

Gameplay video plays

Hello, everyone. Today I'm going to review Commander Keen: Invasion of the Vorticons Episode 1: Marooned on Mars for DOS. The first episode in the series was released as shareware on December 14th, 1990. Those who were interested in the other two episodes had to order the game directly from Apogee software as id took care of development. The story is about an eight year old boy genius named Billy Blaze who goes to Mars for who know what reason. While on Mars, his ship parts get stolen and now he has to track down the thieves, get the ship parts back and repair the Bean with Bacon Mega rocket and get back to Earth before his parents do.

Cut to live video

So let me see if I got this straight; we have *image of Commander Keen pops up* an eight year old boy who *image of Bean with Bacon Mega rocket pops up* builds a spaceship from spare parts and *image of Mars pops up* goes to Mars for no apparent reason without any kind of equipment and *Question mark pops up* god knows who is on Mars with him.

Shrugs shoulders

Makes sense to me, I guess.

Cut to gameplay

You might have noticed that there's no audio from the gameplay. It's because I forgot to set my DVR volume. Then again, there isn't much to talk about anyways because the sound comes from an internal speaker.

Cut to live video

To put things into perspective, what I mean is that the computer itself generates the "audio" that the game produces. It is very basic, monotone and before the improvement of sound cards, that's all you had.

Cut to gameplay

The gameplay itself is very basic; get from point A to point B, collect items *zooms in on lollipop* like junk food, and for every 20,000 points you'll get an extra life *zooms in on ray gun* and ray guns to defend yourself. Keep in mind that ray guns are hard to come by, and you shouldn't waste ammo. You can access your inventory/pause the game by pressing space bar to see your status. *Ellipse to empty space* See that empty space? I'll get into that later. One drawback to the gameplay is that you can only save on the map screen.

Cut to live video

You know what? It makes you wonder who left these things behind. I'm also kind of surprised that when all is said and done, Commander Keen doesn't get obese or diabetic. Interestingly, Commander

Keen doesn't die when he exits his ship because of the thinner atmosphere. Must have some very good genes, I guess.

Cut to gameplay

One level has the *arrow points to pogo stick* pogo stick. *After Commander Keen picks up the pogo stick, image of arrow disappears* You'll need this item in order to get through the rest of the game and collect hard to reach items. Another item that's needed in order to proceed are *zoom in on keycard* keycards. While not common, keycards are usually in levels that are either guarding something, like a space ship part, or in levels that are very large. Smaller levels don't usually have keycards.

The controls themselves are responsive and easy to remember. While the keyboard is fine, I prefer playing with an Xbox 360 controller. *Record scratching sound effect*

Cut to live video

Yes, you heard that. I played a DOS game with an Xbox 360 controller.

Cut to gameplay

While the graphics aren't the greatest, they do their job quite well, and the animations are pretty smooth. The characters are also well done and the enemies are pretty cool looking. Speaking of enemies, let's do roll call. We have *zoom to one eyed alien* one eyed aliens who act too friendly, *zoom in on two eyed aliens* two eyed aliens, *zoom in on gray walking robots* gray walking robots doing their impersonation of zombies, *zoom in on tank robots* robots that shoot, *zoom in on ice cannon* ice cannons that freeze you, *zoom in on vorticon* and the main antagonists and recurring enemies of the series, the vorticons.

Cut to live video

So...what were the vorticons doing on Mars, anyways? Never mind, the less I know, the better.

Cut to gameplay

So has this game aged very well? The answer is yes. Even 25 years later, this game still has that unique charm to this day. If you haven't played this game before, I'd recommend doing so. Commander Keen Episode 1 gets 5 stars out of 5.