

# Brink

Dabba dee dabba die

**B**rink takes place on the Ark – a utopian man-made city that floats on the ocean following the end of the world. Any people lucky enough to be on the Ark before things went pear-shaped are called Citizens: they're there because they could afford to be and they'd like it very much if everyone would leave them alone. Then there are the Guests. These poor souls came to the Ark post-apocalypse seeking refuge. With little choice but to chuck them overboard, the Citizens give the thumbs-up for the Guests to stick around, provided they set up their own living spaces and don't bother the Citizens' Sunday cricket and crumpets. But, in a city designed to support five thousand, the additional forty-five thousand have wrecked havoc on the city's balance and now it's on the brink of civil war between two factions: the newly-formed Rebellion and the Ark's Security.

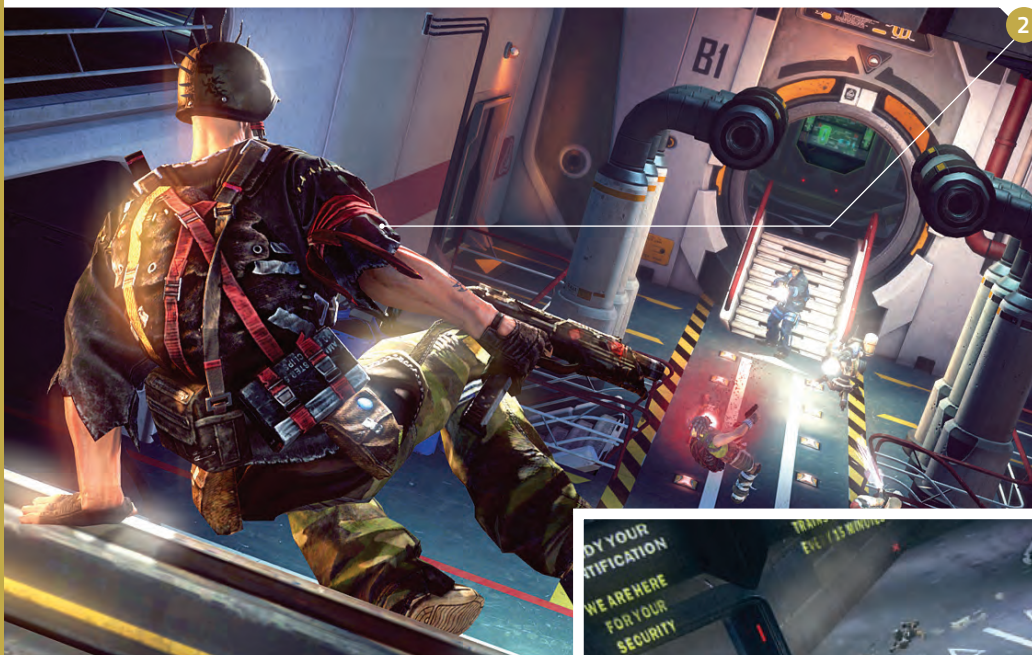
When you start up the game, you're greeted with incredibly slick presentation and a character customisation screen. Not much is available at first, but there's enough to get you excited. If your character

## [ details ]

Platforms: **360 / PS3 / PC**  
 Genre: **First-person shooter**  
 Age restriction: **16+**  
 DRM: **Internet connection required [Steam]**  
 Multiplayer: **Local: None**  
**Online: 16 players**  
 Developer: **Splash Damage**  
 Website: **www.brinkthegame.com**  
 Publisher: **Bethesda Softworks**  
 Distributor: **Nu Metro Interactive**

looks this good already, imagine how awesome he'll look once you've unlocked a bunch of stuff. Once done, you might consider jumping into a tutorial, and you'd be wise to do so. *Brink* works in a similar way to *Unreal Tournament's* Assault Mode: two opposing teams attempting to take similar, opposing objectives, but almost none of that is obvious unless you sit through the tutorial videos. *Brink* comes with a bit of a steep initial learning curve, but once you've got it figured out (which will likely be accomplished by telling the tutorials to get stuffed and learning as you go along), you'll find that the system is fairly straightforward. The simplest part of the game is learning to use its SMART movement system that gives players access to *Mirror's Edge*-like movement with about a tenth of the effort.

The point in each mission is to accomplish a number of goals that open up new sections of the map or change existing ones as you progress. Depending on the mission at hand, you might have to, say, plant explosives or hack into a terminal, while the opposing team endeavours to stop you from doing so. Often, there are ancillary objectives



**/1/** At any time you can bring up the objective wheel that displays currently available objectives for your class. Choosing an objective will show you the target location from anywhere in the map.

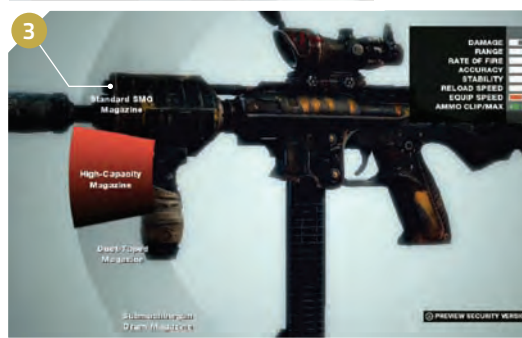
**/2/** Different body types will affect your ability to move using SMART. The Light body type can climb the highest walls and move quickly, but the Heavy struggled to climb over a couch while being able to take the most damage.

**/3/** Weapon and character customisation options are unlocked by completing the four optional challenge missions at different difficulties.



that either team will have access to that will buy them time or cause additional headaches for the other guys. On top of that, the environment contains a number of capturable Command Posts at which players of the owning team can restock on ammo. There are two types of Posts: Health and Supply. The former increases the holding team's players' health bars by one pip, while the latter increases their Supply by one pip. With all of that going on, it'd be understandable if things get a little crazy, but for the most part each mission boils down to a simple objective: kill the other guys as they try to complete their objectives. This simplicity has the nasty habit of resulting in extraordinary amounts of camping (especially if you can camp an objective near a Command Post), and the Supply/buff system, mentioned next, only adds to that.

There are four classes in *Brink*: Solider, Engineer, Medic and Operative. There are no limits on the level of weaponry each has access to (this is instead determined by body type), but each has a selection of abilities (like Perks, to use a *COD* reference) that



make them quite distinct in this team-focused type of gameplay. Many of these abilities are once-off weapons or buffs (some are self-targetable, others are not) that require you to spend the resource called Supply to use. Supply slowly regenerates over time, but many of the abilities will stay until the character dies. Such examples are an Engineer's damage bonus and Kevlar armour, a Medic's health and regeneration bonuses, and the Engineer's deployable turrets. Each player can choose how and when to spend their Supply, and if you go a long time without dying, you'll often find that you've got a few buffs active at any one time, which makes you a hell of a lot tougher than someone with none. So, when a team has to lock down an area, all they need do is keep throwing buffs at each other, planting turrets and mines, and keeping each other healed. The opposing team will have a tough time breaking through such a defence, and with the absolutely bloody awful AI running the show, you'll be hard-pressed to finish a few of the available missions unless you're playing online...

About that "online" thing; good luck with that. *Brink* is stuck in a pretty ugly rut that's the result of many reviewers getting hold of code that the developers themselves call "too early" and "broken". Unfortunately, reviews based on this code went live, calling the game's AI terrible, saying that the AI-controlled players fling wildly between unfairly accurate and plain stupid. As a result, the game scored poorly in its critical first few weeks in the market. The knock-on effect of this is that it's almost impossible to find players online, which means that most of the time, you're stuck with the AI. While it's better than it was before, it's still far from good, or even acceptable.

*Brink* is the sort of game that makes you ask yourself "why isn't this better?" It's filled with potential: cool aesthetic, interesting gameplay ideas, a great setting and a ton of customisability, but falls flat on its face, down a flight of stairs and into a gaggle of passing-by nuns because of just a few glaring issues.

**NAG**

**GeometriX**

/ PLUS / Customisability / Team-based play / Great aesthetic / SMART movement works well  
/ MINUS / Poor AI / Non-existent online community / Gameplay imbalances

BUY THIS SO I HAVE SOMEONE TO PLAY WITH :(

65

# NAG



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## Reviews

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- The Witcher 2:
- Assassins of Kings
- Duke Nukem Forever
- Brink
- + More!



# BATTLEFIELD

# 3

Two words, Hands-on multiplayer! Or is that three words?

JULY 2011 SOUTH AFRICA R42.00



If your DVD is missing we are really sorry. The truth is the DVD had to be redone this month after the burner was formatted. This has nothing to do with your particular DVD being missing - that's just bad luck, which is why we're sorry.