

Frédéric Houde

1) Rayman 2, why a sequel?

I think that Rayman's universe is rich enough to create a second episode. The new technologies allow us to go further and to give the players strong sensations.

Still Rayman 2 is very different from the first episode : in Rayman 2, the player evolves in a 3D environment which allows total freedom. On top of this, the game is intense and fast-paced, the hero has magic powers, and there's a strong storyline and a ton of enemies.

We have had to work in a more mature way : the story and the universe have a stronger, more intense identity, the scenario is more developed, the bad guys have goals and Rayman has friends who help him in the game.

2/ Usually, in action games, the scenario is just a pretext. What about in Rayman 2?

In Rayman , the scenario is not a pretext. Saying this would be the same as saying "I don't care about the plot in Indiana Jones".

The action is justified by interesting goals. The reward for the player is bigger. It is a new trend in the video game industry. A storyline brings big changes to the basic platform game...for example in Mario 64, the designers did not create such a plot. Maybe because of Zelda...with a good plot, Mario would have been a 3D Zelda.

The gaming industry seems to be maturing in terms of creativity. Now the goal is no longer to move from level to level, but to write a story.

In Rayman 2, you must free your friends and find a mysterious power. This is a side quest to the main quest.

The way the scenario is delivered is important: it gives a meaning to action, immerses the player in the game universe, full of surprises and emotion!

Michel Ancel

1) You are, among other things, responsible for the graphics and the look of Rayman 2: What was your leitmotiv for this new episode ?

Rayman 2's graphics are more developed and "adult" in a way. As for the atmosphere and the characters, they're more dynamic.

Rayman 2's spirit is more delirious than the 1st one. Still, the universe is more coherent : it is a real world and all stages are linked as in an adventure game. But the main point remains action.

2) Rayman 2's universe is more fantastic than the first Rayman.. What were your inspirations for this aspect of the game?

Rayman 2 is based on a fantastic background that includes lots of contemporary things. My sources of inspiration are numerous and mostly unconscious. When I was a kid, I used to read all kinds of stories : Russian, Chinese, Celtic...Rayman takes things from all these universes, but adds a more contemporary and cartoonish touch.

The concept is similar to that of Dark Crystal, with its magic and its Celtic universe. The cartoon aspects are inspired by Tex Avery, among others : Rayman is a true high-performance hero who keeps a good sense of humour like Indiana Jones. Rayman is a rebel, fighting against mighty bad guys, like in Star Wars or Robin Hood.

Nathalie Paccard

1) What does Rayman 2 represent in terms of time and staff?

So far, we have been working on Rayman 2 for a year and a half, from September 1997 to May 1998. This might not seem like a lot in terms of development, since we're working on several versions at the same time, but we've got a pretty big staff, in fact the biggest at Ubi Soft: there are 80 people in the team, 40 of which are engineers.

2) How does Rayman 2 differ from the original Rayman?

First of all, it has 3D graphics, allowing complete freedom of movement in a 3D environment!

Rayman's different skills have been improved. For example, the helicopter and the grapnel have been reworked...but everything that was funny in Rayman 1 is still here, just better. Some new actions and powers have been added too.

The universe has evolved. There's a magical element; Rayman acquires powers which he has to improve during the game.

Rayman 2 is more scenario-oriented, with more of a storyline that pops up during the game, which increases the player's emotional involvement.

We also developed design tools which create a complex and evolving AI for the NPC, which allows them to choose their movements in Rayman's world.

We introduced morphing, special effects, lightings, particles and fog to create diverse atmospheres. You will be able to recognize the original Rayman's world (fruits and forest) but it has changed slightly and there are even more worlds to discover.

Rayman was a platform game, Rayman 2 is an action game. The universe has also evolved a lot, so has the character. Rayman 2 is a bit older, able to do more things, and loves a good fight. He's less childish. The game itself includes more action and more tricks.

Still, we kept one of the most important ideas behind Rayman, which is one of its keys to success : the ability to interact with any object or character. For instance, the plum can be a platform, or a way to make a joke, or you can throw it on a wall of branches to make a bridge, and so on... You can really play with the settings! You can lift walls and grow plants... The music is interactive too: it changes according to your actions and location.

Nevertheless, Rayman 1 is not yet outmoded, since it is a long game with a great replay value. It has its own universe, and the Montpellier Studio's special graphic touch...it remains a reference.

3) Rayman 2 on PC CD-ROM, Playstation, Nintendo 64...What are the highlights of each version ?

On PCs, we are not limited by space, so we're able to include more maps and secret levels. The game will therefore be bigger on PC.

On Nintendo 64, we are more limited by space, but it has great graphics and light effect abilities which we have been pushed to the limits.

The game on the Sony Playstation will be different: Worlds will be smaller but more numerous.

All in all, you get topography and gameplay that fit to each machine!

Serge Hascoët

1) What is your leitmotiv for Rayman 2?

Our leitmotiv is to design an action game with a fast pace. There is always something going on in Rayman 2's world. Sensation, emotion...the player must be encouraged to move on, to react.

At the end of a map, the player should be out of breath but satisfied.

The rhythm, like with music, should be a sensation unto itself.

The game should not be too hard. What you have to do in the levels needs to be easy to understand right from the start.

The challenge is to complete the levels with lots of action, movement, and tricks...

2) What do you mean by “ multi-depth gameplay ” ?

There is a normal way to complete a level and, for the more clever gamers, hidden paths which are tougher to reach.

The average player can walk through the game without seeing any of these hidden paths.

Rayman's new powers (mainly his shooting abilities) allow him to reach places that are inaccessible at the beginning, which brings a real replay value to the game.

We do not want to bully the player. We want to give the player a lot of things to do. This is achieved through

the great number of Rayman's moves and abilities.

Furthermore you can get helped in the game : when you free a friend, the friend helps you.

There are 6 friends who are part of the gameplay itself; for example, Rayman frees a snake which allows him to water-ski!

3)What are your references in the world of video-games?

Zelda on Super Nintendo, for its game logic : explore, find new powers. This is a linear game but it doesn't seem like it. The player can walk around in many places, and be stuck as he advances in the game. By exploring and acquiring objects, the player remembers many places where he was stuck and can eventually go back and unlock them. This is the same in Rayman 2.

Quake in network game for the stress and sensations it provides. Its rapidity and its intensity.

Indiana Jones, the character, is our reference : he falls, hangs on to something, jumps, use his whip...It is a linking of various actions and rhythms, just like in Rayman2.