



PUBLISHER: THQ DEVELOPER: Iron Lore GENRE: Action-RPG AVAILABILITY: Retail ESRB RATING: Teen  
 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS: 1.8GHz CPU, 512MB RAM, 5GB hard drive space, Titan Quest MULTIPLAYER: 2-6 players VERSION REVIEWED: Near-Final Reviewable

## REVIEW



To paraphrase a famous quote, I don't know if I can define "good gameplay," but I know it when I see it. And in 2006, I saw it for many, many late-night, eye-bleeding hours in Iron Lore's ridiculously addictive *Titan Quest*—an action-RPG that, like many games before it, stole blatantly from *Diablo II*...but unlike the others, *Titan Quest* utterly nailed that same elusive, indefinable magic groove that made *D2* a classic. Put another way, *Titan Quest* was the first *Diablo* clone that deserved to *not* be labeled that way.

Now Iron Lore returns with *Immortal Throne*, the first *TQ* expansion pack, and it's an essential addition—both to vets and to new players—fixing nearly everything that needed fixing in the original game, while adding a buttload of new content. Nothing here is mind-blowingly original for the genre...but, once again, all the smart choices, cool options, and creative little touches prove that the developers know exactly what they're doing.



I WENT FROM BORED MILLIONAIRE TO DESPERATE PAUPER—AND THAT'S A GOOD THING.

### UNDERWORLD DREAMS

*Immortal Throne* picks up just seconds after you've killed *TQ*'s final boss, Typhon, up in Olympus. Now, for the expansion's new fourth act, you descend to Rhodes...only to discover—shockingly!—that the threat of the angry Titans isn't over, and that you must head toward the Underworld and face off against the Lord of the Dead, "Don't Call Me Diablo" Hades himself. Along the way, you traverse eight humongous maps filled with loot-toting monsters and a couple dozen side quests that should keep you busy for a good 15 hours or so (or more, if you suck as much as I do).

The new act is fine...but the real appeal of *Immortal Throne* comes from all the cool things added to the base game. The big one is the new skill tab, Dream Mastery, a kick-ass combination of magic damage, pet summoning, and restoration.

## HILL AND BE KILLED

Here's the final tally for Mougins, my level 40 Conqueror, after making it through both *Titan Quest* and *Immortal Throne*:

Time played: 76 hours

Monsters killed: 21,679

Times killed: 222

It's so good that, after finishing the expansion with my melee-only Conqueror dude, I felt compelled to start the entire game over just to bathe in its awesomeness. (It's also so good that a nerf seems almost inevitable once fans start whining).

Best of all: the new ways to spend money and manage loot—by far the original game's biggest shortcoming. The original *TQ* gave out too much gold and not enough stuff to spend it on; now the choices are plentiful, and tie directly into gameplay, adding yet more strategic decision-making to the mix. Do you spend it all on powerful one-shot scrolls, which are now nearly essential to beating the game's almost unfairly tough boss monsters? Or do you save up to buy the new artifacts, which can add extremely powerful—and necessary—bonuses and resistances? By the time I hit *Immortal Throne*'s final boss, I had gone from bored millionaire to desperate pauper—and I'm calling that a good thing. The choices were maddening, yes...but, see, that's the whole "good gameplay" part. *Immortal Throne* continues *Titan Quest*'s winning blend of killing, shopping, and strategic decision-making. It's a textbook case of a great expansion. • Jeff Green

### VERDICT

Fixes most of original's flaws; new Act IV is huge; Dream Mastery skill rocks.

Boss battles are almost unfairly tough.

9/10

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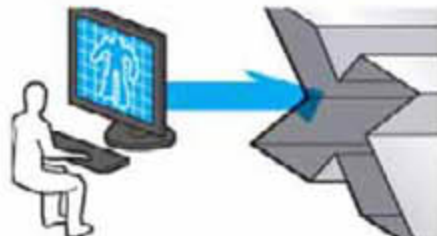
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