

There's still no cake - A Portal 2 review

Written by act_deft

Monday, 20 February 2012 18:08 -



Now that the cake thing is out of the way, I can talk to you about why this is OLR's undisputed Game of 2011.

To start things off, Portal 2 is the sequel to highly acclaimed Portal, which was included in Valve's The Orange Box along with Half-Life 2 and Team Fortress 2. Basically Valve didn't have much faith on selling it as a stand-alone title. To their surprise though, Portal was called one of the greatest games of 2007 and possibly of all history. It was a really innovative game with the use of the portals and not only that; it had a really intriguing story and compelling dialogue behind it. But like all things, it isn't perfect and it had some very evident flaws. The mayor complaints being that is way too short and that most of the puzzles were very easy to solve.

So did Portal 2 not only lived to the hype the first one but also fixed the problems that the first one had?

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Portal 2, as far as game mechanics go, is pretty much the same game. "Why fix what ain't broke?" Make portals to solve puzzles and survive the obstacles that appear in every room. But as you advance in the game, you'll find stuff that will help you get through those levels. Not only do they make the game more challenging since you have to use the portals with these new artifacts and gels, but also make it more interesting.

And with this the game becomes quite longer than the previous one. As I previously mentioned, one of the things people complained about Portal is that it was too short; you can finish it in less than 2 hours on your first try. Portal 2 however gives you more. It isn't as long as some other games out there, but still it's enough to keep you satisfied (and this is only for the single player). You'll be enjoying the antics of your nemesis GLaDOS and your new ally in science Wheatly, not to mention all the random stuff you'll encounter in the game and the ones that are hidden that you'll have to find.

Other things that really caught the attention of everyone while playing Portal were the story and the dialogue. The characters, while only 2, were fantastic. Chell, the silent protagonist, and GLaDOS, the psychopath A.I. that wants to kill you no matter what. GLaDOS made you fear her as you progressed in the game. She pretty much makes the game a lot more enjoyable and immersive experience than it already is. Portal 2 expands on that, a lot. The storytelling, while not that much different from the first, is really something you can sink in and enjoy again and again, like a really good movie. You don't know that much about Aperture in Portal, but in "2" you get a whole lot of background; how Aperture started, how the current labs came to be, how GLaDOS was created and a whole lot more. And Cave Johnson is definitely the best character in the game, even if he doesn't appear in it all.

The music is also really great. There's a track or song for every situation you encounter. Whether it's a happy moment or a terrifying one, the songs really make you feel like you're in the game.

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As far as graphics go, it runs on the Source engine, so it looks good but it isn't as impressive as other games in the market right now. But even then, the vast world you face in Portal 2 looks really damn great. Valve took serious care about the details.

And what about the multiplayer? This is probably the selling point of the game. It's basically like single player but instead you have to work with a friend to get through a series of tests. It's tons of fun, but it can be frustrating if you don't coordinate with whoever you're playing. But then again, it is part of what makes Co-op really fun.

So, is this game better than its predecessor?

By terms of quality alone, yes. Portal 2 offers the whole cake and then some. You find everything that made the first Portal so great and even more; it really expanded the game to a whole new level of enjoyment.

Is it Game of the Year material?

In my opinion, it is. The experience that is Portal 2 is one the best ones in gaming history. Like

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I've said in all the review, Portal was a great game, Portal 2 is even better. It has it all and it's totally worth your time.