

# CO GAME Videogame Research

## General Information about the Game

### Name of the game

Medieval II: Total War

### Year of Creation

2006

### Description of the game

The Total War series has become the gold standard for epic strategy games. Part of the secret has been an evolutionary approach to the game design. The Creative Assembly got the basics right with the very first game, Shogun, and have steadily refined it and expanded on it with each subsequent version, taking advantage of increased system speeds and new graphics hardware, but never radically reinventing the game or making an attempt to dumb it down in order to reach the widest possible audience. The result is that rarest of things: a series that just keeps on getting better without a single damp-squib in the set.

The Creative Assembly have implemented a fully redesigned multiplayer mode that offers a dynamic multi-battle campaign bolstered by an unprecedented level of visceral combat choreography that reflects the brutality of medieval warfare. Set in the most turbulent and bloody era in European history, Medieval 2: Total War allows gamers to lead their armies across the battlefields of Europe and the Holy Land before discovering the Americas and doing battle with the fearsome Aztecs. Medieval 2: Total War offers a vastly enhanced terrain model to create new graphically rich environments portraying breath-taking cliff top castles and enhanced settlement features that are unique to each civilisation.

### Platform

PC

### Type of the game

Strategy

### Website

[www.twcenter.net](http://www.twcenter.net)

### Are there more institutions cooperating to the videogame development? Which profiles?

Developer: Creative Assembly

Publisher: SEGA

Other: Educational Animations: Historical Animation Society of Hungary

## BLOCK A. HERITAGE INTEREST

This part is for describing the heritage quality of the game.

### **Is there any distinctive heritage element?**

Medieval II spans four and half centuries of the most turbulent and valuable era of European history, encompassing the golden age of chivalry, the Crusades, the proliferation of gunpowder, the rise of professional armies, the Renaissance and the discovery of America.

### **If yes, which are the different historical contexts (Who, when, where, why?) described.**

This time around players will be returning to the Age of Chivalry - when knights went crusading in the Holy Land, when Italian city-states warred against each other with hired mercenaries, when succession crises provoked kings to make war upon their neighbours, when the Ottoman Empire attacked Europe, and the Kingdom of Hungary made a heroic battle against them to protect the Western civilization. The grand campaign covers several centuries, from longbows to cannons, and lets fight and conspire with nations from England to Egypt, Portugal to Poland. There's even a small side trip you can take to battle the Aztecs in the Americas.

### **Which are the main historical elements described?**

Like in most strategy games, your goal in Medieval 2 is to try to conquer the known world. And as a ruler of a medieval kingdom, this means you have to rely on knights, men-at-arms, archers, catapults, cannons, and everything else you'd expect out of a movie such as Braveheart or Kingdom of Heaven. That's not all, though; you also have a small array of agents to call upon. Diplomats can negotiate cease-fires (useful when you need some time to rebuild your strength) or alliances; princesses can shore up the loyalty of a general or a neighbouring faction through marriage; spies can give you a peek at a fortified city's defences; assassins can take out enemy agents.

Basically every aspect of medieval life is covered, not the least of which is religion. You must construct churches or mosques to support the faith, and if you're a Catholic nation you can even get involved in some popery by getting your man elected pope. This isn't just for fun, either; having the pope on your side can be a very powerful thing, because he'll be much more willing to overlook some of your aggressive transgressions against your Christian neighbours. On the other hand, if you hack off the pope or one of your sworn enemies gets their man elected, the best you can hope for is to get excommunicated, and the worst is that you find yourself the target of a crusade, which means that it's open season on you. The papal election basically works like this: You enlist priests to help maintain the faith in your provinces as well as take care of any heretics or witches that crop up. The more effective a priest, the more likely he'll be promoted by the church to become a bishop and then a cardinal. Every time a pope dies, the three most senior cardinals are put up for election--and here's

where you can engage in diplomacy to buy votes for your man. However, if you fail and you vote for the losing side, the incoming pope will have a grudge against you.

**Are they rigorous or inspirational or simply scenarios for the development of the story?**

Inspirational

**Which are the most interesting elements regarding COGAME framework, and why?**

Developing competences: mental courage, creative thinking, social interaction, forward thinking and strategic planning, historical knowledge,

The students learn spontaneously (through own curiosity) and intentionally (under the teacher's guidance). They discover and find functionality of things, fantasies or thoughts, realizes their changes.

The game equip children with state-of-the art technology. This may help overcome technophobia (a condition well-known among many adults). Over time it may also help eliminate gender imbalance in IT use (as males tend to be more avid IT users).

## **BLOCK B. EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE**

This part is about collecting information about the educational sense of the game.

**Age addressed by the videogame**

15 - 18

**Is there any link with the national educational levels? (Is the game addressed specifically to any pedagogical level? To some pedagogical activity?)**

Foster the attitude of the child to exploring and learning through play

Developing competences: mental courage, creative thinking, social interaction, forward thinking and strategic planning, historical knowledge,

The students learn spontaneously (through own curiosity) and intentionally (under the teacher's guidance). They discover and find functionality of things, fantasies or thoughts, realizes their changes.

Pedagogical activities:

Understanding students' cultural backgrounds, interests, skills, and abilities as they apply across a range of learning domains and/or subject areas;

Understanding students' motivations and their interests in specific content;

Clarifying and articulating the performance outcomes expected of pupils;

Planning instruction for individuals or groups of students.

**Which educational purpose has the game?**

- It can boost the motivation to learn
- It facilitates learning because students are focused on accruing knowledge and developing abilities
- It promotes student engagement and enhance the learning process while making it fun
- It helps gauge children's cognitive development and facilitate individualized learning.
- It can be useful because the game allows the player to measure performance on a very wide variety of tasks, and can be easily changed, standardized and understood

The Historical Animation Society of Hungary has the intention to bring closer the student historical events by reconstructing determining battles of Hungarian history and creating 3D animation films about them. It is a unique initiation in Europe yet. They use the “engine” of the Total War to create their films.

During the films there is narration available for complete understanding of the historical context. The animations are well used in the Hungarian Education System, and successfully integrated. The Society makes more and more films in every year, which stimulates the student to go deeper into the learning material in any more detail.

An example:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLACK0iskXWidsj5efTo0NN5ns7SzmGICI>

**Target addressed by the project (List: community, classroom, subrepresented groups, disadvantaged, etc.)**

Children, young adults

**Which are the main skills / knowledges / attitudes learned by using the videogame?**

- a, Social competences (interaction): For most gamers, gaming is a highly-social activity.
- b, Communicative competences: understanding and recognises that some people communicate also in other languages, actively listens to and understands the ideas and information from the game
- c, Cognitive competences: applies in play creative thinking, applies own imagination in problem solving, finds uncommon answers or solutions

## BLOCK C. VIDEO GAME DESIGN

This part is for collect information about video game design

### **Graphics (Which type of graphics are used by the video game?)**

One of the most evident changes is the addition of greater individuality among the units and the inclusion of subtle but striking visual effects. Where Rome presented homogenous units where every soldier dressed and moved alike, Medieval II breaks up the monotony by slightly varying the appearance and animation of each individual soldier within a unit. A cohesive unit of 40 knights will have individuals wearing different types of armour and different coloured pieces. The unit will still adhere to your overall colour scheme for quick identification on the battlefield but you'll really start to think of these units as being made up of individuals instead of clones. It adds so much to the experience that it will be hard to go back to Rome after this.

The animations are much more natural this time around as well. The individual soldiers seem to be fighting with one another to a greater degree than they did in Rome. Spear thrusts, cannon reloads and even death animations are very realistic and convincing. Even better, the animations that are mimicked by other individuals are played out of sync so you don't get units moving in unison like the Commodores.

### **What is the storytelling of the video game? (Which are the main narrative elements?)**

The Total War series gives players the best. As a ruler of a medieval kingdom you try to conquer the known world. On the one hand, it offers a turn-based strategic game where you manage the development of your settlements, handle foreign relations, create and move armies around the map. On the other hand it offers intense real-time battles that capture the cinematic pageantry and intense savagery of warfare. What's more impressive is that both aspects of the game are well integrated into a cohesive whole.

### **Is it future or past oriented? It is dystopian or utopian?**

Past oriented

### **Main characters (How many characters the player can choose? Describe them.)**

The game restricts you to only about five major players at first (England, France, the Holy Roman Empire, and so on), but after you win a campaign game you can unlock 12 other factions covering Europe, North Africa, and the Near East. You can even send armies to the New World and battle the Aztecs, though you'll likely find yourself with more than you can handle back in the Old World.

### **Interactivity (What is the level of interactivity inside the game? Describe.)**

All of this skulduggery and manoeuvring is going on while you're busy with your main task, raising armies and issuing them movement orders. The sheer variety of units that you can call upon is impressive, and each faction has its own distinct units, such as the English longbowmen or the Holy Roman Empire's gothic knights. As you'd expect, it's combined arms that wins the battles, so you can create armies consisting of spearmen, men-at-arms, mounted knights, bowmen, siege weapons, and

much more. And after a battle, you'll be sending these units back to a castle or a town to replace losses, so there's a lot of army management throughout the game. Put this all together and it sounds like a lot of management overall, and it is, though aside from a few interface tweaks that we'd like to see, this is an engrossing experience. There's so much depth in the strategic game that you could automatically generate the results of battles and you'll still spend hours trying to outmanoeuvre your opponents diplomatically, militarily, and religiously.

**Usability (Has the game a complex screen? Number of controls (keyboard, screen, Joystick...))**

Medieval 2 isn't a hard game in the technical sense, as the controls are fairly intuitive for the most part. However, it is a game that requires you to pay a lot of attention, especially to what the enemy is doing. The artificial intelligence will certainly keep you occupied on the medium difficulty setting. The AI is smart enough to probe for weaknesses in your defences and then attack if you're not careful, so you need to keep your guard up at all times. Unfortunately, enemy turns take a tediously long time to resolve on the default settings, as you have to sit and wait for every unit in sight to make its move. You can turn enemy movements off and the turns will go by much quicker, though you do lose the chance to see what the enemy is doing during its turns.

**Accessibility (Is the game prepared for people with mobility or control disadvantages?)**

No

## BLOCK E. ASSESSMENT FOR CO-GAME

**Which are the elements you identify as relevant to be taken in mind for the development of the different IO for Co-Game?**

- the game is challenging for the player
- the goal of the game really good determined
- enjoyable gameplay
- high immersiveness
- great tutorial
- illustrative short animations for educational purposes

The game equip children with state-of-the art technology. This may help overcome technophobia (a condition well-known among many adults). Over time it may also help eliminate gender imbalance in IT use

(as males tend to be more avid IT users)

**Which are the elements not to repeat while developing Co-Game?**

The videogame experience and practice may enhance a participant's performance on particular games, which may skew results.

**Name of the organisation in charge of the questions (Write the name or your organisation (CEPS, LATERNA, MUNDANEUM, CIES; BFI)).**

Laterna Magica