

Analysis of Mechanics

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Title: Kenshi

Released: 2013

Author: Lo-Fi Games

Primary Genre: Real-time strategy action role-playing game

Secondary Genre: sandbox, rogue-like, survival, open world, base-building

Style: realistic low-poly

Analysis

In Kenshi you control a squad of characters and animals in post-apocalyptic world. You can recruit more characters and purchase animals (or slaves). Each character has multitude of statistics spanning from trade skills such as cooking, farming, or laboring, to engineering, thievery, and combat skills like toughness and proficiency with various weapon types. These stats can be leveled up by actively engaging in action associated with the stat. For example toughness can be leveled up by getting hit.

There is no main objective in the game, it is purely a sandbox experience. The activities in Kenshi combine the RPG and survival genres. The main core gameplay loop consists of exploring and gathering resources. Players collect various loot and sell it for local currency called Cats. With Cats they can purchase gear, food, crafting resources, drugs and more from traders. They can also purchase a house in any city. The buildings are used for shelter, research, training and crafting. Or they can build their own bases around ore deposits or farm land.

The combat mechanics involves micromanaging your squad like in the other real-time strategy games. A limb system assigns every part of the characters body has its own health bar. The combat is also physics based meaning the weapon has to make contact with hitbox of the body part. Sharp weapons can also dismember limbs. If a character survives this, he can later replace them with robotic limbs.

Any character or NPC can become unconscious or die. Either from combat wounds or lack of food. The unconscious characters can be robbed or even sold to slavery. If the whole squad dies, the game simply ends.

There are no traditional difficulty options in Kenshi. When starting the game, player is presented with different starting options. These options include different initial squad members, items, currency amounts, and a designated starting location.

There are many zones, factions and interesting NPCs. Each zone has different theme, races, factions, wildlife and things to explore.

The low-poly realistic art style fits the harshness of the post-apocalyptic world. The game utilizes weather effects and day and night cycles for atmosphere and immersion. The game has big number of systems. The player can also ignore parts of the game or do them in any order which gives the game replayability and role-play options.