

“DEAD RISING 2”: Extra Ghoulness, Part Two

Written by Brian Patrick O'Toole
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Continuing our chat with Josh Bridge, Blue Castle Games senior producer and developer of DEAD RISING 2, Capcom's sequel to its zombie-bashing video-game hit that debuted this week (see Part One [here](#)):

FANGORIA: Arguably, the most exciting new addition to DEAD RISING 2 is the cooperative multiplayer mode. Can you explain how this changes the game play? And will you be able to keep the points and items you collect in another player's game?

JOSH BRIDGE: Adding cooperative play to DEAD RISING was incredibly important to us. You can hop in and out of a game at any time, which is great if you're stuck on a tough boss. The experience changes organically as you find yourself working with your buddy, luring and clearing out large groups of zombies together. Experience points are shared, so it's a great way to level up quicker. You keep all the upgrades and any items that you had in inventory when you return to your single-player game as well.



FANG: The shopping-mall scenario in DEAD RISING was every DAWN OF THE DEAD fan's dream. Although it was a huge setting, the designers were able to maintain a strong sense of being confined and trapped. Very claustrophobic. The sequel's setting of Fortune City is apparently immense—how does all that new space affect the limited time elements?

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BRIDGE: Claustrophobia is still a part of the experience, as Fortune City is not an actual city. It's more akin to a casino theme park for adults that is gated off and confining, although larger than the Willamette Mall. As with the first game, the world is a feature unto itself; you have to become an expert about it to figure out the shortest routes to your objectives. Knowledge is power, so things like pushing a wheelchair which allows you to run faster, using moving sidewalks or relying on the new vehicles we've added, like the motorbike, are all key to getting around the world quicker.

FANG: The original DEAD RISING was one of those first-generation games that really showed off the processing power of the Xbox 360—500 zombies on screen at once! Then they tried to squeeze all that power into the Nintendo Wii with a watered-down version of the game. What new things, visually and in terms of play, were you able to crank out of the aging Xbox 360?

BRIDGE: We neared the limits of current hardware by pushing thousands of zombies on screen this time around. The sheer size of the horde has to be driven through with a big SUV to fully appreciate the pleasure of running over so many undead. Beyond density, we focused on expanding the size of the world areas, giving players more freedom to whip around in vehicles and get cool views of how immense the undead horde is.

FANG: In DEAD RISING, there were some interesting references to another Capcom character, Mega Man. Are there any new “guest appearances” from Capcom's library of characters? Any thoughts of a RESIDENT EVIL/DEAD RISING matchup in a future RISING game?

BRIDGE: We do have a special Capcom character tribute in DEAD RISING 2. You can get a hint about who it might be if you take a close look at the boots that are for sale in the pawn shop in Platinum Strip. RESIDENT EVIL and DEAD RISING are quite different, and maintaining that separation is important to each game's identity.

FANG: One of the criticisms hurled at DEAD RISING was that it was “too Japanese” in style. At DEAD RISING 2's announcement, it was said that the sequel would have a more Western feel, and that's why Canadian company Blue Castle developed the game. Can you discuss some of the “too Japanese” elements that were Westernized? Is it more than just art style vs. game speed?

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BRIDGE: Beyond the visuals, we wanted to tap into more Americana clichés and references through our characters and storyline. Our psychos, along with our main character, all draw from Western culture, something we can provide more insight and a deeper knowledge of. We also evaluated controls, such as a more Westernized shooting system that gives you the ability to fire a gun and strafe.



FANG: Will there be any downloadable content support for DEAD RISING 2? And if so, are we looking at new levels and missions, or just knickknack things like clothes and weapons? Will there be any compatibility with Microsoft's controller-free Kinect, like the ability to scan objects, or avatars of ourselves, into the game?

BRIDGE: We would love to get DLC out to the fans or explore other ways to extend the game experience, but at this time we have not announced any plans. *(NOTE: As this interview was going to post, a DLC for DEAD RISING 2 was announced at the Tokyo Game Show that teams up its hero Chuck Greene with the original's Frank West in an epilogue adventure called DEAD RISING 2—CASE: WEST.)*

FANG: DEAD RISING 2 is deliciously violent. No more spraying blood; you went with the preferred globular kind. The attack sequences are over-the-top gruesome. Obviously, you guys are not kidding around with the gore. Were there any killing elements you were forced to remove from the final game, and how do you feel about it being banned in Germany?

BRIDGE: We do draw some lines regarding gore and mayhem...though they are few and quite blurry. We haven't been forced to reduce any of the violence; we self-govern our limitations. We avoid human dismemberment, kids and cute puppies. It is unfortunate that Germany has banned the series, but we respect their decision to limit due to ratings.

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FANG: There was some download-content controversy surrounding RESIDENT EVIL 5 when it was discovered that we were asked to pay to unlock content that was already on the disc we just purchased for 60 bucks. What is your opinion of downloadable content for games? Do you think that levels are being consciously truncated or cut entirely so that they can be used as DLC add-ons later?

BRIDGE: We are not fans of getting folks to pay for content that is already on disc, though sometimes this is due to technology limitations that require certain components to be on disc to ensure. We try to keep everything separated as much as possible.

FANG: The developers of the LEFT 4 DEAD series have several salutes to DEAD RISING in their games. For example, in LEFT 4 DEAD's "The Passing" DLC, there's a wink written on a wall—a note from Frank West to Otis telling him he is out of film. Did you return the compliment in DEAD RISING 2? How do you feel about these homages?

BRIDGE: We are all huge fans of the LEFT 4 DEAD franchise, and got a big kick out of seeing the nod. We also noted that they one-upped our zombie kill achievement...we felt obliged to one up them as well with our Zombie Genocider 2: Genocide Harder achievement of 53,596 kills.

FANG: How did *Playboy* magazine become involved in DEAD RISING 2?

BRIDGE: Licensing was in talks with *Playboy* about ways to showcase each other. Fortune City felt like a good fit to get some magazine covers into the game as large-sized posters. They add a layer of believability to the world, especially in the more adult Silver Strip area.

FANG: What does the future hold for the DEAD RISING franchise? Will we see a first-person-shooter spinoff, *à la* RESIDENT EVIL: THE UMBRELLA CHRONICLES?

BRIDGE: DEAD RISING will always be a game that is intended to be easy to pick up and play

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as well as contain a focus on character development. Another genre hasn't come to mind that would expand on the core of what makes DEAD RISING unique.

FANG: What city or location would you like to see infected next in DEAD RISING 3?

BRIDGE: If we continue with another DEAD RISING—fingers crossed!—I can see exploring a more large-scale outbreak and get away from the concept of a single location. I like the idea of a plague that has been ongoing for some time, and digging into how mankind would attempt to survive and fight over food and weapons and shelter.

{comments on}