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A pretty average title
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[Need For Speed Undercover](#)

See if EA's new racing game is worthy of the hype

Need For Speed Undercover promised to bring back all of the things that made Electronic Arts' famous racing franchise so popular, namely the free roaming environment and the police. It was marketed by EA as the title that would erase the ugly memory of ProStreet from the minds of racers and offer them a great gameplay experience.

While at first glance you might label this game as just a next generation port of the previous Most Wanted title in the NFS series, EA has insisted that this one was very different from the 2005 title. The company went forward to show that it had a deep and intricate story in which you are a federal agent who must take down a car smuggling operation by going undercover and pretending to be a normal street racer. While this story isn't like the one from Most Wanted, where you were a regular street racer engaged in pursuits with the police, a lot of other elements are similar to the previous game. So, is NFS Undercover really worth your hard earned money or should you just wait another year for the next title in the series? Well, here's our complete review.

Story

The story does seem a bit elaborate at first glance, but it gets much simpler once you start racing and you get your reputation and Wheelman rank up. You're part of a federal team, consisting of you and agent Chase Linh, played by Maggie Q, that needs to take down an international crime syndicate that deals with smuggling stolen cars and other goods out of the fictional Tri-City area, where the action of the game is placed.

Once you go undercover, your only contact with the police remains Chase Linh, who gives you various assignments, depending on what progress you make through the game. From here on until the end of the game the types of missions are pretty simple and don't require a lot of effort, depending on your racing and cop-evading skills, because in order to move up the ranks of the street racers and get noticed by the smugglers, you need to win races and evade cops.

Once your reputation starts to grow, several members of the underground car smuggling syndicate contact you and offer you different "Hot Jobs," which consist of stealing cars and delivering them to their garages. Of course, once you steal a car, you need to evade the police and keep the vehicle in good shape. As the game progresses, you are tasked with eliminating members of the syndicate, so that they can be questioned by your partner, Chase Linh.

The Tri-City Map Annoying freezes are common

Gameplay

The gameplay isn't very complicated, as someone who has played the Most Wanted game will certainly feel right at home with this new title. The open free roam environment is pretty well built, with a road network that is in very good shape and which gives you plenty of room to race and/or evade the police. Races are divided in Circuits, Sprints, and several new ones, like Highway Battles, where you must distance yourself from your opponent by 1,000 ft. (300 meters), or Outrun, where you must overtake your rival and keep the lead for a

certain amount of time.

The tuning aspect of the game is pretty much the same as in previous titles. You access your garage from where you can manage your cars and modify them in any way you want. From the Visuals menu you can change the way your car looks, by adding body kits or different elements, which don't have an effect on the aerodynamics of the car, like they did in ProStreet. You can also change the paint on various elements of your car, and thus lowering your heat level. The performance aspect can be tuned as well, by adding pre-defined upgrade packs to your vehicle. Also, the fine tuning aspect of the game is there, as you can tweak your car according to your preferences.

The police aren't the brightest in the series but can pose a few problems when they are in large numbers. As opposed to the ones in Most Wanted, these police cars don't hesitate to ram into you and destroy your own. This can get particularly annoying during the Hot Jobs, where the integrity of the car is key to the success of your mission. Also, there isn't much balance between the police cars and your own vehicle, as my Lamborghini Murcielago, tuned to the maximum, was easily overtaken by a Rhino SUV during a chase. Luckily though, there are plenty of Pursuit Breakers that can easily take care of the law officers.

The Hot Jobs are pretty interesting, as you never drive the same car more than once - from a Pagani Zonda to a McLaren F1 or a Bugatti Veyron, there are a lot of beautiful cars that you get to steal and drive around the Tri-City. The takedown missions are particularly interesting on one side and very annoying on the other. Interesting, because you get to chase around a rival and crash into his car, but annoying, because you have no limitations in terms of the road, so you really should be careful as to where your rival is running away so you don't lose him.

But the game is plagued by quite a lot of glitches and annoying problems. First and foremost, the pop-in of the building and portions of race track are extremely annoying, as I've found myself waiting quite a lot of seconds, with the car floating in mid air, so that the game would load the next portion of the track, this happening on a more than average PC. There is a grave lack of weight between your own car and those of your opponents; you can try to ram other racers but fail miserably, and if they just bump into you, your car loses its entire grip. Some very aggravating problems that are sure to make a lot of users angry; let's just hope that they will be addressed in a future patch.

Concept

The concept of the game isn't the most innovative or different from the whole NFS franchise. It's the first time you have a character who is a cop, but in the game you still take out police cars and other law enforcement vehicles, like in any other NFS game. The story isn't that entertaining, although it does provide some twists that, if you pay attention, you can easily figure out for yourself.

The FMV (Full Motion Video) cutscenes are something new to the franchise, as in previous games actors were created digitally after real ones. This time, the likes of Maggie Q, Christina Milian or David Rees Snell, from the TV series The Shield, make an appearance in this title. They don't have big representations and you can clearly see that they could hardly wait to get the job done, but they do provide a nice touch to the game.

Although the story was promised to be very different from any other game, it does have the same mechanics - win races, evade pursuits and eventually get to the end and have a few boss races. Not too innovative, but it's sure to entertain the NFS fans for a short while.

You need to take out your rivals G-Mac, one of the bad guys
Visuals and Audio

There isn't quite a lot to say about the graphics of the game, except that it can get a bit annoying at times. Your races only occur at dawn or dusk, so the sun is always in your eyes and, coupled with the fact that the roads are very shiny, it reflects a lot of light. You might want to consider lowering your brightness level or wearing a pair of sunglasses while you play this game.

The cars look rather good, but not great, and the damage seems quite real, but, because NFS is an arcade game, it doesn't have any impact on the performance of the cars. The world is pretty nicely done, but it doesn't stand out in any way. The shadows are sometimes very jagged and they might annoy players who want their game to look perfect.

The sound aspect is, perhaps, the only very well done aspect of this title. From the sounds of the car engines to the police sirens or the tracks you hear while you race, everything is quite good and can offer a great experience from the audio perspective. The sounds of the engines are very different from one car to another, and they are sure to make players quite happy when they buy new, and more powerful vehicles.

The tracks of this game are pretty diversified, and there's certainly something for everyone's taste. From alternative and rock songs, from Nine Inch Nails, to house or techno tracks from Asian Dub Foundation or Ladytron, and even to reggaeton, from Qba Libre, nothing is left untouched by the soundtrack of this game.

Multiplayer

The multiplayer aspect of the game isn't very good but it doesn't disappoint. There are quite a few modes of gameplay, from which only a couple of them are new. The Cops'n'Robbers mode puts players against each other, one being the cop and the other one a robber. The law enforcers must catch the criminal while the latter needs to evade his pursuers and deliver a package to a designated location.

All the modes provide a pretty entertaining experience, but they don't really keep the players' interest alive as they easily resemble the ones found in the singleplayer campaign. Nonetheless, it is bound to be played by the NFS fans who want to occupy their time until 2009 when the next title will be launched.

Conclusion

All in all, NFS Undercover is a pretty average game, delivering players a relatively enjoyable experience. If you are a NFS fan, and you enjoyed Most Wanted, then this title might interest you and keep you entertained for a pretty short amount of time. But only if you can get past its technical problems.

If you like racing games but don't want an experience filled with glitches and annoying parts, then this game isn't for you. It promises a lot, but it doesn't really deliver on everything; the police aren't too bright, your opponents can be very easy or insanely hard to defeat, depending on their mood probably, and hidden obstacles are plenty to be found, and to ruin your race, of course.