eview by Marc Messer

Title: 2K5
Developer: DoomHammer Software
Price: $25
Contact Info: http://www.doomhammer.com/
Genre: Fighting Game
System Requirements: Power Macintosh, CD-ROM drive, Mac OS 7.5 or later, 12 MB free RAM (25 MB recommended), 5-50 MB hard disk space. QuickTime 2.0 or later for cutscene movies and background music. NetSprocket 1.1.1 and OpenTransport 1.1.1 required for net gaming.

he Fate of Mankind Rests in Your Hands...

Forget the Y2K crisis...this one is much worse. The Jihaz, a fanatic religious organization, has been working for years towards the purification of mankind. Their method involves experimenting with humans to accelerate the evolutionary process. Their end goal: to take over the world. You come into the scene 10 years after the experiments began, in February 2005 (2k5), and right as the real battle begins. The Jihaz and their mutant military force wage battles against the united forces of mankind. Pick your side to determine the fate of the world.

2K5 is the latest fighting game from DoomHammer Software at http://www.doomhammer.com/ and features scrolling fighting action. If you're

familiar with the Mortal Kombat series (for the consoles), you'll understand fairly well what 2K5 is about and how it's played. If you side with the forces of good, you can save mankind from extinction... side with evil and you can take over the planet. Pretty standard good vs. evil stuff here.

ameplay

t the game's outset, players are offered several options for game play: single player, two-player network, computer vs. computer, practice, or replay. If you choose any of the fighting options, you will get to choose your character (or both players in computer vs. computer mode) from the eight provided, or you may elect to build your own custom character.

Once a match has begun, you will fight until the death (duh!). A somewhat anatomically correct diagram in the upper right and left corners of the screen show how damaged each character is and how much ammo remains. What happens after the initial match is dependent upon the options you chose in the original menu. If you're a single player and you win, you move on to play your next opponent at a new venue. It's a pretty simple game to understand, and a detailed description of each option is available on the CD in HTML format.

ontrols

Character controls are a snap. The number pad is used for movement, spacebar defends, and shift, control, option, and command are used for the various attack moves. Each character has different weapons and skills. Each player also have special combination moves which make each match unique. Just be sure to look up the player info on the CD manual for these combo moves.

The controls, though comfortable, are not easy to modify. Only the movement and defense keys can be changed, in fact. The attack keys are fixed, so you've gotta stick with 'em. The upside? If you've got a gamepad with a programmable aspect, you can configure it to work with the game. I always suggest avid gamers own a gamepad anyway, so here's yet another excuse.

raphics and Sound

The overall feel of the game is good, for

lack of a better

word. The character animation is fluid,

but limited.

Each character has a certain number

of moves, and

that's it. For those that are used to the

latest 3D fighting

games where the same move can look

different

according to how it's performed, this

can be frustrating.

Overall, though, the fluid character

movement is a

plus and the limited movement allows

you to easily

create your own characters (if you've

got a knack for

drawing and understand resource

files).

I also liked the background, particularly their clarity and animation. The general background moves as a solid block as your character moves about the room, but each room seems to have something that stands out. For example, some rooms feature a TV with active animation. Screenshots are available at http://applewizards.net/2k5/ .

2K5 also features music and sound effects as you play (what game doesn't?). The synthesized music kinda gets you in a funky Nintendo fighting mood (you'll know what I mean when you play it), while the sound effects themselves are pretty cool and rather realistic. All sounds are stereo, which adds yet another nice effect.

iscellaneous

2K5 offers a variety of options, including graphic resolution and the ability to avoid QuickTime movies and background sounds (for better performance). DoomHammer Software included an in-depth manual (mentioned earlier) which shows character moves and contains background

information. One of the most interesting things is that the source code for the game is included. This allows you to learn how the game is written. You can then use DoomHammer's engine to create custom characters and battle arenas. Very cool!

inal Thoughts

2K5 is a pretty cool game, and its requirements aren't outrageous by any means. For those of us who haven't played a good ol' fighting game in a while, this one is worth picking up. For $25, the game, source code, and instructions are a cheap buy for a budding game programmer.

If you're not sure whether 2K5 is right for you just yet, grab the demo at http://members.aol.com/doomhmr1/2K5HTML/2K5Download.html . You can't really lose (I'm a big fan of demos). For the interesting characters, fluid gameplay, relatively low requirements, and the extra goodies, 2K5 earns four out of a possible five stars.

Well, I'm off to take over the world in my post-holiday sugar-induced rampage. Until next month...

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