



• Combat is just a click away. And another click. And another.

TWO WORLDS

Should've stuck with just the one world

PUBLISHER: SouthPeak Games/TopWare DEVELOPER: Reality Pump GENRE: RPG AVAILABILITY: Retail ESRB RATING: Mature
 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS: 2GHz CPU, 512MB RAM, 5GB hard drive space, 128MB videocard MULTIPLAYER: 2-8 players VERSION REVIEWED: Retail Box

REVIEW

Gargantuan game worlds are big in fantasy-RPGs. But bigger doesn't necessarily trump better, as evidenced by *Two Worlds*—a game doomed to endure countless unfavorable comparisons to *The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion* and regrettably too dependent on cliché and convention to qualify as unique in its own right. It's an admirable endeavor, but it's undone by its scope: Sprawling and overlong, it feels bloated rather than epic, with glimmers of brilliance insufficient to dispel the sense that developer Reality Pump bit off a bit too much.

LONG AGO, IN THE LAND OF BEEN THERE

Missing siblings, Orcs, imprisoned deities, magical artifacts cut into pieces and scattered across the land—*Two Worlds* is like a fantasy Mad Lib. You're a mercenary (male only...sorry, ladies) seeking his kidnapped sister and acting as the unwilling pawn in a saw-that-coming plot to resurrect the evil Orc god, Aziraal. As in other open-world games, you're free to follow or ignore this banal storyline, with its absurdly pompous Olde English script and atrocious voice acting.

NPCs *prithe* and *forsooth* you into hundreds of inventive side quests, so players who elect to leave Sis to her fate still find themselves plenty busy in the extravagantly beautiful and monster-infested world of Antaloore. Given the priority of combat in *Two Worlds*, the developers blew the opportunity to make it great; it's clickcentric to the point of boredom. A few *Prince of Persia*-esque combos would help enliven the sadly unremarkable battle system.

Two Worlds does keep you entertained most of the time, thanks to some clever ideas like the *Voltron*-style ability to stack identical weapons and armor into more powerful wholes. When Ax plus Ax equals Better Ax, you have reason to gather even random corpse junk throughout the

game. Collectible, interchangeable cards drive the magic system, encouraging customization with rare boosters that enhance the core spells of your growing deck. And easy teleportation makes globetrotting a snap without breaking up the flow as *Oblivion's* fast travel did. You can even pay to "regress" your character—freeing up skill points earned when leveling, should you decide to change specialties or drop an unused talent. But every innovation is countered with something unnecessary or obtuse, from the deliberately clumsy inventory and interface to the pointless alchemy system to uncontrollable and exasperating mounts. Most irrelevant of all: two multiplayer modes, offering player-versus-player arena combat and limited party-based questing. These options are briefly entertaining, but the sparse online population and shallow amusement level render multiplayer a diversion at best. What it really demonstrates is how awesome a full-story cooperative mode would've been.

TWO MUCH

If you relish level grinding and clickalicious combat, you'll find enjoyment in *Two Worlds*—a couple hundred hours' worth of play for those willing to overlook small but numerous flaws. It's stable, attractive, and engaging enough to keep you coming back. But the game kitchen-sinks itself. Had the developers made it about 30 percent smaller, cut the fat, and tightened its assorted good qualities, they may have realized its true potential and produced something special. As is, nothing's intrinsically bad about *Two Worlds*—but neither is anything memorably good. •Matthew Sakey



• Well, of course you're cold—look what you're wearing.



• In classic action-RPG tradition, you'll find yourself in major battles against multiple foes.

VERDICT

• Gorgeous and action-packed; wide scope of activities.

• Size trumps substance; unnecessary multiplayer; frustrating interface.

6/10

AVERAGE



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