

Video Game Review: ‘Puzzle Chronicles’ Barely Satisfies

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 3, 2010 - 3:40pm

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CHICAGO – Those of us that are wildly addicted to “Bejeweled Blitz” and played through “Puzzle Quest” like a gleeful toddler with a new toy were pretty psyched that the developers of the latter, spectacular Nintendo DS title were releasing a DLC game called “Puzzle Chronicles”. Once again, our puzzle-loving persona could meld with the kid inside us who misses the days when he played Dungeons and Dragons in his basement. Sadly, “Puzzle Chronicles” only barely delivers.

The first impression is always a physical one and “Puzzle Chronicles” simply doesn’t look good. It has the graphics and general aesthetic of not just the last generation but possibly the one before that. Developers often underestimate the appearance of a game that doesn’t rely on it for gameplay. The hideous appearance of “Puzzle Chronicles” doesn’t effect the gameplay of the title but who wants to spend their limited free time with something that’s not pleasing to the eye?



Puzzle Chronicles
Photo credit: Konami

The gameplay/design of “Puzzle Chronicles” will be familiar to anyone who has played “Puzzle Quest”. Once again, the designers have merged the puzzle structure of addictive online games like “Bejeweled” or “Tetris” with a fantasy RPG experience. Players “battle” through a “Tetris”-esque interface in which they must merge blocks from left to right and push a center bar far enough to beat their opponent.





Puzzle Chronicles
Photo credit: Konami

The player is given three block lines that they can turn and drop on to the center bar. Certain blocks destroy those of the same color and destroying "Rage Gems" moves the bar in the right direction. To mix it up a bit, the player has a Warbeast, a creature that can attack the enemy once the player has destroyed enough of the right colored blocks.

It's a simple gameplay structure that mostly works but it gets shockingly repetitive and hard-to-master quickly. Rarely, did I feel like my skill in placing the blocks was as important as the pure luck of what I was being given. Still, it's the heart of the game and it mostly works.

Far more frustrating is the material that links each "puzzle fight sequence". The player awkwardly moves from location to location with a story line that's very difficult to care about. There are side quests but they're basically just extensions of the main quest that will give the player new items, skills, etc. There's simply not as much variety in "Puzzle Chronicles" to keep it fresh each time you pick up the controller. It too often feels like you're doing the same thing over and over again.

Your satisfaction with "Puzzle Chronicles" may come down to expectations. Of course, we expect a more complete experience when we buy a full-priced game than when we download relatively cheap DLC and "Puzzle Chronicles" does barely give enough bang for the buck when one considers its price point. But with the pedigree of its developers, being "good enough" is still something of a disappointment.

'Puzzle Chronicles' was released by Konami and developed by Infinite Interactive. It is rated E10+ (Everyone 10 and Older). The version reviewed was for the Xbox 360, but the title is also available for the PS3 and Windows PC. It was released on April 20th, 2010.



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