Darkwind: War on Wheels

www.dark-wind.com

Darkwind is a simultaneous turn-based, 3D persistent-world multiplayer wargame set in the near future. The simultaneous turn-based gameplay blends the fast play of a real-time game with the strategic depth and variety of a turn-based game, and therefore appeals to both real-time and turn-based enthusiasts. The game is staged on a sparsely populated continent, one of the few surviving areas of civilisation. The focus of the game is on vehicular combat – cars with guns - both in the wilderness and in man-made arenas and racing circuits. Gameplay is split between a web interface (for strategic management) and a 3D interface which supports Windows and Mac OSX (for control of your characters and vehicles during a combat or race).

Background story

A disastrous solar event in 2019 and 2020 leaves the world devastated, with only small pockets of human survivors scratching out a living in a bleak, irradiated world. Largely fuelled by the stockpiles of hardware left behind by a dead civilization combined with the desperation of a new world order, the gladiatorial death-sports begin, around 2035. The vast expanses of wilderness between the towns are menaced by gangs of road pirates armed with heavily armed cars and trucks, and travelled by equally well armed trade groups, making a living by carrying food, fuel, and other specialist equipment between the towns.

A turn-based game

The turn-based nature of Darkwind makes it a very unusual, tactical driving game. The concept of turn-based racing is well established in a number of excellent board games that have been made over the last 40 years or so. Darkwind combines accurate physics with turn-based play. The race becomes about the tactics of entering and exiting corners, overtaking, and generally breaking down the nuances of driving. By making the game turn based players battle it out tactically rather just seeing who is first to make some dumb mistake, which is what happens in many computer racing games. Each move in Darkwind represents one second of action, and is simulated using a bespoke physics engine, with rigid body physics as the core mechanism. Various terrain characteristics such as friction and softness are applied, and the tyre simulation involves static and kinetic friction, deformation and spring characteristics, as well as suspension settings. Another major reason for making Darkwind turn-based is to allow highly detailed rules and strategy: these things are not possible in real-time games. Players need time to assign orders to their characters, vehicles and weapons. It's a totally different experience to standard real-time car games. Players have time to chat, smack-talk, and time to watch each other's moves as well as their own. You win by having good strategy and tactics, not by having the best reactions.

A wargame

Darkwind is best described as a war-game due to its extremely detailed rules for combat, vehicle modifications, character injuries and morale, fame and reputation, as well as its detailed behind-the-scenes simulations which define the in-game trade economy and on-the-road piracy levels as a direct response to player actions.

In-town gameplay

The leagues and ladders that are staged in the town racing circuits and arenas form one of the main gameplay elements. In the leagues, you compete over a 12 week (one game year) period to win fame and fortune in races, death-races (racing with guns allowed) and arena combats. In the ladders, you challenge other players on specific racetracks using specific cars, and earn points for each victory.

Persistent world, real-world timescale

Many of the aspects of Darkwind run to a real-world timescale. It takes days or weeks for your characters to heal from their injuries; it takes hours or days to repair/upgrade your vehicles, and it takes hours to travel between towns. This makes your strategic decisions carry real importance, and gameplay aspects such as trading take real time and effort, which allows them to work properly as part of the dynamic economy. It also takes months of in-game training and use for a character to become an expert in any of the various character skills such as driving, gunnery, mechanic, or scouting. That is, assuming they manage to live that long.

The Weapons Bunker

[Return to Town]

At the mechanic shop you can order new vehicles, or upgrades and repairs to your existing ones. The mechanic shop is also where you buy vehicle weapons and hand weapons.

Your gang has $472776
ORDER A NEW VEHICLE

Chassis	Engine	Weapons	Tyres	Other

Weapon		Weight*	Bulk	Ammo	Cost*	Stock
Machine Gun		152	20	20	1723	13
Heavy Machine Gun		355	40	20	3494	7
Car Cannon		510	60	10	8426	11
Flamethrower		455	40	10	787	7
Heavy Flamethrower		660	60	10	1549	16
Rocket Launcher		205	40	10	1767	8
Micromissile Launcher		102	20	10	1276	8
Radar Guided Missile		300	40	2	7549	12
Car Rifle		305	40	10	2517	6
Anti Tank Gun		610	60	10	2683	8
Laser		500	40	0	9753	8
Heavy Laser		1000	60	0	14221	9
Tank Gun		1220	200	10	12899	14
Mine Dropper		155	40	10	806	8
Spike Dropper		30	20	10	176	12
Smokescreen		30	20	10	317	13
Heavy Smokescreen		70	40	10	643	8
Paint Spray		27	20	15	625	7
Heavy Paint Spray		58	40	10	990	12
Oil Jet		27	40	15	379	7
Heavy Oil Jet		58	60	10	791	6
Flaming Oil Jet		32	40	15	488	7
Heavy Flaming Oil Jet		68	60	10	801	5
Car Grenade Launcher		204	40	10	1517	11
Light Rocket		25	10	1	110	8
Medium Rocket		50	16	1	208	9
Heavy Rocket		100	24	1	314	12
Mini Rocket		20	6	1	75	8
Mounted Ram		200	5	0	310	8
Mounted Spikes		100	5	0	388	8
Mounted Mortar		508	80	12	5498	6

* (The weight and cost include a full load of ammunition)

Phoenix 'Flamer'

Capacity:170
Engine Capacity:90 (108)
Weapon Slots: FRx2, REx2, LE, RI
Colour:

Component	Cost	Weight	Bulk
Chassis	8524	1500	-
2.5L engine	1291	825	55
Flamethrower [remove] left	787	455	40
Flamethrower [remove] right	787	455	40
4 Standard tyres	304	-	-
60 units grade B armour	5100	600	-
10 unit fueltank	92	-	10
Driver*	-	150	20
Totals	16885	3985	(5)

*Each additional gunner and passenger requires 20 spaces and weighs 150

This vehicle will be ready in 8 hours

ORDER THIS VEHICLE

Estimated Combat Rating: 70

Build your own combat vehicles

Using the town mechanic shops as well as the player-run marketplace, you buy and customise vehicles of various types: economy subcompacts, saloons, musclecars, trucks and vans. You define the armour, engine and weapons in them, and carry out repair work when they are damaged. The types of weapon include guns, missile launchers, ballistic weapons, melee weapons such as mounted spikes, and dropped weapons such as mine layers and smokescreens. The weapons have detailed statistics underlying them: recoil, close range and ranged accuracy, damage factors, psychological 'fear factors', ammunition, and so on. The availability of hardware in the markets is a carefully balanced gameplay factor - if wilderness pirates are not kept under control, for example, then rare chassis types and weapons will not be easy to find.

Wilderness gameplay

One of the main gameplay elements revolves around travel and combat in the wilderness between the towns. Here the stakes are raised: you risk your own vehicles, characters' lives, and any valuable trade or courier goods you may be carrying. But you can also rapidly gain fame and accumulate looted hardware from your defeated adversaries (who may be either computer-controlled or player-controlled). Wilderness actions are performed by multi-player squads: by joining together, you can greatly increase your chance of survival.

Complex behind-the-scenes simulations

A carefully developed economic model based on systems dynamic simulation ensures that the control and distribution of key resources underpins a realistic, dynamic economy. This provides real opportunities for trade to be used as a gameplay strategy, and control of key resources to be used as part of long term feuds and warfare. The actions of the player gangs and the victories and defeats of the computer-controlled pirate and trader gangs directly impacts the availability and cost of resources and vehicle hardware at each of the towns in the game. Lucrative trade routes are therefore not static but must be continually devised and modified.

Community

Darkwind has a great community whose main aim is to have fun in a friendly and pleasant atmosphere. The Darkwind Gazette is a community-driven newspaper running since 2007.

Continuous development

Darkwind is under continuous development and we are adding gameplay features all the time. The player community is actively involved in this process. DW-Tactical is a recently added feature. This is a sandbox version of the game targeted at those players who enjoy the challenge of PvP but wish to play combats without the requirement to build up their own resources in a persistent game-world.

System Requirements:

- Windows or OSX
- 64MB+ Graphics Card Supporting OpenGL
- Any Internet Connection

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