= Giants : Citizen Kabuto =

Giants : Citizen Kabuto is a third @-@ person shooter video game with real @-@ time strategy elements . It was the first project for Planet Moon Studios , which consisted of former Shiny Entertainment employees who had worked on the game MDK . Giants went through four years of development before Interplay Entertainment published it on December 6 , 2000 , for Microsoft Windows . A Mac OS X port was published by MacPlay in 2001 and the game was also ported to the PlayStation 2 later that year .

Players take control of a single character from one of three humanoid races to complete the story or to challenge other players in online multiplayer matches . They can select heavily armed Meccaryns equipped with jet packs , or amphibious spellcasting Sea Reapers . The game 's subtitle " Citizen Kabuto " refers to the last selectable race , a thundering behemoth who can execute earthshaking professional wrestling attacks to pulverize its enemies . The single @-@ player mode is framed as a sequential story , putting the player through a series of missions , several of which test the player 's reflexes in action game @-@ like puzzles .

Game critics praised Giants for state @-@ of @-@ the @-@ art graphics , humorous story , and success in blending in one genre with another . Criticisms of the game centered on crippling software bugs and lack of an in @-@ game save feature . The console version rectified some of the flaws found in the PC versions , at the cost of removing several features . Giants sold poorly initially for both Windows and PlayStation 2 ; however , it sold well afterwards and the game has gained a cult following .

= = Gameplay = =

In Giants : Citizen Kabuto , players take on the roles of three humanoid races : gun @-@ toting Meccaryns , magic @-@ wielding Sea Reapers , and the gigantic Kabuto . Each player is assigned direct control of a single character . The game 's developers , Planet Moon Studios , created this design to encourage players to focus on the action and not to be burdened with micromanagement . Players can customize the controls , which are largely the same for each race , with slight differences for abilities .

The single @-@ player mode consists of a sequence of missions set as an overarching story . Each mission requires the completion of certain objectives to progress to the next mission . The objectives are usually the elimination of enemies or a certain structure , but several of them test the player 's eye ? hand coordination or require the player to rescue and protect certain units . Players control their characters from a default third person perspective ; a first person view is optional . Each race has its own offensive style , and a special mode of fast movement . Killing a creature releases a power @-@ up , which heals or awards weapons to its collector .

The real @-@ time strategy elements of Giants consist of base building and resource gathering , wherein the resources are small humanoids called ' Smarties ' . There are a limited number of Smarties in a mission , and players must rush to gather them , or kidnap them from each other to gain an advantage . Players also gather sustenance for the Smarties to make them work ; Meccaryn and Reaper players hunt the cattle @-@ like Vimps for meat and souls respectively . The options in building a base are limited ; players can neither choose the locations for the structures nor manage their workforce in detail . Players in control of Kabuto need not build a base , whereas the character gains strength and produces subordinate characters by hunting for food . Kabuto consumes Smarties to increase its size and power ; at maximum size , he can produce smaller Tyrannosaurus @-@ like units as subordinates . To restore his health , Kabuto eats Vimps and other units (player- and computer @-@ controlled) .

Multiplayer mode allows a maximum of five Meccaryn , three Sea Reaper , and one Kabuto player (s) to play in each session . Due to the lack of a game server browser , players connect through online services MPlayer or GameSpy Arcade for the Windows version , and GameRanger for the Mac OS X version . Besides the standard " destroy all enemy bases and units " missions , the multiplayer mode includes deathmatches and " Capture the Smartie (flag) " -type games . Players

are permitted either to start with a full base , or to build one from foundations .

= = Plot = =

The game world of Giants is set on a fictional " Island " traveling through space . Its surface comprises grasslands , deserts , and forests , surrounded by azure seas . Players have an unobstructed view of the game world to its horizon ; whereas distant objects are slightly blurred to convey a sense of distance . Missions for Meccaryns provide cover to hide behind , large spaces of water for Reapers , and creatures for Kabuto to eat .

= = = Characters = = =

Planet Moon intended for the player characters to provide a diverse gameplay experience , laying down requirements to make the characters distinct with unique advantages and disadvantages .
Meccaryns use high technology and attack as a pack led by the player . Meccaryn players sport guns , explosives , and backpacks that provide special abilities : jet packs allow players to fly over obstacles and outmaneuver opponents , and the " Bush " -pack camouflages the character as a shrub . In single @-@ player mode , players assume the role of Baz , leader of a group of Meccaryns comprising Gordon , Bennett , Tel , and Reg . Several scenarios in the game shows the responsible Baz frustrated with the laxity of Gordon and Bennett , and the inquisitive Tel and Reg .
Sea Reapers are amphibious , humanoid swimmers . Therefore , they regain health in contact with water , and the game 's Piranhas do not attack them . To travel fast over land , players can " turbo boost " their Reapers to targeted areas . The Reapers can use swords , bows , and spells , such as summoning firestorms or tornadoes , in combat . Planet Moon Studios initially conceived the Sea Reaper single @-@ player character , Delphi , as evil , but later gave her a conscience .
Kabuto is the titular creature of the game , and the only one of his race . In his back @-@ story , the Reapers created him as their guardian , but found him beyond control . Creative Director , Tim Williams gave the " Citizen " title to Kabuto for its allusion to the character 's wish for a sense of belonging to the Island . The game developer modeled Kabuto 's attacks after those of giant monsters in classic monster movies , allowing him to use professional wrestling attacks and aerial techniques such as elbow drops , foot stomps , and the " butt flop " described as " like the body slam , but with less dignity " . To balance his strength , a weak point at his waist inflicts heavy damage when struck . Players playing the giant monster can assume a perspective through his mouth to target prey .
For non @-@ playable races , the team designed Smarties to have oversized heads , bulging eyes , and idiotic personalities for comedic effects . Players labor for the Smarties while witnessing their hedonistic indulgences . The payoff , however , is a " giant gun " . Standard enemies include Reaper Guards (male Reapers with no magical ability , who serve as common soldiers) , as well as fauna such as the insectoid Rippers , beast @-@ of @-@ burden Sonaks , and bat @-@ like Verms .

= = = Story = = =

Originally featuring each race in its own distinct story , the single @-@ player mode now depicts a single sequential story wherein the players begin as Baz , and must complete a sequence of missions before assuming the role of Delphi . On completion of Delphi 's story , players take control of a Kabuto character . Williams used cut scenes to introduce and conclude each mission .
As Baz , the player searches for Reg and Tel . Timmy , a Smartie rescued in the first mission , functions as a guide for the player : introducing other Smartie characters , and providing exposition of the scenario . The plot portrays the Smarties as suffering under the reign of the Sea Reapers and their Queen Sappho . Alluding to the film , The Magnificent Seven , Baz gathers the separated Meccaryns , and takes on a quest to solve the Smarties ' predicaments . In a climactic cut scene , Sappho sacrifices Timmy to Kabuto , and the young Smartie 's grandfather , Borjoyzee , becomes the player 's guide . Baz leads an escape from the area , and sets up a base to lead a counterattack

. Thereafter Delphi becomes the player 's character . Yan , the Samurai Smartie serves as the guide for this story segment , giving instructions on Delphi 's abilities . After completing the training missions under Yan , Delphi attacks Sappho 's base and the Reapers , eventually confronting the queen in a boss fight . When defeated , Sappho summons Kabuto to destroy the Smarties , but Kabuto eats her instead .

In the final story , Delphi has transformed herself into a Kabuto @-@ like creature to challenge the original . The player wanders around the islands as the Delphi @-@ Kabuto character , searching for prey to increase her size . After Delphi @-@ Kabuto achieves her maximum size , she proceeds to a boss fight with the original Kabuto . Despite her victory , Kabuto revives in a triggered cut scene and restores her Reaper form ; whereupon the player takes the role of Baz against the revived monster . After defeating Kabuto , Baz is shown in the final cut scene , flying off to Planet Majorca with Delphi , Borjoyzee , and his fellow Meccaryns .

= = Development = =

When five members of Shiny Entertainment 's MDK development team broke off to set up Planet Moon Studios in 1997 with software engineer , Scott Guest , they decided to make their first project fun and original , a game with graphics and gameplay unseen at that time . Nick Bruty , Bob Stevenson , and Tim Williams initially conceived the idea of pitting players as spacemen , pirates , and giants against each other and having fun . Initially projected for release in late 1999 , the game suffered delays to its development largely due to the illness of their chief programmer , Andy Astor ; he was suffering from stage IV mantle cell lymphoma in late 1999 . The team realized they needed more resources and by 2000 , they had hired two more programmers and an artist . Producing a next @-@ generation game required them to keep up with 1998 ? 2000 's rapid advancement of technology , which resulted in further delays . The team upsized the graphic textures as they changed the graphical software to support NVIDIA graphics cards . Within a year after development started in 1999 , the initial minimum graphics specification climbed from requiring Voodoo 1 graphics cards to those of the GeForce @-@ series . Planet Moon deemed game engines available during development too restrictive and inappropriate for their requirements , and built their own . Called Amityville , it could support Glide , OpenGL , and Direct3D . The team used it to create the required " lush and vibrant " outdoor environments , and terrain deformation effects .

Planet Moon designed the structure of the single @-@ player mode to be a gradual learning process for the players ; the game would introduce new command sets to the players as they progress , and encourage them to repeat using the new commands for that mission . From the start of the project , the team intended the controls to be simple , and mapped commonly used commands to a few keys . Focus groups consisting more than 25 testers went through this design to verify its ease . Planet Moon aimed for a complex artificial intelligence (AI) ; computer @-@ controlled characters would evade shots and take cover . The enemy AI would plot its actions according to long @-@ term goals . The development team consulted Mark Frohnmayer , lead programmer of the multiplayer game Tribes 2 , for advice on implementing the multiplayer portion . To balance the characters in combat , Planet Moon focused on characteristics that could affect the fighting capabilities , instead of tweaking the damage output . The team faced a tight schedule , and abandoned several features initially in the game . Early designs allowed players to change the landscape ; they could gorge out water channels and isolate segments of the land by playing as Reapers . The Kabuto character initially could bake mud into " mud shepherd " units and use them to defend its herd of food .

Interplay Entertainment released the Windows version of the game on December 7 , 2000 . Planet Moon later created a special version of the game optimized for the GeForce 3 graphics card to display water reflections , soft @-@ edged shadows , and weather effects . This version was not sold as a standalone commercial product but as a part of certain GeForce 3 graphic card package deals . MacPlay announced on November 1 , 2000 , it was publishing the Mac OS X version of the game . The Omni Group was responsible for the porting of the game ; they rewrote the game 's software to take advantage of the symmetric multi @-@ processing capability of Mac OS X. Eleven

months later , MacPlay released the port . Multiplayer mode was initially disabled in the retail release but was re @-@ inserted in a later patch . Giants was also ported to the PlayStation 2 (PS2) , a process overseen by Interplay 's division , Digital Mayhem , who posted updates of their progress on IGN . Their greatest challenge for the PS2 port was converting and storing the special effects of the Windows version onto the lesser storage space of the PS2 . LightWave 3D was used by the team to convert the graphic resources . Although they had to reduce the image resolution , Digital Mayhem increased the number of polygons that composed the player character models , making them smoother and more detailed in shape . Due to the limited capabilities of the PS2 as compared to the Windows platform and the addition of a save feature , the team focused on enhancing the action gameplay , streamlining the interfaces , and tweaking the Reaper ski races , level designs , and game balance . They redesigned the controls for the PS2 's controller , and after finding the analog sticks less easy to aim with than a mouse , implemented a feature to help the player 's aim . Digital Mayhem originally intended to retain the multiplayer mode , but discarded it , believing the PS2 environment could not generate the same multiplayer atmosphere as the Windows platform . Interplay released the PS2 port on December 21 , 2001 . They also announced plans for an Xbox port but nothing resulted from this .

Near the release of the United States (US) Windows version of the game , Planet Moon failed to obtain a " Teen " rating from the ESRB despite changing the original red blood to green and covering Delphi 's toplessness with a bikini top . They made the changes to broaden retail opportunities because many large retailers in the US refused to sell " Mature " -rated games ; Wal @-@ Mart reiterated in October 2002 that they would never stock their shelves with software that contained vulgarity or nudity . Planet Moon Studios later released a patch that reverted the color of the blood to red , and computer gamers found they could restore Delphi 's toplessness by deleting a file .

Interplay offered a bonus disc containing extra multiplayer levels to those who pre @-@ ordered the Windows version of the game . On October 5 , 2003 , they offered the game 's soundtrack to those who purchased Giants from their online store . Composers Mark Snow (noted for his The X @-@ Files musical scores) , Mark Morgan , and Jeremy Soule (both known for the music of several video games) were involved in the music for Giants . Interplay hired Morgan to compose the scores , although reports showed they initially hired Snow for the task . Morgan , however , could not fully concentrate on the task due to personal reasons and handed it over to Soule . Closing credits of the game listed only Morgan and Soule , and Soule compiled their works onto the original soundtrack of the game . Soule originally offered to autograph the soundtrack on its release in the United States ; however , he stopped his offer when email feedback revealed many were intending to pirate his work through the peer @-@ to @-@ peer file sharing software Napster instead of buying it .

= = Reception = =

Planet Moon Studios ' blending of two genres in Giants has earned the acclaim of reviewers . Game Revolution and GameSpot found the simplified real @-@ time strategy task of resource gathering in Giants more interesting than tedious , and Troy Dunniway , Microsoft 's Head of Game Design in 2002 , commented that the real @-@ time strategy elements enhanced the game 's shooter aspect rather than making it a hybrid of two genres . Sci Fi Weekly was impressed that both styles of play never interfered with each other , which was complemented by the unique gameplay of each race . The Entertainment Depot , however , found the base building in several missions tedious ; they said the player had to rebuild the base several times due to being forced to leave the base defenseless , which allowed the enemy destroy the structures .

Reviewers commented that the imaginative character designs and use of advanced graphics technology , such as hardware transform and lighting , and bump mapping , made the graphics of the game unrivaled in its time ; ActionTrip was so impressed by the game 's visuals that they thought their graphics card was supporting the complex hardware environmental bump mapping it was incapable of . The animation of Kabuto 's antics such as elbow dropping onto tiny enemies , and tossing up and catching food with his mouth , in particular , won the praises of reviewers . Many

critics , however , were disappointed that the computer versions of the game could not run smoothly at full details on the recommended system specifications .

The AI in the game was also the subject of much commentary . Reviewers said they needed to prompt the allied non @-@ player characters to perform actions on several occasions , although the allied AI performed pretty well most of the time . FiringSquad disagreed , calling their computer controlled teammates worthless and finding joy in leaving them to their deaths . The game review site thought the same of the enemy AI , a view echoed by IGN ; enemies were unaware of the deaths of nearby teammates , and kept running into obstacles . ActionTrip , however , stated the enemy AI did well enough to take cover or flee when hurt , and constantly attack the player 's base .

Many reviewers found the best part of Giants to be its bawdy humor ; the scenes were " bizarre and funny without ever letting the silliness distract or annoy the player " . FiringSquad claimed the humor kept them plowing through the game regardless of the issues they encountered , and were disappointed when the game steadily lost this approach in the later stages . Mac Guild and Macworld UK , however , considered the humor crude on a childlike level and its delivery forced . In spite of the humor , many reviewers found themselves bored by the monotony and slow pace of certain segments , According to ActionTrip , Giants lacked a unique quality to capture attention , compared to its contemporaries such as American McGee 's Alice , MechWarrior 4 : Vengeance , and Sea Dogs .

The frequent crashes of the retail Windows versions infuriated many reviewers ; Game Revolution censured Interplay for focusing on censoring the game for marketing purposes instead of testing for and fixing the software bugs before release . Several reviewers could not connect to multiplayer games due to failed connections or bugs . The reviewers who managed to play online , commented the games were fun , although they were occasionally disconnected or lagged . GamesFirst lamented the lack of dedicated low ping servers , and several reviewers declared that the computer versions of the game was flawed for not implementing an in @-@ game save feature .

Reviewers appreciated the PS2 version for including the asked @-@ for save feature , but complained the ported game retained the AI and level design issues associated with the Windows version . IGN remarked that it looked less impressive than the computer versions . The lower resolution , flat textures , washed out colors , and sparser environments made the game average looking . The PS2 version also exhibited clipping issues ; character models and projectiles would pass through objects on occasion . The game reviewer , however , praised the console version for presenting a smooth animation , rarely dropping frames . On the contrary , other reviewers stated the frame rate dropped when there are several objects on the screen , presenting a heavy load on the graphics engine . The lack of replay value for the console version after completing the single player mode was a common complaint among the reviewers .

Review aggregators Metacritic and GameRankings calculated scores of 85 and 86 @.@ 7 % from their selected reviews for Giants as of 2007 . Although most critics had awarded high scores to the game , GamesRadar and GSoundtracks reported the Windows version sold poorly . In contrast , the Mac OS X version sold out within months of its release , in spite of its smaller market base . According to the quarterly sales reports by NPDFunWorld , the PS2 version sold 11 @,@ 272 copies in the US for the six months since its release . This is a poor sales figure compared to the 51 @,@ 726 copies of Shadow Hearts and 753 @,@ 251 copies of Max Payne sold in the same period for the PS2 . Despite the poor overall sales , reviewers have nominated Giants as a game deserving a sequel , and have kept it on PC Gamer UK 's Top 100 as of 2007 . In 2009 , Andrew Groen of GameZone ran a retrospective on Giants and suggested that the game 's mix of humor and action inspired later games such as Ratchet & Clank and Jak and Daxter . He further commented that games of 2004 ? 09 were influenced by Giants in one way or another .

= = Possible sequel = =

On September 25 , 2015 , the independent studio Rogue Rocket Games , co @-@ founded by Nick Bruty , former Planet Moon Studios founder , started a Kickstarter campaign for developing a new independent crowd @-@ funded game said to be " the spiritual successor of Giants : Citizen Kabuto

" , titled First Wonder . They failed .