

Metal Gear Solid – Windows

Developed by: Konami (<http://www.konami.com>)

Published by: Microsoft (<http://www.microsoft.com>)

Reviewed by: Tim Maxwell

Official Site: <http://www.MGSpc.com>

Genre: Action

System Requirements:

266 MHz Pentium II or equivalent processor

4 MB 3D Accelerator Card

Microsoft Windows 95 or later Operating System

32 MB RAM

300 MB of hard disk space; additional 100 MB of space for swap file

Quad speed or faster CD-ROM drive

Super VGA 16-bit color monitor

Microsoft Mouse or compatible pointing device

Gamepad recommended

Supports: gamepad

ESRB: Mature

Overall Rating: 8

Graphics: 8/10

Sound: 8/10

Documentation: 7/10

Getting Started: 8/10

Gameplay: 8/10

Value: 9/10

The Good Press: Most of the shortcomings that plagued the PlayStation version of *MGS* have been addressed; great storyline and movie-like flair; the inclusion of the VR Missions will keep you occupied for many months to come; Snake is the ultimate bad-ass.

The Bad Press: You'll have the main game licked in under 10 hours and a good portion of that time is spent watching cut scenes or listening to dialogue.

Overview: Finally, a console port worth purchasing.

Tips:

Try to avoid firefights in well-guarded areas. If you're noticed, an army of soldiers will be waiting.

Whatever you do, don't dispose of the CD jewel case. You won't be able to complete the game without finding the clue on the back.

Metal Gear Solid for the PlayStation went down in history as one of the best selling and most innovative games to ever be released on any platform. It introduced gamers to a more mature, movie-like gaming experience and emphasized stealth and cunning to the guns-a-blazing action that players had been accustomed to. However, despite the scores of accolades the game received, it certainly had its share of problems. Minor annoyances like the obnoxious save game feature and less than ideal camera angles tarnished an otherwise outstanding effort. I'm happy to report that the PC re-release of *MGS* successfully addresses many of these shortcomings, and proves that a console to PC port can actually improve a game.

For those of you who never had the privilege of playing the original *MGS*, the story revolves around Solid Snake, a world-renowned governmental operative who's been sent to a nuclear weapons disposal facility in Alaska to stop a terrorist heist. Snake is well known for his remarkable craftiness and ability to complete assignments against all odds. Armed only with a pair of binoculars, a genetic implant to prevent frostbite, and a smuggled pack of smokes (which, like so many of the obscure items you'll discover, is vital to the completion of your mission), Snake must infiltrate the complex and foil the terrorists' plans before they nuke the White House.

This daunting task is made slightly easier thanks to a sophisticated radar and communications system. The radar is conveniently situated in the upper right-hand corner of the screen and alerts you to the locations of enemies, security cameras and important locations. The catch is, if you're discovered by a soldier or enter an area with an

abundance of electronic resonance, the radar won't work. Communication is handled through the codec, a small device that's planted into Snake's ear so he can be in constant contact with his friends back at the base. Whenever you run into trouble or have the desire to hear Mei Ling spout off an ancient Chinese proverb, simply enter the desired frequency and let the conversation begin.

Perhaps the best aspect of *MGS* is the variety and inventiveness involved with the assorted objectives. No operation is ever the same, and you'll find yourself in a major bind just about every time you turn around. How to get yourself out of these predicaments is what makes the game such a blast to play. To give you an idea of what I'm talking about, imagine yourself standing before a room filled with toxic gas and an electrified floor. What do you do? Simple—run down stairs and get the remote-controlled missile launcher, return to the room, fire and guide the missile down a narrow hallway (avoiding motion-sensing machine gun turrets along the way), destroy the power generator, barge in and kill the unsuspecting guard, take the gas mask and continue. Easy, right? Let's just say that they didn't teach this stuff back at the academy.

In terms of artificial intelligence and realism, *MGS* is a mixed bag. At times, enemy soldiers show remarkable intelligence, as they'll investigate footprints in the snow, or the splashing sound made as you tiptoe through a puddle. In contrast, they'll display complete ineptness if you stand outside their cone of vision—even if you're directly in front of them. Many of the tactics employed by Snake to avoid detection are fairly believable, although you can't help but chuckle when he whips a human-size cardboard box out of his pocket and hides inside it. Okay, so there are some lapses of realism, but they don't detract from the overall enjoyment of the game. Besides, if someone sent you unarmed into a nuclear weapons compound crawling with heavily armed terrorists and traps littered everywhere, you'd take any advantage you could too, right?

The biggest complaints that gamers had about the PSX version of *MGS* were the awkward camera angles (usually an overhead view that makes it difficult to see what's in front of you) and the stage-based save feature. These issues have been resolved on the PC version with the inclusion of a first-person mode and a save anywhere feature. It should also be noted that the PC version also includes the *VR Missions* add-on pack which was sold as a separate game for the PSX. Basically, the *VR Mission* pack is an extension of the training missions found in the original game. While not nearly as cool as playing the main game itself, the add-on (which boasts around 300 additional missions) is certainly a welcome inclusion. As an added bonus, all of the missions are available at the outset, so you won't have to spend hours trying to unlock them like you did in the past.

While *MGS* certainly set new high-water marks for graphics on the PlayStation, many gamers (myself included) were clamoring to see the game in high-resolution mode. People who purchased the *Bleem!* Emulator got a taste of *MGS* in high-res, but unfortunately the game was virtually unplayable. Assuming you have a decently equipped PC, you'll now be able to witness *MGS* in all its graphical splendor with virtually no slowdown. In terms of aural performance, the game remains identical to the PSX version. The musical score is excellent and the voice acting (although the characters tend to be a bit long-winded) is superb. 'Nuff said.

Overall, *Metal Gear Solid* is perhaps the perfect example of how to port a console game to the PC. So many ports are rushed and usually don't take full advantage of a PC's superior power and ability. *MGS* for the PC is a rare exception to this rule—the problems were addressed, the graphics were improved, and additional gameplay modes were added. What more could you ask for?