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GAME REVIEW



Singularity lacks focus

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Time manipulation, physics-bending and alternate histories have all been the components of great games in the past. *Singularity* rolls all three of these elements in to one, forming a first-person shooter that plays well but doesn't fully live up to its potential.

The game is set on a secret Russian island where, during the Cold War, the USSR discovered a mysterious new element called E-99 that would revolutionize everything we knew about science. Since then, the island has been over-

run by E-99-infused mutants and military personnel still trying to harness the element's powers. The trouble begins when the player, in the role of an American Black Ops soldier, crashes his helicopter on the island and sets in motion a series of events that puts the entire world in jeopardy.

As players explore the island, they'll encounter audio logs and notes telling the stories of its once-living inhabitants, fleshing out the narrative and providing context to the world players explore. It's a storytelling device we've seen work well in games like 2007's *BioShock*, but while *BioShock* used the method to tell a com-

plex story in multiple parts, *Singularity's* tale is rather one-dimensional.

Where the game deviates from the usual hall-to-room shooter is the introduction of a Time Manipulation Device (TMD) that gives players the ability to rapidly age or restore enemies and objects around them. In combat it has some practical uses, decomposing barriers enemies cover behind or returning ammo crates to their once-full state as needed. However, as a puzzle mechanic, the TMD is mostly used to fix momentary delays like repairing collapsed stairs or decaying an obstacle, which requires no real thought other

than remembering which button to press.

As the game evolves, so do the player's powers. The problem is that the game doesn't properly pace these abilities, making the player far too powerful even before the halfway point. Players who like feeling all-powerful will have fun, but those who play for a challenge will have to artificially handicap themselves.

Singularity tries to do a lot of different things through the course of the campaign but very few of the ideas are original.

Singularity

Where did it come from?

It takes a really unique idea to make a great first-person shooter stand out from the crowd. *Singularity* pulls a lot of inspiration from some of gaming's greatest, incorporating a lot of different ideas from a lot of different games:

Half-Life 2
Valve's 2004 blockbuster wasn't the first to use physics for puzzles, but it was the first to give the player direct control with their very own gravity gun.

BioShock
Telling a story through fragmented audio logs made *BioShock's* Rapture feel like it had a real history, creating an air of mystery as players explored the once-thriving underwater metropolis. *Singularity* attempts this, but without a world as deep it feels more like mental collection than exploration.

Fallout 3
Kitschy 1950s public service announcements and a distinct "glory of the past" motif colour both *Fallout 3* and *Singularity* with a haunting light that questions the permanency of all civilization.

Dead Space
Spooky hallways, check. Terrifying mutant enemies, check. Easily severed limbs, double-check. *Dead Space* mastered the feeling of terror *Singularity* replicates as its waves of mutant freaks descend on the player.

Command & Conquer: Red Alert
It may have been a real-time strategy game, but *Singularity's* alternate Cold War history bears striking resemblance to *Command & Conquer's* rise of the Red Army.



Get your dates straight: An iPhone app for playas everywhere



Uploaded

Jordan Heath-Rawlings

It's happened to all of us. OK, some of us. Alright, nobody I know, but still ... at least a handful of people are so irresistible to the opposite sex that they're constantly getting themselves in trouble by forgetting who's bed they were in on which night and mixing up their various partner's intimate details.

And tech-savvy person can guess my next sentence. Yep ... there's an app for that. Of course there is. After all, if a certain segment of society is going to slut it up to the point where they need to actually keep records just to get their stories organized, why shouldn't an enterprising app designer make three bucks a pop by giving them a way to do it?

It's called The DateMate, and it basically allows you to catalogue your carousing, organize your orgasmic events and give your partners ratings — both for how fun they were as a date and how wild they were ... elsewhere.

Sure, it may seem totally shallow and cheap and demeaning to those you care enough about to share your most intimate moments with ... but let's be real for a moment: Somewhere out there is a frat boy who just shelled out the three bucks with a huge smile on his face. Once you've inputted all the data and ratings, by the way, DateMate will allow you to generate reports on the quality and frequency of your activities. Because if there's anything better than having sex, it's ... reading graphs detailing how often you get it? Sometimes I don't understand modern sexuality.

Do you follow?: There are leaders and followers and when it



Sometimes a simple name-based rhyme is just not enough to help you remember the preferences of your girlfriends, so now there's an app for that.

comes to Twitter, most of us tend to be the latter.

But after looking up every celebrity you care about even a little bit, letting Twitter dig through your Gmail and Yahoo! contacts for your friends and randomly hunting through other people's lists of follows looking for gold, it can get tough to branch out your connections.

Which is why the site's new recommendations — a feature that can be oh-so-annoying on Facebook when the site recommends that you might "like" things such as "reading" or "relaxing" — is a welcome addition to every tweeter's toolbox. In addition to offering a couple of recommendations right on your own page (just under your own follower count), Twitter will also compile a list of people it thinks you might want to follow.

According to Twitter's blog, the algorithms, "suggest people you don't currently follow that you may find interesting. The suggestions are based on several factors, including people you follow and the people they follow."

You can find the list by going to the "Find People" section and clicking on "Suggestions For You".

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