

review by Pete Burkindine

.0 Stars - 1 Star Poor, 5 Stars Excellent

Title: Future Cop L.A.P.D.

Version: 1.0

Developer: Electronic Arts

Price: \$19.95! Demo available.

Contact Info: <http://www.futurecop.com/>

Genre: Futuristic Shoot-'em-Up

Requirements: PowerPC, Quicktime 3.x (installer included), a video board that supports thousands of colors at 640 x 480 or better, 24 MB of physical RAM, video acceleration board suggested.

verview

The setting: 21st-century Los Angeles. You are an officer with the L.A.P.D. and you are driving the police version of Optimus Prime (from Transformers. Jeez, learn your pop culture!). The city has been taken over by crime lords. You have big guns. What else is there to know?

Future Cop L.A.P.D. is a very fun game. It's formulaic, sure — cops versus evil crime lords in the not-so-very-distant future, employing big, hi-tech guns to thwart evil. Everything explodes or dies in gratifyingly violent fashion. Plus, you're the cops, and what could be more noble than ridding the world of crime in the most violent fashion possible?

ote: The image above isn't "typical" of the graphic capabilities of this game. Really. We had to compress the image above to keep the issue under 539 MB :-)

raphics, Sound, and Gameplay

The graphics are first-rate. I especially like the semi-nuclear explosions caused by the bombs, and the 3D perspective and multiple available camera angles make this game visually stellar. The realism (used in a very loose sense, since it is set in the 21st century and you are driving the Volvo of Death) of the story and graphics and the excellent voice instructions from your dispatcher draw you in to the game, and you get really upset when you die (well, I do anyway, but I'm obsessive). You explode in terrific fashion, though, and that almost makes up for it. The sound, a driving hard rock soundtrack peppered with the explosions of your foes, is also excellent. It's not Unreal by any stretch of the imagination, but Future Cop L.A.P.D is definitely a cut above the average game in this category.

Gameplay is, in a word, great. Your laser sight makes it easy to see what you're aiming at, and the multiple camera angles I mentioned above make it easy to keep track of where your foes are lurking. There are a lot of controls to remember, but after the first level you'll be hitting all cylinders. The amount of control is on par with that of Quake or Unreal. The action is smooth and easy to follow, and the variety the plot adds keep your interest from level to level.

our Machine, Your Guns, and Your 'Tactical' Assault

Your machine, as I mentioned, is a transforming machine, with Hovercar and Walker modes. Each mode has advantages and disadvantages, and you will have to use them both to get through the levels. You will use the Walker mode the most, as it is more maneuverable and can get through smaller spaces, though the Hovercar is faster.

You have three basic weapons at your disposal: guns, missiles, and bombs. They are all really cool. Weapons are upgraded as the enemies become harder and harder to kill. If you think your early weapons are cool, wait until you see some of the later ones. What more could you need? Nothing relieves stress better than a bit of good ol' ultraviolence.

All the weapons are aimed with a laser sight (a red line pointing at the enemy you're going to hit), so there's really no challenge as far as hitting your foes go, but most of them are as well armored as you are, so avoiding enemy fire is really the key to battle. FutureCop has its share of puzzles, mazes, and traps which must be figured out in the middle of the firestorm, so this adds a bit of mental challenge to an otherwise purely testosterone-fueled game.

everything That Doesn't Blow Up

New Ideas

Don't kid yourself — this game is a shooter in the classic sense. You blow stuff up until there's no stuff left. That doesn't mean it's just Doom on wheels, though. There are a number of original and realistic aspects that set this game apart and keep it interesting. Every level has droves of new enemies, puzzles to solve, new weapons, and tougher bosses. Gamers will find equal parts humor, action, and fun on every level. My favorite part is the crowd control cam, a fun diversion where your heavily armed tank mows down droves of nearly defenseless criminal types. It's like shooting fish in a barrel.

The Manual

The manual is concise, well written, and completely unnecessary, just like in every other good action game. There is a convenient key reference sheet, which you will need and probably lose. As a reviewer, I am under an obligation to lose the manuals to all the software that is sent to me at least a week before I write the review so I can properly simulate what it's like to use the software without a manual. Or something like that... Anyway, you

don't need the manual, and that's a good thing.

he Last Word

At \$19.95, FutureCop L.A.P.D. is quite inexpensive. There's even a demo version, so you lose nothing by trying it out. The gameplay, story, graphics, and sound are all first-rate, and you get to blow up all kinds of big, expensive machines. I like this game a lot, to put it simply, and you will too or I'll punch your lights out. :-)

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