**Mortal Kombat X – Review**

*NetherRealm Studios* *has returned with yet another bone-crunching, absurd, gruesome and ridiculously fun game, introducing a plethora of characters past and new alike.*

Mortal Kombat X is a fighting video game developed by NetherRealm Studios and published by Warner Brothers Interactive. It is the tenth instalment of the Mortal Kombat video game franchise, and was released on April 12th 2015. Mortal Kombat X is all about giving the players, both long-time fans and new fans, a reason to keep coming back, whether you want to play single-player, online or against friends, it’s extremely addictive and compelling gameplay will keep you wanting more. Mortal Kombat X fuses cinematic presentation with all new gameplay to deliver the most brutal Kombat experience to date. The game offers a new experience that gives the players the ability to choose from multiple variations of each character, which impacts both strategy and fighting style, causing players to adapt quickly.

Mortal Kombat X’s story contains 12 chapters in total. In each of these chapters, the player takes control of a combatant, which includes iconic series regulars like Sub-Zero, Scorpion and Raiden, but also introduces players to the new series characters such as Cassie Cage, Kotal Khan and Kung-Jin. The plot is set roughly 25 years after the previous game, Mortal Kombat 9, and follows the continuous wars within and between EarthRealm, NetherRealm and Outworld. With Shao Khan no longer threatening Earthrealm’s safety, Raiden and his cohorts now find themselves against a new threat - the fallen Elder God Shinnok. As the sorcerer Quan Chi resurrects dead fighters, the defenders of Earthrealm must stop him before he can release Shinnok out into the world and destroy the Elder Gods.

Like in past games, Mortal Kombat X uses 4 buttons for attacks; Back Punch, Front Punch, Back Kick and Front Kick. Keeping with tradition, the game also has combos for all their characters, these are done by pressing a certain button sequence, and can be very tricky to pull off in online games, which is rather frustrating – however, if you press pause while in game you can access a list of combos under the Move list, although I wouldn’t recommend doing this during an online match. The four basic control inputs have combos which are a lot easier to master for newcomers and the casual players. If you’ve got the basic combos down, you can extend your combos even more by juggling your opponent while they’re in the air. Mortal Kombat X does offer you a training mode to practice your combos, which, as a regular player of the series myself, I found extremely helpful. However, the fighting in the game can feel rather separated, as button inputs sometimes don’t respond in time with the game, leaving your character completely dumbfounded and your combo a complete hit and miss.

The games story mode and single player features all feature four difficulties, ranging from very easy to very hard. There is no online difficulty, as that is solely based on your skill level and the skill level of your opponent, which makes for great replay value as the game makes you perfect characters and get better. Along with this, Mortal Kombat X offers tons of different game modes, challenges and weekly tower challenges, bringing you back to try something new each time. Want to play a winner stays on based game mode against people worldwide? King of the Hill’s got you covered. Want to play against people in a less competitive environment? Unranked singles match is your game. Want to prove you’re the best in the world? Ranked singles matches have your back.

Mortal Kombat X is a visually stunning game. NetherRealm studios have vastly improved on the graphics from previous titles. The soundtrack to Mortal Kombat can get repetitive after one sit through of the game, but it’s less noticeable when playing online. The sound effects that NetherRealm studios use for connecting moves and the “X-Ray” moves (which are gruesome) are not only spine tingling and breaking, but amazing in how the sounds are executed so well – it actually sounds like someone’s arm, leg or spine is being broken.

Despite paying for eight extra fighters and the delayed input on the controls, Mortal Kombat X is a really good, solid, and addictive game for casual and hardcore fans. It’s adjustable difficulty for playing offline and the chance for players who are looking to get into the series and improve their skills by playing online make for great replay value. Overall, I give the game a rating of 8/10.