

Video Game Review: ‘Final Fantasy Chronicles: Echoes of Time’ Merges DS, Wii Experience

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on April 24, 2009 - 3:28pm

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CHICAGO – The potential interactivity between handheld systems and next-gen consoles feels like an untapped resource in the gaming world but that’s starting to change in 2009. “[Resistance: Retribution](#) [12]” on the PSP opened up an alternate mode when synced with “Resistance 2” on the PS3. Nintendo takes it a significant step further with “Final Fantasy Chronicles: Echoes of Time,” a well-made role-playing game that hints at the future of handheld and console interactivity by allowing multi-player across the platforms.

Imagine a time when you can use your handheld version of a game to enhance your experience with the version you play on your TV. That’s one of the main draws of “Final Fantasy Chronicles: Echoes of Time”. Both the Wii and DS versions stand alone as well-designed, interesting RPG games, but they also work together for a richer experience. Due to disappointing graphics on the Wii version, the DS wins the battle if you can only have just one, but RPG fans who liked “Ring of Fates” are unlikely to be disappointed by this entertaining entry in the series.



Final Fantasy Chronicles: Echoes of Time

Photo credit: Square Enix

In “Echoes of Time,” your character has returned to his (or her) village after a coming-of-age ceremony to find that a village girl has been infected with something known as the “crystal sickness”. The hero has to step out of his little community to find the cure. What follows is essentially a quest-based system with different puzzle-based levels and enemies to fight or cast spells on, but the dialogue and story are more interesting than most recent RPGs.



Final Fantasy Chronicles: Echoes of Time
 Photo credit: Square Enix

The game and most of the puzzles were designed with multiplayer in mind. If you have three friends online, you can form a team and complete the game much more efficiently than if you have to recruit three AI allies in your quest (sometimes the AI is frustratingly stupid). Although even the AI choice offers some great customization, allowing the player a variety of cohorts to choose from on your journey.

The gameplay of "FF: Echoes of Time" is very easy-to-understand but not overly simplified like some RPG games. The player has a variety of customizable options, from weapons to armor to allies, making no two experiences the same. And the spell-casting is well-designed and easy-to-use, especially a new system that allows "stacking" spells for increased effectiveness. The sword combat is a little too button-mashing and inconsistent for my tastes but it's easy to use and never so awful that it reaches a point of frustration. For this player, the puzzles are the most interesting and successful part of the game.

As for comparing the two versions, they're nearly the same, but expectations are different on a handheld than they are on your 52-inch widescreen TV. What's odd about the Wii version of "Echoes of Time" is that it feels and looks almost exactly the same as the DS version, as if it was ported to the big screen. Imagine playing a DS game projected on your TV. The graphics that look great on a few-inch DS don't look so hot on an actual television.

What I find most interesting about "Echoes of Time" is the multiplayer interactivity across the platforms. Say your friend is on the road with his DS copy and you're home with your Wii copy. You can still play the same game on the same team. More multiplayer games should follow this model.

"Echoes of Time" certainly has its flaws. The gameplay got repetitive quickly for this non-lover of RPG titles and, in one of the most ridiculous decisions in a long time, you can't pause the game. Phone rings? You're going to have to close your DS because 'Start' just brings up your inventory. There are also a few too many levels where the fixed camera creates depth perception problems. I lost track of how many times I fell when I thought I should have landed on the next platform with ease. And the poor camera design sometimes makes puzzle-solving more difficult than it should be.

RPG fans looking for a handheld diversion will find a lot to like about "Final Fantasy Chronicles: Echoes of Time". And if they have similarly-inclined friends who only have a Wii, they can still interact in the same adventure. My only advice would be not to just get the Wii version unless you have no other choice. The graphic are laugh-able. If you have a DS, that's the way to go.

Before you make your decision, check out this cool video from the DS version of "Final Fantasy Chronicles: Echoes of Time":

'Final Fantasy Chronicles: Echoes of Time' was released and developed by Square Enix. It is rated E10+ (Everyone 10 and Older). The versions reviewed were for the Nintendo DS and Nintendo Wii. It was released on March 24th, 2009.



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