



PUBLISHER: Eidos Interactive DEVELOPER: Eidos Hungary GENRE: Action-Simulation AVAILABILITY: Retail ESRB RATING: Teen  
 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS: 2GHz CPU, 512MB RAM, 6GB hard drive space (gamepad recommended) MULTIPLAYER: 2-8 players VERSION REVIEWED: Near-Final Reviewable

## REVIEW

**Ever play a pickup football game** with your buddies? You all draw up some amazing, intricate play in the huddle—something involving a buttonhook, slanting flankers, three pump fakes, two pulling guards, and a play-action pass—then you yell “hike!” and everyone just runs around randomly, trying to get open. Take that situation, throw in some battleships, and you’ve got the 411 on *Battlestations: Midway*.

### THE GATHERING STORM

It started with an ambitious plan: encapsulate the Pacific Theater of World War II in one deep but easy-to-pick-up experience. *Midway* attempts this by giving players the power to jump seamlessly from a tactical planning map to the controls of the ship, sub, or fighter of their choice. It’s a nifty idea; unfortunately, it starts to stumble as soon as you grab the controls. For instance: Flying a fighter proves frustratingly difficult with a keyboard and mouse, but it’s equally difficult to aim a ship’s guns with a gamepad. Switch back and forth a couple times, and you’ll end up more confused than Dale Earnhardt, Jr. at a right turn.

Retreating to the tactical map offers scant relief. While *Midway* purports to employ maneuvers like destroyer screening and combat-air patrol, it’s far too action-oriented to make those procedures worthwhile in practice. Moreover, the single-player missions typically put you up against such overwhelming odds that high-level tactics go out the window, anyway.

### TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY

Still, the core of *Midway* is its multiplayer component, and Internet games are stable and easy to set up. Gameplay mimics the single-player mode, except that individual members of a team only control a portion of its military assets. That

tends to emphasize real, honest-to-goodness teamwork, which is greatly to *Midway*’s credit.

On the other hand, multiplayer games also reveal the game’s biggest design foible: Get a few games under your ammo belt, and you’ll realize that the A.I. wildly outpaces human players at targeting ships’ guns, making torpedo runs, and avoiding depth charges. Once you come to this conclusion, you’ll go from actual playing to merely opening the tactical map, ordering your ships and planes to the attack, and wandering off to make yourself a sandwich. With a little luck, the A.I. will have taken out your opponent by the time you’re licking the mayo off your fingers—unless, of course, he’s employing the same clever *démarche*.

*Midway* simply dies from trying to do too much. Thanks to the lack of focus on one type of gameplay, the stuff you can do gets tired quicker than a narcoleptic on Thorazine. The submarine, for example, can perform exactly three tasks: move around, dive, and shoot torpedoes. That’s it. No deck guns, no emergency blow, no silent running—zilch. Ships and fighters are even less complex. This exaggerated simplicity just means you’ll never find a single deeply satisfying game experience here...just a bunch of vaguely dissatisfying ones. **•Eric Neigher**

**MIDWAY SIMPLY DIES FROM TRYING TO DO TOO MUCH.**



### VERDICT

- ✦ Jack of all trades.
- ✦ Master of none.

5/10

AVERAGE



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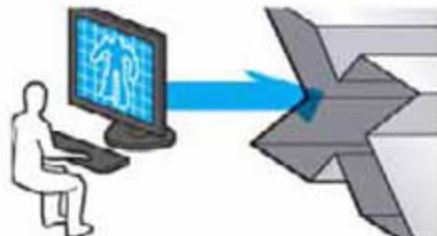
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