


# ULTIMA ONLINE: KINGDOM REBORN

## Kingdom Euthanized

PUBLISHER: **Electronic Arts** DEVELOPER: **Electronic Arts** GENRE: **MMORPG** AVAILABILITY: **Free Download** ([www.uoherald.com/kingdomreborn](http://www.uoherald.com/kingdomreborn)) ESRB RATING: **Teen**  
MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS: **1GHz CPU, 512MB RAM, 6GB hard drive space** MULTIPLAYER: **Massive-scale** VERSION REVIEWED: **Live v2.46.1.9**

### REVIEW

 You may find it shocking, but people still play *Ultima Online*...a full 10 years after its release helped kick off the MMO genre. The reason: *UO*'s original designers created it as a truly open virtual world. Nothing fosters player retention as effectively as an environment that lets you do just about anything you choose. The downside: all the crappy content that publisher Electronic Arts heaped into the game since then. Things like useless item statistics and out-of-place ninja skills pollute *UO*'s virtual world like trash on the banks of a stream.

EA's latest garbage pile, *UO: Kingdom Reborn*, is a buggy new client with 3D graphics that players can download for free. The updated graphics look decent (but still fall short of

today's standards), and some mechanical changes constitute genuine improvements (such as finally being able to zoom the camera in and out). But the new client's main goal is to shoehorn in the same features you see in more recent MMOs—stuff like slot-based inventory management and the ubiquitous chat window in the lower-left corner. These additions simply cut the heart out of what makes *UO* so endearing: the immersion. Example: The old client's localized chat system meant you had to be within earshot of another player in order to communicate...whereas *Kingdom Reborn* jettisons it in favor of the impersonal instant messenger-style chat interface seen everywhere else. In *UO*'s case, these conveniences are the virtual equivalent of a sex change operation—a darkly amusing position for a game that offers player avatars that very option. **•Matthew Chase**



•From the beginning, *UO* offered one of the coolest MMO features ever: home ownership.

EA'S LATEST GARBAGE PILE CONSISTS OF A BUGGY NEW GAME CLIENT WITH 3D GRAPHICS THAT PLAYERS CAN DOWNLOAD FOR FREE.

#### VERDICT

- Mechanical improvements; better visuals; you can still use the old client.
- ❑ Needless interface additions detract from the immersion factor.

# 3/10

BAD



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