

= Defense of the Ancients =

Defense of the Ancients (DotA) is a multiplayer online battle arena mod for the video game Warcraft III : Reign of Chaos and its expansion , Warcraft III : The Frozen Throne , based on the " Aeon of Strife " map for StarCraft . The scenario objective is for each team to destroy the opponents ' Ancient , heavily guarded structures at opposing corners of the map . Players use powerful units known as heroes , and are assisted by allied heroes and AI @-@ controlled fighters . As in role @-@ playing games , players level up their heroes and use gold to buy equipment during the mission .

The scenario was developed with the " World Editor " of Reign of Chaos , and was updated upon the release of its expansion , The Frozen Throne . There have been many variations of the original concept ; the most popular being DotA Allstars , which eventually was simplified to DotA with the release of version 6 @.@ 68 . This specific scenario has been maintained by several authors during development , the latest of whom is the anonymous developer known as " IceFrog " who has developed the game since 2005 .

Since its original release , DotA has become a feature at several worldwide tournaments , including Blizzard Entertainment 's BlizzCon and the Asian World Cyber Games , as well as the Cyberathlete Amateur and CyberEvolution leagues ; in a 2008 article of video game industry website Gamasutra , the article 's author claimed that DotA was probably " the most popular and most @-@ discussed free , non @-@ supported game mod in the world " . DotA is largely attributed to being the most significant inspiration for the multiplayer online battle arena genre . Valve Corporation acquired the intellectual property rights to DotA to develop a stand @-@ alone sequel , Dota 2 , which was released in July 2013 .

= = Gameplay = =

DotA pits two teams of players against each other : the Sentinel and the Scourge . Players on the Sentinel team are based at the southwest corner of the map , and those on the Scourge team are based at the northeast corner . Each base is defended by towers and waves of units which guard the main paths leading to their base . In the center of each base is the " Ancient " , a building that must be destroyed to win the game .

Each human player controls one hero , a powerful unit with unique abilities . In DotA , players on each side choose one of 112 heroes , each with different abilities and tactical advantages over other heroes . The scenario is highly team @-@ oriented ; it is difficult for one player to carry the team to victory alone . Defense of the Ancients allows up to ten players in a five @-@ versus @-@ five format .

Because the gameplay revolves around strengthening individual heroes , it does not require focus on resource management and base @-@ building , unlike most traditional real @-@ time strategy games . Killing computer @-@ controlled or neutral units earns the player experience points ; the player gains a level when enough experience is accumulated . Leveling up improves the hero 's toughness and the damage they inflict , and allows players to upgrade spells or skills . In addition to accumulating experience , players also manage a single resource of gold . The typical resource @-@ gathering of Warcraft III is replaced by a combat @-@ oriented money system ; in addition to a small periodic income , heroes earn gold by killing hostile units , base structures , and enemy heroes . This has caused emphasis on a technique called " last @-@ hitting , " which is when the player attacks a hostile unit when " its hit points are low enough to kill it with one blow " . Using gold , players buy items to strengthen their hero and gain abilities ; certain items can be combined with recipes to create more powerful items . Buying items that suit one 's hero is an important tactical element of the mod .

DotA offers a variety of game modes , selected by the game host at the beginning of the match . The game modes dictate the difficulty of the scenario , as well as whether people can choose their hero or are assigned one randomly . Many game modes can be combined , allowing more flexible options .

= = Development = =

Warcraft III is the third title in the Warcraft series of real @-@ time strategy games developed by Blizzard Entertainment . As with Warcraft II , Blizzard included a free " world editor " in the game that allows players to create custom scenarios or " maps " for the game , which can be played online with other players through Battle.net. These custom scenarios can be simple terrain changes , which play like normal Warcraft games , or they can be entirely new game scenarios with custom objectives , units , items , and events , like Defense of the Ancients .

The first version of Defense of the Ancients was released in 2003 by a mapmaker under the alias of Eul who based the map on a previous StarCraft scenario known as " Aeon of Strife " . After the release of Warcraft 's expansion The Frozen Throne , which added new features to the World Editor , Eul did not update the scenario . Other mapmakers produced spinoffs that added new heroes , items , and features . Among the DotA variants created in the wake of Eul 's map , there was DotA Allstars , originally created and developed by custom map makers Meian and Ragn0r , who took the most popular heroes and compiled them into one map . In March 2004 , map maker Guinsoo took control of development and began the 3.xx to 5.xx series of DotA Allstars . On February 28 , 2005 , soon after the release of 6.x , Guinsoo announced he would be leaving WC3 custom map making , and left the development in the hands of Neichus and IceFrog . Soon after , Neichus left the team and left it in the hand of IceFrog . This started the legendary 6.xx series of DotA Allstars which is currently developed by IceFrog and Valve .

Defense of the Ancients is maintained via official forums . Users can post ideas for new heroes or items , some of which are added to the map . Players have contributed icons and hero descriptions and created the artwork displayed while the map loads , and suggestions for changes to existing heroes or items are taken seriously ; IceFrog once changed a new hero less than two weeks after the new version of the map was released . Versions of the scenario where enemy heroes are controlled by artificial intelligences have also been released . Mescon continued to maintain dota @-@ allstars.com , which by the end of IceFrog 's affiliation in May 2009 had over 1 @, @ 500 @, @ 000 registered users and had received over one million unique visitors every month . Due to their separation , IceFrog announced that he would be further developing a new official site , playdota.com , while continuing game development ; Mescon closed dota @-@ allstars on July 22 , 2010 , citing dropping statistics and his new passion for League of Legends as the reason for its end .

Because Warcraft III custom games have none of the features designed to improve game quality (matchmaking players based on connection speed , etc .) , various programs are used to maintain Defense of the Ancients . External tools ping player 's locations , and games can be named to exclude geographic regions . Clans and committees such as TDA maintain their own official list of rules and regulations , and players can be kicked from matches by being placed on " banlists " .

= = Reception and legacy = =

The popularity of Defense of the Ancients has increased over time . The scenario was featured by Computer Gaming World in a review of new maps and mods in Warcraft III . DotA Allstars became an important tournament scenario , starting with its prominence at the debut of Blizzard 's BlizzCon convention in 2005 . DotA Allstars was also featured in the Malaysia and Singapore World Cyber Games starting in 2005 , and the World Cyber Games Asian Championships beginning with the 2006 season . Defense of the Ancients was included in the game lineup for the internationally recognized Cyberathlete Amateur League and CyberEvolution leagues . Additionally , the scenario appeared in Electronic Sports World Cup (ESWC) 2008 ; Oliver Paradis , ESWC 's competition manager , noted that the high level of community support behind the scenario , as well as its worldwide appeal , were among the reasons it was chosen .

The scenario is popular in many parts of the world ; in the Philippines and Thailand , it is played as much as the game Counter @-@ Strike . It is also popular in Sweden and other Northern European

countries , where the Defense of the Ancients @-@ inspired song " Vi sitter i Ventrilo och spelar DotA " by Swedish musician Basshunter reached the European 2006 charts at # 116 and cracked the top ten Singles Charts in Sweden , Norway , and Finland . LAN tournaments are a major part of worldwide play , including tournaments in Sweden and Russia ; however , due to a lack of LAN tournaments and championships in North America , several teams disbanded . Blizzard points to DotA as an example of what dedicated mapmakers can create using developer 's tools .

In June 2008 , captainSMRT , writing for Gamasutra , stated that DotA " is likely the most popular and most @-@ discussed free , non @-@ supported game mod in the world " . In pointing to the strong community built around the game , Walbridge stated that DotA shows it is much easier for a community game to be maintained by the community , and this is one of the maps ' greatest strengths . Former game journalist Luke Smith called DotA " the ultimate RTS " .

Defense of the Ancients has been credited as one of the influences for the 2009 Gas Powered Games title Demigod , with the video game publication GameSpy noting the game 's premise revolved around aspiring gods " [playing] DotA in real life " . Guinsoo went on to apply many of the mechanics and lessons he learned from Defense of the Ancients to the Riot Games title League of Legends . Other " DotA clones " include S2 Games ' Heroes of Newerth . Blizzard Entertainment has also developed a new game inspired by DotA titled Heroes of the Storm , which features an array of heroes from Blizzard 's franchises .

= = = Sequel = = =

In October 2009 , IceFrog was hired by Valve Corporation , leading a team in a project that he described as " great news for DotA fans " . Valve officially announced the stand @-@ alone sequel , Dota 2 , in October 2010 . Dota 2 follows heavily in the gameplay style of DotA , with aesthetics and heroes working mostly as direct ports to the original mod . In addition to the pre @-@ conceived gameplay constants , Dota 2 also features Steam support and profile tracking , intended to emphasize and support the game 's matchmaking and community .

The marketing and trademark of Dota as a franchise by Valve gained concern and opposition from the DotA Allstars contributors working at Riot Games , as well as Blizzard Entertainment , both of which legally opposed the franchising of Dota by Valve . The legal dispute was conceded on May 11 , 2012 , with Valve gaining undisputed franchising rights for commercial use to the trademark , while non @-@ commercial use remains open to the public . Dota 2 was officially released in July 2013 .