

Video Game Review: Amazing RPG Action of Impressive ‘The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 2, 2012 - 1:38pm

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CHICAGO – I had heard the buzz about “The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings” when it was released for PC last May. It even made a few top ten lists for the best games of 2011, but I don’t have a PC rigged up enough to play it. So, I was excited when I heard that CD Projekt Red was not only importing it to the Xbox 360 but enhancing it with all patches, new cinematics, some refined gameplay, and even some new story missions. My excitement didn’t prepare me enough for the stellar accomplishment that is “The Witcher 2.” The game is not perfect but it’s as close as a fantasy RPG has come since “Skyrim” and if this is your genre of choice than you’re not complete until you play it.



Recapping the plot of a game as massive as “The Witcher 2” would be nearly impossible in a review. It’s another dense fantasy with dozens of subplots, most of which paint a picture of a land in deep political turmoil. The game is essentially about uprisings and leaders being taken down by the people they have oppressed. Caught in the middle of all this drama is the title character, a brilliant creation known as Geralt, one of a rare, powerful species known as Witchers. He is an old-fashioned video game killing machine but with spell-casting magical powers, and it is the development of this engaging, fun-to-play lead that really separates “The Witcher 2” from other RPGs. I loved getting a hold of Geralt and finding the ways to wield his powers that worked best for me. It will be different for you, but it will almost certainly be fun.



The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings

Photo credit: WBIE

In Geralt’s time of monsters, elves, and unspeakable creatures, someone is killing kings. The game opens with a beautiful cinematic of a burly man boarding a ship where a king is being entertained. He takes them all out, decapitates the king, and heads off for, one presumes, more carnage. Who is this shadowy figure? And what role will he play in your story? From there, you take control of Geralt, the title character, as he gets embroiled in the chaos caused by the fact that one of his own kind is killing kings. In fact, the prologue even frames him in such an action, sending him into hiding and the bulk of the storytelling.

The gameplay of “The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings” is dense but the tutorial does a very good job of getting you attuned to it before sending you into the wilderness. It’s a combination of melee combat and “signs,” which are basically spells. There will also some crafting of weapons required for success, some projectiles like bombs and daggers, and even some alchemy to create potions and oils to improve your chances in

combat. It's a complex system but, and this is the key, not hard to learn. And as the game progresses, you'll find new combinations of potions and signs that work depending on the enemy and the situation. To start, I didn't pay much attention to anything but the ability to shoot fire with the Igni sign and didn't worry much about alchemy. Before I knew it, I was mixing up signs, creating bombs, and drinking potions. It's a very organic learning curve — the best kind in RPGs.



The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings

Photo credit: WBIE

Before you feel the power of Geralt, you'll be blown away by one of the best-looking Xbox games of the year. "The Witcher 2" is a beauty with stunning backgrounds, refined character detail, and fluid combat animation. The game is simply beautiful to look at and the atmosphere is enhanced by an impressive, cinematic score. When a game is as huge and time-consuming as "The Witcher 2," the presentation makes an enormous difference. You want to visually enjoy the world in which you're going to spend days of playing time. I loved the world of "The Witcher 2."

And I sure covered a lot of it. If there's a complaint about "Assassins of Kings," it's that it sometimes falls victim to the repetitive travel problem of many RPGs. I can't tell you how many side missions and even story ones are variations on "go here and be told to go there where you find out you have to go back here." There's a LOT of travel. Sure, you'll sometimes encounter enemies on your journey, but when I spent 15 minutes just figuring out how to get around a mountain to get from where I was to the quest point marked on the map, I felt more annoyed than engaged. I know that people love their RPGs massive in terms of gaming hours but I feel like some of "The Witcher 2" could have been streamlined.

It's a minor complaint for a major game. I know that the PC crowd will always be loyal to their original but if you're one of those people who couldn't get to this world last year, you owe it to yourself to take the trip in 2012. This is a great game, no matter how you play it.

"The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings" was developed by CD Projekt Red and released by Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment for Xbox 360 on April 17, 2012.



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