

Heroes of Might and Magic

from New World Computing, Inc.

Heroes is a combination of the best aspects of many games I've enjoyed playing. From the arcade type action and high quality graphics to the challenging strategy and original musical score, Heroes is a thoughtfully programmed strategy/action game with an easy to use interface.

There are four types of castles and four types of heroes for hire. The classes are Knight, Barbarian, Sorceress and Warlock. Each castle type can have six different creatures to recruit into your army for a total of 24 different creatures. You start with a castle and hero chosen by the computer. Your castle starts with a limited number of "lairs". You can now use your resources of gold, ore, wood, crystal, sulfur, gems and mercury to start improving your castle or build a castle in a town you have conquered. Building a Mages Guild will allow your hero to use magic. Your hero can then add the creatures you have recruited into their army.

The game won't overwhelm you with the details strategy. There is some thought required as to what you want to build in each castle and where you want to send your heroes, but most of your time is spent enjoying the game and not worrying about details.

Your hero, Ariel, moves across land and sea with the entire army as one piece. Battles ensue in a 3 dimensional battle field where you have full control over each creature group. The battles are fiercely colorful and graphic. You see your Knight's sword swing into the Druids and you hear them groan in agony as some of them perish. The mighty Knights just stand there with contempt as the weakened and discouraged Druids feebly fight back.

Back at the castle, your opponent, Yog, draws near with his army. Feverishly, you recruit Ambrose, a hero, and place the last of the available creatures in his army. You check with your scouts to find out what Yog's army strength is. You hope that by the time he arrives your castles lairs will have more troops ready for hire. You have a Mages Guild, but the only hero for hire was a Knight. You buy him a spell book and he learns what limited amount of magic he can. All you can do now is wait....

Ariel finishes off the rest of the Druids with a lightning bolt. She is now too far away from home to help out at the castle, but she does stumble across some extra gold and wood. Just what you needed to build a new level to the Mages Guild. Ariel also happens across a magic lamp and rubs....

There are over two dozen different creature types each with their own strengths and weaknesses. Each creature is animated as they attack your opponent. You can increase the morale of your army by having only creatures of one type in your heroes army. There are also wonderful artifacts to find and fight over. You might find a compass to increase your travel rate to an enhanced scroll of knowledge to improve your magical talents.

Every aspect of this game has been very well thought out. Of course, even in perfect games there is always one annoying little detail. The one thing I would like to see added is an auto-quick battle feature. If you know you're going to win battle, you may not want to wait through an entire battle sequence to play out. Even if you have selected the auto feature where the computer controls your army, you still must watch the battle action. They should install an auto-quick battle feature which would ask, just before going into battle, if you would just like to see the end results of an auto battle. This is the only complaint you'll hear from me about this game and I'm sure they will be installing this feature in the future.

Heroes is fully networkable allowing up to 4 players to enjoy all the fun. The difficulty level is fully configurable for each game. You can choose easy, normal, tough or

impossible scenarios. There are 1 to 3 opponents to choose from and each can have their intelligence level set from dumb to genius. There is also a crusade you can go on for the ultimate challenge. I would recommend running through their short 10 minute walk-through to learn how to play. After that, just refer to the manual for minor details.

Heroes of Might and Magic is simply awesome. I didn't want to break away from the game to write this article. Every sentence I wrote made me want to start playing the game. If you enjoyed Civilization and Master of Magic, you're going to love Heroes of Might and Magic. For me, I'm going to go back and start playing Heroes while my wife is out.

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Rating

Graphics	96
Sound	99
Interface	97
Fun Factor	96
Overall	97

System Requirements

486 / 33MHz
8MB Ram
25MB hard drive
2x CD-Rom
mouse SVGA
Supports all major sound cards