

Dante's Inferno Review

Game Name: *Dante's Inferno*.

Game Platform: Xbox 360. (Also PlayStation 3 and PSP.)

Game Overview

Dante's Inferno is an action-adventure, hack-and-slash game from Visceral Games loosely based on the work of the same name by Dante Alighieri that puts the player in the body of Crusader Dante, who must go through the depths of Hell to retrieve the soul of his beloved Beatrice. Players must battle through demons, monsters, bosses, and all manner of nightmarish creatures throughout the nine levels of Hell and also solve puzzles in order to survive.

What did this game do that was different from its predecessors?

Dante's Inferno seems to have two predecessors that I know of, *Devil May Cry* and *God of War*. I have not played either of these, but I have observed the gameplay of *Devil May Cry* at length. The gameplay mechanics seem fairly similar between the two. There's a hack-and-slash means of combat in both games, puzzles, and even a demonic theme runs deep in both.

However, *Dante's Inferno* is different in that it is based on a prewritten world, the Hell of Dante Alighieri. Also, there are no guns in the game, which probably pushes it closer towards *God of War*. While many of the mechanics are similar between both of these predecessors, the story is different and consequentially the enemies and settings.

Favorite Part about the Game (and why).

The best part about *Dante's Inferno* is actually the level design. When I see everything that was put into the levels, I see exactly the same images I saw in my head as I read through Alighieri's poem, which is fantastic. The designers really nailed the imagery in the game that was painstakingly and carefully crafted in the poems. Each ring represents a specific sin, such as gluttony, greed, lust, etc., and they are all brought into a fantastic visual setting for players to play through. It really enhances the experience.

Least Favorite Part about the Game (and why).

The element that detracts from the game the most is that Visceral pulled a *Dead Rising* and made the text impossible to read unless you have a high definition television, so I miss out on half of the information in the game because my poor 10 year-old, 13-inch CRT just can't display that tiny text clearly. (Although, the game still looks beautiful.)

There are two somewhat smaller complaints I have about the game. One is that sometimes for some of the platforming elements I find myself frustrated a little bit because I'm never sure what to do at first. The other complaint is how evident it is that the game was designed for males. It doesn't make me want to stop playing it, and I'm not offended by what I see. However, I would just appreciate even the smallest bit of consideration towards females.

Also, there is a mini-game to play when collecting souls. I don't hate the game at all. In fact, I think it's kind of fun. However, it feels a little out of place. I think they could have used the same mechanic but dressed it up differently. However, since it's fun, it's not really an issue.

How would you change the game to make it better?

To make the game better, fixing the text so that it could be read on non-high-definition screens would be the first thing on the list. I'm not actually sure how to make the platforming elements clearer because I did eventually figure them out, but it did take trial and error, which is somewhat annoying. Perhaps having the mechanics that shape each platforming element be laid out and shown somewhere to the player at some point. For example, one of the elements was that sometimes while swinging on ropes in fiery areas, the ropes can catch on fire. Perhaps showing a rope or two catch on fire somewhere before the player begins swinging on ropes to get through the level would be helpful.

To fix the "sexism" issues, I would have added a male enemy to the Lust level, as they are only females, which is what bothered me more than anything else. I think that would have been the most fair. The mini-game, I as mentioned, could have been dressed up a bit differently but used the same mechanics, since it was fun.