



PUBLISHER: 2K Games DEVELOPER: Firaxis GENRE: Turn-Based Strategy AVAILABILITY: Retail ESRB RATING: Everyone 10+
 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS: 1.2GHz CPU, 256MB RAM, 1.7GB hard drive space, Civilization IV MULTIPLAYER: 2-16 players VERSION REVIEWED: Near-final Reviewable

REVIEW



It took two years, two expansions, and enough patches to stitch up Humpty Dumpty, but *Civilization IV* is finally worthy of being called the best strategy game on the market. The latest expansion, *Beyond the Sword*, improves *Civ IV* so much that you'll wonder how the infamous timesink ever sank a moment without it.

DECONSTRUCTING CIV

Beyond the Sword goes way, er, beyond mere tweaks, implementing fundamental gameplay changes and additions. First among these are the new *Galactic Civilizations*-style "events"—random occurrences that can spell calamity or opportunity for the recipient. Cleverly, these are tied to your civilization's choices throughout the game. For example, only players using the Slavery civic are vulnerable to Kirk-Douglas-and-friends slave revolts, while only players with clam hatcheries can discover rare black pearls. Occasionally, players even receive worldwide "quests" that they can accomplish for a massive bonus—while their rivals try to do the same.

Apart from the new event system, though, *BTS* showcases more quality features than a Woody Allen-only multiplex. The new Apostolic Palace wonder increases the role of religion in the early game, while multinational corporations largely replace religion later on. These corporations provide massive, game-changing bonuses to their home countries. Cereal Mills, for example, boost population growth, while Standard Ethanol supplies fossil fuels even if you have no oil...and gives a research bonus. Corporations finally give players a reason not to switch to the State Property civic (which renders them useless) late in the game.

And even when the changes are minor, they're welcome. Improved connectivity and simultaneous turns greatly speed up multiplayer. And on that subject, you and your buddies should load up one of *BTS*'s many innovative mods, which include a realistic depiction of World War II, a squad-based humans-versus-zombies conversion, and even a *Civ IV* take on *Defender*, in which you build cities, stock them with units, and try to hold out against waves of baddies.

CELEBRITY

Of course, no *Civ* expansion would be complete without a bevy of new races and leaders. You can now lead—among others—the Babylonians as Hammurabi and the Portuguese as John II. De Gaulle, Churchill, and Stalin take time off from their regular gig at the History Channel to make an appearance, although—as far as the *Civ* development staff is concerned—Hitler remains in 10-foot-pole land. Moreover, the entire leader dynamic is changed: Players can now pair any leader (and his unique talents) with any civilization (and its unique units and buildings). So, if you've always dreamed of Napoleon leading an army of redcoats, now's your chance to show Bizarro French Wellington who's boss.

Apart from a few quibbles (large maps still load at a glacial pace and the A.I. still builds cities right on top of yours), *BTS* takes a strong game with some serious flaws and turns it into a fantastic game with a couple of minor flaws. No small feat, that. **• Eric Neigher**

VERDICT

Improves just about every aspect of the game; streamlined multiplayer.

Still hasn't fixed some annoying A.I. behaviors; long load times on large maps.

9/10

EXCELLENT



Despite *Civilization IV*'s many patches, the A.I. still has the annoying propensity to build cities virtually inside your borders.

WORLD OF WARCRAFT EXPANSION!
MASSIVE! 10 PAGES OF SCREENS, INTERVIEWS, AND EXCLUSIVE INFO



STARCRRAFT II
NEW UNITS • WE PLAYED IT!

PAGE 28



TM

Games for Windows®

ULTIMATE PC GAMES AUTHORITY \ THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE



EXCLUSIVE DETAILS

WORLD OF WARCRAFT WRATH OF THE LICH KING

BEYOND BLIZZCON:
NEW DUNGEONS
DEVELOPER INTERVIEWS
**PLUS: THE REAL BURNING
CRUSADE ENDING!**

MARH REIN SPEAKS

**UNREAL
TOURNAMENT 3**
WAIT, IT'S A
SINGLE-PLAYER
GAME, TOO?

SPECIAL REPORT

YOU ARE A CHEATER!
YOU JUST MAY NOT KNOW IT YET
FIND OUT WHY ON PAGE 24

WORLD OF WARCRAFT
TRADING CARD GAME

**FREE
CARD
INSIDE!**



PREVIEWED
**PENNY ARCADE
ADVENTURES**
HILARITY ENSUES?



REVIEWED
**CIVILIZATION IV:
BEYOND THE SWORD**
MUST-HAVE EXPANSION!

SEPTEMBER 2007 ISSUE 10
\$4.99 U.S. \$6.99 Canada

ZIFF DAVIS MEDIA™



GFW.1UP.COM

Display Until October 2