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2012 action role-playing video game 2012 video gameDiablo IIIDeveloper(s)Blizzard Entertainment(a)Publisher(s)Blizzard EntertainmentDirector(s)Jay WilsonProducer(s)Alex MayberryDesigner(s)Kevin MartensDavid M. AdamsProgrammer(s)Jason RegierArtist(s)Christian LichtnerWriter(s)Chris MetzenComposer(s)Russell BrowerDerek DukeEdo GribbleJoe JurekJoseph LawrenceGlenn StaffordMichael WebbMusicPlatform(s)Xbox 360PlayStation 4Xbox OneMay 15, 2012South KoreaOS XMay 15, 2012United StatesMicrosoft WindowsMac OS XMay 15, 2012JapanNintendo SwitchNovember 2, 2018Nintendo Game Boy Advance back and slash, dungeon crawlMode(s)Single-player, multiplayerDiablo III is a 2012 online-only action role-playing dungeon crawling game developed and published by Blizzard Entertainment as the third installment in the Diablo franchise. It was released for Microsoft Windows and OS X in May 2012, PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 in September 2013, PlayStation 4 and Xbox One in August 2014, and Nintendo Switch in November 2018. Set 20 years after the events of Diablo II, players control one of seven character classes - Barbarian, Crusader, Demon Hunter, Monk, Necromancer, Witch Doctor, or Wizard - and are tasked with defeating Diablo, an expansion pack, Reaper of Souls, was released for PC in March 2014. It was released for consoles as part of the Diablo III: Ultimate Evil Edition version in August 2014. The Rise of the Necromancer pack was released for Windows, macOS, PlayStation 4 and Xbox One in June 2017. Diablo III: Eternal Collection, combining Reaper of Souls and Rise of the Necromancer, was released for PlayStation 4 and Xbox One in June 2017, and for the Nintendo Switch in November 2018. The game received positive reviews, although its always-on DRM feature was criticized. The game set a new record for "fastest-selling PC game" by selling over 3.5 million copies in the first 24 hours of its release, and became the best-selling PC game of 2012 by selling over 12 million copies. As of August 2015, the number of sales had grown to over 30 million. A sequel, Diablo IV, was announced in 2019 and was released on June 5, 2023. Much like Diablo and Diablo II, Diablo III is an action role-playing game with fast-paced real-time combat and an isometric graphics engine. The game utilizes classic dark fantasy elements and players assume the role of a heroic character charged with saving the world of Sanctuary from the forces of Hell. Many role-playing elements are present, such as choosing a character class, gaining experience and leveling up, and acquiring more powerful equipment. The quality and attributes of equipment are randomized. In addition to basic stats (such as damage output for weapons or armor points on armor) higher-quality items have additional properties such as extra damage, distribute bonuses, bonuses to critical hit chance, or sockets, which allow items to be upgraded with a gem. Magic-quality items have up to six, and legendary-quality items typically have up to eight with varying degrees of randomness. Set items are a subtype of legendary items which provide additional, cumulative bonuses if multiple items from the same set are equipped at once. Higher-level monsters tend to drop higher-level items, which tend to have higher base stats and bonuses.[1] The proprietary engine incorporates Blizzard's custom in-house physics, and features destructible environments with an in-game damage effect. The developers sought to make the game run on a wide range of systems without requiring DirectX 10.[2] Diablo III uses a custom 3D game engine[3] in order to present an overhead view to the player, in a somewhat similar way to the isometric view used in previous games in the series.[2] Enemies utilize the 3D environment as well, in ways such as crawling up the side of a wall from below into the combat area.[4] As in Diablo II, multiplayer games are possible using Blizzzard's Battle.net service,[5] with many of the new features developed for StarCraft II also available in Diablo III.[2] Players are able to drop in and out of sessions of co-operative play with other players.[6] Unlike its predecessors, Diablo III requires players to be connected to the internet constantly due to their digital rights management policy, even for single-player games.[7] An enhanced quest system, a random level generator, and a random encounter generator are used in order to ensure the game provides different experiences when replayed.[8] Unlike previous iterations, gold can be picked up by touching it, or coming within range (adjusted by gear) rather than having to manually pick it up. One of the new features intended to speed up gameplay is that health orbs drop from enemies, replacing the need to have a potion bar. The latter allows a player to assign quick key buttons to skills and spells; previously, players could only assign two skills (one for each mouse button) and had to swap skills from the keyboard or mousewheel. Players can still assign specific attacks to mouse buttons.[9] Skill runes, a new feature, are skill modifiers that are unlocked as the player levels up. Unlike the socketable runes in Diablo II, skill runes are not items but instead provide options for enhancing skills, often completely changing the gameplay of each skill.[10] For example, one skill rune for the Wizard's meteor ability reduces its arcane power cost, while another turns the meteor into ice, causing cold damage rather than fire. Diablo III's inventory and HUD retain a feel similar to that found in earlier games in the series, including a viewpoint reminiscent of the isometric view of Diablo II's predecessors. The inventory has sixty slots for items. Armor and weaponry each occupy two slots and all other items each occupy one slot.[11] It can also be expanded to include details about the character's attributes.Diablo III's skills window, depicting the abilities of the wizard class Diablo III gives players the choice to make hardcore characters.[12]Originally, players are required to first level up a regular character to level 10 before they have the option to create new Hardcore characters.[13] Hardcore characters cannot be resurrected; instead they become permanently unplayable if they are killed. Hardcore characters are separately ranked, and they can only form teams with other hardcore characters. After dying, the ghost of a hardcore character can still chat. Their name still shows up in rankings, but the character cannot return to the game. If the hardcore character reached level 10 before dying, it can be placed in the Hall of Fallen Heroes.[14] Artisans are non-player characters (NPCs) who sell and craft items. Two types of artisans can be introduced by completing a quest for each: Haedrig Eamon the Blacksmith and Covetous Shen the Jeweler. The Reaper of Souls expansion introduced the Mystic artisan, who can replace individual item enchantments and change the physical appearance of items. Artisans create items using materials the player can gather by scrapping acquired items and reducing them to their component parts. These materials are used to create items with rare bonuses. Unlike in Diablo II, Rare and magic items can also be enhanced rather than just basic weaponry and armor. Crafting can be used to train and improve the skills of the artisans rather than create new items. When artisans gain new levels, their shop reflects their higher skill level. The process of salvaging items into materials also makes inventory management easier. Blizzard stated that this crafting system was designed so that it would not slow down the pace of the game.[15] Followers are NPC allies that can accompany the player throughout the game world. There are three followers in Diablo III: Kormac the Templar, Lyndon the Scoundrel and Eirena the Enchantress, who each possess their own skills and background.[16] As followers fight alongside the player, they gain new experience, skills, and equipment as they level up. Only one follower accompanies the player at a time, creating a gameplay strategy decision. Originally, followers were only going to appear in Normal mode; however, Jay Wilson stated at BlizzCon 2011 that followers would continue to be usable in later difficulty levels.[17] On August 1, 2011, it was reported that Diablo III would feature two types of auction houses: one where players spend in-game gold and another where players could buy or sell virtual items for real-world money.[18] The real-money auction house was not available in Hardcore mode.[19] Prior to release, Blizzard stated that nearly everything that drops on the ground, including gold, could be traded with other players either directly or through the auction house system. Aside from certain bound on account items, such as the Staff of Herding needed to access the Whimsyshire easter egg, Blizzard stated there would be very few items that would be bound to a particular character and therefore untradeable.[19] In order to get rated in South Korea, Blizzard had to remove the real-money auction house from the Korean release of the game as the auction house violated Korean anti-gambling laws.[20] In the gold-based auction house, a flat fee of 15 percent was taken from the final amount, and an auctioneer's commission of 5% (or 10% for low-value items) was applied to weapons and armor) and a 10 percent fee was levied on jewelry. Items crafted using the Auction House, such as blacksmith and jeweler crafting plans, avoid exorbitant fees. However, an auctioneer's 5 percent commission-outcome from profits gained selling items on an auctioneer's real-money auction house was equal to what they would receive if they played the real-money auction was restricted to place items from their home country, which was a different type of restriction. This was done to prevent players from being able to easily cross the border between countries to take advantage of the lower commission rate. The real-money auction house was opened on June 12, 2012 (June 15 in the Americas). In March 2013, former Diablo III game director Jay Wilson stated that he felt the existence of the auction houses "really hurt" the game. "I think we would turn it off if we could," Wilson said during his talk. But the solution is "not as easy as that." [23][24][25] On September 17, 2013, Blizzard stated that both the gold and real-money auction houses would be shut down on March 18, 2014.[26] Players had until June 24, 2014, to claim gold and items from the completed tab on the auction house interface.[27] During a panel discussion at the Portland Retro Gaming Expo in 2022, Jay Wilson stated that the delay in shutting down the auction houses was due to legal issues that could potentially follow, since the feature was being advertised on the retail packaging of the game. According to Wilson, the company "took a long time to try and work out all the legal issues" prior to removing the auction houses from the game.[28] Player versus player combat (PvP) was added to Diablo III in a limited form with the 1.0.7 patch in February 2013. The Brawling system provides a free for all area where between two and four characters can fight and defeat each other as long as they like, but without any scores or damage being tracked.[29] Players can participate by choosing from their existing characters, with access to all of the gear and skill they have gathered from playing the game in single-player or cooperative mode. PvP content for Diablo III had been discussed throughout the game's development, but on March 9, 2012, Blizzard announced that PvP had been delayed and would not be included with the game's release.[30] The Starter Edition of the game was initially planned to include a limited form of PvP, but this was dropped because it did not have enough depth. Instead a simple PvP system would be added for the time being.[31] That PvP mode was initially named Dueling, and was renamed to Brawling before release.[32] Although the PvP systems initially outlined were not released, Blizzard stated that they would add other full-featured PvP systems in a free future content patch. In a May 2013 interview, Diablo III developer Wyatt Cheng stated that the development team was looking to see how the Brawling PvP evolves, while they "continue to work on figuring out something more objective-based".[33] There are five available character classes from Diablo III, one more from the Reaper of Souls expansion, and another from the Rise of the Necromancer DLC pack (which requires Reaper of Souls) for a total of seven character classes.[34][35][36] In Diablo III players may choose the gender, in contrast to the previous two games where each class had a fixed gender.[4] The Barbarian (voiced by Dorian Harewood and Athena Karkanis) was initially the only returning class from Diablo II, and according to Jay Wilson the original backstory (since discarded) envisioned the male as the same character from Diablo II but now 20 years older. Barbarians have a variety of revamped skills at their disposal based on incredible physical prowess. The barbarian is able to whirlwind through crowds, cleave through swarms, leap across cracks - crushing opponents upon landing - and grapple-snap enemies into melee range. The resource used by the barbarian is fury, which is generated through attacking enemies, getting attacked by enemies, and using certain abilities. Fury is used for the barbarian's strongest abilities and degenerates over time.[37] The Demon Hunter (voiced by Robin Atkin Downes and Laura Bailey) combines elements of Diablo II's amazon and assassin classes, most notably her lightning arrows and knives of death, and is armed with chain weapons and can also throw shadow bombs and summon demons. She is able to perform a variety of ranged attacks, including ranged lightning bolts, lightning traps, and lightning spheres. She is also capable of slowing enemies using defensive abilities involving acrobatics or shadows.[38] The Monk (voiced by Jason Esposito and Rajia Barakat) is a melee fighter who can resist damage by blocking strikes, attack with blinding speed, and land explosive kicking blows. Monk gamemasters combine the monk's elements of Diablo II's assassin class with the "holly warrior" role of the paladin. Diablo has stated that the monk is not related in any way to the monk class from the Sierra Entertainment-made Diablo: Hellfire expansion.[39] The monk is fueled by spirit, which has defensive purposes and is slowly generated through attacking, though it does not regenerate.[40] The Witch Doctor (voiced by Carl Lumbly and Erica Luttrell) is a new character reminiscent of the Diablo II's necromancer, but with skills more traditionally associated with shamanism and voodoo culture. The witch doctor has the ability to summon monsters, cast curses, harvest souls, and hurl poisons and explosives at their enemies. To power spells the witch doctor uses mana, a vast pool of mental power which regenerates slowly.[41] The Wizard (voiced by Crispin Freeman and Grey DeLisle) succeeds the sorceress from Diablo II and the sorcerer from Diablo. The initial backstory for the female wizard described her as a rebellious sorceress who could not be tamed. The wizard's abilities range from shooting lightning, fire and ice at their enemies to slowing time and teleporting past enemies and through walls. Wizards fuel their spells with arcane power, which is a shallow but fast-regenerating power source.[42] The Crusader (voiced by Gideon Emery and Mary Elizabeth McGlynn) is a Reaper of Souls expansion character and is similar to the Paladin from Diablo II; in the backstory these two classes plus the Templar make up the three military orders of the Church of Zakarum. The crusader has a variety of combat skills at its disposal based on physical prowess, and typically wields a shield and an associated weapon (typically a flail). The crusader has an eclectic mix of magical powers, but Margot, leader of the Dark Covenant, recruits the third piece, and tries to make Cain repair the sword. Leah, however, kills the cultists with a surge of magical power, forcing Magdala to attack Cain fatally and flee with the stranger. Before dying, Cain repairs the sword and discovers it to be of angelic origin, and tasks the Nephalem with returning it to the stranger. After freeing the stranger from the Butcher in the dungeons beneath Leiah's manor and returning the sword, the stranger's memories are recovered, and it is revealed that he is the Archangel Tyrael, the Aspect of Justice. Disgusted with his fellow angels' unwillingness to protect humanity from the forces of Hell, Tyrael cast aside his divinity to become a mortal and warn Sanctuary about the arrival of the demon lords. Act II The Nephalem, Leah, and Tyrael travel to the city of Caldeum. The Nephalem leaves to track down Magdha. At the Khasm Outpost, demons in service to Belial, the Lord of Lies, have imprisoned and replaced the guards. When the Nephalem freed them, they reclaim the outpost and the Nephalem is given access to Alcamurus, then fights and kills Magdha. The Nephalem then returns to Caldeum to rescue Leah from Belial's forces, disguised as the guards of the young Emperor Hakan II, after which they escape into the city sewers. Leah reveals that her mother, Adria (the witch of Tristram from the original game), is still alive. The Nephalem aids Leah in rescuing Adria from her imprisonment in the sewers. Adria reveals that the key to stopping the forces of Hell is the Black Soultstone, crafted by the renegade Horadrin Zoltan Kulle, which has the power to trap the souls of all seven of the Lords of Hell. Leah explains that Kulle was slain before he could complete the stone, and that his severed head was sealed away. Adria instructs the Nephalem to find the head. After the head is retrieved, Leah revives the ghost of Zoltan Kulle, who agrees to deliver the Black Soultstone if the Nephalem helps him restore his body. After the Nephalem finds his body, Leah brings Kulle back to life and the Nephalem releases the soul of the demon lord Baal. Baal escapes to the city of Westmarch, where he summons the demon lord Mephisto. Mephisto sends the Nephalem to the city of Westmarch, where he summons the demon lord Mephisto. Mephisto sends the Nephalem to the city of Westmarch, where he summons the demon lord Mephisto. 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