

By [GabyC0001](#), Games Editor

## [World in Conflict](#)

### *The best RTS of 2007*

There are bad games, OK games and [brilliant games](#). Games you wish you'd never started playing and games that make you think that you don't have enough time in your lifetime in order to fully enjoy them. Now, moving on to the [RTS](#) genre, I can translate everything I said before easily: there are RTS games and there is World in Conflict. And that's the way it is. I started to write this introduction three times already, because when you get to play such a great title like this one, you simply want to do your best, write something that could be compared to the brilliance of that specific title. But every time you read your words again, you realize that it's not even close and "select all", then "delete" follows. And that's the moment you realize that it is impossible to write an article that can be compared to such a game - World in Conflict, in our case - maybe because, for now, it can't be compared to anything else, or maybe it is better to let people enjoy a game, rather than enjoying a review and hating the game. And trust me, this is a game RTS fans of all ages will enjoy.

**The Story** Since it is a real time strategy game, you have to know that there's a conflict involved (or you already figured that out when you read the title?). Here, the conflict arises in the late eighties, based on the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, which found the latter close to bankruptcy, desperation and very, very resource-thirsty. So they decide to apply the "go grab them" tactic and invade the Western Europe because, everybody knows, the West has the resources. And even though at first the NATO troops were ill-prepared, they eventually manage to bring the heavy artillery into the game and halt the Soviet's invasion. But it appears that the Russians really needed some resources and, since the European War was slowly progressing, they start a surprise attack aimed at the Americans. And this is the moment you will jump into the game and (hopefully) become the hero everybody will remember. The year you and the entire world will remember: 1989. Unlike most of the real time strategies you've played, in World in Conflict you are not a great commander, but rather an unexperienced Lieutenant that happens to be in the right place when all this hell breaks loose. You are Parker and your fate is to save the world, grab the hot chicks and move to Hawaii. (No, the last line isn't related to the game, but I am sure that's what anybody would do after saving the world). However, your mission begins in Seattle, at the same time with the Soviet attack and you'll take part in some of the greatest, super-looking battles you could ever imagine. Because the World's in Conflict. Of course, this is not the most innovative story you have heard, but this game actually narrates this story so well that it makes you forget you've probably seen it, heard it or played it already. Yes, it is predictable, but nobody is perfect.

**Gameplay** Most of the gameplay-related things in this game are nothing but the classic RTS control scheme. You click and drag to select your units, you set formations (just two are available here, but it's enough since a triangle tank formation wouldn't give you any advantages over the enemy infantry. It's not the cavalry, you know!), you issue orders and you press the right mouse button to destroy stuff. Nothing more to add here, since it's already a classic control scheme and World in Conflict had no problems implementing it. But this game probably wanted to do its best to become the best real time strategy ever and a classic, flawless gameplay, wasn't enough. So the developers started thinking and added things. First you will note (and after two minutes of gameplay you will appreciate it) the fact that all that annoying base-building you did in every single RTS game you've ever played does not exist at all. You don't have to build anything - but you'll destroy quite some buildings! - and you won't have to collect resources at all. And no, don't think that it can't be called a strategy game since you don't have these options. This is actually something that raises the tactical planning to the next level. In this game, the "resources" are replaced with reinforcement points which allow you to order new units. Usually these points are limited, so the strategy part begins when you click to order your first unit. Each one of them costs pretty much, so don't expect to have, at any given moment, more than about a dozen units. However, these points, once depleted are not lost forever, the number of available points will gradually and slowly "revive" after one of your units dies. Which is pretty cool, since there wasn't too much strategy in a game that had as a golden rule the "build a ton of units in 2 hours then crush the enemy" slogan. So in World in Conflict you will really feel the pressure of a real war (at least I guess so, since I've never been into one): you have a limited number of units, as I

said, and you will always be outnumbered. So a good tactic, quick thinking and some planning is what you need in order to succeed. And the Tactical Aid Button - another nice implementation. This button offers you some vital help throughout your missions and it might just be that extra thing that is able to make the difference between a loss and a win. It comes with 4-5 tactical aid weapons, like Air Support, Artillery Support or Rocket launches (yes, the Nuke is included!). Each of these has an effect area and it takes some time before they occur, so it's quite a challenge to hit moving targets, since that effect area is usually very small and you have to predict the movement. But this is what this game is all about - always do some thinking before you issue an order. Still, sometimes the amount of support you can request is overreacted - you can wipe out the entire map and still have some left. Along with the tactical aid, you will usually have some AI support from computer-controlled units but, even with these two combined you really need to plan your every move with your "always not enough" troops. After all, this is a strategy game and you will fully understand this when playing with your 6 units against a full army. Brains and AI cooperation are the key. And since I started the units chapter, I should tell you that there is no mega unit to get in order to make your life as a commander easier. The ones you control are built following the paper-rock-scissors rule which has a really good implementation. And because the AI uses every available unit type, you will (usually) need to divide your few troops into anti-air, anti-infantry and anti-armored vehicles. It is indeed something that makes this game a little tougher than others but, personally, I prefer some tactics over 100 units at a time, randomly attacking. It is also worth noting that the troops have special "abilities" - both offensive and defensive, which can be accessed by pressing a key and which will definitely make your life much easier. The missions Lieutenant Parker receives take place in various, beautiful locations, both in the US and the European territories, so you'll get to control some NATO troops as well as the American units. Unfortunately, the single player mode has only one campaign, which means that you can't play the bad guy and that, in my opinion, is a huge draw-back - no Russian Campaign for us and that's not good. In order to finish the single player missions, you will have to control (and sometimes defend) specific command points - key positions in the battlefield. You will receive both primary and secondary objectives and, even though the secondary ones are optional you should always try to accomplish them because they give you rewards. And another light tank would always be a great addition to your team. But these secondary objectives are usually far away from your primary ones, so always be ready for some extra tactical thinking. Oh, did I say that some missions have a limited amount of time? \*Evil grin\* Overall, the gameplay is flawless. Even though particular elements seem to make this game easier, it actually is the other way around. However, this is not a hard game, I would dare to say, but definitely a reason of joy for RTS fans everywhere. Yet, it is simple to control, so new players might find it pretty easy to play, too. But mastering it could be the real challenge. **Graphics** Personally, I never expected a real time strategy to be a graphical delight - I have always considered there are more important things to value in such a game, thus I never expected great graphics from a real time strategy. But World in Conflict sets a new landmark in the RTS genre, providing the best graphics so far. Everything looks great in the game - units, buildings, war zones, explosions, with a special note on how cool the water looks like, so good that you will just forget about your war for a second, dream about the beach and a sweet cocktail and Bam! a nuke hits you and you press "Restart mission". That's life! In this game you are able to destroy absolutely everything you see - buildings, forests, roads, bridges, using rockets, artillery, infantry, whatever. The explosions are great and, as a side note - I sent one Nuke on the battlefield and kept my cam close to the target point - I almost felt that thing burning. Also, you have such a great zoom option, and every detail is so good that you could think you're playing a third person shooter if you zoom close behind a soldier. And you can actually see them shooting bullets, getting shot etc. As I said, there is nothing I have to say against the graphics. No other RTS has ever offered, visually, such a treat like World in Conflict. **Sound** Even though this game's story doesn't bring us something totally new, the way it is narrated (by Alec Baldwin himself) is great. Really touchy, with the "needed" clichés like the pregnant girlfriend waiting for your return, phone calls and so on. When the cutscenes are over, you will get to hear the same old dialogs when you click an unit, issue an order etc. But you will barely notice them since the predominant noise you hear is represented by explosions, explosions, explosions. Overall, the sound is not something you will remember forever, but it is well done, I can't complain. Personally I turn off the sounds in most of the computer games after a few hours of gameplay but in World in Conflict I didn't get to feel this need. Not that I would actually miss it if I did. **Multiplayer** Basically, this game is made to be played in multiplayer and the single player campaign is just a great tutorial about teamwork, since you will join a war and be part of a team which will fail to win the game unless

cooperation exists. You can choose one of the four roles in multiplayer (Armor, Air, Infantry and Support) and each practically only allows you to command certain types of units. And if you remember the rock-paper-scissors thing, you'll understand why teamwork is needed. There are four play modes available in multiplayer: Domination, the one that is played by most of the players, has a group of Command Points spread out across the map and teams will fight to control these - the ones who control the most CPs push the domination bar to the team's advantage. The winner is decided according to this domination bar. The other play modes are: Assault - played in two rounds, one team acting as defender while the other attacks, in order to control CPs in a preset order; Tug of War - one long Command Point acts as a frontline and the teams fight for it and Few Player Mode, which allows any of the previous modes to be played in a 1 on 1 or 2 on 2 game. All these can be played on LAN or over the Internet. Just a note: don't try to get your friends on LAN and ignore the co-op Internet play, because World in Conflict offers a request menu that allows coordination and simplifies the team play, turning complete strangers into great allies. Not to mention that the players I found on the servers were pretty hardcore gamers who knew what they were doing and always followed the golden rule of teamwork: cooperation. The multiplayer maps are varied and you will never get bored playing them - time will pass like it never did before, so get set your alarm clock if you want to get some night sleep, too. Actually, I could say that the multiplayer mode is one of the best experiences up to date. **Conclusion** World in Conflict is, apparently, a perfect game and surely a title that changes the way gamers will look from now on at real time strategy titles. It's not an innovative game, but rather one that blends everything so good that it actually makes you feel like you're having a new gaming experience. At least it manages to set some landmarks regarding the graphics and, together with that, it does prove one really important fact: the gameplay matters a lot. Actually, the gameplay means everything, but in this game there is not one thing that could be considered "the best" - as I said, everything is so smoothly mixed and the result is such a great experience that it certainly makes it impossible for me to compare it with other games. Which is rather strange since basically it is a classic RTS title, excepting for the building and resource thing. Also, it is a highly replay-able title, not because of the campaign (which is rather short), but because of the great Internet community that appeared after this game was launched. A definite must have for this one and thumbs up for Sierra for making this great experience possible.