Video Game Review: 'Transformers: War For Cybertron' Proves Sometimes Bigger is Better

Submitted by **BrianTT** [1] on July 21, 2010 - 1:10pm

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CHICAGO – With Michael Bay filming "Transformers 3" in downtown Chicago, it's reawakened our childhood love for the famous toys and we wanted to share arguably the best product to bear the "Transformers" name in the last several years — "Transformers: War For Cybertron." No one is more stunned than this critic that something worthwhile has come out of the modern reawakening of the national love affair with the Autobots and Decepticons but "Transformers: War For Cybertron" is a shockingly fun game that delivers sizable bang for the buck for both non-fans and those arguably a little too familiar with their favorite Hasbro toys.

Video Game Rating: **4.0**/5.0

The plot of "War For Cybertron" is deceptively simple. Set years before what most modern fans know about the characters, it merely details the explosive civil war between the Autobots and the Decepticons. The single-player campaign is cleverly split into two halves with five chapters that detail the arc of Megatron's attempt to harness the power of a legendary force known as Dark Energon and then five chapters that detail the Autobot battle to stop the now-too-powerful Decepticons. You can have two campaigns going simultaneously starting at chapter one or chapter six but it's a more rewarding experience to play straight through.

Transformers: War For Cybertron
Photo credit: Activision

What the developers of "War For Cybertron" get that so many other game designers have failed to recognize (and even Michael Bay) is that these titles need to be all about over-the-top, massive, enormous action. We don't really care about the storytelling, characters, or cheesy dialogue — we just want to feel like a game is accurately delivering on the endless potential of giant transforming machines. The story of "War For Cybertron" is surprisingly coherent but it's the ridiculously over-sized levels, enemies, playable characters, and boss battles that

distinguish the game. Turn it up loud and turn off your brain. You'll be surprised at how addictive it quickly becomes.

Transformers: War For Cybertron
Photo credit: Activision

Each chapter opens with the selection of one of three characters including favorites such as Soundwave and Bumblebee. The characters feel both expertly redesigned for modern audiences while also completely appealing to the purists — a hard trick to pull off, as proven by the "Transformers" games that came in the past and seemed to satisfy neither.

Of course, the best way to play the game is cooperatively online with two other human players working with you to complete each level but the game also has incredibly smart co-op player A.I.. Far too many developers are taking on the challenge of co-op campaigns but falling short when it comes to replicating the experience when a player can't get online or doesn't want to make the obligation to co-op at a certain time. "Lost Planet 2" is a prime example of a game that's nearly impossible unless you find three players to join you. "Transformers" never falls short of you happen to want to play on your own.

The most surprisingly element of the gameplay is how much "War For Cyberton" encourages ammunition rationing. One might think that a title like this would feature unlimited firepower but you'll be stunned at the number of times you run out of ammo and simply have to use the charge-and-melee technique until you can find some more.

Transformers: War For Cybertron
Photo credit: Activision

What's most notable about "War For Cybertron" is the pace of the game, one that pulls you forward through the action of each chapter with all the urgency of a rail shooter. There's rarely a dull moment. In fact, most of the moments involve giant explosions and increasingly powerful weapons. The game also gets the art of transforming right as the player can shift back and forth between robot and vehicle at nearly any moment. Run out of ammo? Transform and use the cannon at your disposal in vehicle mode. Finding the right balance of typical shooter mechanics with this very unique element makes for a title that constantly feels like it's moving and you're just battling to keep up with its breakneck pace.

The multiplayer portion of "Transformers: War For Cybertron" is shockingly deep with an amazing array of gameplay options that take advantage of the best elements of the single-player campaign. Players can even customize their characters with a wide variety of vehicle and color options. I'm sure some of you dreamed of the day that you could make your own transformer and take him into the battlefield. That day has come and it's a more enjoyable one than I think even the eight-year-old kid in all of us ever though it would be.

'Transformers: War For Cybertron' was released by Activision and developed by High Moon Studios. It is rated T (Teen). The version reviewed was for the PS3 but the title is also available for the Xbox 360 and PC. It was released on June 22nd, 2010.

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