# Diablo

# GDD

# Diablo

## Demographic

ESRB: Teen [13+]

Intended game systems: PC, Classic Mac OS, PS1

The game will target anyone teen and older due to violence, advanced gameplay and strategy required to beat the game.

## Story

## Since the birth of reality itself, the High Heavens and the Burning Hells have waged an endless war for anything of value within their realms of order and chaos. No side has gained much of anything at all for long, and, in their struggle, have often destroyed much of what they sought to claim. It is referred to as The Great Conflict, and all other wars and events, like The Sin War, fall under it.

## The story begins with Inarius, a powerful angel and member of the Angiris Council. Tired of the constant fighting, he sees little point in their infinite war they are waging against Hell. Convinced that there must be others such as him in both Heaven and Hell, Inarius starts to search for other individuals who share his views on the war. To his surprise there are many such as himself, and together with Lilith, daughter of Mephisto, he leads a great exodus. Together, they defect from Heaven and Hell and search for another place to live. They succeed in stealing the Worldstone, and perform two tasks which above all others will affect the course of history:

## Create Sanctuary, the world of men, as a paradise and refuge from the Great Conflict

## Create the Nephalem, the first humans

## To protect this world from both Heaven and Hell, they used the stolen Worldstone. It acted as a protective barrier, and effectively prevented angels and demons from either directly invading Sanctuary or noticing its existence at all. How exactly it worked remains unclear, but work it did.

## The two races of Heaven and Hell tried to live peacefully with each other on Sanctuary, and even mated with each other, spawning the first generation of humans, called the Nephalem. It quickly became apparent that the Nephalem were as powerful as their parents, and had the potential to be much, much more than any angel or demon. This caused struggle among the higher beings. Inarius wanted to kill the humans, as he viewed them as a threat to their own existence. Lilith, on the other hand, wanted to raise the Nephalem to an army and have them fight both Heaven and Hell. The two began fighting, and Inarius cast out Lilith from Sanctuary and imprisoned her in The Void, claiming Sanctuary as his own. Many of the Nephalem were slain during this time, but some survived, like Bul-Kathos and Rathma. The latter became the servant of Trag'Oul, a mystical dragon, and guardian of Sanctuary.

## Gameflow

### Challenges/Obstacles

Diablo is a role-playing game wherein a player creates a single character and guides him through a dungeon in an attempt to find and destroy 'Diablo', the devil himself. All the action takes place in an isometric, three-quarter perspective, with diamond-shaped, 'square' floor spaces (see diagram). The entire game operates on a turn-based system. Using a mouse, the player moves his character from space to space, exploring corridors and rooms and engaging in combat. The character faces challenges in the form of hostile monsters and traps in his quest to descend deeper into the dungeon. Many beneficial weapons and magical items can be acquired and used to help on this quest.cr

A player will have the choice of many races and classes for his character. The player's character will develop as he defeats monsters and descends to deeper dungeon levels. A character will acquire new skills, improve fighting and magic abilities, and wield more powerful equipment.

Forays into the dungeon will be broken up by trips to the town located above. In the town, a general store will provide standard equipment and repairs, and will also purchase extra equipment from the player. A temple will provide healing for injured and sick characters. Training and other facilities may also be available.

## Gameplay

### Maps

The world of Diablo will have a dark, evil tone. Initial levels will be set in an abandoned Gothic church. A marble mausoleum and progressively darker, dingier crypts and catacombs follow. Deeper, natural cave formations lead to supernatural, demonic halls, and finally to the opulent chambers of Diablo.

## Game World

Diablo is set in a fantastic, medieval world, where sword-and-sorcery-wielding heroes battle the forces of darkness. The player's character has just had his life thrown upside down when sinister raiders kill his family and destroy his home. Left with nothing but a desire for vengeance, the character traces the raiders steps to a crypt and an expansive labyrinth below. Gathering up his courage and initial weapons, he dives in with fury.

## Game Experience

An open ending will allow for different themes in future sequels, where goblin caves or a living fungus world will have to be explored and conquered. The player will simply have to purchase an expansion disk to have access to these new worlds.

## Gameplay Mechanics

## A walk-through of an example game session follows:

## After starting up the game, the opening cinematic sequence segues into the main menu screen. The three options provided are: New Character, Load Character, and Options. New Character allows the player to develop a character and start at the beginning. Load Character picks up where an existing character last left the game, or allows a player to select a pre-generated character to 'quick-start' the game. The Options selection gives access to sound and configuration options.

## A player generating a new character is first presented with a choice of race. We plan to offer five or six human races (hill people, forest people, etc.) each with advantages and disadvantages. After race, the player will select his desired class; choosing either a fighter, thief or magician, or possibly subclasses of these. Although all characters will be able to use most weapons, and cast some spells, different classes will provide special advantages. Fighters will gain extra attacks, thieves will move faster and with greater stealth, and magicians will have more spells and cast them more powerfully. After making these choices, the computer will provide basic statistics for the character in the categories of strength, magical aptitude, dexterity and vitality. The player will then be given some discretionary points to distribute as he sees fit. Magician characters will pick from approximately four 'schools' of magic. There will also be a general school, the spells of which are available to all characters. A character will be provided with some initial equipment and gold and then placed in town, where play begins.

## If a player had instead chosen Load Character from the main menu and then picked one of the pre- generated characters, all of the preceding would be skipped and the 'quick-start' character would start in town, already equipped.

## The town is presented in our isometric view with a main road, a town square, and a dozen or so buildings. The player will move his character around by placing the mouse-controlled cursor on the 'square' he wishes to walk to and left-clicking. Left-clicking on a square will cause the character to move to the selected square by the shortest route possible. Left-clicking on an item or creature will cause the character to move next to it. If already adjacent to an item or creature, a left-click causes the character to interact in the appropriate way (trade with a shopkeeper, attack a creature, open a chest, etc.). Right-clicking will cast the readied spell in the indicated location. The arrow keys will scroll the map independently of the character. Moving about the town, the character can visit various shops to purchase further equipment, a temple for healing, and his home to rest and store extraneous items and gold.

## The fun really begins when the player guides his character down the road and enters the abandoned temple (the first level of the dungeon). At this point, the computer generates the layout of the first level.

## The player can see as much of the dungeon as is visible to the character, determined by lighting, line-of-sight, and magical factors. Areas not brightened by light sources fade into blackness. Magical 'darkness' can block light sources. Infravision can detect heat sources within dark areas (providing red shapes of creatures in the distance). As the character moves around, new sections of the dungeon are revealed. If a player clicks on a distant square and a creature comes into view in the middle of the route, the character will stop to await new orders.

## The game runs on a turn-by-turn basis; the player moves, then the opponent(s) move(s). Each character and monster may have a certain amount of action points which would determine what actions are possible in a given turn. For instance: a fighter character turns a corner to suddenly see a skeleton, eight squares away. The a left-clicks two squares ahead to close the distance. As the fighter moves forward two squares, the skeleton also moves forward two squares and a new skeleton comes into view. Moving more carefully, the player clicks one square ahead. The first skeleton also moves one square while the second fires an arrow, hitting the fighter. Again the player moves forward one square. The first skeleton moves on to the square directly in front of the fighter and the second fires another arrow, missing. Now the fighter and first skeleton exchange blows, with yet another arrow fired by the archer skeleton. Determining that the fighter can't keep sustaining the damage, the player clicks six spaces back, in retreat. The first skeleton follows, one space behind. The archer skeleton fires each turn until the fighter ducks back around the corner.

## Assuming the fighter escapes, he will go on to explore the dungeon and finally reach the stairs to the next level, whereupon a new level will be generated. If one of those arrows ends up killing the fighter, that character will be erased completely from the hard-drive and the player must start from scratch

## Enemies

Creatures to be encountered will also follow this sinister theme. The undead will predominate in the form of skeletons, zombies, ghosts and more. Deeper levels will be populated with lesser demons and chaos-spawn. A sprinkling of 'natural' creatures, such as spiders and snakes will add variety.

## Multiplayer Material

Diablo supports 2-player and multi-player game sessions via modem or network. A special 'arena' dungeon will be available for opponents to pit their characters against each other. In two player mode, a user-defined time limit forces player to move quickly; if they do not specify a move, they lose their opportunity during that turn. As soon as all players register an action, the game progresses, regardless of time limit. The ability to play against friends will add to the appeal of the expansion packs as players will seek the upper hand versus their friends.

## Development

## Development team spent one year in the development of Diablo. Personnel consisted of: one designer; one chief programmer and two junior programmers; two art director/artists, one illustrator/ sculptor and three pixel artist/illustrators; and one music/sound effects person.

## Diablo was art-intensive. They intended for the game to operate in Super VGA mode (640x480 pixels). The three-quarter perspective required eight directions of movement, three of which can sometimes be flipped. Each monster had multiple graphic deaths and they required at least 50 frames of animations. They envisioned approximately 16 monsters to start with. The player's character required many more frames to cover different kinds of attacks, casting spells, opening chests, etc. Different weapons, armor and clothing types were reflected in character sprites. There were five or six initial level types as well as an above-ground town. Additional art requirements included cinematics, title screens, character creation screens and inventory screens.

## The programming department's initial task would be the development of a clean, intuitive interface. After this, an overall shell structure, the Dynamic Random Level Generator, and a sound driver would be implemented in time to allow at least 4 months of bug testing, and, most importantly, play balance.

## Music would consist of an opening theme and atmospheric music to accompany game play. Sound effects would cover fighting, spell casting, walking and the like.

## Unique Selling Points

• While Diablo shares familiar role-playing elements with other games in this genre, its unique structure allows a different marketing strategy, one that could lead to sustained, long-term sales.

• A player would buy a new expansion disk or two, go home and install the new data into his game. The new elements would be incorporated into the random mix when a new level is generated. Perhaps a player's character should have one goodie directly placed into his inventory for instant gratification.

• Expansion packs would add to replayability and lengthen the life-span of the product, while providing additional and continuous revenues with minimal investment. Point-of-purchase displays would serve as advertising, directing people towards Diablo on the shelves. The collectible nature would lead to increased sales.