09:48 PM)
Quote

#73

I admit that I liked it back in the day. I wasn't as "experienced" as a gamer, though, and I played it on the Xbox after playing DX1 on the PS2. Forgetting it's a Deus Ex game, it was a solid console RPG FPS. However, after playing the original Deus Ex on PC recently I can definitely see where the sequel failed, I probably couldn't play it at this point. Deus Ex 1 is still ahead of most choice driven RPGS but the sequel seems to exemplify everything that is outdated and backwards about choice driven RPGS.

Jerk
Banned
(09-03-2010, 10:00 PM)
Quote

#74

> Originally Posted by **Splatt**
>
> I have to say, as someone who has finished Deus Ex only last week, it didn't age as poorly as I thought it would. The beggining of the game, when you have no upgrades is a bore to get trough, but as soon as I upgraded pistol and started stealthing my way, things started picking up, mostly because of the great level design. Later on in the game I just sniped everyone in the head, and threw LAMs at robots.

Yeah, it definitely could have been worse (I.E. **Planescape**).

I sniped my way through the entire game my second time playing it. Much more that my first run (stealth).

I do not want to give the impression that I do not like the game (it #10 on my list) but I think people tend to overstate the game and it s relevancy to the modern gaming audience.

Youta Mottenai
Member
(09-03-2010, 10:22 PM)
Quote

#75

Guess I´m lucky. I´ve bought it on a bargain bin but couldn´t make it run (on an ATI Radeon 9600). Crashed to the desktop after (very slowly) loading a level.

I remember having problems installing it (the installer would stuck at x% for several minutes or sometimes would crash halfway the installation).

I tried it in January this year in my brother´s machine (the installer seems terrible regardless the machine you´re using) but got bored by the third load screen.

Sciz
Member
(09-03-2010, 10:32 PM)
Quote

#76

> Originally Posted by **nexen**
> * Levels felt constricted. (I'm sure this was a technical limitation)

There are legitimate criticisms to make against Deus Ex (and you touch on several of them), but this is not one. Excepting maybe the PS2 version.

nexen
Member
(09-03-2010, 10:57 PM)
Quote

#77

> Originally Posted by **Sciz**
> There are legitimate criticisms to make against Deus Ex (and you touch on several of them), but this is not one. Excepting maybe the PS2 version.

Felt constricted to me. They felt small. Except some snipery one in an office building I have a vague recollection of.

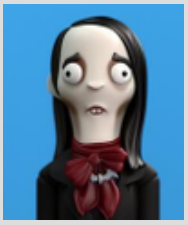
Maybe this one is just my overexpectations of the game though? I was (am) a big fan of Warren Spector's because of Ultima VII: Part 2 and Ultima Underworld 2. When I heard he was making a conspiracy theory themed fps/rpg hybrid I came into it expecting the world to be as massive as in those games.

Zeliard
Livin' Man
(09-03-2010, 11:03 PM)
Quote

#78

Deus Ex was once described by one of its designers, I believe, as a series of hubs. The sandbox aspect of Deus Ex comes in through its gameplay options more than through open world-style freedom of movement (though DX maps allow for plenty of the latter).

Rez
The best advice anyone could ever give.
(12-21-2010, 07:35 AM)
Quote



#79

just bumping this after being linked to it in another thread to say, surprise surprise, "thanks for the interesting read, stump"

TemplaerDude
re-sign Martin Rucinsky
(12-21-2010, 07:44 AM)
Quote

#80

I like this thread because the OP is right on every point.

EmCeeGramr
where did you come from spider-man, where did you come from dog police
(12-21-2010, 08:25 AM)
Quote

#81

The only thing you didn't mention is how even the multiple endings in Invisible War were terrible. Deus Ex had you deciding which of three characters' views for the world was correct (while denying one option because it was absolutely absurd for JC Denton to ally with such a villain*), and then presented that vision of the new world to you without any spin. Terrifying and awesome in the literal sense, each ending could either be an optimistic view for a better future or a chilling hint at a species' decline.

Meanwhile Invisible War just finds four different ways to say "the future is fucked up, super-apeshit-dystopia" where even the "good" endings have unnecessarily sinister overtones.

*Something they never considered in Invisible War, where one option is to grant world rule to an organizations whose stated goals include the mass murder and purging of all individuals with augmentations... *like the ones you have*.

EDIT: Also for full disclosure, I played Invisible War sometime around release, found it boring and its choices very thin and cheap even without any expectations. I knew little of Deus Ex other than that the first game had a very good reputation.

I played Deus Ex for the first time in 2008 and found it to be a superior game in almost every aspect.

Last edited by EmCeeGramr; 12-21-2010 at 08:32 AM.

I should be doing hw
Member
(12-21-2010, 08:48 AM)
Quote

#82

> Originally Posted by **the walrus**
>
> You really hit the nail on the head**. Vastly inferior to Deus Ex in every way possible - yet, of course, praised by reviewers because it's linear, simple, and didn't feature the horrid horrid voice acting of Hong Kong nor the ugly visuals of the original** (even though the voice acting was still bad and the game is plenty ugly and even buggier than the original).

Great write up OP, but missed this as the punchline. Did you forget to add this? I felt like you were leading to something but you ended up just listing IW's faults, which everyone knows is shit.

User33
Member
(12-21-2010, 09:08 AM)
Quote

#83

> Originally Posted by **Stumpokapow**
>
> No, and if they did, it'd be bullshit. The endings of Deus Ex 1 are bullshit specifically for this reason.

Deus Ex certainly did do this:

[redacted]

and

[redacted]

thetrin
Hail, peons, for I have come as ambassador from the great and bountiful Blueberry Butt Explosion
(12-21-2010, 09:52 AM)

#84

> Originally Posted by **EmCeeGramr**
>
> The only thing you didn't mention is how even the multiple endings in Invisible War were terrible. Deus Ex had you deciding which of three characters' views for the world was correct (while denying one option because it was absolutely absurd for JC Denton to ally with such a

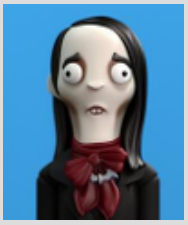
Quote

> villain*), and then presented that vision of the new world to you without any spin. Terrifying and awesome in the literal sense, each ending could either be an optimistic view for a better future or a chilling hint at a species' decline.
>
> Meanwhile Invisible War just finds four different ways to say "the future is fucked up, super-apeshit-dystopia" where even the "good" endings have unnecessarily sinister overtones.
>
> *Something they never considered in Invisible War, where one option is to grant world rule to an organizations whose stated goals include the mass murder and purging of all individuals with augmentations... *like the ones you have*.
>
> EDIT: Also for full disclosure, I played Invisible War sometime around release, found it boring and its choices very thin and cheap even without any expectations. I knew little of Deus Ex other than that the first game had a very good reputation.
>
> I played Deus Ex for the first time in 2008 and found it to be a superior game in almost every aspect.

People who say DX has aged to a point of being unplayable are dumb. The game still stands up today as one of the best RPG hybrids in gaming history.

Rez
The best advice anyone could ever give.
(12-21-2010, 09:53 AM) #85

Quote

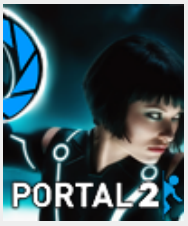


I haven't played either. I have both sitting in my Steam account.

I might just start DE1 soon.

itxaka
Defeatist
(12-21-2010, 10:00 AM) #86

Quote



> There's no reason to try a no kill run--the stealth system is busted as hell (enemies hear from across the map) and non-lethal weapons are just weaker versions of the lethal weapons you already have. There is absolutely no plot or mission reason to ever use a non-lethal takedown.

I don't know which game you played, but on mine this isn't true. You could stealth with no problems behind enemies and such?

EmCeeGramr
where did you come from spider-man, where did you come from dog police
(12-21-2010, 06:13 PM) #87

Quote

> Originally Posted by **User33**
>
> Deus Ex certainly did do this:
>
> [redacted]
>
> and
>
> [redacted]

Because in DX1, it was *slightly* different.

[redacted]

[redacted]

In contrast, Invisible War let you actively murder entire factions and work for their bitter enemies in openly opposing that faction's plans and declaring your allegiance to another, only to be able to switch sides at the very end without any real plot justification.

Same thing with the "oh, but Deus Ex 1 let you switch alignments at the end!" argument. Not true, because *you were never explicitly aligned with any of the people you chose at the end.* It was a mix of allies who had all helped you in along in the main plot ([redacted]), who weren't fighting each other because they were focusing their efforts against Page and MJ-12's plans. It was only once you reached the final showdown that suddenly the question of what would happen to the world afterward became relevant, and JC was faced with a sudden decision of which of his allies to trust.

Last edited by EmCeeGramr; 12-21-2010 at 06:17 PM.

jaundicejuice
Member
(12-22-2010, 06:03 AM)
Quote

#88

I'm not even going to waste time complaining about how huge--you can't understate this--a step back Invisible War is from Deus Ex in terms of complexity in every facet of its design. There's nothing to really say on that subject that hasn't already been said. But here's the plot...

Spoilers ahoy if you haven't played either game and intend to.

One thing that really confused me about Invisible War was that it used **both** the Tracer Tong and Helios endings as the loose foundation for the world of Invisible War. In the beginning of the game when you exit the Tarsus Academy and see the holo-broadcast by the president of the WTO, it appears as though the Tracer Tong/Collapse ending is the foundation for the world, but by the time you get to Trier, you discover that J.C. did in fact merge with the Helios A.I. but somehow failed to become the benevolent dictator of the world, the merger was incomplete and the global network somehow got shut down at the same time. Which is honestly kind of muddled.

It took until Trier, Germany for Invisible War's story to even get remotely interesting, have a vague connection to the first game and actually provide the player with a semi-decent motivation for doing anything in the game. And by then you're pretty much half-way through a really short, disappointing sequel. For the first half of Invisible War you're bounding back and forth between two entirely unlikeable factions, with completely ridiculous objectives for no real valid reason. Your first mission outside of Seattle is to track down one of the chief scientists of ApostleCorp, the company that ran Tarsus Academy and helped to modify all of the students/corporate mercenaries in training. You fly to Egypt, the WTO wants you to wreck her families illegal greenhouse (why? because they're douche bags?) and track her down so they can pick her brain while The Order wants you to murder her outright because you're supposed to be mad over the voluntary body modifications you underwent at Tarsus. you're presented with these ridiculous extremes, with tracking her down as the least distasteful option.

In the first Deus Ex you're a bad ass modified government agent fighting terrorism that stumbles across a sinister global conspiracy, in Invisible War you're a modified corporate mercenary-in-training just sort of going places and doing stuff without any real rhyme or reason until Trier provides some tenuous hooks from the first game and the only sort of likeable faction. In Invisible War your choices are support a sinister conspiracy, ally yourself with a bunch of bigots or pick up where the Denton's left off and go for the super Helios ending. Hmmmm.

Because it's so badly written there is no real choice in Invisible War's ending, whereas I contemplated the merits of all three factions in the original Deus Ex. I was actually conflicted over my decision.

I'm actually pretty glad that Invisible War is so damned short and don't care if Steam doesn't properly track it's play time. Awful, awful game.

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