



Cyberpunk 2077 gamespot review youtube

Editor's note (December 15, 2020): The following review of Cyberpunk 2077 is based on the PC version of the game, as GameSpot did not receive console codes for the game until its release on December 10. There is a significant disparity in performance on PS4 and Xbox One compared to the PC version of Cyberpunk 2077 (as well as the console version running on PS5 and Xbox Series X). Developer CD Projekt Red has acknowledged the last-gen console version's poor performance, even offering refunds--and promising patches in early 2021. You can watch our base PS4 vs. PS5 comparison video to get a feel for how Cyberpunk 2077 plays on different hardware, but as it stands, GameSpot cannot recommend you play Cyberpunk 2077 on last-gen consoles; the frame rate is wildly inconsistent to the point of severe interference with gameplay, and frequent texture pop-in and poor visual quality overall make Night City muddy and ugly to look at. These versions also feature the litany of bugs we experienced on PC. We will revisit this when significant patches arrive, as well as when the game performs far better on next-gen hardware already). The original PC review, published on December 7, 2020, continues below. Early on in Cyberpunk 2077, there's a series of side quests that has you tracking down rogue taxis run by faulty AI. You have to talk one of the taxis down from suicide as it contemplates driving off a bridge, while another needs to be brute-forced into behaving, and a third is an obvious reference to a famous video game AI that manipulates you as you chase it down. It's one of the best minor questlines in the game, an intriguing and surprisingly human substory that rewards you with lots of much-needed cash. It's also an excuse to send you to every corner of Night City, a clever introduction to all the areas you haven't yet been. I spent a lot of my playtime following side-quest threads like this one, excited about the premise and hoping to find something as interesting or fun or rewarding at the end and, in many cases, I did. But now, after finishing the main story, I can't see how most of those activities fit into the overall narrative or the character I was playing. The main story doesn't even gel with itself.Cyberpunk 2077 draws heavily from its source material, with everything from the world itself to the life and death of Johnny Silverhand coming from its pen-and-paper inspiration. But unlike in a tabletop RPG, you aren't playing a role of your own creation in Cyberpunk 2077; you're playing V, and this is V's story, not yours. I often felt like I was role-playing two different characters: one V for the main story puts you on a clock. It's not literally on a timer, but it is very urgent in the way that RPG stories often are, and it has the same pitfalls as a result. It feels weird to do throwaway fun stuff when you have a serious, ever-present threat to attend to, and in V's case, it just doesn't make sense to dally. You have more freedom to play the character you really want to during side activities, but main-story V has clearly defined priorities. I often couldn't find the character I'd been developing via side quests when I returned to the main plot--not in how I'd been shaping her personality as she reacted to events, nor in the hacker I built as she was forced into more traditional boss fights. Welcome To The MachineI knew from the outset that I wanted to play as a hacker, so I sped through the character creator, gave my V points in intellect and cool for hacking and stealth, respectively, and started the game. I had picked the Nomad lifepath out of the three total options because it was the only one that positioned V as an outsider to Night City; I figured that I didn't know Night City; I figured that I didn't know Night City; I figured that I didn't know Night City yet as a newcomer to the game, so why should V?From what I can tell, that lifepath choice didn't affect more than the way the game starts and some dialogue options throughout (and possibly some minor side quests). Now that I've finished the story, I'm much more curious about the Corpo lifepath, in which V used to work at antagonist corporation Arasaka, and how that fits into what I played, but it doesn't feel like a majorly important decision in my experience. The real RPG core is in your five main stats, which are further split into two or three different skill trees, each providing various benefits to combat, stealth, hacking, and so on. Using these subskills will passively level them up and give you additional benefits, ensuring you grow according to how you play in addition to how you actively invest points as you level up.Looking the part (captured on PC by GameSpot producer Jake Dekker)The parent skills mainly govern what dialogue options you can use and what kinds of doors you're able to open, at least in the moment-to-moment (they otherwise provide minor stat boosts). Because of this, I tended to invest skills based on my curiosity in conversations or to access areas I wanted to explore. For example, I'd bank points until I found myself in front of a door that required X points in body to force open, and then I'd level up right there and then so I could see what was behind the door. Because the subskills have their own leveling and points system, I found I could freely invest overall skill points without sacrificing my hacking goals--at least when it came to the traditional RPG progression. Hacking into computers and transferring money to your account is one thing; it only requires enough points in the intellect parent skill, just like how body allows you to open certain doors. On the other hand, quickhacking, which allows you to manipulate cameras, turrets, enemies, and more in hostile scenarios, requires a lot of cyberware investment. Specifically, you need a good cyberdeck--which determines how many different quickhacks you can equip--that has enough RAM so you can use ones that demand more memory. Cyberware in general is not cheap. On top of that, an early story mission is gated by a significant sum of money, so I had to do a lot of grinding before I could afford a proper cyberdeck that made my quickhacks truly effective. Until then, I felt like I had to use guns a lot more than I wanted to, which didn't fit with how I initially built my character. I didn't mind the guns overall, though; while it's not on par with dedicated first-person shooters, the gunplay is decent. It's a little clunky, even after tweaking my sensitivity settings, but the aim assist does the heavy lifting. Once I got a good cyberdeck and equipped better quickhacks, combat really picked up for me. I had a quickhack that reset an enemy's optics--pretty much everyone in Night City has cyberware in place of organic eyes--and temporarily blinded them, which allowed me to sneak past. I was able to shut off entire camera systems to see how many enemies I was dealing with, then figure out who to distract and in which direction so I could move from room to room undetected. If that didn't work, I at least knew I could jam their weapons or shock their systems from afar. When I found my rhythm and found the cash, I really enjoyed quickhacking as an alternative approach to combat, and it was always satisfying to get in, steal a bunch of money off some computers, and get out without being spotted. You can buy much nicer cars in Cyberpunk 2077, but all of them get you where you're goin'. Because I was so focused on this aspect of my character (and saving money to invest in it), I didn't end up spending much time on other approaches; I got the mantis blades, which are cyberware swords that spring out of your arms, so late in the game that I barely used them. Other cyberware upgrades, like a leg modification that gives you a double-jump, were so expensive that I'd have to opt to take on side jobs just to afford them, though this becomes easier later in the game when those gigs have bigger payouts. In fact, most nice things in Night City are prohibitively expensive, and I found that money was often the only obstacle when it came to progression. Granted, I was playing Cyberpunk on a tight deadline, so I couldn't spend much time doing odd jobs. But there is a ridiculous amount of stuff to buy and seemingly endless moneymaking jobs to take on. There's even a whole section in your quest journal dedicated to all the cars people have offered to sell you--though you start the game with a car, and I got multiple free vehicles for completing side quests, so I never bought a car and couldn't find a real reason to.Mad CityThat's emblematic of the world of Cyberpunk 2077. It is so full of things to buy, to do, to see, and yet so much of it doesn't feel essential. Night City is massive, and while you can fast travel from specific points, you'll often need to walk or drive a bit to your destination. I started to compare prices from one ripperdoc to the next--they're how you upgrade your oh-so expensive cyberware--but stopped after the third because I didn't want to drag myself across the city all day. I went clothing shopping only once for the same reason, and I'd managed to loot more than one cute outfit off of corpses anyway. There's even an entire crafting and item upgrade menu that I never actually needed to use, given that I was regularly looting better gear and items off my numerous enemies; at least in my playthrough, I had no reason to engage with these systems at all.Night City is beautiful and vile. The architecture is often stunning, and some of my favorite sections of the game were when I drove from one district to the next, radio turned up, taking in all the neon lights and monolithic megabuildings piercing the sky. Then I'd get out of the car and hear one of the oft-repeated advertisements blaring out onto the street and quickly snap out of the reverie of driving. There's one ad that's just a man making a long, exaggerated orgasm sound that tended to pierce through any conversation I was having. It's a tough world and a hard one to exist in, by design; with no apparent purpose and context to that experience, all you're left with is the unpleasantness. The ads are one of many, many aesthetic choices in Cyberpunk 2077 that are grating with no real point. There's one ad in particular that was the topic of much discussion pre-release; it features a feminine person with a giant, exaggerated, veiny erection in their leotard and advertises a drink called Chromanticore with the tagline "mix it up." It is everywhere. And while the "purpose" of it may be to show what a sex-obsessed, superficial, exploitative place Night City is, there's nothing in the main story or any of the side quests I did that gives it even that much context--I found just one message on one of the many computers I logged into that commented on how low-brow Night City culture is. The result is that there's a fetishization of trans people at every turn, in a game with only one very minor trans character (that I found, at least) and no way to play as an authentically trans character yourself. I found and read tons of text logs, scoured people's private messages, listened to radio and TV programs and random NPC conversations, and I struggled to find justifications for many of Cyberpunk's more questionable and superficial worldbuilding choices. It's a world where megacorporations rule people's lives, where inequality runs rampant, and where violence is a fact of life, but I found very little in the main story, side quests, or environment that explores any of these topics. It's a tough world and a hard one to exist in, by design; with no apparent purpose and context to that experience, all you're left with is the unpleasantness. Scenes from Night City. There are instances where the game does start to do more with an initially superficial choice, but these threads are often dropped quickly. For example, in the pen-and-paper game, the Voodoo Boys were a group of mostly white men who used "voodoo" stereotypes to scare people. In 2077, they are a group of Haitian people displaced by natural disaster (by my interpretation, one caused by climate change). At one point in the main story, you can ask a Voodoo Boys member what the name is about, given they don't actually do anything associated with "voodoo"; he tells you to ask the people that call them that and refuses to tell you what they call themselves. There's a seed of an interesting idea here--the labels given to the "other," diaspora, the trauma of losing your home--but none of this is ever explored again in the main story as I played it, nor in any of the many side quests I played, either. I didn't find another opportunity to interact with the Voodoo Boys at all. There's so much to cover that I can't possibly touch on everything, but my experience is that there are aspects of the game that feel lost in translation, invoking cultures that aren't adequately explored or contextualized. Characters in one side quest use the word "ofrenda" as if it means "funeral" when it's actually a particular kind of altar primarily for Day of the Dead--it's unclear to me if this is a translation issue or an overall misunderstanding of Mexican customs, since you do put together an altar during the event that's being called "the ofrenda." As another example, you can go to a clothing store in Japantown and buy "yukata" that are just wrap shirts bearing only the slightest resemblance to real yukata. It's not that Cyberpunk always gets everything wrong in its incorporation of a variety of cultures and backgrounds but that the world is so big and unruly that I never knew what I would find around any corner or if I'd understand what the intent behind it was--I just grew to accept that whatever I did find, at least in terms of setting and worldbuilding, would likely be superficial. With A Little Help From My FriendsThat's the case for the world overall and its background characters, anyway. You meet a lot of people in Night City, many of whom die in your wake like you're some sort of curse, while others just call from time to time with a job for you to do. The few that don't die and have proper arcs make up V's friends and love interests, and these are the characters that rightfully stand out. The first is Panam Palmer, who wins the award for the best name in the game. She's a rough-around-the-edges type of girl trying to make her own way in Night City and leaving her Nomad family behind in the process. This was the one instance where I felt my Nomad lifepath actually enhanced the experience--by choosing the Nomad-related responses, I actually felt like I was bonding with Panam over our similar backgrounds. Her quests are often fun, poorly thought-out heists, and by the end, I really did feel like I'd made V a lifelong friend who would drop everything to help her out.V with Panam Palmer, who is best described as a wonderful disaster.My favorite character, though, is Judy Alvarez, an earnest, hot-tempered, beautifully human character with the best arc in the game. She edits braindances, which are kind of like VR movies where you can acutely feel the recorder's emotions (and they're often used for porn). Judy is an incredibly gifted BD editor, and she's also a member of the Moxes, a gang of sex workers that look out for one another. Judy's story unfolds thanks to her fierce and endless desire to fight for her friends, which leads to some of the most interesting quests in the game-and some of the only ones that give you the ability to properly fight back against such a bleak, exploitative world. The final section of Judy's arc was my favorite in the entire game. It's a quiet respite from the lights and sounds of the city, an intimate look into the soul of her character, and provided you meet the requirements, contains the only sex scene I saw that didn't make me want to die on the spot. Romance doesn't play a major role in Cyberpunk, at least in what I saw and played, but you can sleep with sex workers and the occasional random NPC--although I wouldn't recommend it. The sex scenes are all POV-style to fit with the game's first-person perspective, and they are awkward. One was so awful that I actually rolled back my save and told the guy I'd rather be friends instead. He took it like a champ.Keanu Reeves: The Man, The LegendLegendary rockerboy Johnny Silverhand is with you for the vast majority of the game, showing up in pretty much every mission to try to influence your decisions, make snide remarks, or just kick back on a bed in the background while you talk to someone. His relationship with V is often antagonistic, sometimes playfully so, and other times outright hostile. Johnny is, simply put, an asshole. It's a testament to Keanu Reeves' performance that I actually liked him. He treated his friends badly and women worse. As dialogue options routinely point out, he may or may not qualify as a terrorist; before he died in 2023, he planted a nuke inside Arasaka Tower, an attack against corporate imperialism that ended up killing a lot of people and an important event in the original tabletop game. He's the kind of guy who gets away with far too much, and based on what I learned about him throughout the game, I'm surprised he died at the hands of Adam Smasher rather than by choking on his own vomit after a bender. Johnny is, simply put, an asshole. It's a testament to Keanu Reeves' performance that I actually liked him. Reeves is somehow able to make all of this interesting and kind of charming rather than extremely off-putting. For the most part, Johnny is a well-written character in that I was always curious to hear what he had to say and how he interpreted the situations we were in--I was never quite sure if his opinions had any merit, but I wanted to hear him out every time. It's Reeves' delivery of these lines, which often involve Johnny chastising you for something or other, that really sells the "lovable jerk" vibe that I would normally find overplayed. The push-and-pull of Johnny's opinions and your own adds a lot of color to even run-of-the-mill missions. At one point I didn't heed Johnny's condescending warnings and accepted a deal from a character who ended up tricking me, which also resulted in a lot of people dying (oops); another time, I pursued a side quest only because he practically begged me to do it, saying it was the most interesting thing we'd stumbled upon in a long time (and it did end up being unlike anything else in the game). The dynamic is compelling and left me on my toes, always wondering if I should listen to Johnny or follow my initial instincts.Keanu Reeves as Johnny Silverhand in Cyberpunk 2077.I'm not sure if there were necessarily any completely right or wrong choices in a lot of those missions, but Johnny's presence, and the ambiguity it brings, is supposed to have an effect on V's psyche, for better or for worse--it's a factor of the circumstances that put him in V's head in the first place. That Johnny could affect my decision-making, as well as how I interpreted each interaction, is a clever way to convey that. Bullet In The HeadAside from character highlights, side quests are far and away the best part of the game. Like the rogue taxi one I mentioned at the beginning of this review, there are quite a few clever, interesting, goofy, and sad side quests that I really enjoyed. On a gameplay level, they often provide a nice change of pace from the more combat-focused main story; sometimes you just talk to people, while a more involved one has you doing favors for Johnny since he's, you know, technically dead. One especially intriguing side quest had me playing detective, investigating a mysterious break-in at the apartment of a Night City mayoral candidate. Mechanically, it's a simple open-world "use your ability to highlight clues" gimmick, but what follows is a fascinating and kind of creepy look at Night City corruption, gaslighting, and whether it's better to tell someone the truth if it means it could get them killed. Conversely, I also did a really silly quest that involved a clown man with a grenade for a nose that had no point but was delightful in a weird way. He's literally just a clown, but I kind of love him? Side quests amounted to around 30 hours of my total playtime, and they were what propelled me through. While not every one lands, there are some that feel essential in a way that very little else in the game does. These include Judy's story arc and the taxi excursion as well as a much shorter story about a depressed man who lives in V's apartment building. Even on the tight review deadline, I kept finding myself seeking out just one more side quest before bed just because I was eager to see what I would find.All that said, when I finished the game, I felt empty. All the friends I had made, what I learned about Johnny, the way I developed my V as a character--much of it didn't seem to affect the urgency of V's main quest, and it doesn't seem to affect the urgency of V's main quest. sponsored murder coverup or the depths of corporate control of Night City life doesn't seem to change V's ambitions to be remembered as a legendary Night City merc. Falling in love didn't even give my V what she wanted. I got a lot out of the side quests and some of the characters, but I got very little out of the overall story. I don't quite understand the ending I got, but it made me sad. It didn't reflect the V I felt I'd developed, one who helped her curiosity. Worst of all, I have no idea what Cyberpunk 2077 is even trying to say. There's an overall theme of identity that is dashed by the dissonance between the V you actually play and the V you get in the end; otherwise, I couldn't tell you what Cyberpunk is trying to do with its beautifully grotesque world. I got a lot out of the side quests and some of the characters, but I got very little out of the overall story.2+2=5It also bears a mention: Cyberpunk 2077 is phenomenally buggy. I played a pre-release build that was updated during the review period, and there's a dayone patch planned as well, but the scale of technical issues is too large to reasonably expect immediate fixes. I encountered some kind of bug on every mission I went on, from more common, funnier ones like characters randomly T-posing to several complete crashes. I didn't notice much of an improvement after the update, either. In a very late-game very important fight, the game froze on me--twice. I ended up taking a break out of frustration before attempting, and finally succeeding, the third time. These bugs, more than any game I've played in years, took me out of the experience often. Non-interactable items like cardboard boxes will explode when you interact with something next to them; UI elements will stay on-screen long after they're meant to, which is only solved by reloading a save; characters will interrupt themselves during proper dialogue sequences by repeating a throwaway line they'd say in the overworld, seriously disrupting key moments; I died once and, upon reloading my last save, found my hacking ability no longer worked, forcing me to roll back to an autosave 10 minutes prior. The list is extensive. This was the only bug I actually took a screenshot of. The technical problems not only took me out of the game literally but also led me to question whether certain things throughout the game were intentional. It often took me a moment or two to determine whether a visual glitch was supposed to be happening due to V's cyberware, which is a major part of the story, or if I needed to reload the game. There were a few instances where I couldn't tell if dialogue or an event had been skipped due to a bug or by design, since there are times where I couldn't tell if dialogue or an event had been skipped due to a bug or by design, since there are times where I couldn't tell if dialogue or an event had been skipped due to a bug or by design, since there are times where I couldn't tell if dialogue or an event had been skipped due to a bug or by design, since there are times where I couldn't tell if dialogue or an event had been skipped due to a bug or by design, since there are times where I couldn't tell if dialogue or an event had been skipped due to a bug or by design, since there are times where I couldn't tell if dialogue or an event had been skipped due to a bug or by design, since there are times where I couldn't tell if dialogue or an event had been skipped due to a bug or by design, since there are times where I couldn't tell if dialogue or an event had been skipped due to a bug or by design, since there are times where I couldn't tell if dialogue or an event had been skipped due to a bug or by design, since there are times where I couldn't tell if dialogue or an event had been skipped due to a bug or by design. some exploration sequences frustrating because it was incredibly hard to tell if I was just missing the clue I was supposed to find or if it hadn't popped up at all, and I ended up leaving areas and coming back later on multiple occasions out of confusion and frustration. At least once, I didn't get a dialogue hint indicating what to do until I left the area and came back. I was playing on a gaming laptop well above the minimum specs announced for Cyberpunk 2077, while another GameSpot player experience, the bugs are obtrusive and substantial across the board, often forcing us to reload saves or exit the game entirely. It's hard to get really into a world you constantly have to leave. But then it's hard to get into Cyberpunk 2077's world in general. So much of it is superficial set dressing, and there's so much happening all around you--ads going off at all times, gunfights breaking out in the streets, texts coming in about cars you'll never buy-that a lot of the game feels superfluous. The side quests and the characters they showcase are the shining beacon through the neon-soaked bleakness of Night City, and they give you room to explore the best the core RPG mechanics have to offer. These are what carried me through an otherwise disappointing experience.

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