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Sign up to add this item to your wish list, follow it or mark it as uninterested Check out the entire Age of Empires Franchise on Steam About This Game In Age of Empires II: HD Edition, fans of the original game and new players will fall in love with the classic Age of Empires II experience. Explore all the original single-player campaigns from both Age of Kings and The Conquerors expansion, choose from 18 civilizations spanning over a thousand years of history, and go online to challenge other Steam players in your quest for world domination through the ages. Originally developed by Ensemble Studios and remastered in high definition by Hidden Path Entertainment, Skybox Labs, and Forgotten Empires, Microsoft Studios is proud to bring Age of Empires II: HD Edition to Steam! Minimum:OS:Windows Vista, 7, 8 Pro+ Processor:1.2GHZ CPU Memory:1 GB OF RAM Graphics:Direct X 9.0c Capable GPU DirectX®9.0c Hard Drive:2GB HD Space Recommended:Extra-900x600 minimum screen resolution 1999 real-time strategy video game This article is about the game of Empires II: The Age of Kings. For the Nintendo DS version, see Age of Empires: The Age of Kings. It has been suggested that Age of Empires II: Definitive Edition be merged into this article. (Discuss) proposed from December 2020. Age of Empires II: The Age of KingsPC box cover/Developer(s)Ensemble StudiosPublisher(s)Microsoft (Win, Mac)Konami (PS2)Designer(s)Bruce Shelley[1]Programmer(s)Angelo LaudonArtist(s)Brad CrowScott WinsettComposer(s)Stephen RippySeriesAge of EmpiresEngineGenie EnginePlatform(s)Microsoft Windows, Mac OS, PlayStation 2ReWindleasewwNA; September 30, 1999EU: 1999Mac OSWW: November 30, 2001[2]PlayStation 2EU: November 2, 2001JP: February 2, 2002[3]HD EditionWW : April 9, 2013Genre(s)Real-time strategyMode(s)Single-player, multiplayer Age of Empires II: The Age of Kings is a real-time strategy video game developed by Ensemble Studios and published by Microsoft. Released in 1999 for Microsoft Windows and Macintosh, it is the second game in the Age of Empires series. The Age of Kings is set in the Middle Ages and contains thirteen playable Players strive to collect resources, which they use to build cities, create armies and defeat their enemies. There are five five based campaigns, which limit the player to specialized and story-supported conditions. There are three additional single-player game modes, and multiplayer is supported. Despite using the same game engine and similar code as its predecessor, the development of The Age of Kings took a year longer than expected, allowing Ensemble Studios to release Age of Empires: The Rise of Rome instead. The design team focused on solving important problems in Age of Empires, but noted upon release that some problems persisted. Receiving The Age of Kings was very positive. The significant number of new features was praised, as were the gameplay improvements. The Age of Kings received universal acclaim, according to video game review aggregator Metacritic. Three months after its release, two million copies of The Age of Kings had been shipped, and it topped the sales charts in seven countries. The game won multiple awards and is today considered a classic of its type, which had a significant influence on future games in its genre. The original Age of Empires II and the 2000 expansion pack, The Conquerors, were later released as The Gold Edition. Age of Empires II is now considered one of the greatest games ever made. An updated high-definition graphics version of the game, Age of Empires II: HD Edition, was released in 2013. The HD Edition includes the original game and the expansion The Conquerors, as well as new campaigns, civilizations and updated graphics for high resolution displays. Age of Empires II: Definitive Edition, a remaster, was released in November 2019. Gameplay Age of Empires II is a real-time strategy game that focuses on building cities, gathering resources and creating armies to defeat opponents. Players conquer rival cities and empires as they advance one of the 13 civilizations by four Ages: the Dark Age, the Feudal Age, the Castle Era (being the High Middle Ages), and the Imperial Age, reminiscent of the Renaissance—a 1,000-year time frame. [4] Advancing to a new Era unlocks new units, structures, and technologies, but players must first build certain buildings of their present age and then pay a sum of resources (typical food and gold). [5]:31 Civilian units, called villagers, are used to collect resources; they are male or female - gender does not affect their abilities. Resources can be used to train units, build buildings and research technologies, among others; For example, players can do better armor research for infantry units. The game offers four types of resources: food, wood, gold and stone. Food is obtained through animal hunting, berry collecting, harvesting livestock, farming, and shore fishing and fishing from Wood is collected by cutting down trees. Gold is obtained from gold mines, trade or collecting relics in a monastery, and stone is collected from stone mines. Villagers require checkpoints, usually depot buildings (city centre, mining camp, mill and timber yard), where they collected resources. [6] Any civilization can buy upgrades that increase the rate of collecting these resources. Players can build a marketplace for trading. Players can exchange wood, stone and food for gold and use gold to buy other raw materials. Market prices fluctuate with each transaction. [7] In addition, markets and docks can also generate gold by using trading carts or gears used to visit foreign markets and ports. Once they return to the player market/dock, gold is added to the stock. The amount of gold earned by a trading unit on each trip is related to the distance it had to travel to a foreign market; more gold is earned on longer trips. It is possible to trade with the markets or docks of enemies, but the trading units of the player can be attacked or destroyed by enemy units in the process. Players do not have to continue trading manually, because once they select the port or market the trading units indefinitely. There are five campaigns in The Age of Kings, with historically based scenarios such as Genghis Khan's invasion of Eurasia, Barbarossa's Crusade, or Saladin's defense of the Holy Land. In the Joan of Arc and William Wallace campaigns, the player can control a unit based on his namesake: In other, players take orders from leading spirits representative of the commander of the army. [8] Additional game modes are available to the player in The Age of Kings. [9] A mode, random map, generates a map of one of several randomly chosen map generating scripts, with players starting in the Dark Age with a city center, three villagers (or more dependent on civilization), and a scout unit. The game can be won through military conquest, by building a special building known as a Wonder and keeping it standing for a certain amount of time, or by gaining control of all relics on the map for a certain amount of time. Deathmatch mode allows players to start using large amounts of resources, creating a focus on military dominance, while in regicide mode each player gets a king unit, winning by killing all the other monarchs. Units and civilizations The Celtic civilization in the Feudal Age. The city centre is visible and has several farms around it; villagers of both sexes work there and elsewhere to collect resources. A scout on horseback is also ready. Military buildings such as barracks, archery range, and stable are visible, as well as economic buildings-market, blacksmith and mill. The right-bottom corner of the screenshot shows the player's walls and a gate. Each player has a limit on the number of units he or she has - a population limit - but should not immediately use the entire potential population. [7] The population cap, which can be capped on anywhere between 25[10] and 200 in intervals of 25[11] is based on the number of houses, Castles, or City Centers-the main building in the city of a player-built. The Age of Kings introduced two major new features for the idle villageer button, which helps players identify villagers who have not been assigned a task, and the town bell, which sends all the villagers of the player into their city center, castle or tower for safety; [12] garrison units within these three buildings, especially archers, increase the firepower of the building (towers fire more arrows with units garrison inside) including the city center, which can't fire anything at all without someone garrisoning there. The Age of Kings also includes five types of military units: infantry, archers, cavalry, siege weapons and naval units. Certain types of infantry, archers and cavalry are counterunits with special defenses against other types of units. The three human classes of the army generally follow a rock-paper-scissors model. For example, infantry are generally powerful against buildings, but weak against cavalry, so the infantry counter units-spearman and pike-have attack bonuses against cavalry. [13] Every Civilization in the Age of Kings has one or two special units that are exclusive to that Civilization. For example, the British have access to longbowmen, an archery unit with a greater range. These civilization-specific units are generally more powerful, but still follow the basic rock-paper-scissors model. The monk is a special kind of military unit that has the ability to convert enemy units into the civilization of the player, and to heal Allied units. Monks are also used to collect relics, which collect gold as soon as they are kept in the player's monastery - the more relics are caught, the faster the gold is collected. Collecting all relics on the card is a method by which a player can win a random card game, depending on the victory setting. [14] Once a player has all the relics in their monasteries, a timer is shown to all players. If an opponent does not destroy a monastery with a relic after the set time, that player wins. Players choose to play as one of 13 civilizations split into four architectural styles-Western European, Eastern European, Middle East, and East Asian—which determine building appearance in-game. [15] Civilizations have different strengths and weaknesses related to economics, technology, and battle, and each has access to one or more different, very powerful Unique Units. [16] [17] In addition, each civilization provides an individual team bonus in team plays. [18] To add variety, each civilization has a set of correct bites in its native language pronounced by units when selected or instructed to perform a task. [19] Buildings Buildings in The Age of Kings are divided into economic[20] and military buildings categories. Buildings can explore technologies and upgrades that increase economic, military or unit-based efficiency and provide resources for the player. [20] The main economic building is the city centre, where villagers are created, all kinds of resources can be stored, some technologies can be examined, and player can move on to the next age. The center of the city can fire arrows at enemy units if the villagers or archers are garrisoned while enemy units are within range. [22] Other economic buildings available include storage buildings for resources, farms, docks (dock can also produce several military ships), and homes to support a higher population. [23] Military buildings include unit-producing buildings such as barracks, archery ranges, stables, and castles, as well as defensive buildings such as walls and towers. [24] Military buildings can conduct research to improve the capabilities of military units, increasing their strength, defense capabilities, or other attributes. [21] Castles are a key offensive and defensive building as they can build trebuchets, train the unique units of the civilization, and fire a hail of arrows at enemy units within range, with garrison units firing additional arrows. [25] Castles can only be built after a player has reached the Castle Age, although in some game options players start with an already built castle already in the Dark Age. [26] After promoting to the Imperial Age, players can also build a Marvel, an expensive non-military building. On many gameplay modes building a Wonder triggers a victory countdown; unless it is destroyed within a certain time frame, the builder wins. Each civilization Wonder is in the form of a milestone unique to that historical culture. Single-player campaigns The Age of Kings came with five campaigns, each with multiple playable scenarios that develop a storyline, and each centered around a different civilization. The campaign of William Wallace (Celts) serves as a tutorial campaign, and teaches the player how to move units, collect resources, and build armies to defeat the enemy. It takes place during the Wars of Scottish Independence against the English, led by Edward Longshanks. In the Frankische campaign, the player Joan of Arc leads against the English in the Hundred Years' War. The Saracens campaign features Saladin and his efforts to divest Crusaders in the Middle East, while the Mongolian campaign documents the conquest of Genghis Khan of Eurasia; Finally, the Teutons campaign reveal Frederick Barbarossa's ambitious expansion of the Holy Roman Empire. The campaigns are sorted numerically to discern the difficulty: the William Wallace campaign is the easiest and Barbarossa is the most challenging. Multiplayer The Age of Kings supports multiplayer over the Internet, or via a local area network (LAN). Up to eight players can participate in one game, with all single player game modes available. The MSN Gaming Zone supported the game to the service 19 June 2006. [27] [28] After that, various multiplayer gaming services such as GameRanger support it. [29] Since April 2013,[30] Steam has been supporting in-game multiplayer for HD resolution[31][32] requiring an Internet connection. [33] Development Prior to the completion of Age of Empires, ensemble studios had signed a one with Microsoft for a sequel. The design team chose to set The Age of Kings in the Middle Ages as a logical progression from the ancient setting of Age of Empires. The design team was aware of an attempt to capture the broad appeal of the first game without making the game's design too similar. Nevertheless, they tried to appeal to the huge demographic that played Age of Empires. [34] The Age of Kings model team planned to complete the game within a year using code from the original and reusing the Genie game engine. [35] Several months into the process they felt they would not be able to complete a game of the quality they were looking for at that time. Ensemble Studios informed Microsoft that they would need another year and instead created Age of Empires: The Rise of Rome, an easy-to-develop expansion package from Age of Empires, as a compromise that could be released before Christmas 1998. [34] In order to meet the next year's deadline, additional programmers, artists and designers were hired. [36] To overcome another major objection to Age of Empires- that of pad find - the team completely redesigned the game's movement engine system. [36] The original Age of Empires had been criticized for its artificial intelligence (AI). Because the original AI could not cheat by attributing itself additional resources or using other techniques the human player could not, it was easier to beat than in many other real-time strategy games. [37] For The Age of Kings, Ensemble Studios tried to develop a more powerful AI system that does not compromise through cheating. Industry veteran Mario Grimani led Ensemble Studios in establishing the new system. The Age of Kings saw the introduction of a triggers system for its scenario editor. The triggers can display messages or actions based on preset criteria or events. [38] The scenario editor was also improved by the new AI system. The AI and trigger systems regularly interact in single player campaigns. [39] The team was less successful in resolving other issues; programmer Matt Pritchard complained after the release of Age of Empires that there was still no process for releasing patches. Extensive trickery in multiplayer games of Age of Empires came due to a number of bugs in the game, which resulted in Microsoft promising Ensemble Studios there would be a patch process for The Age of Kings. At the time of release, there were several bugs that needed immediate attention, but the patch process wasn't finished yet. The first patch was released 11 months later. [40] [41] Ensemble Studios developed a new terrain system for The Age of Kings, with which were vastly superior to those of Age of Empires. Pritchard noted an improvement in the team's artistic abilities after their work on the past two games, and he is noted as saying that AoK became a showcase for their improved talent. [35] However, he complained about the lack of an art asset management art asset management while other departments were given new tools and automated procedures to help design and play tests. [36] [40] Audio The soundtrack for The Age of Kings was directed by Stephen Rippy, who has since taken the role for all games in the Age of Empires series. Music for the game was split into two categories. For in game music, Rippy's team took musical elements from a variety of cultures and combined them to create a mixed sound. Pre-game music is designed to be unique to the civilization in question. Campaigns based on historical figures would contain a theme that will at least be rooted in [the] culture of the character. [42] Release A demo of The Age of Kings was released on October 16, 1999. [43] It featured the learning campaign, a sample of a random card game, and the ability to play via the MSN Gaming Zone. [41] Much to the disappointment of Ensemble Studios, numerous incomplete versions of the game were leaked. These were picked up by warez sites, and sold illegally in the Pacific Rim; warez versions of the game were even sold outside Microsoft's offices in South Korea. [40] Reception sales in January 2000, three months after its release, Microsoft had shipped two million copies of the Age of Kings. The game topped the sales charts in the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Australia and South Korea. [44] It would spend the next two and a half years on the top 20 sales lists. [45] The Age of Kings was the best selling game in October 1999,[46] and the fourth best selling game in 1999. [47] The sale of the game in the United States alone amounted to 469,376 by the end of 1999,[48] which drew revenues of \$20.2 million, the second-highest domestic gross that year behind the SimCity 3000. [49] Domestic sales increased another 442,318 units (\$19.56 million) from January to October 2000, according to PC Data. [50] It ended the year as the seventh largest computer game hit in the United States, with 595,016 in sales and \$26.2 million in revenue. [51] The domestic success of Age of Empires II continued in 2001: with sales of 478,557 units (\$19.4 million).[52] It claimed the tenth place of the year. [53] In the German market, Age of Empires II debuted primarily on the sales media control charts in October 1999, and in March 2000 had spent 17 weeks in the rankings. [54] It received the Platinum Award of The Unterhaltungssoftware Deutschland (VUD within one month of release,[55] indicating sales of 200,000 units across Germany, Switzerland and Austria. [56] By the end of February 2000, had achieved Double-Platinum status (400,000 sales) and become the German market's most successful PC game the past 12 months, according to vud. [54] The game later received a Platinum sales award from the Entertainment and Leisure Software Publishers Association (ELSPA).[57] for at least 300,000 copies sold in the United Kingdom. [58] Between 2019 re-release and global lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 the game has seen a resurgence Popularity. [59] Critical Reviews ReceptionAggregate scoreAggregatorScoreMetacritic92/100[60]Review scoresPublicationScoreAllGame[61]CVG9.0/10[62]Edge8/10[63]Eurogamer9/10[19]GamePro[10]12]GameRev[6] GameSpot9.1/10[16]GameSpy89/100[64]IGN8.8/10[66]PC Zone9.0/10[67] The Age of Kings received universal acclaim, according to video game review aggregator Metacritic. [60] According to Geoff Richards of Eurogamer, the list of new features and improvements across the original game is more than a long page. [19] GamePro's review also focused on new additions to the genre itself that it argued made The Age of Kings outstanding. These include the idle unit button and the city bell. [12] GameSpy's Carlos Salgado was grateful for other features; he praised the ability to create individual profiles for different players and to customize hotkeys. [64] Meanwhile, IGN appreciated the new abilities given to the villagers unit-the review explained villagers now play an important role not only in the collection of resources, but also in city defense and even in combat. [66] AllGame's Michael L. House enjoyed the use of sound bites in the native language of civilizations, which he said was very influential in developing an era-enhancing atmosphere. [61] Eurogamer said this feature gives [villagers] a personality, rather than the standard 'Recognized' grunt of military RTS games, also stating that the use of female villagers provided a good variety. [19] The review of the game's Revolution stated that by being set in a later epoch of human history, the Age of Kings could add character to an otherwise impersonal style of gameplay. [65] Computer and Video Games approved of The Age of Kings' use of shorter, more targeted campaigns, compared to its predecessor,[62] while Game Revolution noted that even in slower parts of the campaign, the historical story helped maintain player interest. [65] GameSpot said that with the screen full of units, you begin to imagine how their historical equivalents once flourished,[16] while GameSpy said The Age of Kings presents realism rarely seen in the RTS genre. [64] IGN staff argued that while the strengths and weaknesses attributed to different civilizations made the game more realistic, the fact that they were still mostly the same prevented the Kings Age from delivering the same battlefield effect of StarCraft or Tiberian Sun. [66] The House also praised the gameplay interface, which he said could not be simpler, as well as the advanced grouping and path-finding systems. [61] Nash Werner of GamePro said that the formation tools were wonderful, and complained only that they could not be assigned to naval units. [12] Computer and Games generally agreed, stating that the controls are very user-friendly and well explained. [62] GameSpot's Greg Kasavin wrote that despite the improved graphics of the game, there is nothing strange about the appearance and that most game features will be instantly recognizable as if played a real-time strategy game before. [16] PC Zone agreed, but in a negative sense-it argued that The Age of Kings is essentially an update of a two year old game. [67] Richards was surprised by the quality of the graphics of The Age of Kings, considering they were all bitten. [19] However, AllGame complained that units were sometimes difficult to tell separately, a point numerous reviewers agreed on. [16] [67] It also cited the sound of The Age of Kings as a negative, but not something important enough to pull players away from the overall quality of the game. [61] IGN stated that cutscenes were somewhat bland, but that generally the chart added an amazing amount of detail to the actual game. [66] IGN's main criticism was for the in-play speech used in campaigns; rhetorically asked why can't they just find a Frenchman to do a French accent?[66] Alex Constantides of Computer and Video Games rated the graphics highly, saying that some in-game buildings are so grand you'll even feel guilty about burning them to the ground. [62] Werner agreed; the most notable graphic advances, he wrote, were the sheer scale and scale of things. [12] Game Revolution stated :AOE2 is the best looking of the 2D RTS games out there now. [65] The Age of Kings won GameSpot's Strategy Game of the Year in 1999,[68] and was nominated for Game of the Year. [69] GamePower also named it Strategy Game of the Year, while PC Gamer and Computer Gaming World gave it Editor's Choice awards. [44] The editors of PC Gamer USA called it their 1999 Best Real-Time Strategy Game, and wrote that it takes everything we know about the real-time strategy genre and polishes it, and polishes it, and then polishes it some

