

FIT NOT FLAT

# MULTIWINIA: SURVIVAL OF THE FLATTEST



FORMAT

PC

PUBLISHER

Introversion Software

DEVELOPER

Introversion Software

REVIEWED BY

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**G**ames like *Multiwinia* are a rare breed to be treasured; every once in a while something refreshingly different rears its head, in this case an amalgamation of genres and a unique graphical style, only baring comparison with its predecessor, *Darwinia*. The original was a tale of destroying a computer virus inhabiting a fully realised digital world: if removing a virus was as fun as this in real life, we'd all be opening our spam folder and eagerly downloading dubious attachments right now.

Now, in *Multiwinia: Survival of the Flattest*, the iconic 2D Darwinians have transgressed and are no longer locked in a single-player fight against a computer virus. Instead they've split into numerous factions, fighting each other for control over the digital resources *Darwinia* holds; oil, solar power, fuel, and so on. In this altered setting, *Multiwinia* allows players to battle against each other (both offline with the AI and online amongst other human players), across a selection of different multiplayer modes. Although we've seen the likes of King of the Hill being done before, the game also plays host to more complex types like Rocket Riot, pitching players in a race against each other to activate solar panels, refuel, board, and blast off in a rocket.

*Multiwinia* maintains the distinct looks from its predecessor *Darwinia*, taking the appearance of a videogame down to some of its simplest forms. Characters are predominantly 2D, inhabiting an incredibly basic yet effective 3D environment. The graphics are simple, endearing and distinctly retro, dominated by block colours and free of small detail, which perfectly complements the game's story of

controlling a digital world. In a way, playing *Multiwinia* even for the first time somehow manages to feel nostalgic; it's remarkable to see two-dimensional characters inhabiting a video game today. The comparatively low requirements will come as a breath of fresh air for many PC gamers, and it's easy to argue that by avoiding a photo-realistic experience, the developers have been able to focus

efforts on simply making the game fun and unique (not to mention something that runs brilliantly smoothly despite thousands of units running around shooting each other).

Although at a glance the gameplay may appear to be a simple RTS affair, this is not the case. Unlike other RTSs you can construct a gun turret and fire it at the masses yourself, and similarly there are specific units you can move around, take aim and fire with. Elements like this force you to get up close and personal with individual units despite the massive scale of the battle around you.

Arguably making *Multiwinia* stand out from the crowd further are its crates. That probably sounds a little crazy; as we all know, crates are easily the most overused, commonplace object known throughout the entirety of videogames. But these aren't your bog-standard crates. *Multiwinia's* crates drop gracefully from the sky and land randomly around the map, but you'll have no idea what's inside until you've opened the contents.

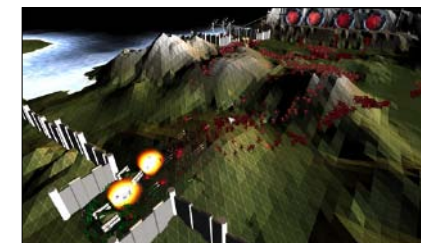


PLAY ▶ PAUSE || STOP ▢

Crates have the ability to swing the entire tide of battle. You could be blessed with friendly monsters to crush your opponents, the ability to place a turret or summon a UFO to recycle souls and boost your population, but alternatively you face the risk of opening an effective Pandora's Box, with the potential to push you out of the game. Thankfully it's also just as likely that a giant space ship will loom overhead and indiscriminately suck up units from any team, only to land them back down on the map as "Futurwinians" – a new enemy race to contend with.

It's a double-edged sword; on one hand you could be dominating most of the map, your Multiwinians see a crate and rush to open it only to unleash a virus that spreads throughout your population, destroying most of it - while on the other you could be losing, grab a crate and launch a missile attack anywhere on the map.

Unfortunately crates can throw what feels like a massive unfairness into the mix, so the ability to alter crate settings to 'weighted' so



they tend to land nearer players in last place, or just turn them off altogether is a welcome option. The risk crates have to offer is worth it, if only for the satisfaction of dropping a bundle of eggs on the enemy's doorstep, and watching Multiwinian's running away while they hatch into giant beasts.

*Multiwinia* has a ton of longevity to offer; the game will surprise you constantly, while coupled with formidable AI and an exciting variety of match types means there's plenty of manic multiplayer fun to be had.

VERDICT ★★★★★