

ARTS

Revolutionary game is evolutionary art



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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Create. Evolve. Explore. Share. From the creator of *The Sims*, Will Wright brings you *Spore*. Featuring a simple yet diverse drag-and-drop creation tool, *Spore* grants you the opportunity to create your own species from scratch.

You'll take your creation through five stages, from a straightforward cell floating in the primordial soup-esque "tide pool" phase and onto land to evolve, form tribes, dominate the landscape; and finally, to take off into the unknown galaxy.

What makes this such a creative outlet for artists is quite possibly the best perk of the game: the ability to share your creations online. You can download user content and vice versa, even to take someone else's hard work for a spin.

You start the game as a mere cell with eyes, a mouth, a flagella and your choice of being a carnivore or an herbivore. Quite simply, the cell phase is "eat or be eaten."

The fact that you're a small fish in a big pond is portrayed very well, with much larger species swimming out of focus in the background to give the illusion that you're too small to be seen. Eventually, as you grow in size and advance your creation with extra parts, you'll notice other creatures running to escape from your attention while others will dart in your direction to eat you.

To make any changes to your creation, and thus "evolve," you have to find a mate. Sound waves will point the way to a suitable candidate and thereafter you'll have access to the Spore Creator application. Here, the player can spend DNA points, gained by eating and completing challenges, to add unlocked parts to your creature.

After the cell phase, you enter the creature phase, which is basically a three-dimensional version of the same thing except now you have a nest. When you die, that is where you're reborn.

As an herbivore, you can only eat the plant life, and you're tasked with befriendng as many species as possible. As a carnivore, you simply kill and eat the spoils. The omnivore is the difficult choice, as you're tasked with doing either of the aforementioned things.

It's your choice to kill or befriend, eat meat or eat fruit. During the creation segment each species you defeat or befriend can uncover extra parts to add to your creature. While it would have been nice to see a more fleshed-out variant of this in the Tribal and Civilization phases, all of the editor parts come unlocked, so the work is done for you.

The game doesn't offer much in terms of a combat experience. Your health and hunger are replenished by food. Eating your talk (or eat) for her, byore and omnivores recharges your health and also satisfies your hunger, which is necessary for a creature for you to kill and gain experience to progress the game along.

My last quarrel with the

you the option of resizing and repositioning everything down to every joint in the appendages. Aside from this, the option of at least 30 very different hands and feet are available, as well as sets of eyes, ears, noses, antennae, antlers, horns, spikes and armor, and anything else aesthetic you could imagine. It's your goal as the artist to decide what looks good and what doesn't.

It's apparent that the developers of *Spore* knew how to begin, with its Pac-man-esque cell phase, and how it the game would end. The problem must have been connecting the dots fluently. That *Spore* cannot fit into just one genre of gaming is a statement of truth; rather it encompasses the Real-Time Strategy, the loner Action-Adventure and it even hints at a little Role-Playing when it comes to "evolving" your creature. In the early stages your instructions are simply to eat or be eaten. However, the Tribal and Civilization phases feel more like an obstacle to slow the game down, as they revolve around dealing with economic and domestic disputes.

Unfortunately, for a game that boasts creative developmental freedom, it seems a shame that *Spore* glosses over such cultural aspects as religion, politics and legal standings to prevent you from truly defining your race. Stranger still is that you can design everything about your creature, but you can't choose to enslave your entire population under a Communist regime.

While *Spore* does indeed lose a heavy amount of creativity in its Tribal and Civilization phases, that outlet is regained upon entering the galactic Space phase. *Spore* just simply doesn't know when to calm down and leave the player to his or her own devices.

Forgoing the negativity, *Spore* is still a very interesting and provocative experience. No other game has to offer such an outlet for creativity. Better still is how the computer brings your bizarre creation to life. Odd-legged beasts have a slight limp or hop and you can see your own take on Frankenstein's monster shift weight around with each step.

With a few clicks of the mouse and some scrolling on the mouse wheel, the beauty of the creation tool is evident when your creature "comes to life" on your computer screen.



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Take to the stars, as you can create your own alien physically, exist the player take over and to reform the planet, and to create a new world, you simply eat organism spread its influence, and so on.

Pineapple Express lights up audience's drug awareness

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Pineapple Express stars James Franco as a pot dealer and Seth Rogen as his loyal buyer. Franco and Rogen's roles are reversed in this movie from other movies viewers have seen them in. Rogen, who has been in hit movies such as *The 40-Year Old Virgin*, *Knocked Up*, and *Superbad* plays the more responsible smoker with a job as a court process server.

Franco, who viewers have seen as the more serious character in films like the three *Spider-Man* movies and *Tristan + Isolde*, plays the funny, spaced-out and stoned drug dealer, Saul Silver, trying to make money to put his grandma in a nursing home.

Rogen's character, Dale Denton, witnesses a murder while in his



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This comedy-action thriller, *Pineapple Express*, is high on laughs.

car. He catches a glimpse that involves a female cop, Rosie Perez, and the local drug lord brutally slaying another man. At the time he saw the murder, he was smoking the rare weed called Pineapple Express, but threw the joint out his car window and sped away when he saw the killing. One of those involved in the murder is able to track him and his dealer, Saul, thanks to the marijuana burning in the joint left at the crime scene. Things get complicated and eventually the two find themselves in a crazy adventure fighting for their lives.

Although this movie is labeled

as a "stoner movie" it comes with a heartfelt story and you see the friendship grow from "dealer and pot smoker" to best friends.

While Dale and Saul do smoke weed a lot, they manage to figure out a lot about themselves and each other.

The action in this movie is sometimes a little exaggerated. For example, when the character Red, played by Danny McBride, gets gavelly serious wounds and yet can still drive a car, save his friends and somehow enjoy lunch without seeking medical attention. Another time is when Ed Begley Jr.'s character thinks

that Dale Denton is high at a family dinner, gets out his rifle and starts shooting at him.

Then again, the whole movie starts getting into action after the bad guy, Ted Jones (Gary Cole), finds the lit joint outside of his house, smokes it, and can tell what brand of weed it is and who was smoking it.

If there were a poll right now whether to legalize marijuana, what side would you be on? Most who would agree to legalizing it or that have no opinion on the subject would enjoy this movie. Most people that are against the use of drugs and wouldn't ever consider the thought of legalizing pot should not go see this movie. It's really as easy as that.

Most of those who have already seen

Pineapple Express loved it and have seen it multiple times. Other people thought it was a waste of money and time. There is no right or wrong side, but the pattern of movie-goers is that those who don't mind drugs won't mind this movie and vice versa. If this movie sounds like a good one or you are even curious about it, go see it. If anything, the movie is a good laugh.

If you don't have a car, *Pineapple Express* will be featured in the Reed building later this fall.

Food For Thought

"One day, someone showed me a glass of water that was half full. And he said, 'Is it half full or half empty?' So I drank the water. No more problem."

—Alexander Jodorowsky

Janet Neff Sample Center
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"As an employee of the NFL or a member club, you are held to a higher standard and expected to conduct yourself in a way that is responsible, promotes the values upon which the league is based and is lawful."

Roger Goodell

Artistic, creative or ambitious?

Write for the ARTS page of
The Behrend Beacon

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