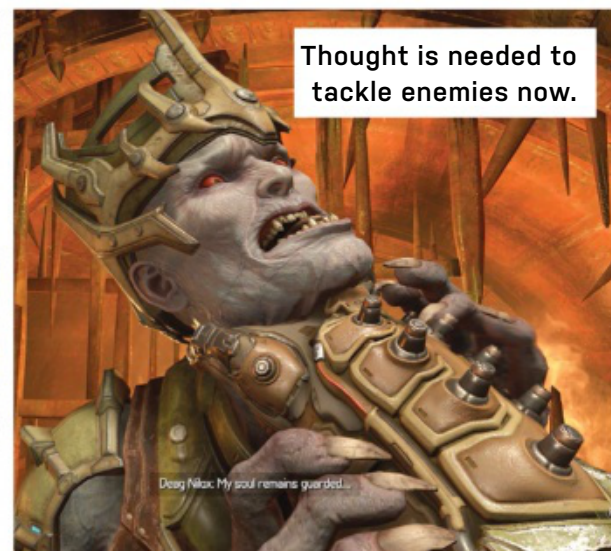


More speed, more monsters, and more splatter.



Thought is needed to tackle enemies now.



The idTech 7 game engine adds a riot of color to the world.



Eternal includes a rich lore behind the story.

FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER

Doom Eternal

Rip and tear, but obey the lore

OF ALL THE LONG-RUNNING franchises, the least likely to reinvent itself was surely *Doom*. It's done that already, with *Doom 3*'s descent into survival horror, rectified with a 2016 game that returned to the shooty mayhem of the first two titles.

Eternal is, on the surface, more of the same. There are demons, many of them horrifying biomechanical creatures, and they're invading Earth. Actually, they seem to have succeeded. A wonderful early scene depicts an enormous horned creature, like Hellboy with a raging hangover, walking through a ruined city flowing with lava, and showing, for a glorious moment, a giant mech suit. There's a boss battle there, you think. Us in the mech vs that red abomination. The fact it never happens is a disappointment, but perhaps the only one.

Every iteration of *Doom* (except *Doom 3*) seems to increase the speed, the monster count, and the splatter. *Eternal* doesn't let us down here, taking everything that was added to the 2016 game and piling more on top. That the starting weapon is the shotgun rather than a pistol should tell you a lot—*Doom*'s signature weapon relegated to a mere zombie-popper.

It's not just the new weapons and enemies either. *Doom* has been imbued

with a plot and lore. And wow, it's complicated. There's flashbacks, ancient aliens, creatures called hell priests that need to be chased across the world and beyond. The Icon of Sin grows a body, but John Romero's severed head is nowhere to be seen. Weapon upgrades are more complicated, and thought needs to be put into which one to use against which enemy, rather than blasting away with whatever you've got the most ammo for.

The need to keep your guns and health topped up drives you to kill enemies in particular ways, although there are also health pickups scattered around. Staggering an enemy makes them flash blue, and charging in with a melee attack rewards you with a special "glory kill" animation and drops health. Killing an enemy with the chainsaw drops ammo, somehow, making the prioritization of targets essential if you're to have enough bullets left to deal with the big guys, once you've tooled up using the cannon fodder.

Special mention must go to idTech 7, the engine very much purring beneath the hood. Not only has it added a dismemberment system that sees you blow chunks of armor and flesh off your enemies to reveal the bones beneath, but the step up to new technology has added

color to *Doom*'s world. No longer are we in a world of grays and reds, but we see blue and yellow illuminated signs, a constant orange glow from lava, and even a few potted plants to brighten the place up. There also seems to be more in the way of intelligence at work, with enemy infighting more pronounced, and flanking that presses you to keep moving. System requirements are very low, with 4K Ultra reachable on modest hardware. Push the slider up, and you'll be amazed how far it goes before ruining the frame rate.

Eternal may be more of the same—what did we expect with a name like that?—but its additions to the game mean that there's more to it than dumb blasting if you want it. And if you just want dumb blasting, that's fine too. **—IAN EVENDEN**

VERDICT **8** **Doom Eternal**

EMBELLISHED Fast, smooth, and full of things to shoot at.


HELLISH New additions may feel like too much for purists.

RECOMMENDED SPECS CPU, Core i7-6700K / Ryzen 7 1800X. RAM, 8GB. GPU, GeForce GTX 970, AMD RX 480.

\$60, <https://slayersclub.bethesda.net>, M-rated



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