



The Sore Thumb



Xbox 360 is here and it's fair to say it's exploded onto the gaming realm. Many smart gamers put in reservations months in advance for their system and are now happily playing away. Those that didn't have been hunting only to find them sold out or selling on eBay as high as \$3,000+ per system! Prices are starting to level out though and are starting to settle around \$500. Microsoft has released that it expects to ship 3,000,000 worldwide in the first 90 days, so hopefully some more supply will be hitting stores during the holiday season and you will be able to buy them at normal prices. In general the most important reason to upgrade is the improved graphics and online play. With Xbox 360 titles you will see 720p resolution in 16:9 widescreen with anti-aliasing for smooth, movie-like graphics and multi-channel surround sound. In addition, with the built in DVD player, exchangeable 20GB Hard Drive, Ethernet, wireless controllers, and audio inputs, it's clear that Microsoft's mission is to place the 360 at the center of your digital lifestyle. With these features you can share your photos, rip your music to the HD and stream your digital media stored on your MP3 player (including an iPod), digital camera, Microsoft® Media Center PC or Windows XP based PC.

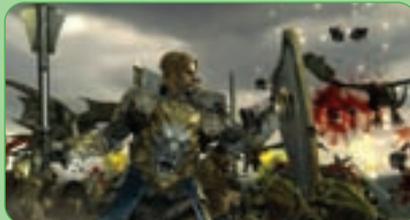
What's new, what you should know; Xbox360:

- has an emulator to play old Xbox titles
- has new wireless controllers
- has customizable face plates
- has online, out-of-the-box access to Xbox Live with broadband service, including 'Marketplace' for downloadable content, gamer profile for digital id & voice chat

- has new gamer ratings like an eBay seller id's. Allows one vote for a particular gamer.
- has a new OS level called "The Guide" which overlays over any game for messaging, preference changes, and other options.
- has Ring of Light & Guide Button – divided into 4 quadrants identifying with wireless controllers. Guide button also lets you turn the system on and off remotely.

Hardware Specs Summary:

- IBM PowerPC CPU with 3 symmetrical cores running at 3.2 Ghz each, 1 MB L2 Cache
- 512 MB of GDDR3 RAM
- Custom ATI Graphics 500 Mhz processor w 10 MB of embedded DRAM
- Storage: Detachable & upgradeable 20GB hard drive, 12x dual layer DVD-ROM
- I/O: Support for up to 4 wireless game controllers, 3 USB 2.0 port, 2 memory unit slots
- Built in Ethernet, Wi-Fi ready 802.11 a/b/g, and video camera ready
- Digital Media: Support for DVD-Video, DVD-ROM, DVD-R/RW, DVD+R/RW, CD-DA, CD-ROM, CD-R, CD-RW, WMA CD, MP3 CD, JPEG Photo CD
- Audio: Multi-channel surround sound output, supports 48 Khz 16-bit, 32-bit audio Processing, 320 independent decompression channels, over 256 audio channels
- Polygon Performance: 500 million triangles per second
- Overall System Floating-Point Performance: 1 teraflop!



Gun

Publisher: Activision

Developer: Neversoft Entertainment

Platforms: Xbox, Xbox360, PS2, GC, PC



Thumbs

Reviewed by Orion

Get prepared to be drawn into an epic western tapestry woven and forged with Apaches, outlaws, railroad barons, bears, frontier towns, desert vistas, saloons, and of course – guns. In a nice change of pace, Neversoft and Activision have brought the classic western genre to the console. Perhaps there might have been others in the past, but none are memorable. Gun however, delivers on great game play whether on foot or horseback. Riding horseback is fun as you can jump fences, shoot from the saddle while riding, herd cattle, and even use your horse to trample opponents when necessary. You can free-roam through the beautifully and artistically created west ranging from the snowy mountains of Montana, to the plains of Dodge City, Kansas to the deserts of New Mexico. Another aspect I liked which added to the immersive experience were the authentic weapons. In developing the game they actually recorded the sounds of each model on an open range with weapons such as six shooters, shotguns, sniper rifles, Gatling guns, flaming arrows, hatches, and dynamite.

The story of Gun unwinds with the main character Colton White, a vengeful gunslinger, out to avenge his father's death. At least, he thought it was his father until his

father, who in his last moments told Colton otherwise, as he pushed Colton from an exploding steamboat to save his life. Colton is left with only a medallion which his father asked for him to bring to Dodge City to find 'Jenny' at the Alhambra. However, this Alhambra is no famous Moorish castle and Jenny is no primping southern belle. She's sweet and all, and shoots a mean shotgun, but don't get too attached. We're not about to reveal the intricate story that unfolds. For that, you'll have to buy the game.

Neversoft carefully crafted this work with the excellent penmanship of Hollywood screenwriter Randall Jahnson (Mask of Zorro, The Doors) and then brought in excellent voiceover talent including: leading man Thomas Jane as vengeful gunslinger Colton White; Kris Kristofferson as Colton's mountain man father, Ned; Tom Skerritt as Resistance Fighter Clay Allison; Brad Dourif as evil preacher Josiah Reed; Ron Perlman as Mayor Hoodoo Brown of Empire, New Mexico; and Lance Henriksen as the obsessive tyrant Thomas MacGruder. This 'Hollywood' approach paid off as the characters are 'round' and the storyline is excellent. This is one game where it's worth watching the cut scenes.

And why did the game get the mature rating? "M" (Mature – Blood and Gore, Intense Violence, Sexual Themes, Strong Language, Use of Alcohol) - I think that just about covers every avenue for a mature game : p

I give Gun 5 thumbs up.

