

GAME DESIGN, ART, RESOURCES, RESEARCH,
CRITICISM, TUTORIALS & STUFF BY ANJIN ANHUT.



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Dark Souls: Let's Be Honest

If you like it, that's great, buy it, share it, hug it. You go! But don't give me that crap of Dark Souls being a worthwhile game and whoever doesn't like it is either not as bad-ass, patient or resilient as you. Or simply doesn't get it. That cake, son, is a lie.

Hard Done Right

Before I dive into Dark Souls, I'd like to tell you about Vanquish. Vanquish is a very well crafted action game and it has multiple difficulty settings. *God Hard* is, like the name implies, hard as hell. The high difficulty in Vanquish comes with carefully balanced game mechanics, spot on controls and tight play-testing. The player is always in full control of his avatar and has a wide range of offensive and defensive options at his disposal. The difficult scenes are a result of well done enemy AI, well designed and diverse enemy classes plus thought out level design and arenas.

A game like Vanquish on *God Hard* is a punishing experience. But the strategic options to try out, the levels to exploit and the search for weak spots in enemies keeps the gameplay from getting repetitive, even if you have to retry a checkpoint multiple times. The most important aspect is the fact, that the game just works smooth. You may be overpowered by the enemy onslaught, but the controls, collision detection, physics or usability never fail you.

Here is a screenshot, I took with my camera after beating a certain checkpoint on *God Hard*. I knew I've already died quite a few times, so I thought it might be interesting to document how many times. After days and days of fighting I finally beat that pack of enemy robots and the checkpoint was passed. The statistics showed, that the game design was able to keep me entertained while I was retrying and failing the same sequence for 422 times.

MISSION RESULT		TOTAL		
Total Score	-412400	-696200	Completion Time Bonus	+0
Mission Time	4:45:52	20:24:18	Death Point Deduction	-422000
Cover Usage	12.77%	40.64%		
Distance Traveled	34062	99999		
Munitions Fired	8297	99999		
Deaths	422	913		
Confirmed Friendlies K.I.A.	30	670		
Wounded Friendlies Assisted	2	20		
Confirmed Kills	30	737		
Pangloss Statues Destroyed	1	12		

Ⓐ EXIT BRIEFING

I died 422 times in the same battle sequence, sometimes lasting just a few seconds. But there were so many tactics to test, enemy patterns to learn, weapons to experiment with and never ever did I feel handicapped by controls or any other aspect of the game. It always just were the odds of the fight, that were stacked against me. And repeated exploration of options, learning and practicing made me slowly but surely even the odds. That was satisfying.

Gnashing Teeth

I got Dark Souls as a rental and after 20 minutes of playtime I had to turn off the console to not get anymore frustrated with the design of that game. Not because the warrior I was playing was facing hard to beat enemies and dangers, no, I as a user was facing a hard to use piece of software. Since everybody was promising this holy land of satisfaction and sense of accomplishment once I would get the hang of it, I gnashed my teeth and tried again. After over 6 hours of playtime, I finally gave up on finding any glimmer of a hint of a whiff of that great game everybody was telling me about. It is just not there.

That's not to say, that Dark Souls doesn't try a lot of promising concepts and ideas. The souls system, where you lose your grinding rewards when dying, adds tension to the game. Great, there is something at stake. And the idea to allow the player to try to reclaim his lost souls, if he dares to fight his way back to his place of death, is a super great risk-reward-element. Also the shoulder button controls for the left and right arm in combat are refreshing and could have been a attractive alternative to the standard face-button mashing from other third person games.

Where Dark Souls really shines is level architecture. The way in which regions are build, the scale, the vertical distances are simply impressive and remarkable. Not to mention the clever online multiplayer mechanics.

Nostalgia VS Laziness

My list of complaints with this game is long. Pages and pages of notes long, to be more precise. But nothing on that list comes from the good ol' days of gaming. Just ignoring decades of progress in game design is not the same as providing a throwback to the unforgiving days of retro gaming and arcades, From Software.

I grew up on Contra, Megaman, Ninja Gaiden, Ghouls'n Ghost, Double Dragon and many similar titles. I know what it means to sweat and shiver, fighting my way through the final stage, only one life left, with a total Game Over only one collision detection away. Yeah, those games had issues too and difficulty often was a result of cheap deaths and technical limitations. But those games made up for it by being fast paced, simple and short. Dark Souls doesn't even get close to recreating that.

The problems in Dark Souls are to be found in almost every aspect of the game design and software design. Character controls are unresponsive and the lack of auto-targeting made controlling the player character similar to giving voice commands to a blind person. The targeting mechanic (clicking the right stick) adds a completely unnecessary and clumsy extra command to picking enemies, but is basically required to hit an enemy with any vertical sword swipe or stabbing attack. The fact that the player character can't climb over small obstacles made me get stuck in corners and on ledges. A five year old would have been able to get out of those situations but I had to restart the checkpoint. Small info dialogues don't stop the gameplay but block your character from being able to attack. Plundering a treasure chest takes three seperate inputs from the player before he can swing his sword again.

The list goes on and on and on, but I don't have all day. Those were just a few examples, which may appear to be nitpicks. But if you add up all the nitpicks, the game dies the death of a thousand cuts. There is so much stuff From Software didn't take care of, didn't polish to a decent degree or just ignored. Making a game work, making it playable takes work and effort. What gametrailers.com calls bold design decisions in its review of Dark Souls is just laziness and severe neglect.

Edit: I think I need to state, that I was playing the XBOX360 version. Since there appear to be lag issues.

Sense Of Accomplishment

Okay, I don't like a particular game. That happens from time to time. Nothing out of the ordinary. I normally just put games I don't like aside and that's it. But what really blows my mind with Dark Souls is the widely spread positive reception of that game. Dark Souls gets praised for crap, no other game could get away with. To be fair, this statement of course would be better directed at Demon Souls, since this is where the hype started and Dark Souls just repeats a selling formula.

Still, back to Dark Souls, since I did not played the predecessor. One key claim to sell the game is, that it would provide a sense of accomplishment. Well, I guess to the people claiming that, it might have. But how come the standards for "accomplishment" are suddenly so low? The average enemies are weak, predictable, have laughable AI and beating them is just hard because controlling your fighter is complicated, sluggish and unresponsive.

A gamer picking Dark Souls is the same as a race car driver picking a broken car with bad steering and just three wheels, so he can feel a sense of accomplishment for reaching the finishing line at all. The challenge in Dark Souls is not beating tough enemies, finding hidden ways, solving puzzles or any test of skill. The challenge simply is adapting to the gaping holes in game design and software design.

Not For Everybody

Now we get to the meat of my beef with Dark Souls. Or more precisely my beef with the praise for Dark Souls. I don't know where it came from, but there is a meme surrounding Dark Souls (and Demon Souls for that matter). The game is "not for everybody". You need to "understand it", "be patient", "be resilient" and "appreciate the old days of gaming" and if you "are good enough" the game will open up to you and you will experience its magic. In short, you can only like this game, if you are a true hard core gamer.

This is so messed up and it drives me crazy. You tell anyone you don't like that game and suddenly you lose your gamer credibility? I already experienced it myself. I complained on twitter and the first response I got was "*Seems like the game is kicking your ass. ;)*". And later people calmly tried to explain to me that I probably don't like Dark Souls because I probably just recently started gaming and can't appreciate the unforgiving nature of an 80s or 90s action game... Those people didn't know me at all. But me disliking Dark Souls seemed to tell them enough.

Let's assume From Software actually made the game inaccessible, hard to use, frustrating, repetitive and unrewarding on purpose. How awfully elitist is that? There is a reason for a difficulty setting in games. It allows players of different skill levels and background to play the game and to have a somewhat satisfying experience. Why would anybody appreciate a game that puts artificial barriers up and blocks a large part of people from playing? I ask because that is precisely what separates Dark Souls from other games of similar genres. The super hard difficulty is not optional, it is mandatory.

Let's Be Honest

Dark Souls isn't a great game. It pushes some brave concepts, has great architecture, solid art direction and I appreciate that. There could have been a great game called Dark Souls. In the end the game design, software design and technology are way below any current standard. But somehow Dark Souls' shortcomings got twisted into being virtues and liking the game became a litmus test for "true" gamers.

I'm used to so called hard core gamers taking pride in drawing a line between themselves and casual gamers, female gamers, gay gamers or children and I'm used to marketing people talking bull to sell their bad games. What gets me is, that so many reviewers and game professionals do the same with Dark Souls. Memes can be viewed as entities themselves, but they still need individual people to get perpetuated.

Reviewers and game professionals should know better, than to recommend a game as inaccessible and broken as Dark Souls. And they should know better, than to participate in creating an environment in which liking the game is not a matter of taste, but a matter of strength and authenticity.

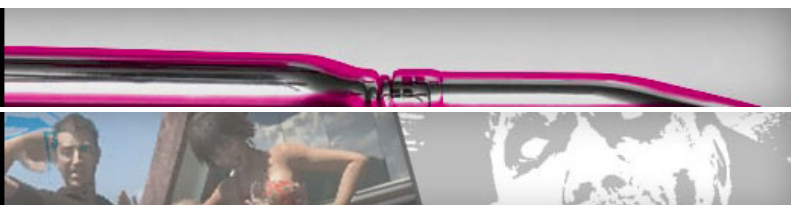
Of course you can still enjoy a game like Dark Souls. Love it even. I myself have my guilty pleasures, but I don't rate them with an 89 out of a 100 (current metacritic rating). This kind of seal of approval is completely undeserved.

When the next From Software RPG comes along, Dungeon Souls or something, I'd appreciate a bit more critical thinking, inclusiveness and honesty.

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LAZY GAME DESIGN: SILVER
BULLET COMBAT

ALL GIMMICK , No
BRRRRRAAAHHHNNSSS.





226 THOUGHTS ON "DARK SOULS: LET'S BE HONEST"



Cihan

on **July 18, 2013 at 11:08 pm** said:

Good article. I wrote an article too about my impression of Dark Souls while playing it, and my problem had nothing to do with the difficulty of the game, that was fine. I love the concept. My problem was that the game was not coherent at all:

<http://wp.me/p31sEw-gY>



Sam Fisher

on **July 13, 2013 at 3:15 pm** said:

I completely agree. The controls in dark souls are sluggish and terrible. The game is all about making use of cheap exploits to advance and the whole thing feels very sloppy. I felt like I was insane since all my friends love it but I don't see the appeal. I think it's ugly to look at and when I did conquer difficult areas, I had zero satisfaction because it either felt like a fluke, felt like I exploited some aspect of the game or simply knew that all I had to look forward to was more of this shit game.

In my opinion, examples of good games with GOOD smooth, fast, precise controls that also offer a stiff challenge are Ninja Gaiden Black on Xbox and Super Meat Boy. The difficulty in those games don't come from wrestling with shit controls and poor design decisions and they are actually fun as well as being hard.



Dorkmaster Flek

on **July 18, 2013 at 3:28 pm** said:

Okay, I will certainly agree that Dark Souls has some legitimate problems. The game (very purposefully according to the director, who also was behind Demon's Souls) does not hold your hand at all. It doesn't explain the intricacies of the combat system, and it sure as hell doesn't explain core game mechanics like how the soul system actually works (though you figure this out pretty fast on your own), or what it means to be in human or undead form, or you know, the entire freaking covenant system. It's optional, but you either start in a covenant (depending on your class), or you can join one straight away once you get passed the tutorial. When the game asks you "Join covenant?" and you have no idea what that means, that's bad.

You really need a newbie's guide to Dark Souls when you start playing it. I spent time reading the wikis to learn about the core game mechanics before I even started playing the game, and I think this helped a lot. But you shouldn't have to do this. This is dumb. The game should bloody well explain core game mechanics. Thankfully, it looks like they're addressing this in the sequel. It's being handled by a new director (two actually) and they've stated numerous times in interviews that they intent to remove this accessibility barrier while still keeping the actual challenge of the gameplay high. So maybe give the sequel a try once it actually comes out next year, you might enjoy it more.

But! But, but, but, I cannot agree with complaints about the "sluggish" and "unresponsive" controls in Dark Souls. Okay, the targeting system could use a little work. I wish you didn't lose your lock when you parry or backstab an enemy; that's just annoying. It's true that it's kind of difficult to hit enemies without it, but that's true of many games with 3D melee combat, and you don't have wide swinging attacks that hit large arcs. That's why Zelda introduced the concept in the first place, to make 3D combat work better.

I think this is a limited definition of what "responsive" means when it comes to controls. When you compare Dark Souls' controls to Ninja Gaiden and Super Meat Boy, that tells me a lot. I think when you say "responsive", what you really mean is "fast". Meat Boy is a totally different genre, but to look at Ninja Gaiden for example, the combat in that game is fast and furious. It's similar to something like God of War or Devil May Cry or Bayonetta. Fast paced with a focus on chaining combos together, and taking on waves of enemies at once. Dark Souls is the polar opposite of this.

Combat in Dark Souls is slow and methodical. It's actually what I love about it. I fell in love with the combat system as soon as I was fighting my way up the stairs from the Firelink Shrine towards the Undead Burg. You need to be patient, and you need to manage your stamina carefully. You do NOT want to take on multiple enemies at once, if you can avoid it. It's very easy to get overwhelmed in Dark Souls. When you decide to swing your sword, you are going to SWING YOUR SWORD and it will take some time to do that and you will leave yourself open to attack. The combat has a weight to it that I don't get with other games.

I can't tell you how many bloodstains I've touched (mostly in the starting areas) where I've seen the last moments of somebody two-handing their weapon while swinging it wildly and rolling all over the place, as if they were playing Ninja Gaiden or Bayonetta. Next thing you know, your stamina is empty, you can't do anything, the enemies run you through, and you're complaining about "sluggish" and "unresponsive" controls. That's not sluggish, that's you failing to understand how the combat

system works. It is very precise and perfectly responsive, once you understand its slow, methodical nature.

Now you may not enjoy this. You may say "I don't like how slow the combat is in Dark Souls". This is fine; I don't much care for how fast the combat is in Ninja Gaiden or Bayonetta myself. It's not for everybody. But don't confuse your dislike for the nature of the combat with the game having poor controls.



Dorkmaster Flek
on **July 18, 2013 at 4:24 pm** said:

Also, I feel I have to mention that I believe part of the reason I see people confusing this has to do with the Dark Souls fanbase itself. I believe some (not all) Dark Souls fans have built up the reputation of this game such that it's a "real" gamer's game. If you're a "real gamer", you must like this game, because it's clearly for "real gamers". If you don't like it, you're not a real gamer.

This leads to exactly this sort of confusing reaction, where people say "Oh well I'm a real gamer, so if I don't like this game, the problem must be the game". No, this is bullshit. You're not any less of a gamer if you don't like the style of Dark Souls. You just don't like the type of game it is.

Clearly people who like the style of game that Dark Souls is think it's a very good example of that style of game. Starcraft is considered one of the finest RTS games ever made, but I don't much like RTS games so I don't really like Starcraft. It's just not my style. But I don't go around saying Starcraft is a bad game because I don't feel any kind of pressure that "all real gamers must like Starcraft, because it's for real gamers!"



Unreal Impatience
on **June 30, 2013 at 4:28 am** said:

I don't mind most of the sluggish controls of the combat at all. What drives me up the wall is when I press B to sprint but I end up "sprinting" (animation plays but speed slows down). I move slower than my average walk and still drain out my stamina. This happens even when I'm completely naked. Also being unable to step from one platform to another when the height difference is average stair height or less is quite irksome when you're running through trash mobs. I've "fallen" in between steps and literally been stuck until I used a homeward bone. I'm just waiting for the day I get stuck without anything to get myself out and then be forced to restart the character because no amount of reloading will get me out. These reasons alone make the game at most 80/100. Very lacking in polish. I completely understand the writer's annoyance.



Dagoth Ur
on **June 26, 2013 at 8:40 am** said:

I agree partially with this article. Some aspects of these 'uber-hard' Japanese games does often appear to be deficiencies in game design rather than an intended component of gameplay which has been laboriously engineered by the developers. There is no doubt Dark Souls is a great game, but really, it isn't the supposed bearer of light struggling against the darkness of mass consumer games its followers pretend it to be. Games like this have always existed. Games like this will always exist. It isn't a revolution, it's one of the first times people in the West have realised games like this exist and they're all like, 'OMG, SOMETHING TO AFFIRM MY TITLE AS MASTER GAMER,', or 'I HAVE DEFEATED GWYN, LORD OF CINDER, BOW TO MY GAMING MIGHT YE LESSER RPG GAMERS.'

Dark Souls prevails in the risk-reward mechanic it employs, and it is more reminiscent of something like Crackdown or even a MMORPG than anything else, simply due to the fact that whilst the gameplay mechanics are solid, they are enjoyable rather than revolutionary. What really makes an impression on people is the fact that the developers have made the difficulty so high (merely in the sense that you have little health) that any progress makes you appreciate it much more to the point where the more...intense, gamers get super absorbed by it, like the rush you get after a terse hour working out at the gym. The gym exercise wasn't necessarily enjoyable, it's just that the relief and adrenaline after the workout grants you a sense of elation. Still a great game though, even if it is a demanding relationship.



Tobberoth
on **June 25, 2013 at 3:17 pm** said:

Such a weird review. The actual complaints make up one paragraph out of a dozen (third paragraph out of the nostalgia vs laziness part), and the complaints are minor, yet the whole article is drenched in negativity. No one is

forcing anyone to like the game, but it just looks ridiculous when the article is more about being buttthurt about elitists saying you're just not good enough than it is about actual issues with the game. Here's a summary of what it sounds like:

"Some people like this game, but I dislike it because the controls are a bit sluggish. Which makes the game extremely shitty when people say I dislike it just because I didn't beat it and act like it's all awesome if you're good at it, implying that I'm not. It makes me so mad, god the game sucks, also the controls are a bit sluggish."

If you want to criticize a critically acclaimed game, it's probably a good idea to focus on the aspects of the game you dislike rather than the response you imagine from the community.

Personally I agree there are design issues with the game, but there are design issues with all games. The point is that Dark Souls is really fun to play, really atmospheric, worth playing several times and quite innovative. Slightly better controls would rock, better performance in some areas (like blighttown) would be sweet, but the fact remains that the game as a whole just leaves too much of an impression to ignore.

Let's be honest: It's not a perfect game, but it's far from broken and has a TON to offer people who want a Zelda-style action game with a more mature theme and more challenging difficulty.



EvilWaffles

on **June 25, 2013 at 6:27 am** said:

It can be a tough game. If you don't enjoy it because you've failed and your not use to winning, then don't bother playing it. You've got all the freedom to just not play something you don't enjoy. The reason I love Dark Souls is the fact that it's probably one of the best games that doesn't hold your hand. Besides, this game is a lot better than the mainstream games we have around today.

The Souls series probably works a lot better w/ research online. It's actually really fun looking up what items do what and looking at the stories behind these items via in-game itself. The problem I'm having is that the enemies get a little predictable once you've found the pattern to them, but that doesn't mean you'll find a pattern to invaders as easy C:. The game is something to enjoy if you are willing, it's not made to be played forever... True gamers like to mix it up with other games and not spend their whole life with one game.



EvilWaffles

on **June 25, 2013 at 6:28 am** said:

*use to NOT winning.



josh

on **June 23, 2013 at 7:34 pm** said:

In modern psychology, cognitive dissonance is the discomfort experienced when simultaneously holding two or more conflicting cognitions: ideas, beliefs, values or emotional reactions. In a state of dissonance, people may sometimes feel "disequilibrium": frustration, hunger, dread, guilt, anger, embarrassment, anxiety, etc. It is the distressing mental state that people feel when they "find themselves doing things that don't fit with what they know, or having opinions that do not fit with other opinions they hold.

....im badass at games...being an expert at games is one of the things that define me...im getting wtf pwnd at this game...ive tried what I feel is my best at this game and still failed...//dissonance occurs//...it can't be me...it must be the game...//dissonance fades//

Well if it helps, IT IS THE GAME. The game takes a simulation approach to fantasy combat. Its difficulty isn't made to test how fast you can hit buttons, how well you can memorize patterns. The controls are trashy because the person you are controlling isn't a hero, he isn't a god, he isn't superhuman. He is just a guy. Give me any game and I will start it on the hardest difficulty, my reflexes are honed, I, like you, are a gaming expert. When I play a fps, the hardest difficulty can't test me because headshots are overpowered and I only aim for the head and after 10 years of counterstrike, I will hit the head first try 99% of the time. A room full of badies is cleared in seconds and I move on. Where dark souls succeeds in being the first truly hard game I've played is by making the character im controlling not able to move as fast as I could make him...not being able to block as fast as I can hit the button to. Dark souls removes my superhuman gamer powers and forces me to use planning and patience... I'm controlling a guy who isn't great at combat, and trying to figure out how to overcome incredible odds with him. That is a challenge no other game has ever offered me. In bayonetta there was a difficulty you could unlock after beating subsequent difficulties that was supposed to be uber hard. There was also however a move bayonetta had that could counter any enemy strike as fast as you could hit it. The difficulty was in that you had a window of microseconds to use the counter or it would fail, even less if you needed to counter two, nearly simultaneous attacks. For those of us with the reflexes to nail this counter though bayonetta became invincible and it was like playing with cheat codes. The difficulty was based on that most peoples reflexes can't use that counter effectively as fast as needed and so the scaled up enemy damage would wear

you down much to quickly to complete a level. My friends weren't that great at it, I however very rarely missed it, and made total mockeries of the very hardest battles in the game. The difficulty was non-existent other than testing my stamina to hit insanely fast counters many times over the course of hours.

Dark Souls is the first game I've played that has stripped me of my superhuman gamer reflexes and forced me to rely on something else...my patience...which is not my greatest strength, and strategy.

"Let's assume From Software actually made the game inaccessible, hard to use, frustrating, repetitive and unrewarding on purpose. How awfully elitist is that?"

This is why your friends say you must understand the game

-It is inaccessible, and we thank them for that. Difficulty in games has disappeared because companies want to sell as many copies of their game as possible and most people expect that no matter how good or bad they are at a game, they should be able to win/beat any game they pay for. Dark Souls is for the true challenge seekers who are searching for the game that is finally too hard...so they can beat it.

-It isn't hard to use, it's just not accommodating. The character actually reacts like armor is heavy, like he is a human and not a god at combat. To win, HE isn't going to carry you, you must carry HIM.

-Frustrating?? VERY, the frustration of not being able to just jump in and win are required for the feeling of reward. You very well know this, play any game on the easiest difficulty where you're not even allowed to die and how great do you feel when you beat it? Easy difficulty settings these days are what we used to call cheat codes, nowadays though you turn on the cheats by picking "easy".

-Repetitive...this is just QQ, look at any game, any fighter, any FPS, they are all doing the exact same thing over and over with the only thing changing is the room you're standing in when you shoot the person.

-Unrewarding...You are not allowed to comment on this, because you have finally found that game that is too hard for you, and it's called Dark Souls.

Pick yourself back up, remember you are a gamer, that nothing is too hard for you. Realize that you are confused that the challenge of this game is completely different than what you used to. Heck, if it wasn't you would have destroyed it by now and be bragging how much faster you downed a certain boss than all your friends right?

OR

Blame the game, blame the mechanics, blame whatever you have to keep telling yourself you are an expert gamer and this game is just too broken to play (while everyone else disagrees). Just remember, when you catch yourself saying things like...bs, I only died cuz the freakin' guns should reload faster, it's stupid how long it takes, THEY should have made the guns reload faster, then I would have got that headshot and beat the boss on the hardest difficulty... you are becoming.....CASUAL



MachineMan1992

on **June 25, 2013 at 7:14 am** said:

Yet another fanboy, desperately trying and failing to avoid criticizing their beloved game, unwilling to acknowledge its faults, unable to see reason, they continue to parrot the same bullshit a thousand others like him have said, couching their diatribes in psychology and failing to realize that they're fucking projecting.



Dagoth Ur

on **June 26, 2013 at 10:02 pm** said:

Now I realise why I was put off this game initially...it's filled with the same 'gamer jocks' who fill up the COD servers. People who measure how good a game is by the supposed difficulty it stacks up against them and then the supposed reward at the end of the game which only seems enjoyable because of the level of stress and frustration the actual gameplay induces. These are the same people who when they play an actually hard game like Ninja Gaiden will scream out 'OMG, THIS ISN'T DIFFICULT BECAUSE I'M A TERRIBLE GAMER, THIS IS DIFFICULT BECAUSE OF GAMEPLAY DESIGN'. Grinding your ass off to wield a spear isn't entertaining or fun, it's excessively tedious.

In fact, I'd say that the fact this game hinges solely on combat means that if the combat becomes boring (which, let's face it, it kind of does after dodging then backstabbing for the 302nd time) then the game falls through. I think I know what the response is going to be though, 'PSSST, I BET YOU DIDN'T EVEN GET PAST THE TAURUS DEMON', or 'LOL, ONLY REAL MEN ARE ABLE TO PLAY DARK SOULS. I MEASURE YOUR MORTAL EXISTENCE BY YOUR ABILITY TO HANDLE A GAME CONTROLLER.' These are facts.



JamesTheGamer

on **June 21, 2013 at 2:19 am** said:

I got to where you said that there was no auto-targetting.

That is a lie.

If you click the left (or right I forget) you actually do lock on.



MachineMan1992

on **June 22, 2013 at 6:28 am** said:

Still no soft lock, so combat is sticky and inelegant.

"Oh, but that's the point of game!" Oh fucking really? Again with the twisting of bad design into virtue?



MachineMan1992

on **June 22, 2013 at 6:31 am** said:

And he does mention the target button. I just adds a extra step to target acquisition.

(And should have been a face button or trigger, not the stick. But that's just me.)



Tograx

on **June 19, 2013 at 8:34 am** said:

I completely agree with your review of this awful, over-valued pile of crap. It's one of the worst games I have ever played (and completed), and I have been playing games for over 20 years. The game controls and cheap tricks sucked and were the only thing that proved any challenge whatsoever, everything else was super easy requiring zombie like grinding over any real skill.

If this (and it's predecessor) was a PC game only, it would have been dead in the water. There is no way in hell a PC gamer would play this shoddy game and consider it in any way good. Sure now that it has already been hyped up people have paid attention to it, so now anyone can be trapped into playing because of all these reckless people recommending the game. Any game is addictive once you have spent 10+ hours investing time into it... that's not something special about the game, that's just human psychology.

Why do people persist playing past terrible and awful issues for hours on end? Because of the hype. They keep thinking, "ok maybe the good part is coming up" or rationalize their crazy actions as "I have kept playing this game... because it's fun! Yes it must be because it's fun! Not because of the hype!". I played this game against my better judgement because of the hype, all the way to the end. So to all the people recommending this shitty game, fuck you for wasting my time.



MachineMan1992

on **June 10, 2013 at 2:58 am** said:

I thought the Xbox version of this game was a great big broken monkey fest of poor design and features that do nothing but aggravate the player and artificially ramp up the difficulty. Apparently the PC port is even worse, which should be impossible.

The controls are easily the worst aspect of the game, with one particularly bullshit death standing out in my mind being my character backflipping off a ledge. Which brings me to the level design, which is full of instant death pits, which combined with the simultaneously too-slippery-to-control-accurately-yet-too-stiff-to-be-useful-to-battle controls, leads to A LOT of bullshit falling deaths.

So, you'll die, you'll die a lot, and by Christ does the game want you to know it. The game is just tedious; defenders of this game, -stop chewing on that piece of wood and come hear this- there is a big fucking line between "challenging" and "frustration", and Dark Souls crosses that line, going a million miles too far. There is such a thing as too difficult. Challenge should come naturally from the design, but since we've established the design isn't worth the bytes it takes up, it's a moot point.



Jern

on **May 29, 2013 at 2:42 am** said:

So you admit in your article that you didn't play this game long enough to learn it? I personally have 100s of hours in

this game, and some of my friends are still better than me at it. It's difficult to learn, of course, but they never tried to hide the fact that it was. But now I beat the game in 5 hours, can build any character I want, and revel in the complexity of PvP. No game I have played recently has given me such a precise combat experience. It's almost like, you know, FIGHTING WITH A SWORD AND SHIELD IS HARD. This game is replicating the intensity of fighting a legion of demonic enemies led by the old Gods. Sure, you should get to just walk through them, right? A normal undead should have no problem killing off God's armies, that makes perfect sense. But clearly you didn't play long enough to understand that the mechanics aren't slow or poorly made. Once you get the handle of riposte, of backstabs, or what is effective in certain situations and what isn't, the game isn't hard. I don't get hit by Dark Magic. Using Wrath of the Gods on me is a waste. I'll dodge. I watch your moves and learn your rhythm, and then I'll parry you. I'll switch to my bow and pop a poison arrow shot at you if you're hiding behind your shield, I'll take out a shield with Fire Resistance if you Great Combustion spam. In Dark Souls, there is an answer to every good mechanic. All too often it is only skill that determines how well you can play. But I have seen plenty of examples of people going from being utterly frustrated to master fighters. They loved it. The fights that we have are better than any PvP any other game I've played has offered me. It's a sign that anticipation is dead when you play a game billed as, "incredibly challenging" for a couple of hours and then blame the design instead of yourself. Maybe you're just not, I don't know, not very good at Dark Souls.



Lamthara

on **May 28, 2013 at 2:00 pm** said:

I have played that game, enjoyed it like a normal game, it was frustrating not because it was hard... but because it was hard to play, the controls were messy and contro intuitive and the story was meh. But i liked to finish the games i started so i sticked with it. So in the end, i've beaten it but i don't think it's the game everyone is talking about... but considering i've been able to finish it i should "understand" it, am i right ^^?

so let's consider this... you say "Let's assume From Software actually made the game inaccessible, hard to use, frustrating, repetitive and unrewarding on purpose. How awfully elitist is that?"

I think it's exactly what they've done. They've made the game hard because the people able to beat it would consider themselves different from the others. They were good, hard core gamers, part of the best elite out there. It's a proven psicology trick that when a thing is scarce it is appreciate more than a thing that can been commonly found. And that's the reason people like Dark Souls... because once they win they are a part of the small community and the mind tricks them thinking "the game was good" :D



Tombstone

on **May 24, 2013 at 9:31 am** said:

When developers create a difficult game they make it difficult to kill the AI. Unlike most these developers make the controls difficult to kill the AI.



Tombstone

on **May 24, 2013 at 9:11 am** said:

I love playing challenging games that push your skills to the limit but with this game I found it tested my ability to adapt to such terrible gameplay. The game is not that hard it's the controls that make it difficult. For example kicking should be a one button execution and there should be no cycling between health revive and throwables. Also, It felt like every time I died I was being penalized. The AI was revived however I didn't retain any of my grenades or knives that I used previously before I re spawned. Which in turned took away from the experience. Adding to the terrible controls I actually tried to avoid getting into sword fights. Plus the graphics are horrible . This game has a great concept but without the execution. 1 hour I played this game and it's the only game I threw away. What did it for me(right after the tutorial where you run up the steps to start the first mission) after dying a bunch of times I ran passed all the skeletons up the tower threw the white door to the allure where I was greeted by a huge monster. This monster took up the entire width of the allure and because there are parts of the battlements that are busted I fell to my death. So you can B.S me all you want that right there is stupid. Most games give you a sense of accomplishment when you overcome something difficult, with this game I was just glad to have it done.



Georgio

on **May 16, 2013 at 6:47 pm** said:

The first 8 hours are really not enough to judge the game with after at least say 15 hours the game design clicks i mean i don't hate you for you opinion first time i played it i thought it looked dated and the controls felt clunky but as i progressed i got the hang of things and the difficulty and challenge just made me go "let me try again, just one more time" and being challenged and thinking really hard about how to defeat an enemy made me feel as though i wasn't wasting my time with this game like i was using my brain and reflexes and judgment to win. And for real winning from a really hard boss after many tries felt really good and sometimes my heart would really pound. And lets not forget the games world and story are quite intriguing.



Tombstone
on **May 24, 2013 at 9:24 am** said:

Of coarse it felt like you were using your brain. Do you know how many neuron pathways your brain had to build to get around such terrible gameplay



Gabe
on **June 21, 2013 at 10:17 pm** said:

no game should take 15 hours of gameplay to become average. I already regret the 8 hours I've put in this game, as well as the \$20 i spent on it. Sure as hell not going to waste any more time to find this "promised land" that I was told existed in Dark Souls.



Brien
on **May 5, 2013 at 2:05 am** said:

I don't think people understand this, but once you say "some games aren't for everyone" you don't really get to bash it endlessly. Of course you can and should point out the faults you see and the things you dislike, but the moment you get emotional and call it stupid you are no longer saying "some games aren't for everyone", you are saying "this game doesn't fit all my needs, and that makes it stupid." Get over yourself. There are definitely a lot of flaws as in any game. There are a lot of great things about it as well.

The part that kills me is this; using a sword and a shield to fight well in real life isn't easy. There is no auto-locking in real life. Things aren't just served up to you. You can't get hit 500 times and have the enemy die after swinging your sword once. If you don't like it, great, but your insults belies your frustration, and that is pretty much always because it was too hard. Again, there is nothing wrong with that, some people don't have tons of time to dedicate to games (I should spend less since I'm trying to get a comp. engineering degree), and some people do but don't want to, but it isn't because the mechanics are bad; they just don't suit you.

So, don't pretend to have a live and let live attitude and then whine incessantly because it doesn't fit your play style. This is the age of the internet. Look up a game and watch a few minutes of some different let's plays, read some reviews, but don't waste your money and then say the game was poorly made. It was perfectly made for their demographic, the so called "elitist gamers" (although anyone with patience can make it through and enjoy it, using the auto targeting pretty much feels like cheating.)



Brien
on **May 5, 2013 at 2:15 am** said:

I forgot to add that of course you can bash it as much as you want and be as hypocritical as you'd like, but I don't see the point in that. Truly, some games really aren't for everyone, which is great (otherwise all games would be terrible.) For the most part I really enjoyed Skyrim but the combat was so very easy. On the other hand it actually had a story, unlike Dark Souls, which was very nice. There are definitely a few key things that I would like to see in Dark Souls, along with Skyrim and some other games, but it is a fun, different experience that I actually do think is very satisfying.

Lastly — and I made mention of this at the end of my first post sort of — I was curious to know if anyone who's played it decided to not using the auto-targeting (activated by clicking the right stick in) ? I discovered it after playing for maybe an hour and it just seemed to make things way, way too easy. The point of the game for me was to actually have a challenge by learning to control the character and be skilled in combat. Did anyone else do this? I probably – or certainly – wouldn't have wasted as much time as I did on the game, but I'm glad I played it that way.

Good day.



Jem
on **May 29, 2013 at 2:32 am** said:

Did you say Dark Souls doesn't have a story? So the whole "you are the born hero who travels first to ring the bells of awakening, then to the home of the Gods in pursuit of the Lordvessel, then to slay the Lords of the Age of Fire, only to either take the throne of the previous king or to turn it over to humanity", all of that was just in my head? My character

wasn't actually a descendant of the furtive pygmy, the drama of Gwyn's family was all in my head, the relationship of Seeth to the Princess Guard was a figment of my imagination, I just dreamed up the fall of the Daughters of Chaos, and there were actually no dialogue options when I spoke to the Primordial Serpents? Siegmeyer and his daughter never existed? Artorias never walked the Abyss, Reah and Petrus's story never happened, the Darkwraiths had no leader, and if you're still reading, how about you read the item descriptions next time instead of assuming all plot was just handed to you on a plate?



Amazed by people
on **May 2, 2013 at 9:48 pm** said:

Wow commenting on this site is a pain in the a\$\$



I love Turtles
on **May 2, 2013 at 9:46 pm** said:

This game needs patience, not skills.

If you like re-doing the same levels over and over to learn enemies, levels and bosses patterns and to grind your levels, you will love that game. If you like having fast-paced action and just moving forward, you won't like it, simple as that.

I personally found this game annoyingly boring and repetitive, but that's my opinion. I love this article because it show-off some points that the corporate reviews never mentioned. It's always good to see both side of the medal before buying a game, or you may be disappointed since most games nowadays are overrated. At first you're amazed how games are good, then you play them a little bit longer and realize that's all they have to offer, that happens to many often.



Brien
on **May 5, 2013 at 2:21 am** said:

I completely agree with this. I do wish there was a bit more to spice Dark Souls up as the game progressed, but I did enjoy it overall. It was very different, and I really enjoyed having difficult combat that took some time to master (didn't use the auto-lock.)

In any case, even though I thought that there was too much complaining in the main review, it is good to see all sides of a game, and this provided some useful insight into some of the downsides. I also might have gotten bored sooner but I listened to intelligence^2 debates on YouTube while I played so that made it more interesting for me. Anyways, good review.



geert matthys
on **May 2, 2013 at 9:04 pm** said:

Dark Souls is a niche game whose design focuses on nothing else then having you die a lot. That's your experience. I'm sick of this bull that if you block at that moment and roll at that moment everything will be fine 'cause it won't. The amount of cheapness here is through the roof, it is quite simple: die a 100 times 'till you get lucky. That's the whole concept of the game. I thought that maybe you would become more powerful as you leveled and you would get to having fun, but uh-uh, at lv 170 I'm still dying in cheap ways. Of course the difficulty is necessary, else you see an empty game without content. This is a game only self-loathers would enjoy. Don't bother with character creation, you'll run around as zombie the entire 100 hours. Good luck! Get a girlfriend!



I love Turtles
on **May 2, 2013 at 8:19 pm** said:

The game itself says prepare to die, skills my ass, you have no other choice than learning levels, enemies, bosses parterns or using a guide... which results in a painfully boring and repetitive experience.

Should be; Dark Souls: Prepare to waste a whole lot of time replaying the same levels again Edition.



ron

on **April 25, 2013 at 9:21 pm** said:

i completed dark souls recently. i took it outside and smashed it. it gave me no satisfaction, having completed a game (like you stated) only made difficult by poor design.



KrisW

on **April 29, 2013 at 7:01 am** said:

Most of the complaints about Dark Soul read "The game lacks an I win button". Games are becoming much like the rest of our society: mind numbingly easy. You all have just grown lazy and fat off of dumbed down entertainment.

Dark Souls has one of the best combat fighting systems for a multi-player online role playing game period(unless your used to WoW pansy click and spam/auto-target game-play). Much smoother then Bethesda's fighting system used in the Elder Scrolls and Fallout series.

Here is the secret difference between those who beaten and enjoyed the game and those who where beaten by the game: IT IS AN ONLINE GAME! Get a buddy or two to help you. Heck or make a few buddies waiting by a boss door. If your having trouble with a boss fight, volunteer for a few fights to help others beat the boss so you can get the hang of it.

The only gripe I have with Dark Souls is the fact that it isn't more of a multi-player game. Anyone who can't understand that doesn't have the right to claim to be any kind of gamer. Dark Souls as it is now is perfect for real casual gamers(they need a harder difficulty setting for the more serious gamers).

If you want to be entertained alone, go sit on your coach and watch TV. Playing a multi-player game as a solo game and complaining about it is so utterly unforgivably absurd, that as a game critic you lost every droplet of credibility you may or may not have had.

What is next, your going to complain about not being able to solo a raid with only your pet?



Amazed by people

on **May 2, 2013 at 9:26 pm** said:

I'll tell you something that you clearly didn't understand; there's some people who love having a challenging experience and there's some who love playing games for fun. Not everybody has the patience needed to enjoy this game, they may actually do most useful things instead of playing video games, yet they're still gamers nonetheless. Some people seek challenges elsewhere and play games for having fun and/or relaxing. And people may have different opinions than you and that doesn't make them "not real gamers".

All you said about the game is your opinion and nothing else, we respect that, but respect others opinions too, playing a game or a fight over and over again may be a nice experience for you, but a pain in the ass for others. This game is extremely slow in every aspect of it, and some people hate that and don't research this in a multi-player experience, which you need to do a few things and meet certain requirements before being able to play with friends, it's not like drop-in/drop-out, like Borderlands which is a multi-player game, and both mode are fun.

And did you ever heard of single-player games? I play games for story, fun and immersion like a lot of people. Ohh but sorry, sounds like you're a real serious gamer and everyone who didn't beat Dark Souls aren't gamers, they are just wannabes who try to love gaming to be as bad-ass as you are.

By the way the guy said he beat the game and still you call him a lazy and fat just because he didn't enjoyed it!? He's a gamer like you and have the right to his opinion, the only difference is you're a stupid one with too much ego.



You're an idiot

on **June 6, 2013 at 8:39 pm** said:

Hilarious—you're giving the standard Souls "you're just a loser who can't handle the game" speech to SOMEONE WHO SAID HE FINISHED THE GAME. Did you even read what he said?

God, you Souls fanboys are idiots.



Austin Petty

on **April 19, 2013 at 10:43 am** said:

Oh my god I can't stop laughing at these comments.

I've spent 60 hours on this game, and I can't stand it. I just want to beat it and put it away (I'm a completionist). I've encountered so many artificial difficulty points it's unbearable. Falling through the floor, losing a fifth of my health only to be blasted instantly by a red cloud that drains the rest of my health? Not hard, cheap. Facing two polar opposite enemies that tag team me and ambush me repeatedly? Not hard, ridiculous. Walking through a fog gate only to immediately be mauled by two poisonous dogs and a steroid using man wearing a cow skull? Not challenging, stupid. The enemies on the way to a location respawn over and over, and it's only because the game knows you'll need to grind and grind and grind with these enemies to pass retardedly high difficulty spikes (Undead Burg to Blighttown. Like, no.) I can predict the replies and future comments already: "ur so casual lel" and "zomg don't you know how to block" and "u just suck rofl" and let's not forget "you have to get deeper into the game to enjoy it."

No. I do freaking NOT want to spend 10 hours to get to the "fun" part of a game. Mainly because I spend 20 minutes total on a boss in an area, while it'll take a few hours running back to the boss after I get stunned by some blind-siding attack that sends me sprawling off the side and to my death in a swamp. I know the fanboys and girls will look at me and go "this guy got stuck on first level noob." Yeah, no. I suffered (and I REALLY mean suffer) all the way to Anor Londo, and cleared the painted world of Ariamis (that's how it's spelled, right?)

Also, I don't consider getting frustrated and pissed off as successfully making me emotional. I consider it just a bad game. The only two times I received ANY genuine emotion from this game was when Lautrec had to go and fuck up my bonfire, and when Sif started limping around at the end (God fucking dammit that was horribly depressing. I seriously let him kill me the first time.) I hate this game with a passion, because so much of it is broken.

Well, I guess the only broken part is the invading. Invading is just bad. Getting one hit by someone in a loincloth is just fucking bad.

But anyways, I don't credit my deaths to bad camera angles or unresponsive controls, I credit it to the ridiculously artificial difficulty that several enemies (and only three boss fights) were given. I hated being bum rushed by the Capra Demon, I was absolutely raging at the Stray Demon's drop-in battle and red smoke near insta-kill spamming, and I admit I stopped playing after my thirtieth death at the hands of fatty and skinny farting in the tub and crushing my bones.

tl;dr artificial difficulty doesn't make a good game.



Great

on **June 6, 2013 at 8:52 pm** said:

Great comments, and I totally agree. I had the same feeling about Demon Souls (which I finished), and whenever I started leaning more in the "I like it" direction, the game design would do something to royally piss me off. Case in point: I loved level 1-4 (basically the last level), right up until the point I fought Old King Allant and he *drained my character's soul level twice in a row*. I couldn't believe the game designer(s) included a mechanism that PERMANENTLY DESTROYS PROGRESS THE PLAYER HAS SPENT HOURS BUILDING UP. I've read about other people being drained eight or more times by Allant, resulting in them being unable to use their current armor or weapons! Unbelievably. So I went from loving level 1-4 — including the grinding I had to do to get to Allant — to dreading having my hard work flushed down the toilet in a millisecond, thanks to From Software's willingness to screw the player blue.

That's not "difficult", it's cheap—and not just cheap but light years beyond cheap. And it's a hallmark of Souls design. The games are mainly difficult not because of great enemy AI, but because of inflated damage, poor controls, unnecessary grinding and lengthy control lockouts. That they're still enjoyable despite these shitty design decisions is mainly a testament to the good level design.



Mike M

on **April 12, 2013 at 11:30 pm** said:

You are all missing the point. He doesn't like the controls. The game itself is designed poorly, its not "cool" or "challenging" when something is designed poorly, it's just bad. No matter the content, no matter anything else. Now, your opinion about the controls can differ, but if you hate the way it's set up to begin with, there really isn't any point to keep playing is there?



Ecubster

on **April 12, 2013 at 12:05 pm** said:

I got to the part in the article where you start talking about the lock on controls and it was clear to me at that point how much of the game you had played (not very much at all). I immediately discounted your whole argument. I stopped reading, and can't take you seriously anymore. Any person that's really dug into Dark Souls will tell you that having an auto-lock on would completely destroy you in some battles...even as early as the Capra Demon fight. If you

didn't even get passed that to understand the significance of that decision, then your whole "Dark Souls is not a great game" argument is backed by half-ass assumptions. Moving on.



Austin Petty

on **April 19, 2013 at 10:47 am** said:

Go ahead, discount his entire argument because he didn't like the lock-on controls. It doesn't make his argument untrue, it makes you look like you can't defend a bad game from being called a bad game.



horheristo

on **March 25, 2013 at 7:39 am** said:

Me and wife tried it, I could already guess from the screenshots but had to test it firsthand.

We've put it down after 5 minutes of gameplay:

- Graphics were unbearable to look at
- Boring battle action (I want to get excited when I fight, not swing like a ken doll)
- Felt from the getgo that you should expect a soulcrushing experience for very little satisfaction in return.

I love RPG's, played all the verity you can think of, and can honestly say this game was made for the same people who enjoyed games similar to Elder scrolls. Definitely not my cup 'o tea unless I need to catch a good snooze.

Can't call this game garbage thanks to its large fanbase, but many people like justin bieber too on the other hand.



bobo

on **April 4, 2013 at 5:51 pm** said:

The fact is you, like the reviewer are being impatient.

It's not elitist, but the fact is you haven't looked into the lore, met most of the enemies, encountered any of the major concepts, or the main story. So you're not in a place to talk about it bad in any way. Get to the LordVessel before you complain bro.

Your entitled to not like it and all, but you're saying you don't like a sandwich and have barely nibbled the crust without encountering the tasty filling.



ET

on **April 11, 2013 at 6:04 pm** said:

How do you even get deep into the lore, meet most of the enemies and understand any stories, concepts or shit if the game fails to even keep you long and patient enough to go through it?



Reve

on **May 7, 2013 at 9:43 pm** said:

Who gives a shit about lore if the core gameplay is trash? Controlling your character in Dark Souls is like controlling a special ed child. The only reason this game is difficult is because the game lags behind every action I decide to make.



Madgoblin

on **March 11, 2013 at 11:51 am** said:

I seriously am In love with dark souls. I don't get why you don't like it man.

Even though I haven't played all those 90's 80's games. This game was something new, when I first picked it up I was thinking "This should be alright"

Then I died. And died. And died. I hated the game, but from all the good stuff I've been hearing from it, I pressed on. I kept trying, and learnt new things. "Ohh this is how I kick!", "Ohh I can parry!"

And when I beat that god damned Taurus demon... (Took me over 30 tries 0.0) I seriously was in love with the game. I fucking felt like a invincible legend, unstoppable. And I loved it. Until I played uncautiously and walked onto the

charcoal'd burnt bridge with corpses on it. And instantly died by a dragon. I legitimately died inside then.. But I pressed on.

And now I've beaten the game 2 times. And I'm still learning more. I'm challenging myself with a no shield playthrough and more. Seriously this game is amazing. It feel so great when you can 1 shot one of those bosses who used to give you trouble. Or to overcome a challenge.

This game is a 10/10 for me. Just plain amazing. New and refreshing. And crazy hard. But not too unfair, sometimes it can be a little bs though.



Matt

on **March 5, 2013 at 9:00 pm** said:

I've had this game and played through somewhere around 15 hours now, having just reached Blight Town and heres my opinion on the only time I truly believe the game could do with better level design.

After looking around it seems that most people quit after dieing in undead burg frequently. The main issue being the gamedoesn't give you alot of tools to use, the intent of course being too prepare you for the rest of the game, but the lack of options here is what makes it repetitive. That and the flawed arena of the first boss seems to be what constitutes most of the quitting or at least a negative stigma.

I'm not gonna say it's an awful game either, and the narrow mindedness here bothers me. A good game evokes a range of emotions, not just constant satisfaction. The more frustrated you get the more rewarding victory is, that's just human nature and trying to argue that's not true is totally out of spite. This game in particular simply asks you to deal with being frustrated sometimes. To Work for what you want and not just take it. Hand holding doesn't exist, not because it's more difficult that way but because any accomplishment is entirely your own. The game let you find out how to do it and left you to it.

Of course there's the fact that I haven't finished the game, I've only been by what I hear to dig into this world and I must say I'm enthusiastic to continue. It's really interesting and I've honestly been looking for a game like this for awhile. I understand that the experiance isn't for every one and I won't degrade someone who'd rather master something more simple, but this is its own thing and by comparison it is challenging and it does require you be thinking about it.

What's really disappointing here is seeing comments where people blatantly say that a personal preference of theirs related to games means that this one is terrible and people who enjoy it are dumb and smug and no one should care what they think. Vice versa too, people who give up aren't pansies, they just don't care to do what the game asks, which is a lot at times. I even thought about quitting trying to kill the gargoyles, the boss guarding the first bell. But it seemed so appropriate that I tried re approaching the situation and the game as s whole became easier to play and even deal with its hardships. But that doesn't really work for everyone, but I'll be Dammed to be called an elitist or apologist for having that experiance with a game.



tomato

on **February 21, 2013 at 10:14 am** said:

hey i'm sorry so many gamers are jerks

i just thought i'd throw in that i really enjoyed dark souls, and i don't even have a blessed relationship with old, difficult games. i don't like things that feel needlessly frustrating at all.

which is why dark souls surprised me so much. i loved the meticulous combat, the different combat styles you could employ, the confident aesthetics and visuals

I'm mostly just writing this to let you know that the game has a lot of fans, me and my friends included, who don't give a shit about being hardcore or what games we used to play and how the market doesn't service us enough or anything, but still really liked that game, and it makes me sad to see you're basically lumping people like us in with roid raging neckbeards when you address dark souls apologists.



Kitfox

on **May 1, 2013 at 7:15 am** said:

This is more or less my experience too. I'm usually the first person to say 'let's turn down the difficulty' when my group wipes a map in left 4 dead, or when I flail about and get smashed by the AI in a Civ game. But for some reason the difficulty in Dark Souls didn't feel unfair.

It felt like it was me who was the one messing up, and when I kept trying I got better at it. My first playthrough I did most of

the fights alone as a super-tanky character with a big shield and a bigger weapon, and when I finally beat it I started over doing the polar opposite, a guy who was rolling fast everywhere using light weapons to whittle enemies down when I saw a chance. And it turns out I did some parts a lot easier that way and some parts were a whole lot harder.

All throughout it, I can count on one hand the number of times it felt like the game was cheating me out of winning and it wasn't me making mistakes that had resulted in my death. And I think that's what I found most refreshing. I really wish you could have gotten the same enjoyment out of it that I did!



Matt

on **January 29, 2013 at 10:58 pm** said:

I totally respect your right to dislike the game, but people pretty widely agree that the controls are excellent, so to combine that complaint with getting stuck "on corners and ledges" to the degree that you had to restart... maybe you're just awful. I dunno man.



Zel

on **January 29, 2013 at 7:57 pm** said:

I do like dark souls. But after I have played it awhile. It reminds me of Onimusha and Monster Hunter series. The soul system which allows you to upgrade your weapons is very similar to Onimusha; where the stamina comes from monster hunter. I heard people say this game is very unique but it's more like combining several systems from the old games and given a new background. I do actually enjoy playing the game very often. However, I would say it's really overrated. That's my best honest opinion.



C.

on **January 29, 2013 at 1:23 am** said:

I do not understand complaints about the controls. They are simple and require some timing. Fits perfectly for a melee oriented game that tries to convey a weighty feel for it's combat.

Otherwise the hypocritical pompousness in your writing made this article near unbearable to read. :/



Dark Souls

on **January 28, 2013 at 7:06 pm** said:

Dear Mr. Anhut,

You are Casul. That is all.

Regards,
Dark Souls



Yesu

on **March 30, 2013 at 12:08 am** said:

Look out guys, we got a hardcore gamer over here! That or a internet douche.



FireWalkWithMe

Finally. Someone reasonable, who doesn't make all of us Dark Souls fans seem crazy, like — possibly — a few people up-thread.

I actually love Dark Souls, but I do agree with the article — holy crap, I hate the controls. Not very intuitive at all. The camera, for me, is terrible; the problems with frame rates and syncing can make combat clunky and frustrating. Sometimes, I felt like the game was less truly good AI encounters and just rigged against your player character to put up the illusion of difficulty.

Once I mastered the flow of the game, these complaints kind of went away for me. But I don't blame anyone who just didn't want to work super hard for something they weren't enjoying. Who does? The elitism and eye-roll inducing "I'm a hardcore gamer because I play Dark/Demon Souls" is silly and embarrassing to watch. And, I don't think it matters how long someone plays a game — they are entitled to write anything they choose to about a game. This review, for example, was really well written and had some excellent points; just because it says some things that people don't like, doesn't make it any less valid.



Dunstan

on **December 30, 2012 at 10:19 pm** said:

I just exited the game in a rage because there's this tar pit where I need to fight two very, very tough enemies at the same time and I kept getting my butt kicked all the way back up to the surface. The basic strategy is to wear light armor and roll over their staves when they swing them in wide arcs, and get out of the way if you see them making a jump attack and reposition yourself. In between all of these, try to get a few chops with your weapon and repeat. It's hard when facing one of the critters alone, it's insane with two of them. I'll go grab something to eat, calm down, watch the news or something and then I will try again. And it will feel so awesome once I overcome them, as it felt with every other obstacle in this game.

Frankly I don't understand why people say it's a bad port. I never cared about graphics, maybe it's because of lag but it happens so rarely it's something I can overlook. Sure, it's annoying as hell to die because of it, but it doesn't compare to dying because of your own stupidity, which is what I've experienced the most, heh. And there's little to no legitimacy in cursing the controls either. The producers stated that they highly recommend a gamepad. I've purchased an xbox 360 classic controller and I've had no issues at all, excepting what has been previously posted about it being difficult to consistently perform kicks or leap attacks and yes, manually aiming a bow isn't really smooth, but it's not a game-breaker either. Yeah, I've missed some critical shots in decisive moments because in the aiming mode the stick isn't as good as a mouse, but that's not really a reason to say the game is terrible lol. To the person posting above being a left-hander and all that, I'm left handed as well and I've played PC games with standard KBM input all my life (mouse in right hand). Complaining about KBM controls when gamepad is highly recommended is like raging about not being able to cut firewood with a club. You're doing it wrong.

My two cents would be that this is a game that is punishing and unforgiving to you when you make mistakes, but I for one feel good when I overcome what seemed an impossible obstacle by the right combination of planing, timing, technique and, sometimes, luck. If you don't have a sense of achievement after killing a huge monster over a 10-15 minutes long battle in which one wrong move would have meant your death, then yes, maybe this game isn't your cup of tea. But I find it terrific that I can enjoy a victory in which my decisions and actions played a much higher role than they do in other games. There are no mechanics on auto-pilot here, it's all up to you.

One more thing, it happened to me several times to get glitched in the scenery, yes it sucked and I raged like a berserk quillboar when it happened, but I managed to get myself unstuck every time.



Gamer

on **December 28, 2012 at 5:05 am** said:

People enjoy Dark Souls because they enjoy a challenge. Some of the attacks are somewhat unresponsive, but that can make it interesting as the player has to figure out the correct timings to pull them off successfully rather than landing a hit as soon as a window of opportunity is visible. It's nice for a change for a game with a single difficulty to be one of high demands. Usually I dislike games with a single difficulty as they try to be one size fits all and turn out too easy for players that don't wish to complete it whilst on auto-pilot. The scarcity of the items is a welcome decision as most consumable items aren't common and you only have the opportunity to buy them or find them at a couple points throughout the game which makes using them feel more special and timely. Initially quitting after only a few minutes shows that you drew conclusions and blamed the game early on allowing the next 6 hours to build upon it and solidify your externalisation of where the faults lay. The game does lack by not teaching you all too much by someone curious like myself enjoys trying different theories till you understand a certain mechanic. All in all, as you said, it's not for everyone, but if you enjoy being thrown into the deep end in a unique environment that has secret items/passages, great level design, creative enemies/bosses, a lot of risk/reward and a game that requires you to learn and strategize then get a hold of it and prepare to die. Best use a gamepad and not keyboard controls as you'll find it far more enjoyable, also, there are plenty of guide and walkthroughs around if you should get stuck, but try to keep the use of these to a minimum I would suggest.



Random

on **December 25, 2012 at 4:46 pm** said:

Yes I agree, the controls are horrible. My main problem is targeting, A lot of the time the game will target an enemy that I can't even see, or one that I didn't want to attack which leaves me free to get stabbed from behind. Once I even fell of a ledge because instead of targeting the enemy right in front of me, it targeted an enemy 50 metres to the side making me fall. Not only that, the game is obviously designed with the poor targeting system in mind, as it is almost impossible for a newer player to play without it. Having an enemy targeted also changes the way you move, further increasing the difficulty of the already hard to use controls. The game doesn't cater for new players at all. I feel like I would have needed to play all of Demon Souls so I could familiarize myself with the awkward controls. You are plunged straight into extremely hard boss fights from the start, many of which will one hit you leaving you extremely frustrated. Especially when you die again in some underhanded way losing all your soul points, which means if you forgot to level up, everything you did was lost. I have deleted most of my save files from the sheer frustration of losing all my hard earned experience.

Again, the AI is quite laughable, the only reason they're difficult is their large range of attack animations, that can vary from extremely slow to dashing forward and slashing insanely fast in a CoD like fashion. I feel like the enemies are very easy but the difficulty of the controls is what is stopping me from actually beating them. The menu system is also hard to work out and equip items, and all unexplained stats of items gives me no idea how what advantages a weapon has over another. I am really annoyed at all the review hailing this as the best RPG ever, because they are the only reason that I went out and spent \$50 on it. I would pay \$20 for it maybe. My advise to anyone thinking to buy this game is go out and rent it first to see if you like it. That is all.



kesher

on **December 23, 2012 at 11:01 pm** said:

You're a clown. Let me give you a couple of examples of clown statements:

1. You've played a game that is known to have that quality of tv shows that grow on you and you can only appreciate their true value after you get acquainted with the characters, not instantly, like a clown enjoying a strawberry gum, for 6 hours – red nose clown, probably 4 or less – and you rushed to write a review on your clown page.

2. You imply Demon Souls was a hyped game, then admit you've never played it. This is not clown like, this is just dumb. Bellow average sense of logic of a herpes licking clown. Htf can you know if a product is hyped or underpublicized when you haven't even played it?

Auto-target clown nub.



Justin

on **December 23, 2012 at 1:08 am** said:

20 minutes and you quit? Seriously? Ok, well I can see how a person with no patience for a learning curve would quit, sure. Someone more into Call of Duty games, sure. But to quit after 20 minutes and then rant on your blog thingy about it? Blaming the game design for your inability to progress? Shame on you, sir. And I'm not saying I am "elite" because I like it, I haven't even beat the evil, unforgiving, hard pile of awesome that it is yet. But My Black Knight Halberd build is tearing shit up and its fun. I die a lot, then die trying to get back to my bloodstain, same as EVERYONE else. Lose souls and get OMG pissed off but I can always see where I fucked up. Me, myself, not the game. So give it another go, have some patience, and try to get a good weapon like the Drake sword, or Black Knight Weapon. The Halberd is easiest to get, and can 1 hit pretty well every enemy.



fiji

on **December 22, 2012 at 3:48 pm** said:

first off i haven't the slightest idea why even a mildly seasoned gamer would find this game difficult, ESPECIALLY if you've played through any half-decent 3D beat em up released in the last 12 years, for chrissake even demon's souls, a harder game, isn't that bad

second, you can grind the game out if you're having trouble, enough grinding and the game is placed into easy mode instantly where you can 1-hit kill everything (huge flaw actually)

but what really makes this game stand out, what really places it high above so many other games, what makes it in fact one of the finest games ever made, is not the "amazing combat system" or "atmosphere" or "deep arr pee gee mechanics" or "BRUTAL DIFFICULTY", it's the superb level design, it takes the levels that all those Metroidvanias experimented with over the past 20 years and takes them to their logical conclusion, the world is absolutely amazing and so well-connected and i'm not sure when it will be topped, it's so amazing that it make Metroid Prime look like a mere diversion before you get to a REAL game

everything else is actually pretty inconsequential

flaws:

1. the difficulty has weird spikes but it's generally an easy game
2. the fact that you can grind the game out is stupid and frankly they should take the DMC route and just give you tons of moves from the get-go (DMC1 also had WAY more atmosphere than Souls games)
3. these arr pee gee mechanics simply mean that some fights are bafflingly simple because of your +5 bum-raping sword or whatever and if you're having trouble you just grind a little or just choose an elemental weapon
4. enemies aren't too bright and the only way they can kill you is if you're being silly and rushing in head first
5. lock-on is pretty bad

but none of this affects the superb levels

in other words, this game would be improved by being HARDER, probably shorter, and REMOVING content instead of adding any, plus a cooler and more flexibvle moveset with tougher enemy AI to compensate, i basically wanna see DMC1 with dark souls levels, holy crap that would be amazing

but yeah, all in all, a really annoying post

you start with this whole "it's subjective maaaaaan" then ask why anyone would ever like the game and then try to pass of the game as having "sluggish" controls as if it's somehow objective, off to a flying start already i see

then you name a few nitpicks that don't end up affecting the REAL genius in the game, then some vague "fighting is clunky lawl" statements, then some shallow fluff about 89/100 or something (which is actually about the perfect score for it, maybe 87) and you expect anyone to take you seriously? it seems to me like you're just mad that a bunch of pseudo-hardcore kids tried to put you down for not liking their "BRUTALLY DIFFICULT" game then, instead of IGNORING them like an adult should, you try to put them down as a way to get back at them instead of having a proper discussion

also, lol @ all the vanquish praise in the same post that you try to trash dark souls, i mean, seriously, superb AI? diverse enemies? multiple options? you fight braindead red gorgies for about 70% of the game, here's a game where, on the hardest difficulty, the player can cheese most levels out by finding two hiding spots, going for some easy headshots, and throwing some EMP'S and why? because the enemies aren't smart, they just do a bunch of damage like i'm playing cowadoody 4 on veteran, the overwhelming majority of the enemies you face do a terrible job of knocking you out of cover so just find about 2 sturdy walls and you're solid, and i won't even mention random difficulty spikes, i mean i love vanquish (best tps ever made probably) but the game doesn't always hit the high points



Sage

on **December 17, 2012 at 2:21 pm** said:

I can't take this review seriously until the writer can play more than 6 hours of apparently no progressing. I hate to say it, because I do hate elitism, but it might actually be because you have no patience. It sounds like you want to button mash, or to be able to just ram through every single enemy, hoping that the game would present you with a godly character who's better than every other human being in the world. You're not special. You're nobody, you're useless scum in the asshole of the world. You're going to get destroyed once or twice.

I wouldn't be saying anything like "hurr you're not good enough" BUT, you said you died a lot in the first area, and my CoD playing friend and girlfriend got through without any deaths up to firelink shrine. THAT prompted me to immediately assume your problem was competency. Post a video of you playing or something, unless you're playing the PC port, then yes, the game is a horrible piece of crap and the controls are impossible.



Jordan

on **December 13, 2012 at 12:58 am** said:

It is not true when people say the difficulty of Dark Souls is the same sort that is found in older games. Much of the difficulty in older games is quickly learning relatively arbitrary patterns before you die. That sort of difficulty is primarily skill and memorization not decision making. Dark Souls is about common sense, and it is unlikely you thought about accepting that. That is not necessarily a bad thing; it's just you didn't have a completely open mind for a video game. A rule I assume you don't know or don't care about is always having your shield up wherever you go, which should be common sense when you are exploring new territory. You should also keep your shield up when you are facing new enemies even if it seems you can attack them, because they might still be dangerous. Why presume to know how to

kill them when you just encountered them? Why is it bad that attacks are slow, because if you do one incorrectly you can't recover? If you attack something and you fail to even stun the enemy, you deserve to be punished in the same way you punish them when they do the same. You always check corners. You always study the area in case you get surrounded so you know where to retreat to. You always explore the area thoroughly to ensure you gain as many advantages as possible to survive (People complain about how you don't know that you shouldn't go to the graveyard in the beginning...the guy at Fire Link shrine tells you the easier bell is above you, yet the graveyard leads down). You never take chances when it comes to life or death. It is just common sense. It's the universal sense of understood realism that makes this game so acclaimed. You just gotta believe :)

As far as some of the other points you make go, why would you not want to manually control the targeting...so it can auto-target when you are trying to retreat or move to a better location?. The level design is such that there are not many small ledges that you would feel you could easily get over but can't. Why would you talk to someone in the middle of fighting enemies...the dialogue should make you feel overwhelmed and punish you as it does. The process of opening a chest is long so that you can't just run into an area and loot them...they are rewards for when you've conquered the area.



Talbot

on **December 7, 2012 at 9:55 pm** said:

Indeed, it's an overrated train-wreck of a game.



Tommy

on **December 17, 2012 at 10:14 pm** said:

This comment was not approved by admin.

Admin note:

Hey, Tommy. I won't let people just throw insults around here. How old the fuck are you? Merry Christmas.

Sincerely, Anjin.



pdoggity

on **December 4, 2012 at 9:14 pm** said:

I got about three bosses past the first bell ring. I can't remember their names because the game looked and felt the same everywhere. Such a boring game with terrible graphics and clunky 'click and wait' game-play right out of Dragons Lair. I unfortunately fell for the internet hype. 'Fans' claimed it was difficult and rewarding.

What a bunch of useless barking.

I understand less capable gamers feeling smug and triumphant grinding through a game that is impossible to lose, simple, and slow. They thought they finally had some form of validity. Then your post comes along and robs them. Oh the tears...



jij

on **December 4, 2012 at 7:02 am** said:

The controls are bad for a PC game. Maybe console people are used to things like being unable to back up without turning around or locking on, but that doesn't really cut it real games. I especially like when I try to lock on to a guy, but they're too far away so it realigns the camera instead.

The on screen prompts are also all xbox, which isn't very helpful when you have a different gamepad (don't even try with the keyboard). Annoying,

Interface problems aside, there really are two critical design problems. I guess they're kind of related. First, much of the game isn't /hard/ so much as it's /tedious/. The first time I explore an area can be exciting. Edge of my seat, don't know what's coming next, new monsters, etc etc. But then I die and have to run from the last checkpoint. So that's slogging through 5-10 minutes of content I've just played, where I can still easily die, to get back to the interesting part. I guess some people like that, but I find it unbearable. It's not a challenge- I cleared it fine the first 3 times. Now I'm just impatient. I've started just sprinting through areas I've cleared because it's quicker and more entertaining than clearing the monsters again and again and again.

Related to that, the leveling system is a bit borked. You can just grind up levels to make your character significantly more powerful. I don't know if you guys are aware, but "time = power" is a really crappy model for games. It means the guy who can put in 20 hours gets numerical advantages on top of all the practice he gets. In this case, it means the guy who can play all day is rocking 100 vitality, 100 endurance, maxed out weapons and armor. Someone who plays a more reasonable amount of time gets double whacked- Their stats are lower, and they haven't put the practice in.

Not even going to touch all the Guide Dang It moments. Some people like that, but I'm not really a fan.

Also "spells per day" was a crap magic system when D&D introduced it, and it's still a crap system today.

So yeah. Overly repetitive gameplay, grindy advancement, terrible awful controls. All of that really undermines what could've been a neat game.

Not sure if comment was posted or not.



hardcorenoblebbclassygentlemanman
on **March 7, 2013 at 10:51 am** said:

Yo just not as hardcore as I am plbian go back to call of casual, excited plbb face.



Ejee

on **December 4, 2012 at 1:16 am** said:

There are tons of small problems with the game that make it very frustrating, but it is one of the best conceptual games I have e'er played. Most of the problems you list stem from a lack of willingness to adapt to a new game; the name of the game is control, and as mentioned often enough, discipline. I find the action animations slow, but that pulls it away from a reaction based game like most instant, perfect aim, bullshit physics fps games.

The level design has parts you can and cannot walk over. They are restrictions not bugs; you must work with them, and if you build up your intuition there are many pseudo secret environments you may jump up onto. All of the entrapment level design issues have been hammered out since 1.00 – there were around four I found; now I see only a few where you have to running Jump over them (those over deathly falls would definitely be I intended and artificial difficulty). It does play like an old action game in: it's limited mobility, quick deaths and making you grind back up to another chance (definitely agree this can be very painful for those of us used to frequent checkpoints). Everything you mention is manually controlled as long as you've turned the auto correct camera off... I mean who else do you have to blame but yourself? The game demands you adapt to it and it sounds like the community has led you astray, so far as for you to presume you can grind through it like you did in that screenshot; sometimes there are very few I able strategies, but as another interview mentions there are always casual gamer ways around the bosses... They almost always require exploiting your true advantage over the game: the ai (key example: last boss and pillar). I think you're the worst type of person to rebuke dark souls and for only one reason; you complain about features which takes a voice away From real problems like:

Massive framerate issues which fuck with you timing and can riddle the game with True artificial difficulty; graphical overextensions that could simply be avoided (red phantom and other causes of frame rate loss); literally random button delay which has been significantly improved since 1.00 but not eliminated; forced pvp with fog gates unending (or appearing but never connecting to a player encounter due to the dynamic nature of ip ip matchups) and on that note, ups should be segregated in dark souls as even small desync leads to totally fucked encounters in a game based on the minutia of timing. Whine about the game, that's fine, but realise you are not a worthwhile reviewer to read when six hours is chump change.



Lyrical Destruction

on **November 25, 2012 at 10:46 pm** said:

You are amusing. Sorry, but Dark Souls IS great. Not perfect by any means, but hey. It fully deserves the rating it has gotten by most reviewers.



Erick

on **November 22, 2012 at 9:39 pm** said:

I'm afraid I didn't like it all that much either. I played up until I had a level 40 thief, which isn't great, but at some point I just became extremely annoyed with the game.

Nowadays, like to be able to sit down and make progress with a game. Whether it be for 30 minutes or 3 hours. Dark Souls is a game where not only there is a good chance that won't happen; there is a chance that you will worse off than when you started, and that you won't be seeing any new content.

The architecture was beautiful but the world annoyed me. Nowadays I like to see things in games like fleshed-out, believable worlds, and character interaction. These things are pretty much nonexistent in Dark Souls. The 'world' is a bunch of zones linked together doorways, in inexplicable ways, crammed vertically and horizontally into a space probably the size of a city block. There are no inhabitants of this world aside from the endless respawning of opponents and the small amount of vendors and NPC's standing stoic and motionless, to buy or trigger some reward. NPC's are just mechanical 'deus ex machinas' in games, true, but it's more obvious in this game than other, more modern RPG's. They don't even serve as plot devices here so much, as the plot is well pretty bare to begin with.

The combat is fun sure, but after awhile you feel you are just memorizing combat patterns. Dodge, roll and backstab. Dodge roll and backstab. Backtrack, backtrack, backtrack. Farm farm farm so you can get that dagger to 10x. Etc. I mean it's me vs. the mechanics of the game. The more mechanical I am the better I will be at this game.

I really don't feel like being mechanical anymore...at least not for games. After awhile it just wasn't relaxing to play this game. So I play 'relaxing' fare nowadays which isn't punishing, games that guarantee that after 30 minutes you've probably advanced a little. So yeah, I play easy games, like Borderlands, Skyrim, and yes even Mass Effect 3. (love the multiplayer).

FYI in past days, I was more 'hardcore'. I finished Super Ghouls and Ghosts, a game some consider one of the hardest ever. Back in the 90's I used to go to the arcade instead of school and had my name on the high score boards at the front desk. I just don't have it in me anymore. Tastes change. Good for you, if you like this.

As for the guy who said 'if you can't enjoy this, I fear for your quality of life', give me a break? One's preference for video games in no way reflects on his desire for challenge, accomplishments, or his 'quality of life'. Some of my proudest accomplishments: running a marathon (three times, once including the original course in Greece from the town of Marathon to Athens. You know, where that guy supposedly died. According to my GPS logs I've ran over 3000 miles training for these events...hundreds of hours. Also earning my black sash in kung-fu. That took 4-5 days a week for 6 years. Mechanical stuff, I know. But I still don't like Dark Souls.



Joey
on **November 29, 2012 at 6:55 am** said:

Theres no one because you know your kinda in the land of the gods....



jaffa
on **March 21, 2013 at 3:09 am** said:

Listen, you don't need to get defensive about why you are bad at Dark Souls. Dark Souls is not for everyone, in order for some people to be good at games, there need to be people who are bad at them as well. That said, beating the game is probably not impossible for you either, if you put in a lot of hours and use walkthroughs, you may possibly be able to beat the game. I realise you are "annoyed" right now, but keep trying.



Julian
on **November 17, 2012 at 4:18 pm** said:

I, like many other players, had purchased this game, It was excitably recommended to me by my friend, he promised me with such things as help throughout the game, and items and gear and a hell of a time playing together. Though, as you can imagine, this never happened, I was merely alone in this vast and unforgiving world known as Dark Souls. I, quite excited by the prospect of playing this game, turned on my xbox and put in the disc, and once I waded through the many pop-ups on start-up, I went on and created a character. My first Character was a Thief, named Joolz or something, He was awful, I had no understanding of the game at all, despite my prior gaming experience on other games, I continued and 'logged in' to the world, and found myself in a Jail Cell, and immediatly given a white glowy corpse, which would assist me with my escape. I proceeded to venture through the first area, presuming it was probably a tutorial area, and granted, I died a fair amount of times, due to controls perhaps and not being completely fluent with them, and not being completely used to the enemy characteristics, however I ventured forth and after a long, arduous and otherwise incredibly agitating, Sprint, Engage, Die, Respawn sequence I finally defeated the first, pot-bellied Boss. I was overcome with a rewarding sensation, and eagerly proceeded further with much anticipation.

Don't get me wrong, the controls ARE slightly clunky, but that's the dark souls way, and don't mistake clunky for broken, they are clunky, so get used to them, you aren't playing the sims, you're not going to be rewarded for having an IQ of 10 and merely doing as the game tells you, and i'm pretty sure playing games at first in general, or on different consoles are described as 'clunky' at times. Especially the computer, you have to switch out what you know with a

panel of letters with a WASD, Up, Down, Left, Right, system, which as far as i'm concerned is different/ clunky, and getting even deeper than that, talking about key-binds with games, they are clunky as hell at first, but, slightly irrelevant due to the fact there is no 'key-bind' system in Dark Souls. However you would proceed to get used to them to get better at the game you are playing.

As far as I am concerned, you have no right to review Dark Souls, because 6 hours gameplay is piss poor, I'm at 174 hours on my main character, and I STILL have troubles, but I have definitely improved, I understand mostly all aspects of the game which affect my character, as to character builds, stat configuration, poise, Equipment load, and item effects, Like stamina regen, poison resist, and how to use this to my advantage in certain fights. I am constantly switching out my weapons and armour to cater for what I am about to come up against. But that came with time, and I had to learn that. But if you haven't at least given this game at least 50-100 hours of your time, and at least completed it once, then you have no valid opinions.

I have read all of the comments above, and I read that someone said the graphics were bad? The graphics are fine, the graphics are good infact, compare them to say; world of warcraft, and they are massively better, not to mention that 'WoW' is a better selling game. But, saying the graphics are bad, is ignorant, due to the fact that you are more than able to get better technology and equipment. Don't blame the game for your shoddy equipment.

Can I just re-iterate, Playing the game for 20 minutes before getting annoyed enough to turn off your console, is pathetic, you must hold the controller upsidown or hold it with your feet, because that is pitiful, the enemies are not hard at all, they just aren't retard friendly, and given the fact that you seem to be an unwilling noob, then you are going to fail, massively, this games punishes as much as it rewards.

So maybe grit your teeth, and push through. I've been at points where i've lost my temper, almost thrown my controller across a room, and punched the shit out of my mattress. But, that is due to my incapability, and not understanding the boss/ enemy I am trying to conquer. But you take a breath, maybe look up a guide online and damn-well do it!

I've had the game for about 4 months now, and I love it, there's plenty to do, and nothing comes easy which makes the feeling of success so much sweeter.

Let's move on to 'Auto-Targeting' What exactly is your beef with it? You don't seem to specify, it just seems to be an unguided rant in its general direction. The Auto-targeting is completely manual, and simple; Toggle right joy-stick to activate, re-toggle to deactivate. Again, your lack of knowledge about it is not justification for angst. There is no lack of it, you just didn't use it. Again, this is no reason to complain about the game, I think you are merely angry at yourself for being bad at a game that others find compelling and rewarding. Like I said, it's not retard friendly.

I found it unecesary for you to bring up the audience of the game, and specifically, going as in depth as bringing up sexuality, your sexuality doesn't change your gaming preference, this leads me to think that you are just complaining for the sake of it.

The fact that, I amongst others bring up, "be patient" and "give it a chance" is because it's true, it doesn't give you everything, it expects you to have a brain and figure it out. As a gamer, you should realise the gruelling process of elimination with games, from the character concepts, to item concepts, to boss concepts, mechanics, etc. So, in turn, this is not a bad game, and should like a challenge, I remember back about 10 years, playing Mario on the Gameboy Original in black an white, and I could barely get past the first few levels. This might be due to my age, or equally due to the game, but saying that, games nowadays are so easy it's refreshing to have something like Dark Souls.

Skill – It is re-imbursed with this game, to be good, and have skill, you need to know the game, and to know the game, you have to first, try until you previal, such is the way of life, and let's be honest, if you can't beat something as easy as dark souls, by taking it on, learning, and defeating, then I fear for your quality of life.

It's a shame, as I read someone who is left handed had purchased the game, and found it essentially impossible to play, which I am sorry to hear, and that, IS a issue which they need to fix. But, merely nitpicking and tiny things which you do not like is not, especially when you have next to zero play time.



Rob
on **April 11, 2013 at 7:37 pm** said:

You insulted him way to much, your opinion is invalid...



Joe
on **November 17, 2012 at 12:32 am** said:

Game had promise, but it needs a difficulty adjustment option. As a gamer of 30 years, some people just don't care to want to deal with hardcore gaming like they once did before. It grows tiring.

This is the reason I buy preowned at Gamestop, it goes back if it doesn't make sense. I'd rather play Fallout in hardcore mode before continuing with Dark Souls. It's all about choice, and I don't see a difficulty option. Of course, that's probably why Darksouls is both cheap and plentiful at Gamestop. Fine game design, but they completely alienated their audience.



Lyrical Destruction
on **November 25, 2012 at 10:42 pm** said:

Eh, no. It doesn't need difficulty adjustment option. If you can't beat it, its too bad for you.



FiachSidhe
on **November 27, 2012 at 7:11 am** said:

Yeah, because this game is all about making a small subsection of gamers feel good about themselves. If it was more accessible, your precious bragging right would vanish, and you'd have to go back to being proud of absolutely nothing. It wouldn't affect you in the slightest, other than your selfish desire to keep others from enjoying something you do.



cheeseman
on **March 7, 2013 at 10:55 am** said:

The game was designed to be difficult and if it had a difficulty option this would ruin the point of the game and make it piss easy.



MachineMan1992
on **June 10, 2013 at 2:42 am** said:

It's an option. OPTION. Not a requirement. You'd still have your precious bragging rights.

"Yo dawg, I just beat Dark Souls on the hardest difficulty!" etc.



Matt
on **January 29, 2013 at 10:54 pm** said:

I kind of like knowing that I couldn't make it easier if I wanted to, but I wouldn't have a big beef if they added a casual mode or something for people who just wanted to fight all the guys and see the ending.



Sajat_Uns
on **November 14, 2012 at 10:46 pm** said:

Alexandre you are clearly just ranting.

I simple cant believe your claim to have finished it 3 times given your list contents.



Alexandre
on **November 15, 2012 at 6:55 am** said:

I allways do all the achievments, no matter i like the game or not.



Joey
on **November 29, 2012 at 6:51 am** said:

Achievements dont matter



Austin
on **December 15, 2012 at 6:13 am** said:

..to you.



StonerHat
on **December 16, 2012 at 6:44 pm** said:

You really need to improve your e-penis that much...?

Get a life. I've got several characters on Dark Souls, beaten the game a few times, I'm still just over 600G on it – achievements don't make the game.

Dang 12 year olds....



Alexandre

on **November 14, 2012 at 2:08 am** said:

Totally agree. This game is awful and it fails in every single aspect. I beat the game 3 times just for the achievements. I never want to see this shit again. Here is my list:

Bad graphics;
Bad sound;
Bad gameplay;
Worst control ever;
Very bad physics;
Bad mechanics;
Bad AI;
Full of glitches;
Not fun at all;
Bad port;
More annoying than difficulty;
Very repetitive;
Lack of resources;
Bad design;
Bad interface;
Weak tutorial.

I could tell more but, like you said, I don't have all day.



Joey

on **November 29, 2012 at 6:50 am** said:

- 1 your TV
- 2 your audio
- 3 your skills
- 4 learn to adapt
- 5 No? How so?
- 6 perfectly fine mechanics
- 7 AI Has a single purpose to bee line and kill you thats to intimidate you
- 8 only when you make stupid mistakes to get in them
- 9 is fun once your good
- 10 your supposed to be Annoyed its how they get you to mess up causing more death and more rage
- 11 not really... Every boss is different has different fighting
- 12 im sorry? What?
- 13 only flaw to many people was insanely high crits wich is fixed
- 14 works fine when you hold controller right / place hands right
- 15 tutorial is to sen you in blind they show you its not to be messed

With



HLW

on **February 16, 2013 at 12:23 pm** said:

You realized ALL of your points were disproved by the article?

Jesus, the only thing worse than this cuntrag of a game is it's fanbase.



Jacob

on **November 12, 2012 at 6:03 am** said:

It's suspect to me that you claim to have played 20 min to begin, then a grand total of 6 hrs, and yet, the rew compliments that you did give the game dealt with various level designs and architecture...and then it's online multi player mechanics. For one, if you were able to get far enough in the game within 6 hours to appreciate these aspects in their entirety, then you simply did not take the adequate time to level up, learn the battle mechanics, learn HOW to level up, what character to build based on play style, what weapons to use based on play style, learn how to battle enemies and bosses...etc. If I may inquire, seems...like you attempted to get through multiple areas that you just weren't prepared or invested enough for, or...possibly exaggerating how long you gave this game? For one, if you are getting beaten that bad (for control issues, that's fine, that's how you feel) then it is a known fact that you didn't even get that far...because the damn bosses wouldn't let you pass far enough anyway. Hell, damn basic enemies won't let you get that far if you aren't prepared. Just not...buying all of your statement here.

I can understand the controls SEEM a little frustrating because certain moves or jabs with your weapon can't be stopped, that it takes a bit to loot chests...but for me that's one of the pros for this game. Like previous guy responded...that's one of the challenges of Dark Souls, that you CAN'T cancel a decided blow with your weapon. That's the point, learn when to strike, and do it wisely, because a bad move will get you killed. As far as chest looting, how about just KILL THE SURROUNDING ENEMIES before looting, that's another one of the points, absolute real game play, no time outs...so be careful, be wise.

I do not know exactly what is going on with your control mechanics, and if it really is the control mechanics...well that sucks. But for me, the controls are precise and accurate, I feel based off of Demon's Souls that they repaired alot of that with Dark Souls. My character does what I want when I want, it's just that the enemies, well, their fighting mechanics do the same, and can block, evade, and kick my ass if I'm not careful. Love it.

I somewhat agree about not being able to get over minuscule obstacles, for me though that's just an issue I have as far as I believe it would have made free world exploring more flexible. But even with that, there are still ways to get around them, and these small "curb" sized bricks you can't seem to crawl over are few and far between...so actually for me maybe it would have just made the graphics feel more credible or the game more believable. But, again, for me, the camera controls worked...rather smooth. So with that being said, the brunt of your issue seems to be that, well, you voicing your dislike the game received rants from asshole trolls. So???? Hell with em'. But your complaints don't seem valid, certainly don't speak for the same game I've played, and again...very suspicious if you even gave it a chance like you've claimed. If so, oh well, still don't get your issues. And it's percular that you claim the difficulty isn't even from the enemies, that their AI is so obsolete and that they're repetitive...when a simple skeleton can kill you with two hits...which from the sound of it, happened to you a bit...hmmm?

Great game for me, but even for those that do not enjoy it, this list of particular complaints don't seem credible at all, more like ranting. Not to call you out as far as what kind of gamer you are...I couldn't care less if you play like my 3 year old nephew or the damn Wizard...just don't believe you much. I believe, you are more upset with clowns bashing you for your dislike.



Shaggers

on **November 7, 2012 at 2:48 am** said:

Honestly "you just dont get it" is exactly the term i would give you. Just because you werent good at a game doesnt mean its bad. I SUCK at alot of video games, and i honestly love dark souls. Sure the controls were hard to get used to at the start (doubly so because i bought the pc port which was the worst port job of a game ive ever seen, tho im very happy to be able to play the game on my expensive gaming rig) but thats not where dark souls is hard. Dark souls is hard because of the fact that there are so many spots that you can get killed, even when playing correctly, that it makes it hard to win. I remember fighting sif over 50 times (giant wolf boss about halfway through the game) and i wasnt dying because i couldn't control my character, i was dying because i was using the wrong gear set up. I had heavy armour on, which made my stamina regenerate slower and my character move slower, which meant i couldnt get out of the way of sif's giant sword which ate through my health in a frequent 2 shot combo. Just because the game isnt easy for you doesnt make it a bad game. I suck at Starcraft and Starcraft 2 (to the point that i cant even play them) but they are certainly good games. Im sorry that you couldn't enjoy the game yourself, but if the majority of people like the game, its generally a good game. 1 oppinion doesnt change that.



FiachSidhe

on **November 27, 2012 at 7:09 am** said:

True, but just because you were able to overcome flawed gameplay and artificial difficulty. Doesn't make the game good either.



Knight Artorias

on **December 14, 2012 at 7:51 pm** said:

"Artificial difficulty" because you didn't die over 400 times in the span of 4.5 hours in a game that had a different approach to difficulty while still being unforgiving.

Dark Souls is good because it punishes you for being in the world it created. Learn it and perfect it, or die crying. It's true old world D&D in a video game. You don't know anything that will happen, and you'll die.

Controls and gameplay are only difficult for an hour or two. Honestly, I was barely past anything in the game at 6 hours. Your review is entirely from that inexperienced point of view.

Don't get me wrong, I yell at Dark Souls probably once every play session, but that just adds to the satisfaction later

when I get to stand over that obstacle as the victor.

To my original point, how is this difficulty artificial? You're given little and expected to give a lot. That's just genius programming with a minimalistic approach. No fluff to baby you into winning eventually.



Austin
on **December 15, 2012 at 6:14 am** said:

thats not genius, thats just unforgiving. NOTHING MORE.



Maxwella

on **November 7, 2012 at 12:07 am** said:

I agree. this game certainly has a great art concept and background philosophy. However, the game-play designers just decide to limit what the player can do to create the so-called hardcore difficulty. It's like how resident evil is hard (at least in 1~3) because player can't run and shoot simultaneously .

I mean c'mon. In dark souls you can't jump; you can't cancel these long attack moves; you can't point your shield in one direction while moving around (in pc version at least)...what. the. fk? the camera control in cramped rooms is terrible, too. and etc. etc.

I so wanted to buy a ps3 just so i can play demon souls. so glad i didnt. not bashing ps3 by any means. in fact my ps3 broke in 2009.(initially bought just for MGS4.)

/rant



Evilagram
on **November 9, 2012 at 11:10 am** said:

But you can jump. Jumping isn't a critical part of combat and enemies aren't designed around Z axis movement any more than you are. However you can jump, and use jumping attacks.

If you could just cancel those long attack moves, then there is no risk in attacking at the wrong time, because you can just cancel it. Fighting games don't generally let you cancel things in the startup of moves, especially in ways that would make you safer like it seems you're trying to suggest should be the standard. When a player makes a mistake, they shouldn't be allowed to take it back. That and attack animations can actually be canceled. There is a technique known in the community as block canceling that reduces the recovery animation of various weapons on a successful hit (or a blocked hit, anything but a whiff). I believe block canceling is actually something totally different and slightly more complicated called IASA frames or Interruptable As Soon As frames.

The camera can be a little fussy when you're locked on, but I rebut these issues in general because it's not that fucking hard to figure out how the camera works. Sometimes you might get camera screwed when you're locked onto something and have a wall to your back or cross under a boss, but that's rare. All that needs to really be understood is that the camera pulls in closer so it doesn't clip through scenery. It's like every other camera.

It's not hard like Resi 1-4 were hard. The controls function perfectly, and have no limitations comparable to not being able to run and shoot at the same time, and even if they did, you nor the article have managed to adequately explain those limitations.

You can't strafe in the PS3 version of the game either (which is what I assume you meant by pointing your shield in one direction while moving around) except when locked on, and except when locked on, this isn't terribly important to gameplay. It's not a feature the game needs.

I'll repeat again, Dark Souls is not a particularly hard game. Its normal difficulty is the hardest of any normal difficulty in any game this generation. It's not a hard game, just everyone's perspective is skewed by this generation having a LOT of especially easy games. It is certainly a challenging game, in part because of great level design and enemy placement. On the most basic level enemies are frequently placed to ambush the player if the player did not check carefully enough when going around a corner. On a more complex level as shown even in the undead burg, enemies are frequently placed nearby each other that compliment each others strengths to make defeating them difficult, such as placing an archer on a high rise above melee enemies that occupy you while the archer takes pot shots. Defeating enemies can frequently involve pulling individual enemies using their aggro range if you are not confident against that enemy type or have poor equipment. Enemy mobs unlike other games don't wait around in huge groups around your character for you to deal with the single enemy you're facing (such as assassin's creed), they will all mow you down, and you need to find ways to deal with that. Enemies are placed in spaces such as tight corridors and walkways with pits below such as to restrict your options, because in tight spaces, you cannot swing as freely, and on walkways you have a risk of falling off. In one area, they place not one, but two archers that fire powerful arrows off at you as you run along a narrow walkway, and if you are hit, you may very well go tumbling down.

Dark Souls doesn't have the fastest enemies, but it gives them a decent amount of HP, and you not terribly much, and it places both you and them on the same playing field. No special player privileges like in any other game. Most of the humanoid enemies are given attacks that you yourself can use and nearly every enemy uses the same types of statistics you do, such as poise and resistances, vulnerability to backstabs and ripostes.

Dark Souls is a game that tries to include horrible deaths in an age when no game wants to do that. It keeps them infrequent, it keeps them fair, it gives you hints. It gives you heals and frequent checkpoints. It's not like it's out to get cheap deaths from terrible control schemes or really at all. It gives you more than enough information to go on, and it assumes that no player is perfect, so they'll die at least a bit.



FiachSidhe

on **November 27, 2012 at 7:08 am** said:

Do you listen to yourself? Do you have any idea how you sound? You sound like, well, every apologist fanboy out there, downplaying the flaws of their favored game. Like a battered housewife playing off her husband's beatings.

Using as tender a hand as possible, and using delicate terminology for those flaws you can't refute, to try and minimalism their impact.



Joey

on **November 29, 2012 at 6:41 am** said:

About the camera controls in options theres auto wall recovery wich fixed most of my deaths its when the camera gets infront of a pole it moves to see the option disables that and your direction is constant as long as you dont change



Evilagram

on **November 6, 2012 at 7:17 am** said:

Two questions, first, how far did you get in the game. Second, what's your whole big list? The only thing you've really complained about so far is bad controls, but you weren't terribly specific, not to mention that a couple of your points are factually inaccurate, such as the fact that you can absolutely attack and shield with an item dialog box up. It is not 3 inputs before you can act when opening up a chest and obtaining its item, it is 2, and you could very well act between those two if you chose to.

To rebut your points. A lot of 3d action games have lock on that is not auto, such as Devil May Cry, Legend of Zelda, Onimusha, Zone of the Enders, The Witcher 2, Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver, Metroid Prime, and No More Heroes, and I don't think auto-lockon is even a good idea considering how useful turning off lock-on is. Not to mention that auto-lockon would ruin many of the enemies set up to surprise the player. If you're complaining about the actual input used to lock on, it makes sense. It is bound to the same stick used to readjust lockon, and every other button on the gamepad is bound to something sensible that you wouldn't want to overlap with the lockon except for the left control stick, which is at least equally arbitrary if not moreso. The extra input is there because it makes sense, and you lose out if you don't have the option to lock on or lock off. Turning off lock on by the way is useful for manually aiming projectiles, which is incredibly important in PvP. Dead Angle is another advanced PvP technique that is impossible without lock off. In PvE, I've found a lot of reasons to not use lock on, such as manually positioning fireballs to catch multiple enemies, and a lot of general running around. Especially when I'm speedrunning areas and trying to ignore enemies. I don't think that your complaint about the lock on not being automatic was terribly well thought out.

There is no issue with responsiveness in the controls. The only thing close to that is the buffer window on actions. If you input while an uninterpretable action is playing, your input will come out on the first possible frame it can come out if it was input during the buffer period. This is not a foreign concept that only dark souls uses, many games these days use framebuffers on inputs to make it easier on players to do what they want instead of mashing the buttons hoping to hit the first frame possible for an action to be performed. In my opinion, the framebuffer is longer than it needs to be, but honestly it isn't difficult to figure out. There is no input delay. There is nothing that occurs when you do not command it to. The only real issue of unresponsiveness with the controls is perhaps how difficult it is to consistently kick or jump attack (probably should have used the left stick as a modifier button), and that's about it.

Dark Souls' interface design is not the most intuitive, but it is designed alternate to other schemes because it is the only one that works for the game, period. Any other input setup or menu design would lead to a loss of functionality.

Dark Souls' default difficulty compared to other recent games perhaps places it as the hardest game of this console generation, but frankly, it's not a hard game (nor is it an old school one by any means). It is a tremendously forgiving game in my opinion. They provide the player with healing items that come back every time they visit a checkpoint for whatever reason, next to nothing in the game one shots you, enemies are all animated to telegraph attacks far in excess of human reaction time so that prediction skills aren't really necessary. They allow you to actually reclaim your souls at all. They even back up your blood stain 10 seconds to make it slightly easier for you.

The AI is good enough at what it does. It's not exceptional AI, it's rather simple, but by no means does it fail to perform

its job, which to is run up to you and beat the tar out of you. Better AI would be an improvement, sure, but the existing AI is more than sufficient. Not to mention that it has pretty great path finding most of the time.

I don't understand how you got stuck in any of the areas available to you in the first 6 hours unless you were speedrunning pretty hard (I once saw someone get stuck between some roots in a very late game area). In general, it is difficult to determine which obstructions are clearable without trying them, but you can frequently jump over them. That and in general it pays to have a homeward bone, but I for one have never gotten truly stuck in my entire time playing.

The challenge in Dark Souls is primarily adaptation and knowledge. It's not a physically demanding game, it's primarily a game of learning patterns and being able to adapt to doing things at the right time, not merely repeating the same thing in sequence or using every enemy's surefire solution, weakness, or as you put it in a different article, silver bullet, like Batman Arkham enemies which are as simple as, press this button then wail on them. You know the attacks the enemies have, you learn their positioning, and you work around that.

Dark Souls is a game that provides you with all you need and expects you to figure it out. This is a part of the game itself. I don't want a more inclusive experience in their next game, because your definition of inclusive means losing functionality. It means stripping away features whether you realize that's what it means or not. Dark Souls was not designed as it was for any type of elitism. As I have mentioned, it has tried its hardest to cater and forgive with its design. The lead developer, also the worst player of the game in the entire studio because he ends up playing it the least, personally plays every level, and if he cannot beat it, it is adjusted accordingly, to make sure that it is not beyond anyone.

I understand the long list of complaints completely. I've made similar lists for many games. Very likely even games you find to be great. I am frequently dismissed by people as nitpicking even when there are very serious issues on my list, so I can understand your situation very well. I will confess that Dark Souls is not without its flaws, and there are things I personally wish I could clear up, but for some reason I have a hunch you missed those genuine flaws.

Jax, I am sorry to hear about your experience with the PC Port. I'd recommend you skip the KBM controls completely, and use either a 360 or a PS3 gamepad (use the motioninjoy drivers to emulate a 360 pad, it's what I do) with the game. It simply does not translate well to KBM controls even for right handed gamers. However I believe that with DSfix (<http://blog.metaclassofnil.com/?p=258> please download here), the PC port is actually the best version of the game, seeing as it has the best frame rate, best resolution, and best graphical options overall, not to mention the bonus content is bundled with it. I have played both the PS3 and PC versions of the game several times.



Jax

on **November 4, 2012 at 5:05 pm** said:

I bought the game, quite sadly as the PC version of this , i can see how on Xbox , the controls might be decent . But for me , as a left handed gamer , this fucking piece of shit port , could not even allow me to allocate my key bindings, and once i settled for some sub-par key setup to which i must now get used to, IT DOESN'T EVEN WORK , and the character simply refuses to run in the right direction , among many other game-breaking flaws. So this game , is it good? maybe on console. Was it a fucking waste of cash for me ? certainly so. Does it fucking suck ass as PC port. For a lefty with special keybind needs, very very much so.

It is quite literally unplayable.

Conclusion:

9.5 /10 score for this is RIDICULOUS for a game that overlooked so much.

I've not played the console version and i would reserve the right to change my opinion about it once i do, but so far, the PC version -- i would say is DOGSHIT. and deserves a quick delete and forget.



Trying to help

on **January 3, 2013 at 6:49 pm** said:

You can create some simple custom keybindings with AutoHotKey if you are using a Windows box. It's free and lets you do everything from simple hotkey macros to some pretty robust automation.

<http://www.autohotkey.com/>

*Note, this is not a defense of devs not allowing custom keybinding. That is horribly lazy and stupid.

** I am not affiliated with Autohotkey in anyway. I just use it and enjoy it.



Gio

on **November 3, 2012 at 7:50 pm** said:

Well, I agree with you, its your opinion of the game, and a hard core gamer as yourself didnt like it, it's ok.

What I dont agree with it's the elitist part, the game wasn't made for you, it was not designed with you specifically "the one they want to sell the game to", and only because of that it doesn't make the game elitist, not everything can be accessible for everyone, some things are just out of our reach, or you think they should make hiking more accessible to everyone, or how about surfing. You can not pretend everything to be aimed at you, or that everything that leaves some people out it's bad.

Finally, and this is only my opinion, it seems like you didnt made a build to move quickly, because if you say controls are unresponsive and the character is clunky, I suggest you check your item burden and make a build that you find entertaining, and maybe you'll find that "unlimited ways and strategies to approach the enemy".



Reuben1975

on **November 1, 2012 at 7:47 am** said:

This has got to be the most biased one sided review I have ever read. Dark Souls is one of the best games I have EVER played, And in 35 years of gaming starting on an atari I have played ALOT of games. This review is pure stupidity at its worse. Don't go around on the internet and complain about a game you spent 6 and a half hours on. Go die idiot . Fuck you make me want to blow my own brains out because of your stupidity. Idiot. Die.



DS_Sucks

on **October 29, 2012 at 5:39 am** said:

i did a full play-through, though i did not particularly enjoy the game(paid full price). Everybody kept saying "oh it gets teh aw-sumnez when u gets to b good at it".

huh. well, being that i didn't die until walking off a cliff at the first graveyard, (awkward controls are awkward, deny all you want, doesn't make it less true.) my first true death was at the first real boss (no, not the lolsauce 'asylum demon') I died here and there when encountering 'new' enemies for the first time, (mostly to ranged *sigh*) and of course at least once on every boss fight (no guide, was without internet at the time, which is why i played through DS, nothing else to play/do)

overall, very honest review. Controls were downright awful at times, enemies were pitiful, and gameplay essentially is nothing more than- block-roll-swipe (of course that doesn't work on everything, the basic idea implied still rings true) akin to GoW's shoot-cover-run to next cover mechanic.

I did not feel 'fulfilled' from getting a better piece of armor/weapon/trinket etc

Gorgeous game though, great music too. but controls really kill off a lot of the fun. The animations felt awkward at times too, like some felt out of pace, as if in slow-motion. Would love to see the next iteration correct the control's issues, make it less frustrating. Even without dying, having an issue in combat and faltering because of a control issue is extremely infuriating. And the lack of depth for the boss battles was REALLY boring (it's essentially NOTHING beyond learning that one special move, die to it once, then rollstomp the boss, barring any control issues)



DS_Sucks

on **October 29, 2012 at 5:45 am** said:

i hear the pc PTDE fix's a lot of the control issues, hopefully there is a demo floating around. If it weren't for the glaring issues with controls, the game would have been great (drop-in/out co-op would have been great, instead of the random lounges etc)



Woody626

on **October 28, 2012 at 5:30 am** said:

I find it entertaining so many people are getting their panties in a bunch over this. I personally love the game. On NG++++ and always end up playing it again after a few months. But people you have got to chill. Seriously. All this is some dude's opinion. Sure he might not like it cause he sucked. I recall at the end he said something about he kept playing through it and had a minor liking to it. Second to last paragraph.

"Of course you can still enjoy a game like Dark Souls. Love it even. I myself have my guilty pleasures, but I don't rate them with an 89 out of a 100 (current metacritic rating). This kind of seal of approval is completely undeserved."

He just doesn't have fun with it like someone like me does. So finally, to my fellow gamers that love Dark Souls. Get over it. Some people don't like it that much.
Oh and some dude mentioned that making DS 1st person would make it better.
In response to that I think that should have been an extra bonus for starting a complete new game after beating it at least once. Seriously how BA would it be to be looking up at Ornstein while he's 15-20 feet tall. F-ing amazing and it would add some amazing difficulty to the whole game in general. This coming from someone who has never played a 1st person rpg.
Anywho. CHILL OUT PPL. done



ragekage

on **October 17, 2012 at 5:04 am** said:

So this game sucks because you're slow and you can't automatically target an enemy? It kind of sounds like you got an hour in and quit because you're not good at being slow and not instantly targeting things. You should look past all of that and just try to enjoy the game instead of making mental notes of every flaw that doesn't coincide with your preferred gaming controls.



Alessandro

on **October 16, 2012 at 4:06 pm** said:

Well, despite all the game faults (no game is perfect). I think this was the best rpg I played in my 25 years of gaming life. Everyone has an opinion, I just want to leave my.



durrrdurrr

on **October 12, 2012 at 1:24 pm** said:

Just for future reference, all of you people that are pointing out when the OP said that the game had a "lack of auto targeting" and are jumping heels-over-hands to call him an idiot, you are the idiot.

He said AUTO-TARGETING. The game has MANUAL targeting, but that is something completely and entirely different from auto-targeting. Because of the game's lack of auto-targeting, you have no point of reference during boss fights, as you can usually not use manual targeting because (as someone else pointed out) it targets the center of their body, which is usually the empty space between their legs, making you miss the boss at point blank range due to a poorly implemented targeting system.

If an auto-targeting mechanic was in place, your character would be able to keep tabs on the enemy and attack them without manual targeting, completely throwing this problem out the window.

And let me say it before any of you moronic fanboys say it; the inability to aim attacks at enemies two inches from your nose was not intended by the designers. It's a flaw, plain and simple.

This game has the worst fanboys in anything I've ever seen in any medium in my entire life. No matter how logical or how well thought-out your criticisms are, they shut them all down with dick-measuring or simple NUH-UHs.

Anyway, my newest complaint about this game is the horrible PC online component. It took me around 5 hours to find my way through the maze of tutorials and guides to get summoning signs to appear, and now that I finally do, I dare not go human because as soon as I get anywhere, there's a twink at a low level with ridiculous gear who kills me in one hit, lags out and backstabs me, or is simply cheating and has infinite HP.

Dying to twinks, lag, and cheaters is so fun. All part of the fantastic Dark Souls experience!



Chris

on **October 12, 2012 at 3:03 am** said:

Fans of this game are the worst I've seen in a long time. Man, I even like the game, but I think it's horribly flawed, NOT THAT HARD since almost everything can be overcome by having information on advance; combat is piss poor easy to

get used to and enemies don't vary much and have, as the author of the review said, pretty bad AI. But one could save a lot of time running around senselessly with just a little nudge in the right direction. And not falling randomly in stupid pits or cheap traps because of how badly designed some areas are.

Despite all that, I really like the boss encounters, even though you fight them once, it's over. Even though some of them you have to glitch to pass through (that lava boss thing for example). Multiplayer is great and I really like to duel people, as I think the combat is far better than the taste you get from the stupid AI.

But people act like it's the second coming of Christ or something. Fanboys will always be fanboys. You want the best enjoyment out of this game? Get a FAQ to have a general direction, then it all boils down to learning the enemy patterns which are not even that complicated to get down. Don't bother with the fanboys.

And this game being as difficult as games from the 80's? People probably never played Ghouls 'N Ghosts. They don't know what they are talking about and are gonna get stuck in the second level forever. Unlike those old school games, DS being an RPG allows you to grind – that alone reduces the difficulty to about half of what it would be normally, and contrary to what most people say, higher stats improves your chances severely, as does augmented equipment (specially weapons).

Oh, and by the way, fanboys don't like that you go saying their favorite hard game is actually fairly easy – they'll say things like “don't use broken weapons” or “stop using magic” or “now play without armor”. Those jokers are hilarious. You want to troll those guys, just say “Blighttown is really easy” (I really think it is a overrated level, one of the easier ones with a very easy boss) and note the angry responses.



Wratts
on **October 5, 2012 at 1:01 am** said:

This game doesn't require you to grind, I don't know where people get this. They assume that RPG equates to grinding, and Dark Souls is one of the games that is anti-thetical to this concept. Even more so since patch 1.05.

The controls are not unresponsive, but if you mash buttons you will die in combat or fall into pits. The controls are very precise, with slow actions taking more time to be carried out than fast ones. You must have never met ninja players in this game or you would eat that claim.

Yeah, there are glitches, but you don't need to exploit them to beat this game. You only need to do so if you want to act all internet badass and claim you've succeeded at a game which is said to be infamously hard. On a sidenote, I think the difficulty in Dark Souls is completely overhyped; I've played harder games, especially certain games on their maximum difficulty settings. Dark Souls only really gets hard at high NewGame++ cycles with the same characters if you don't grind.

Not going to dispute your opinion of the game being good or bad, but have you actually played for more than an hour?



Dos
on **September 28, 2012 at 3:05 am** said:

” the lack of auto-targeting ”

So, you didn't even try reading the ORANGE NEON SIGNS that give you hints about the game. Nice try.



AdamTM
on **September 27, 2012 at 1:19 pm** said:

“Sure there is a grind, like most rpg and jrpg,Äö/Œ/s thats given but trust me even so there is a way to beat every single creature in this game cleverly or just sneakily. From poisons to stairs to getting them to fall of cliffs or just straight giving it to them from e back.

[...]

If you do try it again I hope you,Äö/Œ/sll stop seeing what (in your fair opinion) was poor mechanics but instead tools to use in your own arsenal”

It will be the end of all of us if we consider glitching and exploiting an enemies AI “tools” and part of design.

I mean there is a difference between games like Deus Ex where you have multiple approaches of dealing with an obstacle and Dark Souls where there is but one, head on confrontation.

The difference is that shoddy controls, bad AI and physics glitches aren't design, they are random shit I can use to

exploit the game, no different from exploiting the bottomless box glitch that lets me dupe items.

I hear this “It’s not a bug, It’s a feature!” nonsense over and over again from the Dark Souls “community”. Some on the InsanelyDifficult Forums even objected to patching Hellkites AI, stating that “the jankiness” is part of the gameplay. Others even objected to patching in instruction-signs in the asylum that show how to dashjump, because it “takes away from the games learning experience” or is “so obvious”.

C’mom, WTF.

If “outsmarting” your enemies means using cheap exploits, I can as well just download a trainer and cheat myself infinite HP.

I “outsmarted” the game right there.



black_Adam

on **September 27, 2012 at 11:42 am** said:

Read your thoughts and i totally respect your opinion. Yes dark souls is not friendly when it comes to controls, sure enemies arent that advanced (the first lot especially) and you spend the most time griping with your own character than seeing a hit coming. So yeah hard, do i think this was a fault in design or poor design principles? No and here’s why.

Vanquish = full control of avatar only your imagination limits how you can approach encounters, which is good and very empowering

Dark Souls = some control? Sure at first it seems very little but its there though fleeting most of the time. What i do like or get relief from is when with all these handicaps I still triumph over a boss. Sure there is a grind, like most rpg and jrp’s thats given but trust me even so there is a way to beat every single creature in this game cleverly or just sneakily. From poisons to stairs to getting them to fall of cliffs or just straight giving it to them from e back.

My advice play more like a rogue(exploit every sneaky clever facet available to the maximum) and less like a champion(head first power house) and you’ll soon find those sore mechanics of Dark Souls apply to everyone even npc’s then trust me you’ll see a smile spread across your face...and then you’ll die over and over till the next time you outsmart them again. If you do try it again I hope you’ll stop seeing what (in your fair opinion) was poor mechanics but instead tools to use in your own arsenal



AdamTM

on **September 22, 2012 at 4:03 am** said:

Sorry i meant “re-read” instead of “discovered”. its 4am and my brain is missing.



AdamTM

on **September 22, 2012 at 3:41 am** said:

Hey, just found this article of yours and was surprised how it mirrors my own article about the game, written one year later.

Subbed for more.



NinetyPhoenix

on **September 21, 2012 at 1:37 am** said:

Totally agree with this post, there have been many games that have pissed me right off but this game was just something else, had me raging every 15-20 mins due to the mechanics. I had to stop playing this and till this day I still don’t understand what the heck the story was about.



jonowev

on **September 20, 2012 at 10:12 am** said:

Dude although i found myself enjoying Dark Souls souls but i 100% agree with you! to be honest it's a quite addictive game when you get used to it, bu i agree with your point "The challenge simply is adapting to the gaping holes in POOR game design and software design." -> This is not a good example of how a great challenging game should be, and i've found that Demon's Souls is still better in terms of gameplay mechanics. My score for Dark Souls: 7.5/10.



silverDistortioN

on **September 11, 2012 at 4:04 am** said:

Thanks for this. All my friends are into Dark Souls, and I wasn't sure if I was just being a cranky asshole for not liking it. Well, maybe I am, but at least it's good to know it's not just me.



Jorajwen

on **September 10, 2012 at 7:15 am** said:

=====

It,Äö/Ñ/¥s not for everyone, fuck no, it,Äö/Ñ/¥s for autistic manchindren with nothing better to do than grind for 5 hours straight while eating pizza crumbs from their neckbeards.

, =====

This dude has got it spot on. Epic quote that describes much of this game.



w

on **August 29, 2012 at 12:06 pm** said:

[point of view]

Very good article.

The game is broken on multiple levels.

Hovewer, seeing as so many people actually like it, just remind yourself of the 95/5 ratio of sheeple/mages that is -in its various facets- to be found everywhere in the world.

Dont let yourself be disillusioned by the trolling majority, there always will be the few that appreciate Your sharing and honest opinion.

Regards

-w



darkshit

on **August 26, 2012 at 3:38 pm** said:

I agree with you, the gameplay is insufferable. I play games for fun, not to get bored, die, kill a miniboss, FEEL NOTHING, get a shitty armor, die, get bored and repeat times infinity. It's so boring, even the musical score seems to want to bore you. And the grinding, with the shitty 2 pattern enemies charging at you and fucking around. "Hurr durr armor slows you down Asylum demon :)" Yeah, and not having armor leaves me with a character with crappy controls that dies when gets hit two times.

It's not for everyone, fuck no, it's for autistic manchindren with nothing better to do than grind for 5 hours straight while eating pizza crumbs from their neckbeards.

Everytime you die, you spawn in some place ages away from the boss, you fight your way through waves of minions and then you die, and then it's time to repeat the same shit forever, or grind for eternity in order to actually upgrade

your equipment or level up. I rather watch paint dry than suffer through that one more time. And I have forgiven games with much worse gameplay just because the narrative or the characters were well written and enjoyable, but this game has nothing going for it in this department. I can't name even a character from this game, and that is really fucking sad on 2012 when talking about an actual RPG. Anyways, great review, don't let the overly moronic autists bring you down! Time will put this abomination in it's place; some shitty youtube videos with 20 views.



durrduurr

on **August 25, 2012 at 3:04 am** said:

Don't listen to these fan boys, bro.

I played this game when it came out on the PC, and was very frustrated and dissappointed with it's "quality." It's terribly unresponsive and slow gameplay, and especially the ridiculous situations where you get chain stunned/massacred and you can't do anything about it drove me crazy. The only reason the game takes so long is because it is divided by moments of ridiculous ease and horrible RNG that wipes you out while you helplessly watch the screen and die, then run back and try again, die, run back try again, die, it's awful.

And I beat Ys: The Oath in Felghana, which is pretty much the hardest game ever concieved, and ACTUALLY IS from the 90's. It has nothing to do with "hardcore" or whatever, the game is simply crap. And all of these people who site reviews, especially from large review sites, forget that these reviewers are the same ones that give plenty of other trash games great reviews, especially in the RPG department (Kingdoms of Amalur/Fable 2/Fable 3)

I also don't even like the online component. The fact that the game doesn't want me to play with my friends and wants me to only play with strangers is stupid. I don't care about your deep gaming philosophies, if it has co-op, but doesn't let me play with friends (easily) it's pretty oxymoron.

PLAY WITH EVERYONE EXCEPT YOUR FRIENDS! Stupid.

This game is really bad IMHO. It's about as challenging as memorizing boss mechanics on WoW, which you can just watch on youtube a couple of times and always come out on top no problem.

Too bad I bought it on Steam and can't return it.



Shay

on **August 16, 2012 at 10:22 am** said:

So much rage on this thread. This game has some of the most egotistical fanboys that attack anything against the game as rage quitting or lack of skill. If Dark Souls decided to implement intermediate random freezing throughout the game for new difficulty, fanboys would praise it as a divine intervention in ground breaking game design. Lets be honest. The games harder than MOST games, some gamers will laugh at it and blow right through it, most will die horribly. In my opinion, the Ai is decent with shuffling attacks that a skilled dark soul player will be able to read and counter effectively. However, what I agree with on the author of this post, is the controls are badly designed (and lag on Xbox360, I haven't tried on PS3). Kicking mapped with the attack button makes for an annoying combination of random kicks when you mean to hit an enemy. Unless you stand still when hitting enemies you have a good chance of throwing out a random kick instead of an attack. Auto-locking works well for small monsters but is awful for large monsters; most bosses being large. The lock is in their center which causes most attacks to swing between their legs hitting nothing. If the monster is armored in the center or shielded (certain guards have large enough shields to cover their center even not using block) bow or crossbows will hit the shield instead of doing damage. Most attacks are slow on execution which is fine for gameplay difficult, but Dark Souls suffers extensively from lag even offline. Occasionally attacks are delayed, you can continue moving, but a good few seconds later your command will execute often at the wrong moment. I've noticed this lag happen very often with the halberd where I will hit RB to attack and nothing will happen, I will move away to dodge an attack then suddenly lunge in to execute the delayed attack just as the enemy is attacking. Personally, I think this game would have been smoother in gameplay with First-person controls *cue fanboy rage*. Although we can aim manually without auto-lock, it's very difficult to sprint and follow an enemy manually due to the placement of the b button for sprint on the Xbox360 controller. However, speaking on more practical ideas for the already developed game, having the option to remap controls would also be a nice fix for changing the kick and sprint abilities.



Anjin Anhut

on **August 16, 2012 at 5:59 pm** said:

@shay...

Hmmm... Dark Souls in frist person? Yeah, that would fix quite a bit. Let's imagine that the designers would have also had to design to meet the constrains of first person gameplay, maybe a few mechanics, which are now clumsy, would have been made much smoother or have been kicked all together. Nice food for though.



Sunbro

on **August 9, 2012 at 12:13 am** said:

How To Not Suck At Game Design

Tip #1: Don't read blogs on game design by self-important jackasses who don't know the first thing about game design.



Jamal Tyrone

on **August 8, 2012 at 4:46 am** said:

I'm 100% behind you! F@#k all the people that think you're not a hardcore gamer just because you dare criticise their precious Dark Souls. Loved the article, it makes many good points that fanboys seem to scared to observe or accept.

As for people who use the argument that you state opinions as facts. When did you ever? As far as I could see they were all valid opinons never stated as facts in any way.

Lame fanboys!



Tazmakitten

on **July 10, 2012 at 10:45 am** said:

Listen to my comment too!

True Dark souls can be a hellhole in certain parts in the game
I booted it up as a joke and well almost tore my eyes out in frustration...

but then... i got over it and started up the thing again this time i was a little better. and the more i played it well it was starting to become easy in my eyes but it's true Dark Souls is not for the one's who charge straight into action it makes you think about each action that might be crucial to survival.

In short terms Not to take as a joke . :)



Scorch Bomb

on **June 30, 2012 at 2:54 pm** said:

Absolutely brilliant article, Anjin. What ceases to frustrate me, though, is why is this game being met with such incredible acclaim by some of my most respected game critics?



srd

on **June 30, 2012 at 2:48 am** said:

I actually wholeheartedly agree with you. This game is awful. The controls are sluggish and all these people think the game is hard simply b/c it entirely fails to explain even basic game mechanics. That isn't ground breaking...that's lazy design.

I've had the game for a couple of days now and I just can't keep playing it. It's really repetitive combat and you end up fighting the same monsters in the same place over and over and over. Not to mention, I have no clue what almost anything is. What are the armor and weapon values? What the fuck is humanity? What the hell is the plot of the

game? I've gleamed that I'm some sort of undead chosen one blah blah blah avatar was original too...but honestly, the game is terrible.

I'm glad I bought it used.



Trusty Patches

on **June 24, 2012 at 11:47 am** said:

Someone hasn't seen Gwyneveres breasts yet...



TobioT

on **June 23, 2012 at 6:29 pm** said:

You know, most of these comments are really piss poor reactions to an article that they simply just didn't agree with. First of all, contrary to popular belief, disliking the game does not merit an ineptitude at playing it. I play the game just fine and still don't like it. Secondly, mobbing up on someone just because they dislike what you happen to like isn't legitimate grounds to state that he/she is wrong, and I feel this article pulls up some very legitimate points. For example, yes, the targeting system indeed sucks. When I compare it to games such as Kingdom Hearts or Devil May Cry 3, where there is an auto targeting system as well as a manual targeting system, Darksouls leaves more to be desired. And of course, there are many who would use the excuse of "game difficulty" to try and defend it, but difficulty isn't an excuse for piss-poor mechanics. AVGN demonstrated this with his Back To The Future review, in which the game was only one stage long, but so hard that you would spend forever trying to get through that one stage and all its faulty mechanics. Third, I will agree that the game isn't for everyone no doubt. But that's hardly grounds to for whether someone likes or dislikes it. I could be absolutely horrible and still like the game. It's a very weak defense in itself. It just really seems that instead of seeking actual reasons that hold water to rebuttal this article, everyone is simply getting mad that someone would dare say bad things about their precious Dark Souls and seek to shut him/her down at all costs. It's cool to be passionate and cool to disagree, but at least make sure that your arguments are derived from actual legitimate statements, instead of just a blind hatred for someone who doesn't have the same opinion as you do



Ornstein

on **June 3, 2012 at 10:33 pm** said:

So I understand that this is a rant.i understand that but if I want to make a rant I dont spout random complaints and label them as facts without fully understanding the situation.if thats what we are doing now ill label these facts,you are a casual gamer who bit off more than his peanut brain could comprehend.the fact that you wrote this rant is proof that you dont have the patience to process games that require higher level thinking.when you start the game you're basically on easy mode considering the the several ng+'s that only get harder so since you're already on the easiest setting you would only be able to change to a higher difficulty which you couldnt handle considering it was to tough for you after 6 hours of play.



gnat

on **May 24, 2012 at 3:56 pm** said:

You,ve got pages and pages of complaits after only playing 6 hours. Dude, you hadn't even started the game.



F,äö~f,äö~f,rChralle

on **May 10, 2012 at 12:06 pm** said:

Played Dark Souls for about 12 hours now ... While it has its flaws it a marvelous game! I just like to play it and fck up everything which crosses my path. there's nothing more to it, it's the fun I have when being in combat against mighty

opponents. I've played Vanquish too, several times, it's one of these games which you will remember decades later because you were just 'in tune' with the game itself (only speaking for myself). You just need to accept that there are people out there which feel the same way about Dark Souls (and once again, I am one of them). Stop nagging man! :) none of the people liking Dark Souls gives a damn about your opinion, check your comments :) no hard feelings ... just get over it and go play some other stuff.

PRAISE THE SUN



John

on **May 5, 2012 at 5:21 pm** said:

Fuck you Anjin..... fuck you.



lolyoufuck

on **May 1, 2012 at 8:51 am** said:

you suck at games



Fawlkies

on **April 30, 2012 at 10:38 pm** said:

All I see is "I bought into hype without knowing anything about the game"

I like Dark Soul's, I'm on NG+++, It takes time to get into the swing of it, Learn parry timing with your favorite shield, it will make it easier, and Seeing the counter attacks and back stabs never get old, Like ATS in Fallout.

Also one thing, "The fact that the player character can,Äö/Ñ/¥t climb over small obstacles made me get stuck in corners and on ledges.", Really? because clearly its the only game ever that's done that. How dare a game have invisible walls.

Maybe one other thing, Contra took skill to get through, not everyone could do it, I didn't get through it. I'm not blaming it on bad game design. I got through Dark Souls gritting my teeth 3 times, but I did it with skill and swagger. Parry the final boss with an empty hand, its fun.



No-Kind-Of-Wiseman

on **April 23, 2012 at 1:12 am** said:

So a guy posted a rant. He even said it was a rant. Clearly a rant. Do you idiots know what a rant is? It's a pile of ill-thought out, anger-induced, loathing for a particular item, person, or viewpoint. This is clearly ALL that this article is.

I agree with him on some points, the game is god awfully unforgiving. I love to hate the damn thing. I like it because it is difficult, and exists solely to spite your efforts. There is a great amount of lag in lots of areas that has caused me to die from a lack of response. Camera angles in tight spaces have caused me to DIE because I could not effectively block an enemy or three. An enemy that I've been fighting for 12 hours over and over STILL, on occasion, manages to kill me by spamming the living crap out of a high-damage move with speed and agility that I did not expect. And quite a few boss fights just LITERALLY come out of no-where and crush you upon traversing the white light. Controls stick, and menus get in the way. Sometimes the controls don't respond at all, even when I have full stamina.

Honestly, the game really is broken in many places. He's right about not being able to climb over a 2 foot wall. It's happened to even the best of you, don't deny it.

However, I enjoy a great many games that are unforgiving as heck. Try S.T.A.L.K.E.R.: Shadow of Chernobyl, Clear Sky, or Call of Pripyat on Master difficulty. Try Ghost Recon on the highest difficulty (where enemies could see through walls, before you revealed yourself.), or even Metro 2055 or whatever year it was on RANGER HARD where you have no ammo for squat and the knife is near useless.

See, there's a difference between those games and this one. A fundamental difference, and that's difficulty level options. It doesn't make you less of a gamer because you play games with difficulty settings. And let's face it: If you're gauging the worth of your life by what games you play... well shit, son... I hope you don't reproduce.

These are GAMES people. JUST. GAMES. That's all they'll ever be. You want a game that you only get one chance at? Try life, bud. You only get one life in life itself, and if you seriously spend time getting butt-hurt when some dude with a blog throws his two cents in the change machine, then you're really, really doing it wrong. If the rest of us are lucky, you all will drop dead by heart attack because you spend all your days sitting down, playing "hardcore games" or some other stupid nonsense all of your waking hours.



opinion

on **April 22, 2012 at 12:51 pm** said:

Well I agree with the article. I don't like the game, but that is just my opinion. The thing that I hate the most is that every time you heal at a bonfire, all enemies revive... That is just like restarting at a last checkpoint. And then I have to fight the same enemies again. You even have the time to nickname every enemy, coz you face him more than once. And then everybody says it is realistic... Yes it is realistic in the way that heavy armour is heavy, so you go slower. But most of the game is not realistic guys. If I kill a dog, he wont revive if i go to a hospital(or sleep at a bonfire). I can't carry 10 shields on my back, there is not enough space.

Well I do admit that i have not gone deep in the game, so I do have a question. Will you get more ways of attacking? Like with jumping or while evading, coz the only thing my sword does is swing left, right or down. It will give more opportunities. I like games where you have combat and you say: wow, that was a cool move. And then it doesn't need to be realistic, this game is not all realistic either, that is why it is a game. If i want realistic fighting then I will do some fighting sport.

This is just my opinion and I think the writer of this article doesn't deserve so much criticism. He shares how he thinks, that is all.



me

on **April 8, 2012 at 12:48 pm** said:

You do not make any valid points in your rant. If you suck at the game then keep trying or sell it back. If you want to try to stab some enemy in a tight hallway with a mace you're dumb. Use a knife or some kind of sharp object. Not a blunt weapon. If you want to target press down on the right joystick. If you want to switch targets use the joystick and move it to the general direction of desired enemy. If you want to make friends in the game don't hit them. I know if you hit me I wouldn't be your friend. The controls are not sluggish. Pick up a hammer and swing it. You will understand. Pick up a sledge hammer and you will better understand. Swing that same sledge hammer while wearing a backpack on back and front and you will fully understand. I like that realism in this game along with the dark atmosphere. Yes its kind of hard but not in that usual rpg way of some stupid bandit with an iron sword just killed me while I was wearing full deadric armor. Stupid ass Skyrim. I do die a lot but I probably should quit traversing the white light with 2 estus flasks. I don't know what to say homie except you're missing out on a great game with all kinds of replay value and its only 40 bucks brand new with pretty clear wrapping and everything.



Chaos Witch Kellogs

on **March 26, 2012 at 2:39 pm** said:

My list of complaints with this article is long. Pages and pages of notes long, to be more precise. The list goes on and on and on, but I don't have all day.



Aletheia

on **March 26, 2012 at 2:00 pm** said:

You are aware that substituting "This is my opinion" for "this is bad game design" doesn't magically make your arguments valid, right?

I mean, you never actually go into detail about the game design.

Take this bit, for example:

"The statistics showed, that the game design was able to keep me entertained while I was retrying and failing the same sequence for 422 times."

All you've said is "I found it fun to do the same thing over and over again". Nothing of it is remotely related to actual game design. Me playing through Superman 64 22 times and finding it fun, and then claiming that it was because of the game design, doesn't magically make my opinion more valid, nor does it have anything to do with actual game design.

Same thing goes for:

"I got Dark Souls as a rental and after 20 minutes of playtime I had to turn off the console to not get anymore frustrated with the design of that game."

I can start up a blog called "How not to suck at cooking" and then go about praising McDonalds for its superb cooking by saying "This is good food because of ingredients".

Adding "This game wasn't fun because game design" doesn't make your sentences, or "arguments" for that matter, any different than "This game wasn't fun because I think so". The fact that you try to pass this off as legitimate criticism built on design choices in the game just shows that you've got no business writing about video games at all.

Well, unless you start up a site named "This is what I think about games without actually discussing game design".



Gaben

on **March 26, 2012 at 1:12 pm** said:

Nothing to see here guys, he had Dragon Age 2 as his pick for second best game of 2011. Guess he likes his combat and story spoon fed.



Joe

on **March 24, 2012 at 12:39 pm** said:

You know i put up with alot of easy casual games because they're fun but its sucks that they dont last long and arent especially challenging, i loved warhammer 40'oo space marine and shadows of the dammed but i had both of those games started and finished within a day on their hardest difficulty settings.

Then every once in a while we get a game like dark souls wich beats you to the floor and makes you work for every little thing, progression, new gear even little bits of the story of the game (i hear some people complain theres no plot but its there you just dont get it spoon fed to you). I am happy these "elitist" games exist because its simply not fair to expect everyone to have the same skill set and some of us want the challenge (wether or not we can actually beat said challenge is another story).

My point is, is it so wrong that there are hard games out there for people that like hard games? why does everything have to include everyone?



Murdok

on **March 4, 2012 at 8:08 pm** said:

Wow, talk about a throng of dark souls tards. Yeah, the game is fun and all that but it has serious problems...get over it. The game lags to hell in blighttown, new anor londo, dragon bridge, etc. The game is not hard at all (which isn't a bad thing); however, the game's lag makes for frustratingly stupid deaths due to the game's inability to read your inputs quickly. The game is still fun but the lag is a real letdown.



papai

on **February 29, 2012 at 7:50 pm** said:

lol at crying for auto targeting.



Blueblood

on **February 28, 2012 at 11:28 pm** said:

You know, your review was all fine and dandy. After all a review is opinionated. But then you started stating misunderstandings as fact; then blaming it on game design. Maybe, just maybe you're not supposed to auto-target? I know a good half a million situations in the first area alone that auto-targetting would hinder you. I'm sorry you apparently got spoiled? But most games I play don't have this at all. And stopping your character from attacking? Bah! You can still pick up items mid fight, like I frequently do (especially in the Blighttown Swamps). Though you don't have to at all. Just to get it away you have to stop; which isn't a problem at all just a personal annoyance.

And yes, you were right on the fact that the permanent stuck on "Super Hard" makes it inaccessible and that the people who most frequently compliment the game do say those things. They annoy me too. But you have to remember, the website for darksouls IS preparetodie.com. They never tried to market it anything more than a Spiritual Sequel to Demons Souls (a game that got sales based on heresay). So please, don't rip on a game for marketing itself AS IT IS. Certainly far braver than most games, and nearly every movie.



Kharlor

on **February 28, 2012 at 4:24 am** said:

hey there is an auto target feature. just push R3 in the general direction of an enemy.

did you even finish the tutorial?



Artorias

on **February 28, 2012 at 3:39 am** said:

I'm 12 and what is this?



fatboyslim

on **February 28, 2012 at 1:50 am** said:

i don't understand why people who don't like a certain videogame feel compelled to make sure the entire world feels the same way. instead of saying "i guess they were right, this game is not for everybody" one pushes outright lies as fact. the controls are very responsive, but if you are in the middle of the followthrough of a missed swing you're stuck for a bit. you opened yourself up, and no amount of mashing the buttons can change that.



Solaire of Astora

on **February 28, 2012 at 1:14 am** said:

Why... This isn't grossly incandescent at all!

No seriously. Sounds to me like you were playing a character wearing armour. That's the funny thing about armour. It's heavy, and makes you sluggish. "OH BUT I WANT TO ZIP AROUND AT 100 MILES PER HOUR IN HEAVY ARMOUR."

No.

Stop.

Desist.

You insult the enemy AI. You're fighting Hollows. Zombies. They're practically brain dead, just like this review.

You also touch on the issue of 'auto targetting.' I seriously hope you aren't serious. What? You want the game to play itself for you? Maybe if you actually played past the Burg and aimed at trying to get further on in the game, then maybe you'd realize that the game isn't poorly designed, but that you just don't have the diligence to play further.

Also, your facts are nothing more than opinions. Consisting mainly of: "I suck at this game, therefore it sucks."

Yeah, nah.

Praise the Sun.



Johann
on **November 2, 2012 at 10:54 am** said:

I agree this game isn't for everybody, it takes a gamer who is willing to play hours and hours of difficult times and frustrations to get to the good parts of the game, this guy obviously likes having all of the good stuff spoon fed to him in the beginning... dark souls doesn't spoon feed you, there are no hints, map markers, objectives... it's pure thinking so yeah.

Praise the sun. :P



Sneakers
on **February 28, 2012 at 1:04 am** said:

Haha, sounds like this lil' fella couldn't handle the Asylum Demon.



Ornstein
on **February 28, 2012 at 12:57 am** said:

"and the lack of auto-targeting made controlling the player character similar to giving voice commands to a blind person."

Are you

fucking blind?

The fucking tutorial tells you how to auto target.

Yeah man, you're so hardcore. You can't even read a goddamn sign. Maybe you should leave the article writing to the real gamers... Why don't you go play some angry birds or some shit, you filthy casual.



Just Jeff
on **February 28, 2012 at 12:13 am** said:

Aw somebody can't beat the Asylum Demon. That's cute.



Executioner Smough
on **February 28, 2012 at 12:00 am** said:

What's the matter, got stuck on the Asylum Demon?



TankorSmash

on **February 27, 2012 at 11:33 pm** said:

You got a couple of typos in the article:

complains is complaints and titel is title.



Anjin Anhut

on **February 27, 2012 at 11:39 pm** said:

@Tankor Smash

fixed it, thank you



Maou

on **February 27, 2012 at 11:28 pm** said:

This is a disgrace of a rant, you are pushing opinions as facts. And the fact that you can't learn to play well, it has a steep learning curve, and even in the best dark souls players causes rage quitting. In the unpatched game there was some input delay, but that has been fixed. But it was still playable even then. The controls are fine the problem is you.

Dark Souls is a worthwhile game you just simply don't get it. Also opinion, but one shared by thousands of fans. Way to offend a ton of people, not by disagreeing that's fine, but by your hostility about it; telling us we're lying and the game is crap.

I love the game, it's true, I've put 100+ hours into it making me bias. But why create a rant/article like this? Really what's the point?

There are tons of character builds to try, fighting styles, customizations. You are comparing apples and oranges with Vanguard, which is also a great game.



Kobra

on **February 27, 2012 at 11:28 pm** said:

This is a very poorly written article. The sentence structure, use of punctuation, and word selection is VERY POOR. That being said, your opinions and points about this game are also VERY POOR. You also have absolutely no idea what 'artificial difficulty' is, which is something Dark Souls does not have (you complained about not having difficulty settings...really? LOL)

Maybe you should try playing Call of Duty. Or pokemon. Seems like those two games would better suit your level of skill and taste in video games.



velka

on **February 27, 2012 at 11:28 pm** said:

Troll



egghead

on **February 27, 2012 at 11:27 pm** said:

-homophobic language deleted by admin-



The Dude

on **February 27, 2012 at 10:22 pm** said:

Well that's just, like, your opinion, man. Just like it's my opinion that this article sucks a fat one.

1/10 for making me reply.



Solaire of Astora

on **February 27, 2012 at 7:30 pm** said:

Awesome Incandescence. Great Sun. Look shiny. Glowing. Bright. Keep us all posted on your continuing stellar growth with new Hubble-Footage or Thermal-Maps. Show us what you got Sun. Wanna see how grossly' incandescent, shiny, glowing and bright you can get. Thanks for the motivation.



CharlieE

on **February 27, 2012 at 7:06 pm** said:

I think you should just take this article down.

It's so bad in so many ways.

You clearly read a lot about the game before hand and had this conception in your head of what it was going to be like. I agree there is a lot of praise for the game but I do think it is deserved.

I'm going to defend one of my favorite games because that is what people do but seriously man? How? How can you say that this is a bad game and poorly designed?

In 6 hours you will have barely scratched, barely made a dent in the outer shell of DS. It is a huge game, not in length or scale (some korean guy finished it in like 37 minutes) but in depth. There is so much you have not yet experienced.

The first time I played it I made a few characters, got bored and left it a few months. The next time I got hooked because I didn't have to spend hours getting my shit slapped, some of the skills I had learnt passed on.

If you don't play an RPG for more than 20 hours I don't think you are qualified to write a review really. They aren't a magazine, they are books, and you wouldn't review a book based on its cover.



Kaathe

on **February 27, 2012 at 2:39 pm** said:

It should not be so difficult for you to admit that you suck at the game. You know, even gays and gimps have equal rights now. Don't be afraid to admit you have a short attention span disorder. Don't project your own shortcomings on a great game.



wat

on **February 27, 2012 at 1:39 pm** said:

This is by far, the worst article I've ever read. I have a long list of complaints so get ready.

A: Stop abusing "the cake is a lie" it only serves to make you seem ten years old.

B: "It's not for everyone" is not a meme, it's actually a legitimate statement.

C: I can tell from your posts that either you were really bad at this game, or didn't play it with the intention of taking it seriously.

D: The controls in dark souls are very responsive under most conditions, and I have no idea were you are getting that from, unless you want to be able to fly around at mach 2 in heavy armor.

E: Everything you stated as pure fact is actually an opinion. If you wish to write articles you must learn to put that non-

bias in there, or you won't be taken seriously.

F: You keep calling dark souls a bad game, but it has such a huge fanbase... did you ever think that maybe, just maybe, you were wrong?

All in all I give this article about a 2.3/10

Stay classy.



Lautrec of Carim

on **February 27, 2012 at 12:10 pm** said:

Say that to my face Hollow, not in the Abyss! See what happens.



Anjin Anhut

on **February 27, 2012 at 12:15 pm** said:

@Lautrec

Wha? Huh?



asdfasda

on **February 27, 2012 at 11:53 am** said:

Horrible article.



someone

on **February 25, 2012 at 3:49 am** said:

way to be self centered



Anjin Anhut

on **February 25, 2012 at 12:08 pm** said:

@someone

Well observed, Watson.



Rhorge

on **February 14, 2012 at 12:52 pm** said:

Well having read this Anjin I am very disappointed. It seems to me that if you find an unusual feature in Dark Souls (and it has plenty), you simply turn it down and say that it's the dev teams ignorance like the combat system. Maybe your idea of an rpg is swinging a foot wide sword as if it was paper but this game is supposed to be realistic hence the hit delay when you swing the weapon back to get momentum and the stamina usage. Also you mentioned that thrust attacks do not adjust well saying it is a human reflex. While the cup of coffee example is very true it would be hard to adjust while putting all your weight and strength behind a thrust however like in real life you can easily aim the thrust before you start the damaging part of the animation. Overall I think you do not understand the point of some things in this game because you did not play enough. Every player that spent 15 hours on this game would think that auto lock is an absurd idea that would ruin the game btw. when you lock on just flick the right stick to cycle targets do not hold it. Overall try to spend some more time with DkS and hopefully you will get to understand its design.



Anjin Anhut

on **February 15, 2012 at 10:12 am** said:

@RHorge

Hey...

If you think you understand the design of Dark Souls and I don't and I haven't played it enough and that's why I don't like it... well, you are exactly positively and definitely the target audience for this article and statements like yours are the reason for me to make this public statement in the first place. So any reply I could give to you right now would be retreading my article.

So you being disappointed is not that unexpected.

Many of your concerns are already addressed with other commenters very thoroughly, I'd like to point you to the conversations with InsertDiskII and especially with HonorEDnLK.

Have fun playing Dark Souls, champion for it but don't expect making any ground here blaming someones disapproval for the game on him instead on the developers.

Cheers.



Holier

on **February 7, 2012 at 5:08 am** said:

and now for anyone that's interested here is imo a better critique of this game's proclaimed 'difficulty and challenge' aspect. first point, all enemies become piss easy to beat once you have enough health/armour defense and/or damage with your weapon. most of the enemies are just about tediously moving out of the way and then attacking then blocking/moving out of the way then attacking – if you do alot of damage then it makes it easier. for the first part of the game there is an area where you get 500 souls just by walking up a ladder basically. so for all those levels requiring say 10000 souls or less i found myself doing this to get more souls to level up. which got me through the game but was essentially boring.

That said all the boss fights are really challenging. and the way you can go about doing them in unique ways is pretty cool. like for the sewers depths boss fight i used 150+ arrows to defeat it never meeleing once i dont think. another unique thing is how you can level up your weapons, the sheer amount of investment it takes to level up your weapons and armour and then combining them with special boss souls to make a new weapon makes it feel (without help from the internet) that you've created a super rare and powerful unique weapon/shield e.t.c. and other things like rings and all the items pretty much without help of the internet really are rare things that would be unique to your playthrough. but positive point about the challenge, it potentially can be the most challenging game particularly for the stubborn. there's usually a particular weapon or method that will help you win a boss fight. for the gargoyles on the roof however that was truly, truly challenging having two different OHKing jumping gargoyles with their hammers which alternatively breath fire from behind you e.t.c. was truly a satisfactory boss fight. and journeying to ash lake without any knowledge of it from the internet but through pure luck and help of the notes left by other players and then coming across the hydra which you have to run past as fighting is not an option at your current level that was truly a good gameplay moment and i lie to think i play only good games.

another point is that you get the feeling a lot of the 'difficulty' is mere tediousity they've decided to add in. in concrete terms say you have to kill an enemy to get through the door well in dark souls they'll make it so that before you even get to the enemy you will have had to have walked and journeyed from the last checkpoint a far while. thus that isn't difficult it's just going to make it feel all the more tedious if you die and have to do it again. there's many situations like that where you'd want to give your controller to someone else and have them do it before you get back to playing ie easy but time consuming grinding for souls, or the mindless commute journey.

another thing that wasn't great was that you didn't get to experience much multiplayer being invaded type stuff unless you used humanity and always stayed human. but the system was bad as there was no benefit to spend your humanity on being human rather than keeping it (as it is rare) for other stuff that would actually help you on your adventure like kindling and offering humanity to a covenant. so i didn't experience any being invaded apart from once. there is a really good co op part of the game which is a very unique multiplayer experience as the lobby summoning mechanic gives it a weird feel, half offline half online feel.

and for those that haven't played the game yet and are thinking about it. personally i expected the game to be like most adventure games where you venture through a variety of types of areas, maybe different cities or just generally a world consisting of say in zelda a village, a field a water world, temples, introductory hidden forest area, castle or elder scrolls type huge world or gta sandbox. but no what dark souls is one massive Level. a level that becomes bigger the more you play, ie highly intricate one path you've journeyed on for hours finally and suddenly connects you to a previous area you started off at ages back in one big circle. the world expands downwards and upwards in many layers and has many hidden routes and pathways all of which you essentially stumble across and find on your own and do not use the internet for finding out hidden pathways e.t.c. it will just limit the fun and wonder of discovery. do possibly use the internet to work out meanings of stats and stuff particularly for multiplayer as leveling up is very costly in all sense of the word.

i should probably stop writing now seeing as essentially i'm contributing to this Anjin's blog post a bit too much for my liking.



Holier

on **February 7, 2012 at 4:37 am** said:

fair comment Moi, certainly better than the poster continually trying to believe that i was drunk whilst writing it. there was a bit of rage but it was all well founded. i don't think you can write an essay of bullshit which really is what it was after playing a few hours of the game. and what i my reasons for that: because he talks not just about the controls which btw are difficult and rewarding controls ie for the heavy attacks you have to press forward perfectly in timed with pressing the r2 trigger or r1 trigger which is intuitive when you get the feel for it, but for the fact that he talks about such things as 'there are no hidden paths'... that is just pure factual incorrectness and stuff like that makes his post quite enraging. that game is FULL of hidden paths, having got to the end now, i was dissappointed that the game is kept within one 'world' but the level of intricacy... wow this is the most intricate world i have ever played in, everything links up together and it is full of hidden paths that you may never even come across during the playthrough without help from teh itnernet and not to mention the items you may never find or not.

but no it's not because i really like the game and i'm an idiot who therefore gets offended by seeing anything which criticises it. it's the fact that this was a very poor critique and it's called critical thinking and it's just full or ranty, stupid bullshit which i read all of. believe me i even managed to annoy a friend of mine by pointing out some bad things of the game; my friend being an example of someone who doesn't want to hear Any criticism of the game he fucking idolised. particularly one fault the game has and this is a rare occurence but for me i accidentally aggravated both oswald of carim and undead merchant – if you touch them with any type of weaponry they will not speak/sell to you at all and will try attacking you if possible. those two npc's out of the game's 5 or so npc's are the two that sell you anti curse items – there is one other npc however harder to get too but you don'tknow he's enemy of foe anyway so if you're someone who went for using bows and arrows, like me you might kill him anyway lol. and the thing if you're cursed that means you have half hp until FOREVER unless you get a anti curse item.

anyway writer of this blog. you really are quite rude. after all even though my post was quite ranty like yours and expressed anger towards you it was still a lengthy response to having read all of your article and it gave many valid points to your arguments put forward so just replying with 'you're drunk' is really childish.

to Moi, i do know about game design, i find game design is pretty much anyone with a good mind will know about game design. like i've thought of game design concepts that don't even exist that much yet.



Drylce1829

on **February 6, 2012 at 7:31 am** said:

This is one of the best critical reviews I've ever read. You touched on a lot of points that I haven't seen any other critic mention... Can any other product get away with being purposefully rigid, tedious, and with one mandatory option (in this case, difficulty setting)? It's a silver bullet that kills the argument before it can even begin.

The "hardcore gamer" phenomenon with Dark Souls doesn't surprise me. In fact, it's to be expected. One of the most basic needs that a game, any game, fulfills is the desire to prove something to yourself. Unfortunately this is also something that is omnipresent in the gaming community, which I why I almost never participate in any discussions. People are always trying to prove how much better and smarter they are than everyone else, to the point where people don't even treat people like people on the internet. It's ugly and tragic.

Anyhow, once again, outstanding article, outstanding writing.



hffh

on **February 4, 2012 at 5:43 pm** said:

trust me, dark souls is a pile of shit. you have to be some hardcore ps3 fan to like it, as it shows ps3 fans are easily satisfied with crap gameplay on the crap ps3, with its crap games. The gameplay is something youd expect on a low budget dreamcast game insted of a game from 2011 on a freakin ps3. Namco has gone downhill and hit every rock on the bottom.



Anjin Anhut

on **February 6, 2012 at 11:24 am** said:

@hffh

As much as I enjoy you bashing Dark Souls... All your PS3 comments are practically worthless. "trust me" ? No you are not to be trusted, sir. Because you are in console war rage, which is amongst the stupidest reasons to say bad things about somebody else....

@Drylce1829

Yeah, I was missing that kind of critical perspective in major review sources also. So I wrote my own. ;)



Moi

on **February 1, 2012 at 3:40 am** said:

Holier, someone does -not- need to grind +80 hours on a game to have an opinion about it.
In fact, most well known gaming magazines play a game for maybe only 6 hours before sharing their experience and opinion on it, or even less because their time budget doesn't allow it. But even after a playtime of maybe 5 minutes someone can already easily tell if the controls suck or not, and after an hour of playing you can tell if a game has a bad game design/level designs/anything else.

I can tell you -really- enjoyed the game – which is good for you!
I think you're enraged because he describes (one of) your favourite game(s) as a bad one – let me tell you, just because -you- think it's a great game, doesn't make it a great game.
There are plenty of movies which I think are beyond awesome – but when they were criticized they got only average ratings.
In the long run, your opinion doesn't really matter here. This is Anjin's blog, and it's about his opinion.
Of course you're free to leave a comment and give good points why you think the game is great – but if you come in guns blazing saying things like “you're just too stupid for the controls” you don't have to wonder why people don't take you and your opinion serious.

I didn't play the game myself, so I don't know if it's good or bad or anything inbetween, but I know Anjin personally and I doubt he wrote this review based on nothing but hot air. He knows quite a lot about Game Design, and I don't know if you do. Do you? From your previous posts, you seem like someone with gaming experience, but that doesn't make you a person experienced with game design.



Holier

on **January 31, 2012 at 5:58 am** said:

it's Holier moron. and i assume you didn't read any of my points with that sort of response. you're pathetic making such judgements and poor thinking after only a few hours of the game how arrogant is that. i have a few assessments of it but thats after playing 80 hours. to be certain i wasn't drunk when i wrote it or anything and i find it amazing if you actually thought that. my comment owned your blog which shouldnt be a blog because you dont have a clue what your talking about.

as for the controls whining, you're a fucking idiot sorry. or atleast a very shit gamer to complain about the controls. the ONE thing about the controls is that the targeting doesnt lock on from a reasonable distance (even though thats to stop people being able to use magic/bows to effectively).



Anjin Anhut

on **January 31, 2012 at 11:55 pm** said:

@ Holier

Honestly, don't drink before you comment here. It makes you write things that do not speak well for your mental constitution and level of intelligence. So please, comment again, but this time sober.



Orbow

on **January 24, 2012 at 3:46 am** said:

I agree this article,one can look back at Dead Space 2 and its hardcore difficulty. Trying to beat the game with only 3 saves at the risk of restarting all the way back? Yes that would make the game more horrifically scary and stressful if that was that could not be changed. But guess what they make it an option. Dark souls is just like that but not giving the player the freedom to choose the difficulty, some games I like cranking the difficulty up others games like RTS I put to the easiest difficulty.



AdamTM

on **January 23, 2012 at 1:41 pm** said:

I've noticed a similar pattern with another game that is considered "difficult" and "unforgiving", I'm talking of course about the Monster Hunter franchise.

I was originally introduced to MH with Monster Hunter Freedom Unite on PSP where the controls were absolutely atrocious mostly because you would have needed three hands to operate the game properly.

I bashed my head repeatedly against the wall because of the camera controls and to play the game you had to put down the psp on the table with two fingers on the L-R d-pad, one finger on the analog stick and two fingers on the X O buttons for camera controls. This especially sucked in first person when you used your ranged weapons.

Once I tried the older games on PS2 where a second analog stick was used for camera the game however, suddenly the game became easier because i did not have to struggle with the camera controls.

Add to this that the whole series for some reason completely lacks target lock-on in any shape or form and most of the time you are just fighting to see whats going on on the screen rather than the bosses being difficult.

I see the same thing with Dark Souls. The difficulty stems only from the convoluted control scheme (dpad + analog for target marking, etc). I can't count the times i fell off ledges because my character only has two walking animations – run and sprint (i.e. the analog input is pointless if i can't -slowly- approach a ledge)

Also, an observation from me about the death penalty, its inconsistent with the games "difficulty".

Loosing your souls and humanity is not making the game any difficult, just tedious.

In a sense, you should constantly be spending your souls, the modus operandi in this game goes against any sort of hoarding of currency, since you don't loose your equipment on death, just your currency.

Respawning killed enemies after death only adds to the tedium, it doesn't make it harder (because you didn't loose your equipment just currency) in any way, just more time-consuming.

Diablo 2 had a better death penalty in this regard on the higher difficulty levels. Not only did you loose gold but also your gear and XP, you needed to corpse-run back to the place you died to retrieve your gear and XP.

Dark Souls is not "difficult", "hard" or "challenging" its simply tedious and purposefully inaccessible.

There are plenty of games (in this genre) that are extremely challenging (on high difficulties) and yet accessible to everyone.

A few:

Ninja Gaiden Black/2, Bayonetta, Vanquish, Witcher 2 (Dark Mode is actually harder than Dark Souls), The Gothic Series...

Dark Souls fits the text-book definition of sadomasochism, it inflicts pain and suffering on you just to give you that sweet release after the pain goes away, its not the feeling of "accomplishment".

The feeling you are heaving after you beat a boss, its like the feeling of your first breath just after someone tried to strangle you to death.

I understand there are people that like this, but lets be honest about what it is, and liking it certainly doesn't make you a better person.

But now I'm just rambling.



AdamTM

on **January 23, 2012 at 1:21 am** said:

There is a rumor going around that the game might be coming to PC soon. For various reasons i think that once gamers get access to the precision controls of mouse+keyboard, the difficulty of this game will bleed away and what will be left is a hollow shell of a "korean grinder".

The game offers little challenge past trial, error and pattern recognition. Especially taking into account the various exploits you can use to "beat" the faulty game-design (drop-hits on bosses, excessive kiting, ai-exploits, quit the game to prevent death, etc)



Anjin Anhut

on **January 23, 2012 at 2:13 am** said:

@AdamTM

Ha, good point. I did not find the actually enemies to be very challenging either. Let's hope the publisher actually has the balls to allow for mouse controls... it may fuck up their idea of balancing so much that they restrict it to controller inputs.



HonorEDnIK

on **January 22, 2012 at 7:08 pm** said:

Thanks for replying, I finally am starting to see your point, I mean I can play the game easily as it is, but you may be right about the autotargeting, it hasn't bothered me that much though.

However, I do think that the weapons are just fine the way they are, I mean, there are damage types in the game that are linked to the weapon you're using, if you have a rapier or a spear, you'll attack with an estocade, but a long sword will estoc only when using R2, where as using a bastard sword will change the estocade attack for a vertical slam of the sword, and the attacks change if you use both hands to hold the weapon, the two handed long sword, will make vertical and horizontal attacks, so there's a lot of variation in the game, as you got to adapt to the style, timing and range of such attacks.

For instance, If you're using a knife, then your hits will be very swift and instant to the button pressing, much like most games, but your range is limited, but you can adapt to it and beat the game with it, as knives have a high critical strike chance and are good for backstabbing, this is one of the things that I liked a lot, because it really widens the game's experience, it is a very different way to play and it's fun to discover new play-styles, there's even a Castlevania build with it's whip and all.

As for the difficulty, the game isn't really that challenging, the thing with it is the pressure you're under constantly, having souls and humanity and not wanting to lose them, with the fear of a player invading, or that a Gravelord servant (another of the Covenants in the game), makes harder enemies appear in your game, until someone kills him. All of that makes the game very enjoyable for me.

In the end, beauty is the eye of the beholder it seems, it is a weird game, different from all others, but many have said it is a love or hate kind of game, and now I see why.

Nonetheless I still think that the game has a lesson to teach to the gaming industry, most games are too easy nowadays and not memorable (despite a great story in many of them), and gaming for me is about the experience, I respect a lot some of the new titles that have come out as they have been original and memorable, some of these games have been the Batman series, Heavy Rain, the Dead Space series, and of course the Souls series, each for unique reasons that separate them from others,

Regards.



Anjin Anhut

on **January 23, 2012 at 2:08 am** said:

@HonorEDnIK

Yeha, the game is something special for sure. And the way people enjoy the game is as special. There is a large audience for uncompromising challenge, Dark Souls showed that. And a lot of people got invested in the game like with none other... so there is definitely a whole lot of lessons to learn from this game. Though I think we may disagree, what those lessons might be. ;)

Enjoyed the discussion. Cheers.



HonorEDnIK

on **January 21, 2012 at 8:46 pm** said:

I see what you mean now, but I don't believe this is faulty, it was made in purpose, except for the lag on the 360 version of course.

- no autotargeting
- clumsy toggle mechanic to target enemies

Sometimes is better not to autotarget, I do when I'm fighting one enemy, but this is the same that in Zelda games and when you're surrounded it's better not to use it, do you mean that Zelda is faulty as well? it's the same targeting system

- need to switch weapons to execute certain attack movements

Which game doesn't need you to switch weapons, in fact, most games won't even let you use more than one through all of the game, and when they do the weapons suck.

- being unable to climb small obstacles

This actually existed in Demon's souls, it was removed in Dark souls but it doesn't make a great difference, you can

get everywhere by walking

- unguided jumping mechanic

Jumping didn't exist in the previous game, and you won't need it a lot although there are around 4 places I can think of where you'll need it, but unimportant areas that are not required to go to in order to beat the game.

If all of those things are faulty and not made on purpose, then I guess I got used to play with bad game mechanics like you said I guess, but I don't think so, it just feels right.

Kind regards.



Anjin Anhut
on **January 21, 2012 at 11:40 pm** said:

I'm sorry, but you simply don't register or forget, what other games do right, if you even start comparing the Dark Souls mechanics with titles like Zelda. There are decades of game development, fine tuning of mechanics, tried and true methods, just ignored by Dark Souls' development team.

"Sometimes is better not to autotarget, I do when I,Ã/Ã/¥m fighting one enemy, but this is the same that in Zelda games and when you,Ã/Ã/¥re surrounded it,Ã/Ã/¥s better not to use it, do you mean that Zelda is faulty as well? it,Ã/Ã/¥s the same targeting system"

Absolutely not. Zelda and most other games with 3rd person melee combat allow you to simply point with your left stick toward the enemy you want to hit and automatically correct the direction of your attack to hit the target. This is mimicking the the auto correction humans have when grabbing a coffee cup. Dark Souls does not have that. If you are doing stabs or vertical slashes you might miss the enemy barely, if your character is not perfectly set to the right degree.

When it comes to using an active targeting system (where the user interface actually displays a cross hair of some sort), other games allow you to fluidly toggle between enemies, employing the left stick or shoulder buttons. This gives you grater control, which is all what targeting is about. In Dark Souls you need to manually snap and unsnap enemies you want to have targeted, which especially with multiple enemies is exactly one input too much to keep the combat flowing.

"Which game doesn,Ã/Ã/¥t need you to switch weapons,"

For what I complained about? Every other game! Switching weapons in Dark Souls is necessary to be allowed to stab or swing vertically, which in other games is mapped on specific buttons and NOT bound to certain weapons (see Soul Calibur for example). Or the game allows you to swing horizontally, even in narrow corridors, so you don't hit the wall when fighting. There are weapons in Dark Souls that have no vertical or stabbing attacks which makes them useless in tight spaces. And where a real warrior would just make different swings with his sword, in Dark Souls you need to switch weapons.

"This actually existed in Demon,Ã/Ã/¥s souls, it was removed in Dark souls but it doesn,Ã/Ã/¥t make a great difference, you can get everywhere by walking"

Nope you can't. I was once dropped from a stairwell onto an area wich i could not leave, because I was unable to climb a small wall. When they removed the climbing feature they should have planned their level design accordingly. Having to restart a checkpoint, because my warrior was not able to do what a 5 year old boy could do was very frustrating.

"Jumping didn,Ã/Ã/¥t exist in the previous game, and you won,Ã/Ã/¥t need it a lot although there are around 4 places I can think of where you,Ã/Ã/¥ll need it, but unimportant areas that are not required to go to in order to beat the game." Not to mention, that the game does no where tell you, you can jump. (the horrible tutorials are another story). Jumping would have been welcome, whenever there is a barrel rolling at me on a staircase for example....

I understand that the game feels right to you. Otherwise you wouldn't play it for hours and hours... and seeing the overall praise the game gets, a lot of people seem to share your feeling. I simply don't. I have my reasons for that. And those reasons never where because I found it to be "hard" or "tough" or "challenging". These terms never crossed my mind when playing.

While many people dislike many games... With Dark Souls, not liking it is "my failure" and saying it is the games fault that I don't like it "is kinda dumb". Your words and be sure not only yours. You see why I felt to write this article?



Anjin Anhut
on **January 21, 2012 at 11:48 pm** said:

@HonorEDnIK Before I forget: I really enjoy the discussion, so thanks for chiming in here.



HonorEDnIK
on **January 21, 2012 at 9:45 am** said:

I read your post once more, I first thought that you referred to unresponsive controls because of the 360 version lag,

you should try the PS3 version and edit about half of your post, on the Sense of Accomplishment part, you began mentioning the controls being unresponsive and the game buggy which is false as all times I died it was my fault, also did you know that if you evade in the exact moment you're going to be hit, almost if not all hits only trespass you if they still touch you? As far as I know, this is no hole in the games programming...

The only flaw I noticed was the framerate drop on Blight Town (funny that I didn't die because of it), now if you're referring to unresponsive to the time it takes the character to actually hit, if you notice there is even an animation for that, meaning it is not a glitch, it's just not the instant attack we're used to and you need to time your hits, like a real guy with a heavy sword would, there are also 4 weight status in the game, if you're at 1/4 of your total weight you run faster, below 1/2 you're a little slower, above 1/2 you're much slower and when evading you don't jump as far and can "feel" the weight of the armor you're wearing, and being above your max, well that will not let you evade at all. And weight also affects the speed you recover your stamina, This game is more complex than you may believe, I have beat it and I still don't know much of the game's extra stuff yet, but I still play it a lot. I've around 68 hours with one char and around 40 with other.

I really believe you are talking about a different game here, I only know the ps3 version but you complain so much about bugs and glitches that it doesn't seem like the game I played.

If you simply don't like it, at least you shouldn't blame your failure towards a game bug or unresponsive controls. You remind me of the type of guy who throws the controller because he keeps losing and blames the game, which is kind of dumb.

Try the PS3 version and play online too, you won't experience multiplayer until you beat the first boss after the tutorial, you should include multiplayer in there too, in my previous post I mentioned how more enjoyable that can make the game for you. I mean, really.

Regards.



Anjin Anhut
on **January 21, 2012 at 10:26 am** said:

A list of problems with the Dark Souls controls:

- lag (may be amn XBOX only problem)
- no autotargeting
- clumsy toggle mechanic to target enemies
- need to switch weapons to execute certain attack movements
- being unable to climb small obstacles
- unguided jumping mechanic

So what of those problems get fixed by the PS3 version.

"If you simply don't like it, at least you shouldn't blame your failure towards a game bug or unresponsive controls. You remind me of the type of guy who throws the controller because he keeps losing and blames the game, which is kind of dumb." Whenever I read responses to my article like that I can only assume you just skipped essential parts of my argument.

Anyway, your online statements are valid, but you grant the game waaayyyy to much leeway with its faulty design, just because you managed to adjust to it. And it's kind of arrogant to assume, that your ability to work with that broken tool is to be seen as some sort of standard and when somebody complains it his fault or kind of dumb. Damn, see? I just repeated the last part of my article, as if you haven't read it....



HonorEDn1K
on **January 20, 2012 at 7:08 pm** said:

I see a lot of complains about this game's difficulty but it's not that hard, I mean you know there is cooperative gameplay right? And nobody has even mentioned the multiplayer part, which for me is one of the very best and innovative features this game has.

To give you an idea, I was exploring when a message appeared below, "player xxxx has Invaded", luckily a summon sign appeared on the floor so I summoned him but when I did that the invader attacked me and almost killed me on one hit, I ran for it, healed myself, approached again, and when I started attacking the invader, my summoned player entered the game and was behind him and attacked from behind while I did from the front, the bad guy was in the middle and looked like a ping pong ball the poor guy, it was hilarious and a friend was at my house watching it.. true story.

I actually love the part where someone invades you I mean not only you have to worry about the traps and enemies but also about players trying to kill you, it is exciting,

I borrowed Demon's souls to a friend, and he said he didn't like it a lot, since my PS3 had died I couldn't play and didn't ask for my game back, a month later he could not stop praising the game, he bought his copy and we played it all coop, best gaming experience ever, I'm waiting for him to get his Dark Souls copy although it seems it's more tricky

now to play with friends.

It is so refreshing to have a game without difficulty options, as InsertDiskII said. Plus it wouldn't work anyway, I would hate to fight against a player that got all his armor and weapons by playing on easy, it wouldn't be fair, but I always leave my sign for others to summon me, so I can help them, it works for everyone like this.

It is far more enjoyable than most games out there too, you'll get to know the feeling after dying on a boss 3-10 times, and then either kicking his ass on your own or with help, it feels GOOD when you finally take the bastards down!

We should play together sometime InsertDiskII, I'm around level 103 now and I have a level 46 as well, or we could start playing it all coop from scratch



Dr.Khaos

on **January 17, 2012 at 9:06 am** said:

I really like that game to be honest. But i also bought the special edition for like 30 bucks. But I can understand when someone doesn't like it. Over the past months I always heard this debate about "hardcore gamers" and can't really agree. A game today can be hard but still entertaining and not frustrating (see batman:arkham city on hard mode).

So Dark Souls feels for me like a game which don't want's me to get in it. This is really hard to explain but there is still a barrier between me and the game. It might be the controls which im used to now. But from time to time I play it for a while.

It's not the revolution like everyone say's but still a nice game.



TheCathodeRayMission

on **January 16, 2012 at 7:04 pm** said:

I agree with most of Anjin Anhut's assessment.

I did complete the game, but begrudgingly so; upon completion I feel more duped than accomplished. Part of my motivation in completing it was to better understand the high marks that critics have been heaping on the title. What I wonder is, if this title did have an easier difficulty setting, would it have gotten the praise that it has?

I don't mind the difficulty, but any decent reviewer should take into consideration of the abundance of glitches; beating many of the bosses is simply recognizing poor design and taking advantage of it.

The boss of the game, Gwyn Lord of Cinder, was very dissatisfying for me — the controls being muddled as they are, and the collision detection as terrible as it is. Columns/stalagmites throughout his chamber out to provide an obstacle between the player and boss, yet his strike simply passes through the column sloppily. Is this a conscious design decision? Also, a leaping attack he will often perform wraps around those a column oftentimes. These instances are design annoyances, presenting the player with less flexibility on how to confront a boss than the world seems to indicate. It leaves me wondering if this game was adequately tested, or if any feedback was simply disregarded by the developers.

It's frustrating to read the blindly favorable reviews, in which flaws are regarded as virtues. I've read a review that acknowledged the controls as limiting and then promptly called them brilliant in how they force the player to work around them — to me this is madness.

Sure, some glitches may be patched out of the game, though I'm inclined to think they'll be left in so long as the player is hindered by them. Patching in itself, to me, is admission of the release of an unfinished product. Why would a craftsman not take more pride in the work they do?

But I can't blame the game-makers. It's the critics that have deified this title, turning a blind eye to the flaws. I recommend seeking game news from alternate sources — the humble Anjin Anhut, perhaps...



Holier

on **January 16, 2012 at 1:46 am** said:

Firstly i could just say you're only 6 hours into the game so you're not valid to give any sort of review maybe like a 500 word youtube esque comment but that's about it. it was quite an aggravating read.

when i read there are no hidden pathways it was annoying. firstly the statement there are no hidden anything is quite self contradicting, secondly you'd only played 6 hours so what would you know? and lastly you've haven't really read much about it thus you'd know there are PLENTY of hidden pathways. btw i'm like 35 hours into it.

why is i have a tendency to read ranting blogs. honestly if you need to rant just rant. why do it in blog form and if you will then... just rant. to try and intellectualise nonsense.

i haven't read all the comments here but from the general jist of it by now i think you should realise (whilst everyone's entitled tot heir opinion) you were just wrong on a lot of things and bad concepts in your argument.

so all i can say is let's be honest. wtf are you talking about... the only valid thing i can side with you on is (and you didn't especially make this point) is that dark souls is about 75% skill challenging/discovering and probably 25% getting souls to be easily more powerfull than your enemy or just trial and error whereby something is hard the first time simply because say it was a surprise attack which you'll easily no the next e.t.c. THAT is a valid criticism of the game. Your thinking throughout basically your entire post was just damn shoddy to be perfectly. Also the closest you came to making a worthwhile point was talking of difficulty settings... well even that's not really quite right... dark souls is meant to be hard... difficulty is tied with the whole aesthetic of the game. all the REALLY good challenging games never come with a easy, medium, hard e.t.c. for instance Legend of Zelda OOT (the greatest game ever made and i dont even like mentioning it most places on the internet for it taints my childhood memories having to use it in an argument against certain critical thinkers), don't think resident evil 4 had a difficulty setting nor did mario 64 those games were so Huge that that gave difficulty in itself. dark souls is difficult in aesethetic but is essentially just one of those epic games like zelda and all whereby difficulty settings are invalid. A game should naturally have some real life intuition to it and the game which can even implement a difficulty setting is probably not a natural game.

About hardcore gamers yoru rant. Fact is if you do dark souls without any help from teh internet or people anywhere, you're a hardcore gamer. If that gives you the right to call people like this guy not hardcore at this point in time then that's ok i guess.

'i'm used to hardcore gamers distinguishing themselves from 'gay gamers" – haha i'm not. You've put forward this argument that they've made a game which has this elitist agenda or ideal. No... the notion of hardcore gamer has been around for ages. This is really no different but perhaps the first to market itself as that because games on average have become more casual. So you're pretentiously (or whatever word describes this nonsense) just saying that now the notion of hardcore gamer is an elitist notion... please don't. well you can but you wouldnt be criticising dark souls you'd be criticising pretty much the whole idea of hardcore gaming/gamers.

89/100 – i really like the game and yet i'd say how that's a fine score. see how i take out my bias and think critically?

i dont know man why did you feel like writing a blog anyway? and maybe this whole blog thing you have to make it somewhat annoying/controversial coz then you get more commenters/views and stuff who knows.

That thing yuo said abotu the targetting system. Wtf... utter nonsense. sorry but only some casual gaminig 5 year old lol would find the targetting that bad. that's honestly what i think. the one bad thing about it would be as with msot targeting systems i think that it sometimes locks onto an enemy on a lower floor or something ie the wrong one but even then you intuitively flick the r3 stick to another target if you want or if no target in sight you juts click again on the r3 button.

maybe you work for some company that wants bad publicity for it who knows. All i know is yer said a lot of wrong. i mean a lot of wrong. and i dont know why you asked for people's email on here too.

So i could have just said you've only played 6 hours and you thus aren't valid to say about 50% of the points and facts you tried making but what would be the fun in that.

I'd just like to mention the dark souls architecture is amazing like you can explore that game and discover so much and there's no direction and it all leads back and connects. you gota play it.



Anjin Anhut

on **January 16, 2012 at 11:09 pm** said:

@holler Please don't write comments here, while being drunk. Thank you.



Luigi

on **January 15, 2012 at 10:22 am** said:

Thank fuck! Someone else actually GETS that this game is not what it purports to be! It's NOT THE DIFFICULTY THAT'S KILLING ME – IT'S THE SHIT CONTROLS AND CAMERA!

I too played 'tough' games like Ninja Gaiden and Vanquish – and enjoyed them. Because they were still not frustrating to play because of poor design and poor mechanics and poor control!

Hats off to you sir for having the balls to stand against the crowd and not pretend to like it for the sake of 'being cool

and down with the kidz'.



Anjin Anhut
on **January 15, 2012 at 11:54 am** said:

I'm tipping my head back to you, sir.



Jimmynopants
on **January 9, 2012 at 4:31 pm** said:

I really like this game.

I did lots of level-grinding so that I can now take out most bosses within a few hits.

I tend to kindle lots so I have a spare 20 estus flasks available.

Upgraded 2 handed weapons are good.

I've put my strength upto 32 which has helped a lot.

It's nice to play a game where every choice does make an impact.

I knocked two NPC character's off a cliff at the beginning of the game because I wasn't strong enough to have a proper duel with them.

Doh!

Now I don't know what they were holding, waaah! Nah it's cool :)

Wow I'm such a stats geek, woop!

I went to fight a big monster but I fell into the water and drowned. Oops!

This is random and very different to everyone else posting here but I thought I'd be pretentious and self-rightouessouss... I can't spell. Damn! I ain't as cool as I thought I was.

I think this game is great but I do really recommend being patient, take your time with it.

Level-grind to your heart's content.

You can say that again!

Ok... LEVEL-GRINDING YES YES!



Greg137
on **November 24, 2011 at 12:35 pm** said:

I have had a chance to chill out... I really don't see what in the world is wrong with the free market system.. Why should we be required to Purchase a game at the highest price in the land?! I will wait for the price to drop.. because I don't see a \$40 game here... Given the fact that the mind behind it was full of deceit, and I am thinking that those same people who made the game are paid to give rave reviews for it.. A Game developer should never try to lie to gamers to push their product.. Many times over If I offer my opinions I keep getting the feeling that the web is hostile territory to anyone with an honest opinion.. I didn't mean to be rude, but I get this feeling that a sub-par game shouldn't be relabeled as something good when it doesn't deserve it... This game is currently valued in my book at \$30-\$20 price range or less, my review for this game is on gamefly... With regard to rules of gameplay they are not always equal, if there are two combants, and they are physically identical, and one oponent stabs the other one and that other oponent ignores compleley the damage(please note that the combants being attacked didn't block at all, but the weapon passed straight through the one being attacked doing quite literally zero damage and no damage effect call it a glitch if you will, but it is still cheating... The human players who on the other hand are told that if they take advantage of poor A.I . 's routing then they are called cheaters, but I can't make that claim against them.. Plus, the fact that Dark souls has a number of bugs in it, which are inexcusable, for any one to claim this game is the best invention since sliced bread.. I also think that if a game designer wasn't willing to remove the bugs in the game it certainly, can't be called cheating, since the developer never once thought to remove them! which in turn means that this game is not the perfect game that every one is claiming.. To: ajin anhut please remove the other remarks stated above... I was pissed at you.. I don't beleive that we should encourage those that make this sub-par effort like dark souls to be abold to continue with the destruction of the game industry...



Greg137

on **November 24, 2011 at 11:44 am** said:

I was only trying to make a point, that people go to great lengths to define a narrative... dark souls is not worth a \$40 - \$50 and that is my opinion..I won't spend that much either!! If I don't want to buy it that is also part of the free economy!! The problem is that we have to many people trying to define a narrative, and it is worst when our views are treated like garbage by the elites who lie through their teeth. if you don't like my opinion, sir! Then free speech is dead, because if that is considered arrogance that I don't agree with the "big dog" on campus then you are in league with him, and you can throw this in the trash can too!!! Since you don't like any one to disagree with elite snobs!!



Greg137

on **November 24, 2011 at 11:34 am** said:

I guess nobody really cares about my opinions any way....which means free speech is dead.. see ya!



Greg137

on **November 23, 2011 at 9:55 am** said:

rejected by admin



InsertDiskII

on **November 13, 2011 at 11:08 pm** said:

@greg137: "Rules" are the same for AI and PCs. Some of the AI are considerably stronger than PCs, but that is the point of, for example, bosscharacters, isn't it? There is no "cheating" AI in all of Dark Souls (even some of the instantkills from early on will become just very hard hitting attacks after some progression and proper equipment).

Dark Souls isn't making you pay more? Buy the game once, and you have it all.

Also, From Software hasn't produced a single guide either for Demon's Souls or Dark Souls. Both were released by Future Press. And both were 20 bucks when they were first published. Unfortunately, the print run of the original Demon's Souls guide was rather limited. But there is a second printing for the Dark Souls guide.

Anyway, you don't need to spend any money on guidance, since the various wikis for both games contain already an almost complete coverage of all aspects of said games. No further investment needed, in fact – with the upcoming patch for Dark Souls, some of the printed information is actually outdated or wrong.

I find your concept of "value" very questionable (for the record: should you aim for all achievements you are easily looking at 100-150 hours of gametime, compared to most 15hrs titles this is HUGE), and I am pretty sure it will hurt longtime-experiences like Dark Souls. On my first weekend with the game I just made it to the second bonfire in Undead Burg – not because the game kept content from me, but I wanted to prepare for battles ahead did other important things – there was no progression in terms of slain bosses or fabulous loot, but there was still important progression that made my life easier later on. It's not the kind of game were you get "the most out of it" by pushing it and rushing through. That kind of attitude can only lead to frustration and anger. Actually, not only with Dark Souls, but the majority of From Software games including the amazing Armored Core games. Just saying, you might want to take this into consideration before passing final judgement on the Dark Souls experience – because what you experience now will not drastically change in one or two more days. And this game as well as it's prequel a very bad "rental" games.



Anjin Anhut

on **November 23, 2011 at 6:40 pm** said:

@Greg137

Hey, behave yourself. Your comment went right into the trash can, just in case you were wondering. Feel free to try to state your point again. But cut that condescending shit out. Thanks.



Scott Lewis
on **November 13, 2011 at 4:35 pm** said:

I think you mean "God Hand" instead of "God Hard".



Anjin Anhut
on **November 13, 2011 at 5:42 pm** said:

@scott Nope, God Hard. The difficulty levels in Vanquish are: Casual Automatic, Casual, Normal, Hard and God Hard.



Greg137
on **November 13, 2011 at 9:34 am** said:

One thing I wish would happen is that a game would include a single rule book for all combatants.. Dark souls have two rule books one for the players and one for the computer.. Cheating is when there is two different sets of rules to abide by.. Gamers pay real money for a game, but I hate it when a game demands that you must pay again and again and again just to have a game that actually works.. Fraud is when you promise content, but continue to milk a gamer for their money in order to advance! I don't play MMOs, because I personally think they are frauds, but that is just me.. I am poor(on Social Security), and can't afford to keep paying and paying and paying, just to figure out a game..I am not made of money here.. If I am considered a lesser person because of that, then it would be considered snobbish not to mention that it is wrong to judge someone based on their wallet book!!! I have seen one practice that makes me sick, though.. It is when game companies send their employees out to hype the game by pretending to be consumers, or they will pay a reviewer extra for hyping the game, and silencing any opposition to it...

Gamers get the game, play the game only to find out later(only after playing it) that they have be lied to about the game or that the promised content is unreachable... This is why I am a fan of cheat codes and cheat devices, but there wouldn't be any need for them if those damned game companies would give us gamers a break!! We already have to "prove" ourselves in so many other areas of life,but leave it to a bunch of snobbish elitists to ruin our fun by demanding that we pay real money for some thing that isn't real(diablo 3 for instance)! Or that we have to pay \$90 for a strategy guide and game, but they wouldn't produce just the guide; like the way FROM Software did with Demon Souls(cash cow anyone?)!!!

Here is what you do... Rent the game from places like blockbuster or gamefly! It is a worth while investment to try the game before you buy game! That way you can tell... And just to show that it works to try the game first; if dark souls doesn't start improving my opinion of it soon I will send it back ands FROM software will be deprived of funding! FROM Software is blacklisted by me, which means i will not buy a game from FROM software unless I rent it first then I will be able to gauge its value! At this point the game seems more like in the \$20-\$30 department... Will it drop further?? That depends on whether or not it is able to save itself by the next mailing day... If my opinion is not improved by, then I WILL send it back!!



InsertDiskII
on **November 6, 2011 at 11:06 pm** said:

"So you are arguing that you need the hardness in Dark Souls to be mandatory, because if it was an option, a difficulty setting, you wouldn't know if you would actually take it?"

Yes. I like to be forced once in a while – sometimes you forget what you are really capable of until you are trying. And because I am just as lazy as the majority of people, more often than not I pick easy (as mentioned before) – but there is no shortcut here. Also to cope with things that I cannot change but just have to accept them the way they are – you know – that is just like in real life and a valuable lesson for every human being ;)

"And the mandatory difficulty, hindering people from advancing in the game, is there, so people don't miss out on stuff?"

I am pretty sure you know Halo. Did you know that Halo on "easy" and Halo on "legendary" are basically two different games? The difference in the AI is so remarkable in that game between those difficulty settings, and the huge appeal for a lot of Halo-fans comes from playing that game on "legendary". Everything below that is missing out on stuff. Sure, easy lets you finish the game – but you haven't seen Halo for what it really is then. And there are other examples like that, where higher difficulty actually makes a difference.

But yeah, cheers mate :)



InsertDiskII

on November 6, 2011 at 4:00 pm said:

I find it interesting that you only picked Hannah Montana and Call of Duty (I would still argue that an unappealing setting is the biggest blocker of all – because I am not going near any of the promised content by not even wanting it in the first place, excluding me per default ;)), However World of WarCraft you do not include. Even if I am King of the single-player games, in WoW I need the help of fellow players – if for whatever reason – they decided to not do stuff with me, I am screwed. Good luck doing that 40-man raid on your own... it didn't say so on the box, it just promised me high-adventure, dragon-slaying and Nighelf-wenches – but wander into an area not ment for your current level and your are toast – which is exactly happening in Dark Souls. Did anybody ever complain about that? I don't remember it – as it was back in 2003 “normal” for Roleplaying games to have areas you just shouldn't wander off in – not if you didn't want to catch a severe case of DEATH.

But I think this is maybe a bit pointless (since we could come up with hundreds of games proving or not proving this argument), let's disagree on the fact that you think DrkS is roadblocking you, while I think it's not.

So, the sole reason games should be accessible is that we can make them accessible? It boils down to “because we can”? As I said before, I am guilty of ploughing through games that serve more as a snack rather than an experience I deem worth my time. But don't you feel – as a game-designer I presume? – that you haven't created a good experience when people just rock your game and be done with it? I am pretty sure that Dark Souls, even on the people who don't like it, made an impression or impact. Whilst all those other games seem forgettable and just get replaced by another shortlived experience soon enough.

Again, this is me as a designer speaking, I want my stuff to be lasting rather than just being hip for the moment and begone in the next second. Wouldn't you be scared that people just miss out on stuff you have carefully crafted/designed/thought about (this is generally speaking not particularly about DrkS now) – do you believe the majority of people are strong-willed enough to go for hard or extreme or whatever. Sure I have the option, but will I actually take it?



Anjin Anhut

on November 6, 2011 at 4:34 pm said:

@insertdisk: S

Again, this is me as a designer speaking, I want my stuff to be lasting rather than just being hip for the moment and begone in the next second. Wouldn't you be scared that people just miss out on stuff you have carefully crafted/designed/thought about (this is generally speaking not particularly about DrkS now) do you believe the majority of people are strong-willed enough to go for hard or extreme or whatever. Sure I have the option, but will I actually take it?

So you are arguing that you need the hardness in Dark Souls to be mandatory, because if it was an option, a difficulty setting, you wouldn't know if you would actually take it? And the mandatory difficulty, hindering people from advancing in the game, is there, so people don't miss out on stuff? I so don't get it.

But I think this is maybe a bit pointless (since we could come up with hundreds of games proving or not proving this argument), let's disagree on the fact that you think DrkS is roadblocking you, while I think it's not.

Yeah, I'm actually pretty fine with that. Cheers.



InsertDiskII

on November 6, 2011 at 3:10 pm said:

Comments awaiting moderation? What's going on?



InsertDiskII from Twitter

on November 6, 2011 at 3:04 pm said:

Damn, used quotation marks – if you don't mind, please moderate my comment. Thanks.



Anjin Anhut

on November 6, 2011 at 3:31 pm said:

@insertdisk: I think, when somebody reads our exchange, the quotation marks work just fine... But, you can resubmit your comment in the form you like and we take the previous one out. But I don't think it's necessary.

Regarding your view on objective-nonsense in game criticism: Word! I think there should be waaaaay more open subjectivism in game reviews. Critics who are just upfront with their preferences and are reviewing the games from their own perspective. Yes, please.

Your "Hannah Montana also elitist?" example is not quite fitting. And also the Call of Duty analogy. To you those games are not accessible because of your taste, You find those games horrible and unappealing and therefore are excluded from enjoying them. I'm talking about access in the sense of access to promised content. No matter how gross Hannah Montana is to you, you still have the option to access that game, you can buy it and play it. That is not the case with Dark Souls. Dark Souls technically hinders people from accessing the later parts of the game, even seasoned players like me, by providing roadblocks. Even if players bought the game, being big fans of fantasy, third person adventure, RPGs, hard challenges ect, many of them won't get access to the things promised.

Why is there such a need to appease everyone with a game? Well, because it can be done. If there was a difficulty setting you could have access to exactly the same gaming experience like you have now. Nothing would change for you, since it is just an option and you can decide for yourself how you wanna roll. The only thing changing would be the access to the game you fought so hard for would no longer be exclusive to you. Other people not as patient, skilled, durable or whatever would also get access. That's why Dark Souls' mandatory hardness is elitist.



InsertDiskII from Twitter
on **November 6, 2011 at 2:58 pm** said:

Funny you mention hiking, I am sucker for trips to Scandinavia into the middle of nowhere ;) Gazing into the midsommar-sky, it's the most magical time – the one time where one does truly feel alive on this earth. But I digress...

I never said it was a good game (and even that is up to debate, depending on where you are coming from), I said it's a good experience!

I know of it's flaws, it's inaccessibilities, problems, glitches and issues – yet, and that was my point, it's you as a person making or breaking this experience. In fact, the way you tackle this game could make you reflect on yourself. Only games that in one way or another "stick out" do that to me (again, mileage may vary here).

It actually boils down to a flawed way how games are reviewed. And is another discussion all in itself. If game reviews would finally stop this whole "objective"-nonsense, get rid of the numbercrunching and finally start actually acting more like book- or movie-critique things would be different, and this argument wouldn't be happening. I agree with you that you cannot put Dark Souls next to Uncharted, a Mario Game or some downloadable title in a list with "scores". It can only lead to disaster and frustration, cause it might make trick people into believing the experiences are comparable to each other. Which they are not. Sleeping in the Ritz-Hotel is different from camping in the wild – both can be extremely awesome, but that wholly depends on your point of view, your experiences, likes and dislikes. Why aren't we making that distinction in game reviews and acknowledge the fact that people have different tastes, wants, needs? Why is that basic concept so hard to understand for people in this particular industry?

"To not be elitist, but to be inclusive." you say.

There are a ton of games that just bore me by subject matter, and are not including me in their audience. Is a Hannah Montana-game an elitist title? Because I will not touch it, despite getting good scores at places. Call of Duty is extremely popular, getting rave reviews and everything – I find it to be a horrible experience – especially the single player with obvious flaws like invisible walls seem to be completely ignored. My point is, this whole system of ratings and reviews is flawed and rotten to the core, why pick Dark Souls to address this? Or actually, maybe you are right – Dark Souls is a perfect way to address this, as it proves that objective criticism and experience cannot and will never be able to be squeezed in 2 digits at the end of a text. Gaming as a whole would benefit from this p.o.v. in my sincerest opinion. As there would be no need to squeeze unconventional titles in a checkbox-corset that only fits so many games and not doing justice to those that stray from the usual formula.

Why is there such a need to appease everyone with a game? I am a fan of extreme metal, those guys making it would never half-think to make the music more compatible for the RnB crowd. And vice versa. Is that elite now? Why does gaming try to cater to both extreme metal and RnB crowds so to speak? It's just impossible. Why give the illusion it is – when every other form of media clearly shows that it is just that, an illusion.

"That kind of art is elitist. Actually that kind of ,Äö/Ń/you-need-to-get-it-to-appreciate-it,Äö/Ń/π art (modern art), is for decades now a symbol for snobbery and elitism."

That is a very one-sided concept of said artform. In fact, the original concept of it was to get from it what you get from it. There is no defined meaning, and you can appreciate a piece of modern art for a whole different reason than the person next to you. That was my point, there is no RIGHT or WRONG in expression. At least, there shouldn't be. And I find Dark Souls to be offering just that. It's indifferent to good or bad, right or wrong. You take from it what you take from it, be it all or nothing at all. Just the way we are talking about it right here shows how different we both took this game in. This fact in itself is amazing, if you ask me.

I agree with you on people belittling other people for not having the same experience or whatever is childish and stupid – but at least I am not like that, and I know others are not like that either. That is also why I am refraining from telling

you your opinion about this game is wrong, because it was your experience and it sadly wasn't as good as mine is.

"Yes! Yes, you are supposed to access what you paid for."

I don't see Dark Souls limiting your access to what you paid for. I think there are technically much more flawed games out there that got much bigger acclaim that would by technical errors prevent me from accessing the late game. I am just thinking horribly buggy Fallout 3 on consoles here. Dark Souls is far from that. But I don't see people bashing Fallout 3 for the bugfest that it was (and probably still is) instead it sits there with it's 90+ Rating among technically much cleaner games. How does this work out?

"game design and a lack of difficulty settings that block a player from accessing the game."

Who makes these rules? Where does it state that these artificial points are DESIGN LAW? Granted, I am a just a "Digital Media Designer" but never have I heard that something was inexcusable, if there is a thought process and concept going anything goes. Again, all I am seeing here is "how to generate cash". But is big budget game design really so limited? How do games like Minecraft come into play, that actually have no difficulty whatsoever? I am not fan of dogmatic rules, at least not for expression – because that would kill of all sorts of creativity if you are bound by some arbitrary ruleset YOU HAVE TO STICK TO. And games like Super Meat Boy wouldn't be around either if scalable difficulty was such a big deal? And dayum, did I love me some SMB :)

And call me naïve, but I consider my games not as "goods" and hate them get treated that way and in the long run becoming just that – "consumables" that help you kill some time. That is why polished games like Uncharted, Killzone, Gears of War or God of War don't captivate me, they feel like snacks. While Dark Souls is more of an exotic dish, with the big chance of being entirely not my taste – but how can I know that, if I don't try it?

"Promising game content on screenshots and in trailers and then completely blocking it for your paying customer is fraud."

Hmm... so, you think I should sue Epic Mega Games because I was so tired of Bulletstorm that I didn't even got to experience the Echoes Mode? They locked me out with an amazingly boring game (well after the initial rush wore off) – yet advertise it as super-awesome on the box? When I tried out World of Warcraft in 2003, I think there was some Onyxia-lair action in screenshots either on the homepage or the box itself... I never got to see Onyxia in my entire time playing WoW (which just lasted 1,5 years) because I wasn't lvl 60, not in a guild, and had no proper Tier-equip. So, is WoW fraud – because design-wise I couldn't reach endgame-content the moment I first logged into the game.

On a sidenote, check the speedruns of Dark Souls on YouTube, with a bit of planning you can see the entire game in under 2 hrs – just saying ;)

"Now you said it yourself in plain english, playing Dark Souls instead of games where you can dial down the difficulty makes you a better person."

Uhm, not exactly stating that Dark Souls makes you a better person? It was ment more as general life-experience thing. "The destination is worthless, if the road is easy" is a nice Warhammer-proverb fitting that just as well. It's a general view on life, not on gaming or Dark Souls. And as I am trying to say here, there are probably a billion more different views and beliefs to life than gaming. Is it elitist that we don't share that same concept of living on this earth, because we differ in our views and beliefs? Am I questioning your integrity as a person because I tread a different path than you? Whatever happened to live and let die?

"All what you have said in this last paragraph are spot on the excluding and self-applauding opinions and statements that I complain against. I don't know what to say, honestly, that final paragraph made my jaw drop."

I feel another misunderstanding happening. Where am I self-applauding myself? But we obviously have a very different line going between elitism and different opinion.

Just a final note, the concept behind Dark Souls is the same as the effect training has in sports (anything from soccer to boxing goes) – no pain, no gain – and there is no quick way to achieve it (well, steroids, but...), no work around – you just have to do it. Are athletes elite snobs now? You are not born a super-soccerstar, but you can become one – and that is the essence of the Dark Souls experience in my opinion. You are not cast into the world of Lordran as an unstoppable fighting machine, but in time you might become one. And every hour of braving the hardships of this game is an hour closer to that final goal.



InsertDiskII from Twitter

on **November 6, 2011 at 12:13 pm** said:

Since you label it as a rant, I am not entirely sure I should reply – however, since I get mentioned in the text (still can't believe that little remark hit you that bad – ;) or not) and having 30hrs done in Dark Souls already, about to be going down to Blighttown with Soullevel 89 I think I may comment on a thing or two.

My first question is, if Vanquish would have made you work to reach the point you kept constantly dying or made you restart the entire level – would you have gone through the troubles of dying 422 times? The gist I am getting from that first paragraph is, it was quick – there was no lost progress – it felt less like a waste of time. Now, I do love me some Vanquish, in fact it was GOTY for me the year it came out – but it couldn't be ANY different from Dark Souls. And I feel you just needed to get that out there so "hardcore" people would acknowledge you got a worthwhile opinion or something. Or to put it differently, your criticism on DarkSouls isn't getting any backup by showing you dug through

another difficult game (or actually a very nice scaling difficulty level). So, I can play through the first 3,5 levels of Metal Slug on a single life on the actual cabinet on max difficulty... what exactly proves that?

Anyway, let's address a few points of your text.

I do not understand how you could get so frustrated by the tutorial – 20 mins in you are in Undead Asylum facing like 10 Hollow Soldiers, that you could even take out barehanded. Honestly, I would love to see your playstyle. Because I can imagine you did a couple of beginner-mistakes that we all did in our first Souls game. The whole concept of progression is just so different to what we are used to in nowadays games (and I am not saying Dark Souls is oldschool, cause it's a modern game too, but different from the rest of them). Especially on unknown terrain you need to tread lightly, observing your surroundings, stopping once you spot enemies checking out if you can take them or not, if others are around, if it's a trap. Also, you need to pick your battlegrounds carefully. If you got the wrong equipment for a narrow corridor, you might get hit or not being able to hit back. Also you want freedom to evade, to get behind an enemies back. And if you get cornered, it's end of the line. Thus you need to have an escape plan ready BEFORE you start attacking. The whole battlesystem is the closest thing I know to an actual melee-fighting simulator. There was Bushido Blade before, which was an excellent game too, but the Souls games take it one step further. A whole lot of fascination just comes from the fact that in Dark Souls whenever you pick a new weapon, you are basically starting from scratch – learning how that particular weapon handles, where the hitboxes are and what you can do with it in certain situations. To effectively wield a weapon is one of the major points of motivation for me. And no other game on the market right now has such a thought-through fighting mechanic. At times it almost feels like a classic Beat'em Up with Invincible Frames, Hitboxes and certain timeframes in which you can attack. It's just lovely. Adding backstabbing, parry moves including counterattack, plunge attacks (which the majority of enemies can't defend against, even when the cover behind shields) and falling attacks you got a broad arsenal of possibilities – but you need to fight in a favorable environment for your fighting style to work. That is something I don't see in other games – usually, you get to the point where you are supposed to fight the enemy – mostly Arena-type areas, with it being artificially locked till you killed everything or triggered a certain event.

And don't get me started on the ingenious stamina-mechanic. The whole risk-management is awesome. Play like your average God of War and be doomed – but once you consider the amount of Stamina consumption by blocking certain attacks against loss of stamina through evasive-roll, against circlestrafing (if possible) and knowing when to go all out or keep some stamina for incoming counters. Also exposing yourself to get more stamina back by not having a shield up is just sweet. It all comes natural after a while, and makes sense.

All of this could be considered slow, cumbersome – even bothersome. But it is the most effective way to make you feel alive in this game. How many games do you know where a bunch of trashmobs are a serious threat? Running into three enemies in a narrow area in this game: you are screwed in most cases (or take the damage you are like to receive and try to make it out alive). And all of this happens all the time at the same time. Now I did some Live Action Roleplaying when I was younger (and we used some steel weaponry too, I still got a Bastardsword from that time, weighing a nice 2kg, preferably wielded by 2 hands, otherwise the fatigue in your arm will get you killed), just believe me here – this game is pretty close to delivering that feeling of doing actual medieval combat without becoming unplayable. So, I totally agree when you say “because controlling your fighter is complicated, sluggish and unresponsive” – what you forget to say is, that this becomes worse in certain situations (you lose stamina by blocking damage, you may get stunned or pushed back if the enemies strength is considerably higher than yours, resulting in an unprotected timeframe in which other enemies can get hits in) and clearly shows this was by design rather than lack of polish.

To put it short, Dark Souls celebrates battle – like no other game I currently know.

And thus “being fast paced, simple and short. Dark Souls doesn't even get close to recreating that” is absolutely true. Because Dark Souls wasn't an arcadey game to begin with – it's not supposed to lure you in with an easy concept and then take your money. It's complex from the get-go, tells you little and makes you work – also, it already has you money in most cases. This whole oldschool-nonsense is just coming from gamereviewers who didn't understand their oldschool games in the first place and confusing all sorts of “hard” with one-another. But I mostly think they usually just romp through easy-settings to get their review done in a timeley manner and have forgotten that some games actually feature an underlying gamemechanic that you need to work with and learn, at least in normal- or hardmode or whatever. And before you think this is arrogant or an excuse, it happens:

<http://www.neogaf.com/forum/showthread.php?t=449885>

However, especially on the 360 version THERE IS INPUTLAG! Which might make you feel uncomfortable, there is a patch underway fixing that. I suggest you give the game a second chance if that patch is live.

Next stop, targetting-mode. Auto-targetting would get you killed.

The combatsituation constantly changes, in fact, against certain enemies I am not using the targeting mode at all – because it's easier to be in control without it. You did realize you can circle through enemies by pushing the right stick either left or right, right? The targetting system is simple, true, but especially in this game, it gets the job done. Battles against groups of enemies wouldn't work if the game picked my target, and due to the changing nature of the situation, the camera would go haywire spinning like crazy, constantly readjusting.

HOWEVER, targetting is glitched in the current release, sadly – said patch above is supposed to fix these problems as well.

I will not adress the whole “sense of accomplishment” paragraph any further though, since, for a lacking a better word, it seems ignorant. Luckily, design is in the end a very subjective matter – being pissed off at a game going a different route and people liking it for that – for it is a complete departure of what we are getting in any other game – is silly. I am hoping my little text here will prove there is immense fun and excitement to be had with this game. Do you really believe this is all made up? That people imagining they are having fun with it, when they actually don't have it? This is not a hardcore thing, since Dark Souls is not hard. It has a learning curve, definitely needs some polish (again, especially the 360 port seems to be worse off than the PS3 version) and glitches out on occasion, but there is an experience in this which is unlike other games. And the best thing is, it's so diverse. You can ask three people why they liked Demon's Souls, and they will tell you three different things. Some digged the atmosphere and artdirection, some loved the difficulty, some tremendously enjoyed the PVP and trolling other people online. It's all genuine fun – and it remains genuine fun even if you don't like the game or the “hype”.

I think your main problem with Dark Souls is, that it's not telling you “HERE HAVE YOUR SHINY REWARDING

EXPERIENCE". The game is what you, the player, makes of it. It's not telling you, you have done good or anything. Doesn't pepper you in cutscenes or achievements, unlockables and flashy YOU WIN screens. And there is no reward at the end, the big revelation... it's not coming, since it's not there. In fact, I feel more accomplished beating some normal enemies and braving unknown terrain without getting killed than destroying the big bosses. Some people get no kicks out of the PVE at all and went straight for kicking online-ass. For those people it's probably a 110% out of 5 golden gameplay-twinklies. It's unfortunate you haven't found what satisfies you in Dark Souls, but it can't be helped. But telling others to not try to express that in scores and ratings is a bit silly, don't you think? I haven't yet read a review that hasn't mentioned framerate issues, glitches and problems – yet they still give a high-score. Maybe the experience is bigger than the flaws?

And all this nonsense-talk of gamer-credibility? Who gives a flying fuck about it? I play many of the polished "big" games on easy, because I am not caring for them – just wanna beat them, see some pretty lights and have them done (and even on easy I found Gears of War 2 annoying – total casual gamer right there). But I completed Demon's Souls 1,5 times and probably will pour 100hrs into Dark Souls. Am I hardcore, am I casual? Does anybody care? I am in this for the game (for 20 years now, does that boost me more into the hardcore-side of things again?), not some "l33tr0xx0r" calling me a noob or whatever.

Okay, this is getting too long already – I am not getting the elitist part in the final part of "sense of accomplishment". I for one appreciate a game company coming though with a concept, that wouldn't leave the drawer of any western developer (at least no developer going big instead of indie-games or XBL/PSN – cheers to Team Meat :)). You also fail to give me reason why a game should be accessible for everybody? Let's just imagine games are "art" or at least a viable form of "expression" that is not just serving the purpose of generating moolah for the publisher – we'd get a SHITLOAD more "specific" games like the Souls-games. Because suddenly different things matter, and people would embrace the concept of that some people will just not like it or not being able to grasp it's content by design. Where does it state you have to cater to all audiences? Old games didn't do that, why should new games suddenly do it if not for big sales?

And difficulty settings are just a way out for people who don't want to actually spend time with the game itself, they just want to waste time with the game (I am guilty of that, see Gears of War 2 mentioned above) – being a designer myself, I can understand why you want to force your audience to actually experience what you intended, rather than just taking in the watered down gist of thing and forgetting about it all once the next big thing shows up on their piles of shame. Also, there is nothing wrong with admitting defeat – are you supposed to finish a game because you paid for it? Shall it comfort you, because you exchanged hard earned cash for it? In fact, how are you supposed to grow (not only as a gamer but also as a person) if you can get away with just switching to a lower difficulty setting if the going gets rough?

"Why would anybody appreciate a game that puts artificial barriers up and blocks a large part of people from playing?"

They shipped 1,5 million copies, I think a lot of people ARE playing. Spend some time with the game and in time you will learn it's not "super hard difficulty" – far from it. In fact, so far it is much more forgiving and generally easier than Demon's Souls thanks to some interesting design choices like the bonfires. But that is another comment for another day.

@Mario: Try the game please, I for one enjoy reading the various opinions this game generates.



Anjin Anhut
on **November 6, 2011 at 1:40 pm** said:

@InsertDiskII

Whoa, that is whole article for itself there. Nice. I really appreciate somebody taking the time to speak for game here. Thanks. And no worries, your remark didn't hit me particularly bad and we already cleared that up on twitter. I mentioned it here because it is very much symptomatic for the climate in which Dark Souls is discussed. So again, no worries there.

Also I understand that you and all the other people, reviewers and fans really dig that game. I'm telling nobody that they got tricked into thinking they like it or something. It is still dishonest in my opinion to call it a good game. You saying "it is a good game" is like a Bear Gryll survivalist spending his vacation in the woods, sleeping on the floor, eating roots and insects and then getting back to civilization and telling everybody about this great hotel he was in. You enjoy Dark Souls for what it is and for what you are when playing it, same as a survivalist does when he camps out in the wild, but that does not justify making a list of games giving them rates and putting Dark Souls up at the 89% slot.

And regarding your final paragraph defending against the elitist argument, you actually support my argument with what you say. Let me address a few quotes:

You also fail to give me reason why a game should be accessible for everybody?

To not be elitist, but to be inclusive.

Let's just imagine games are fart...people would embrace the concept of that some people will just not like it or not being able to grasp...

That kind of art is elitist. Actually that kind of "you-need-to-get-it-to-appreciate-it" art (modern art), is for decades now a symbol for snobbery and elitism. And BTW Dark Souls is not sold as art and not rated as art, it is rated 89% as a commercial good next to other commercial goods like Deus Ex, Arkham City ect.

...are you supposed to finish a game because you paid for it? Shall it comfort you, because you exchanged hard earned cash for it?

Yes! Yes, you are supposed to access what you paid for. A broken DRM blocking you from accessing the game is as inexcusable nowadays as game design and a lack of difficulty settings that block a player from accessing the game. Promising

game content on screenshots and in trailers and then completely blocking it for your paying customer is fraud. It's just that there is no legislation yet (which I would NOT support btw for artistic reasons) to call it that.

In fact, how are you supposed to grow (not only as a gamer but also as a person) if you can get away with just switching to a lower difficulty setting if the going gets rough?

Now you said it yourself in plain english, playing Dark Souls instead of games where you can dial down the difficulty makes you a better person. Whoa... that... is... harsh and that is excatly, totally and to the point what I described as elitist. All what you have said in this last paragraph are spot on the excluding and self-applauding opinions and statements that I complain against. I don't know what to say, honestly, that final paragraph made my jaw drop.

Still, thanks for taking the time to put your view up here. I appreciate that my readership has access to varying opinions here.



Conaaando

on **November 6, 2011 at 5:48 am** said:

I hear you. And yes, I also think it is overrated. But what *really* pisses me off are those comments like: "Ah, if you don't like Dark Souls, Killzone or then you are NOT a hardcore gamer (loser), so I won't consider / respect your childish taste. Go play Farmville or something." — you know what I'm saying? Yeah, Vanquish can be that hard as well as Red Dead Redemption or Altered Beast. But you know what? I prefer to have fun while playing games and not torture myself just to be proud of be a "real gamer". People tend to take this particular entertainment industry waaaaaaaay too serious...



Mario Canario

on **November 6, 2011 at 4:50 am** said:

Have not played this dark souls game but I can truly sympathize with being tired of them hardcore gamers being holier-than-thou cos they can have more pain endurance than you. Such people also prefer to eat their frozen pizza without putting it in the oven, and drink their beer warm and flat just to show how hardcore they are. And, a small detail that you missed is that a lot of those authentic old school games...are actually completely unplayable.



Anjin Anhut

on **November 6, 2011 at 4:54 am** said:

@Mario

Hahaha, yeah, they are unplayable. But I was a kid, already bought the games and had nothing better to do to still try to play them over and over again.