



# **Divinity: Original Sin Postmortem**

Success Stories and  
Lessons Learned

**Swen Vincke**  
Larian Studios



**GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE®**  
MOSCONE CENTER · SAN FRANCISCO, CA  
MARCH 2-6, 2015 · EXPO: MARCH 4-6, 2015



"DIVINITY: ORIGINAL SIN DELIVERS IN ALMOST EVERY CONCEIVABLE WAY"

9.5/10  Polygon™







## Quick facts

- Single and multiplayer CRPG
- Over 100 hours of gameplay
- Made by a 35 people team
- 3,5/2 years of development
- Our second self-published game



## Talk Structure

1. A most important lesson
2. Getting the Funding
3. How we made sure it was good
4. How we told people it was good
5. Questions



**Broken boring games don't sell well**





# The Abyss





# Our Worst Nightmare

- 13 years & 40 games in
- First console game
- First co-publishing deal
- 8 months late
- Released prematurely
- A true turning point

The screenshot shows the Metacritic website for the game **Divinity II: Ego Draconis** on Xbox 360. The page layout includes a top navigation bar with categories like Movies, Games, TV, Music, and Features. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with links for New Releases, Coming Soon, High Scores, Browse A-Z, Publications, Publishers, and Trailers. The main content area features the game's title, developer (cdv Software Entertainment USA), release date (Jan 6, 2010), and platform (Xbox 360). A summary tab is selected, showing a Metascore of 62 (Mixed or average reviews based on 37 Critics) and a User Score of 6.4 (Mixed or average reviews based on 33 Ratings). A 'Your Score' bar is visible. The summary text describes the game as a story-based role playing game with a free-roaming world, aerial and ground combat, and exploration of dungeons. A 'Buy from amazon.com' button is present. At the bottom, there are sections for Critic Reviews and User Reviews, each with a bar chart showing the distribution of positive, mixed, and negative feedback.

Positive	Mixed	Negative
9	23	5

Positive	Mixed	Negative
4	1	3



# Introspection Day

- Too reliant on middleware
- Too many iterations
- Fragmented focus
- Team issues
- Insufficient financing
- No control
- No day 1 revenue
- Lost identity

-----+

Reboot needed





## First steps

A clear plan:

- Finish the game
- Integrate feedback
- Settle debts
- Prove ourselves
- Get ready to break free





# It worked!

## Awards Divinity II – The Dragon Knight Saga

Best Xbox360 RPG and Best PC RPG in 2010 at Jeuxvideo.com

GameStar Gold Award

"Thanks to its open character development, the remarkable quality of the musical score and its well-written story THIS GAME DESERVES YOUR FULL ATTENTION!"

"Flames of Vengeance, like the main game, offers great and eye-catching fun... A great expansion with a great ending!"

Numerous Editor's Choice Awards

Gamer's Choice Award @ RPGWatch

Silver Award @ XboxDynasty

Dark Horse Award and LOL Award @ NowGamer

"An extensive campaign, countless subquests and witty dialogs make it a **CRACK WORK** for a RPG!"

A graphically appealing, world-spanning, exploration and questing focused, largely open-world RPG opus quite unlike anything else on the console. It even manages laugh-out-loud moments with its bawdy and often Pythonesque humour."

90%	9.0	9.0	4/5	4/5	17/20	9/10	17/20	9/10
Jeuxvideo	NeoSeeker	RPG France	The Guardian	The Examiner	JeuxActu	Inc.Gamers	Xbox360Magazine	Somethingawful.com

## metacritic

Movies Games TV Music Features

New Releases Coming Soon High Scores Browse A-Z Publications Publishers Trailers

### Divinity II: The Dragon Knight Saga PC

Focus Home Interactive | Release Date: Nov 5, 2010 | Also On: Xbox 360

Summary	Critic Reviews	User Reviews	Details & Credits	Trailers & Videos
<p><b>See the trailer</b></p>	<p><b>82</b></p> <p>Metascore</p> <p>Generally favorable reviews based on <b>9 Critics</b></p> <p><a href="#">What's this?</a></p> <p><b>Summary:</b> Divinity II - The Dragon Knight Saga includes the original adventure "Ego Draconis", and "Flames of Vengeance", the Dragon Knight's new adventure that continues the epic story and adds dozens of hours of additional gameplay. Divinity II - Ego Draconis appears here as an... <a href="#">Expand</a></p>	<p><b>8.3</b></p> <p>User Score</p> <p>Generally favorable reviews based on <b>172 Ratings</b></p> <p>Your Score: <input type="text"/> 0</p>	<p><b>Developer:</b> Larian Studios</p> <p><b>Genre(s):</b> Compilation</p> <p><b>Cheats:</b> <a href="#">On GameFAQs</a></p> <p><b>Rating:</b> M</p> <p><a href="#">More Details and Credits</a></p>	

Critic Reviews	User Reviews
<p>Positive: <input type="text"/> 8</p> <p>Mixed: <input type="text"/> 1</p> <p>Negative: <input type="text"/> 0</p>	<p>Positive: <input type="text"/> 37</p> <p>Mixed: <input type="text"/> 6</p> <p>Negative: <input type="text"/> 4</p> <p><a href="#">Write a Review</a></p>



**Polished fun games are rewarding  
Let's never compromise again...**





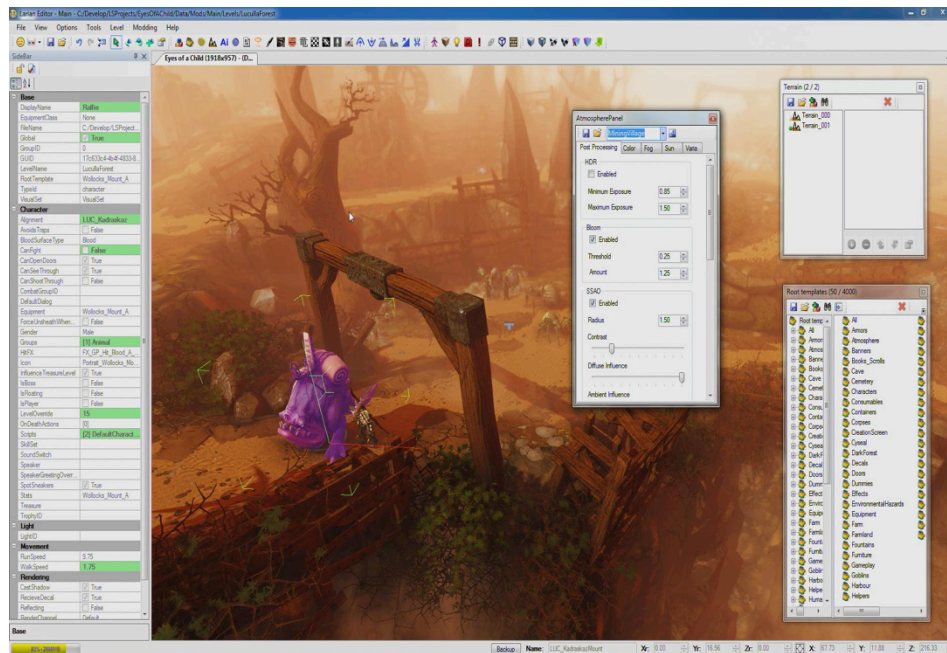
## The Pillars of the new Larian

- Take control
  - Stick to our vision



# The Pillars of the new Larian

- Take control
  - Stick to our vision
  - Make our own technology





## The Pillars of the new Larian

- Take control
  - Stick to our vision
  - Make our own technology
  - Do our own publishing







## The Pillars of the new Larian

- Take control
  - Stick to our vision
  - Make our own technology
  - Do our own publishing
  - Re-establish our identity





## The Pillars of the new Larian

- Take control
  - Stick to our vision
  - Make our own technology
  - Do our own publishing
  - Re-establish our identity
  - No more broken games

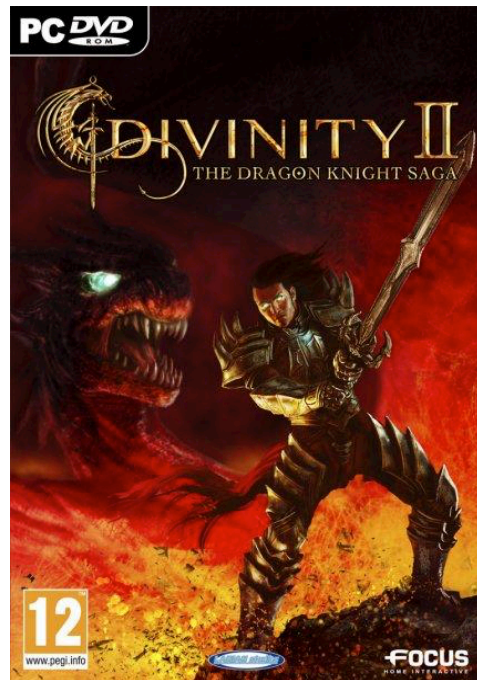




## The Pillars of the new Larian

- Take control
  - Stick to our vision
  - Make our own technology
  - Do our own publishing
  - Re-establish our identity
  - No more broken games

**Iterate until it's very good**

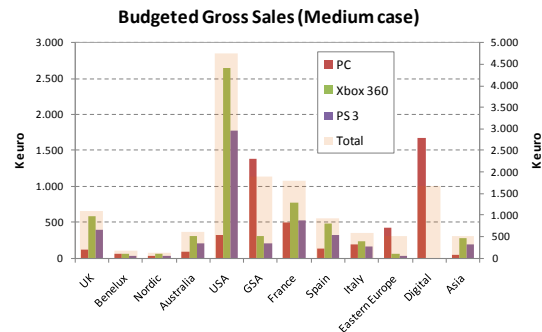
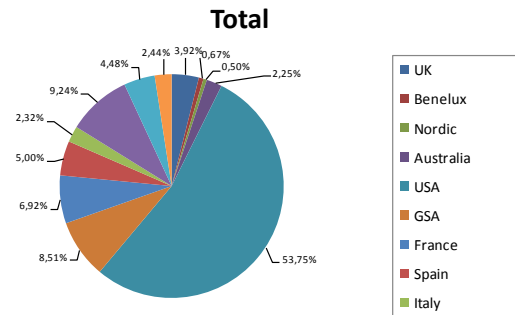




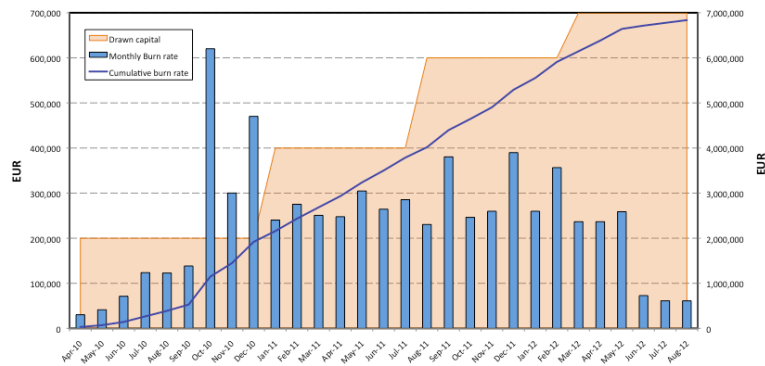
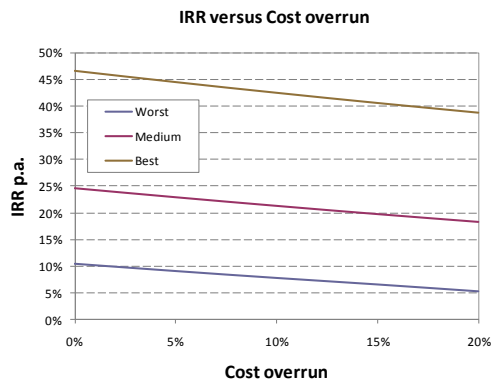
# The Plan

- Keep team together
- Make two games
- One small, one big
- Small helps fund big
- Iterate until it's ready





# Funding iteration

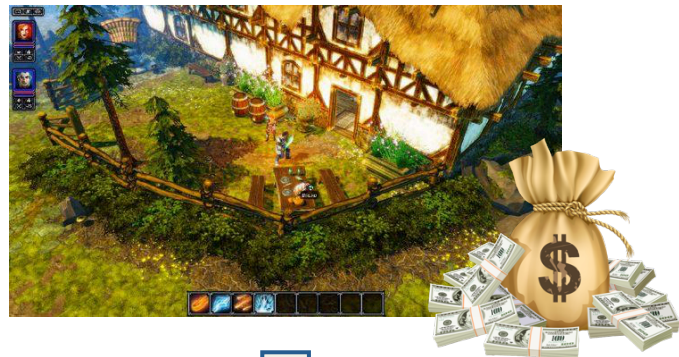






## Key issues

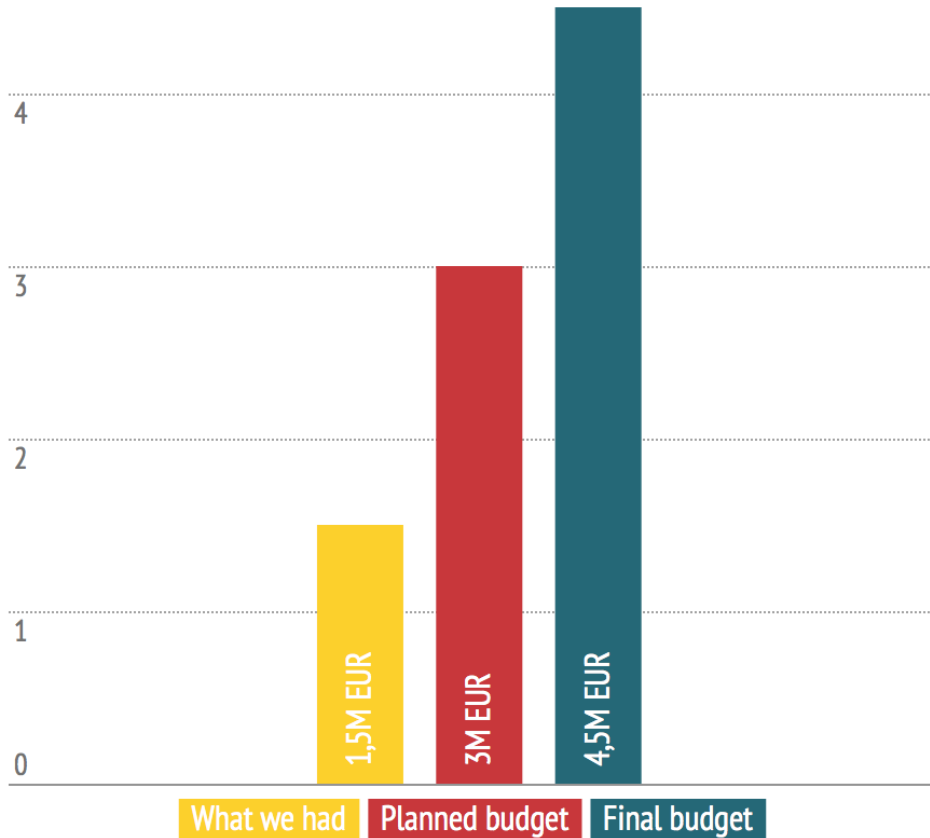
- If you commit yourself to quality, scope & time will increase and therefore budget will increase
- Best have an arsenal of tricks ready to get the financing in place





## Budget

- 1 500 000 EUR for development & publishing
- We hoped to double it
- We ended up spending almost 3 times more



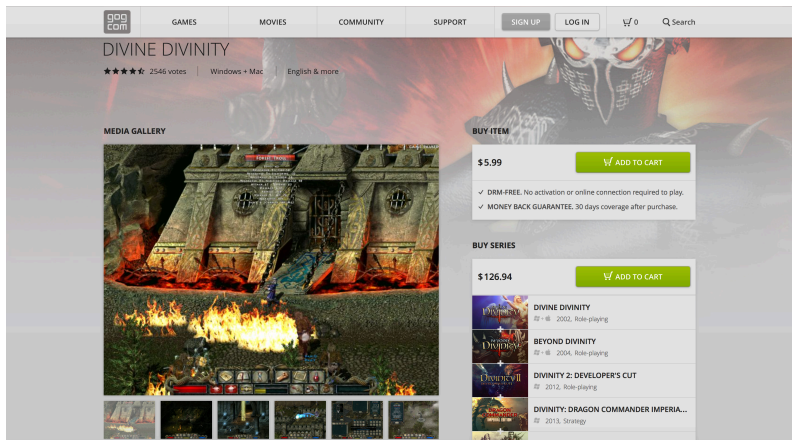


# **Where did we find the money?**



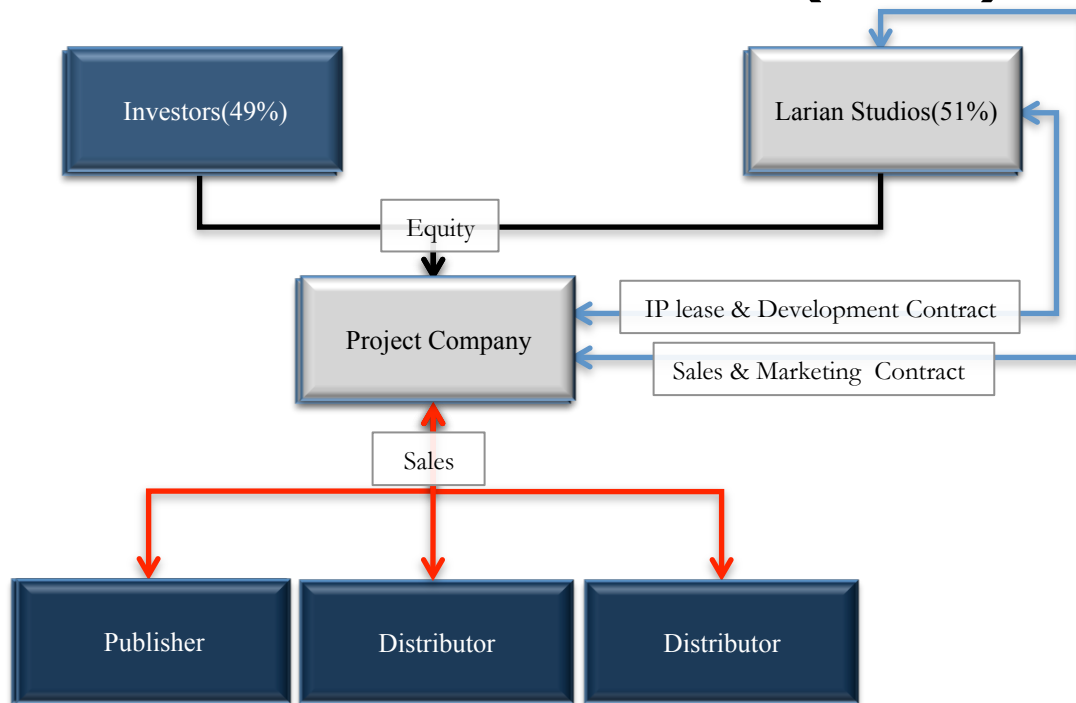


## Legacy games (2011)





## The trick with the SPV (2011)





## The trick with the trade shows (2011/2012)

- Shows allow you to raise your profile
- Triple benefit
  - Business development
  - Broader press coverage
  - Team morale





## Repackaging our previous games (2012)





## Minimum guarantees (2011/2012)

- Distribution deals
- Licensing deals







## We went to Kickstarter (2013)



19,541

backers

\$944,282

pledged of \$400,000 goal

0

seconds to go

Funded!

This project was successfully funded on April 26, 2013.

Divinity Original Sin is an old-school cRPG with new ideas & modern execution, will release this year. Funded by fantastic backers!

Larian Studios LLC

🕒 First created | 12 backed

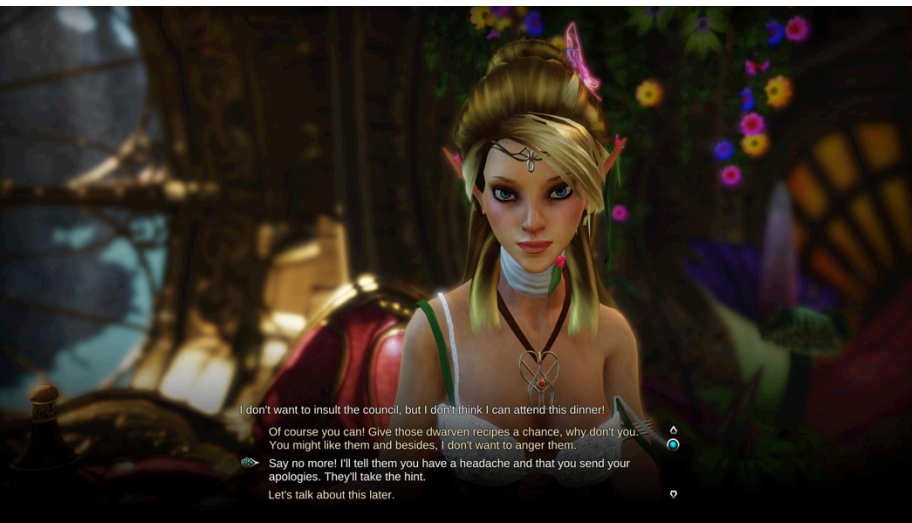
🌐 [divinityoriginalsin.com](http://divinityoriginalsin.com)





## The murder of the Dragon Commander (2013)

- DC originally intended to be released after D:OS
- Suffered delays due to switching engines/combat issues
- Sacrificed to help Divinity: Original Sin





About PC Gamer reviews

## Divinity: Dragon Commander

An RTS designed for entertainment rather than e-sport. Colourful, fun and memorable, its elements mesh surprisingly well.

**PC GAMER**

### Divinity: Dragon Commander / PC



About GameSpot's Reviews

#### THE GOOD

- + Delightful merger of role-playing, strategy, and action
- + Dialogue lets you mold the lives of your associates
- + In-depth politics allow for customized utopias or dystopias
- + You play as a dragon with a jetpack

#### THE BAD

- The core real-time strategy mechanics are unsatisfying
- Bugs and stability issues







# Divinity: Dragon Commander PC

**Larian Studios** | Release Date: Aug 6, 2013



Summary

Critic Reviews

User Reviews

Details & Credits

Trailers & Videos



[See the trailer](#)

76

## Metascore

Generally favorable reviews  
based on **37 Critics**

[What's this?](#)

**Summary:** Set in the time when both magic and technology were at their peak in the Divinity universe, Dragon Commander tells the story of a young dragon knight who fights for the survival of Rivellon when his father, the king, is brutally murdered for opposing the teachings of a new religion. Six... [Expand ▼](#)

7.1

## User Score

Mixed or average reviews  
based on **231 Ratings**

Your Score



**Developer:** Larian Studios

**Genre(s):** Action RPG

**# of players:** 1-4

**Cheats:** [On GameFAQs](#)

[More Details and Credits »](#)



## We made deals with the devil (2013)

- Kickstarter -> Investors -> Bank -> Stress
- Advances where we could
- Prepping to sell rights





## We did work for hire again, kind of (2013)





# The Steam Early Access debate (2014)



The screenshot shows a Reddit post on the 'r/gamedev' subreddit. The post title is 'Pros and Cons of Steam Early Access' by user 'self.gamedev'. It has 106 upvotes and was posted 1 year ago. The post content discusses the pros and cons of launching a game on Steam's Early Access Games (SEAG) program. The author, Greenlit, mentions they have been hesitant to jump at the opportunity. The post is structured with sections for TL;DR, Background, Brainstorming time, Pros, and Cons.

**TL;DR** - What are the pros and cons of launching a game on Steam's Early Access Games (SEAG) program? Are there any cons?

**Background**

Some players have been asking me recently about when my game will be available on SEAG. I'm Greenlit, and I have the opportunity, but I've been hesitant to jump at that opportunity thusfar.

The recent inquiries have me wondering, though. What am I afraid of? I already offer the beta for sale on my site, and as an "alpha funding" game on Desura. Is there any down side to doing the same on Steam?

**Brainstorming time:**

The following are just some initial thoughts, not a definitive answer. I'm curious if anyone has others, or if they disagree.

**Pros**

- **More revenue now** - In theory, launching on SEAG means an injection of cash *right now*.
- **More exposure** - Word of mouth marketing seems like it would get a shot in the arm, just from the increased number of people playing the game.
- **Steam Front Page** - Some SEAG games get front-page treatment, and that can be a huge marketing boost.
- **More feedback before launch** - Assuming you're interested, more players means more feedback. And more feedback *could* lead to a better game.

**Cons**

- **Bad First Impression** - This is probably the biggest and most tangible risk I can think of. If your game isn't ready, this is one way to let as many people know as possible. In many cases, first impressions stick, so this can





# Going to Steam Early Access (2014)

**Polygon** NEWS REVIEWS FEATURES VIDEOS FORUMS OPINION PLATFORMS MORE

## Divinity: Original Sin now available on Steam Early Access

By [Samit Sarkar](#) on Jan 17, 2014 at 3:33p @SamitSarkar

[SHARE](#) [TWEET](#)

Divinity: Original Sin - Steam Early Access Trailer

ALPHA v1.0.1552.9723

LARIAN STUDIOS



## The last months (May 2014)

- Bank lost patience
- Government crisis changed tax collection rules
- We still needed to finance retail & localizations & voice recordings
- We were beyond “all in”





**And then...**

“Confidentially, the Steam summer sale will start on June 20th 2013” ...  
Valve





## Top Sellers | Under 5€ | Under 10€ | New releases



**DIVINITY**  
ORIGINAL SIN

-20%  
30,99€  
31,99€



**Wolfenstein**  
THE NEW ORDER

-50%  
49,99€  
24,99€



**DARK SOULS II**

-33%  
49,99€  
33,49€



The Elder Scrolls V  
**SKYRIM**  
LEGENDARY EDITION

-66%  
30,99€  
10,19€



**PLANETARY ANNIHILATION**  
GALACTIC WAR UPDATE

-66%  
45,99€  
15,63€




**PAYDAY 2**

-80%  
27,99€  
5,59€



**BORDERLANDS 2**  
GAME OF THE YEAR EDITION

-75%  
44,99€  
11,24€



**CS:GO**

-50%  
13,99€  
6,99€



THE  
**WITCHER 2**  
ASSASSINS OF KINGS  
ENHANCED EDITION

-80%  
19,99€  
3,99€



**ARMA**

-50%  
44,99€  
22,49€



THE  
**WOLF AMONG US**  
A TELLTALE GAMES SERIES

-66%  
22,99€  
7,81€



THE WALKING  
**DEAD**  
SEASON TWO

-50%  
22,99€  
11,49€



**BOTTLEBLOCK**  
+  
**THEATER**

-75%  
14,99€  
3,74€




SID MEIER'S  
**CIVILIZATION**  
THE COMPLETE EDITION

-67%  
30,99€  
13,19€



**SOUTH PARK**  
THE STICK  
OF  
**TRUTH**

-33%  
30,99€  
20,79€



**METRO**  
COMPLETE  
EDITION

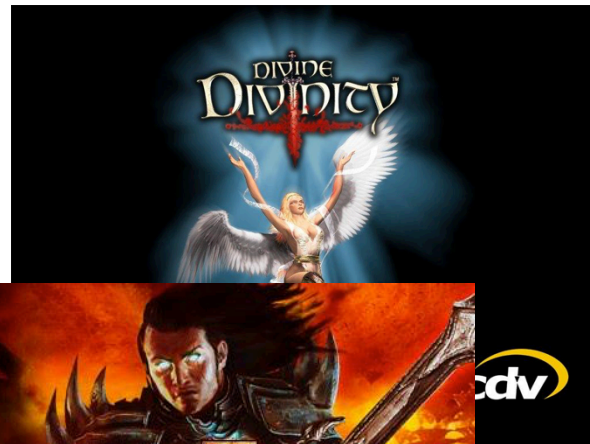
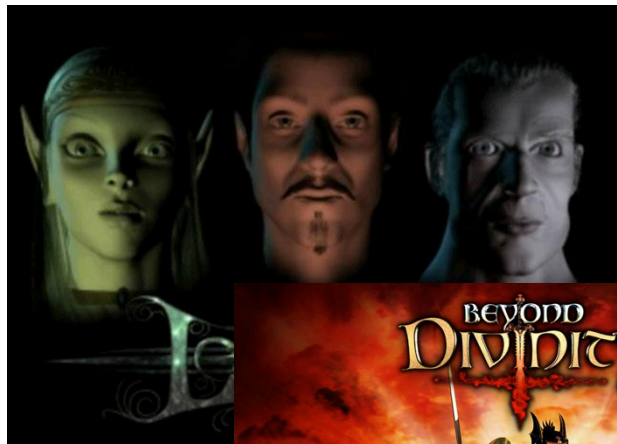
-66%  
10,99€  
6,79€



# Making it good



# We've been trying to make a cooperative RPG ever since 1997





# The challenge of making our type of co-op RPG

- It hadn't been made before so little "inspiration"
- A big architectural problem







## Our Design Pillars

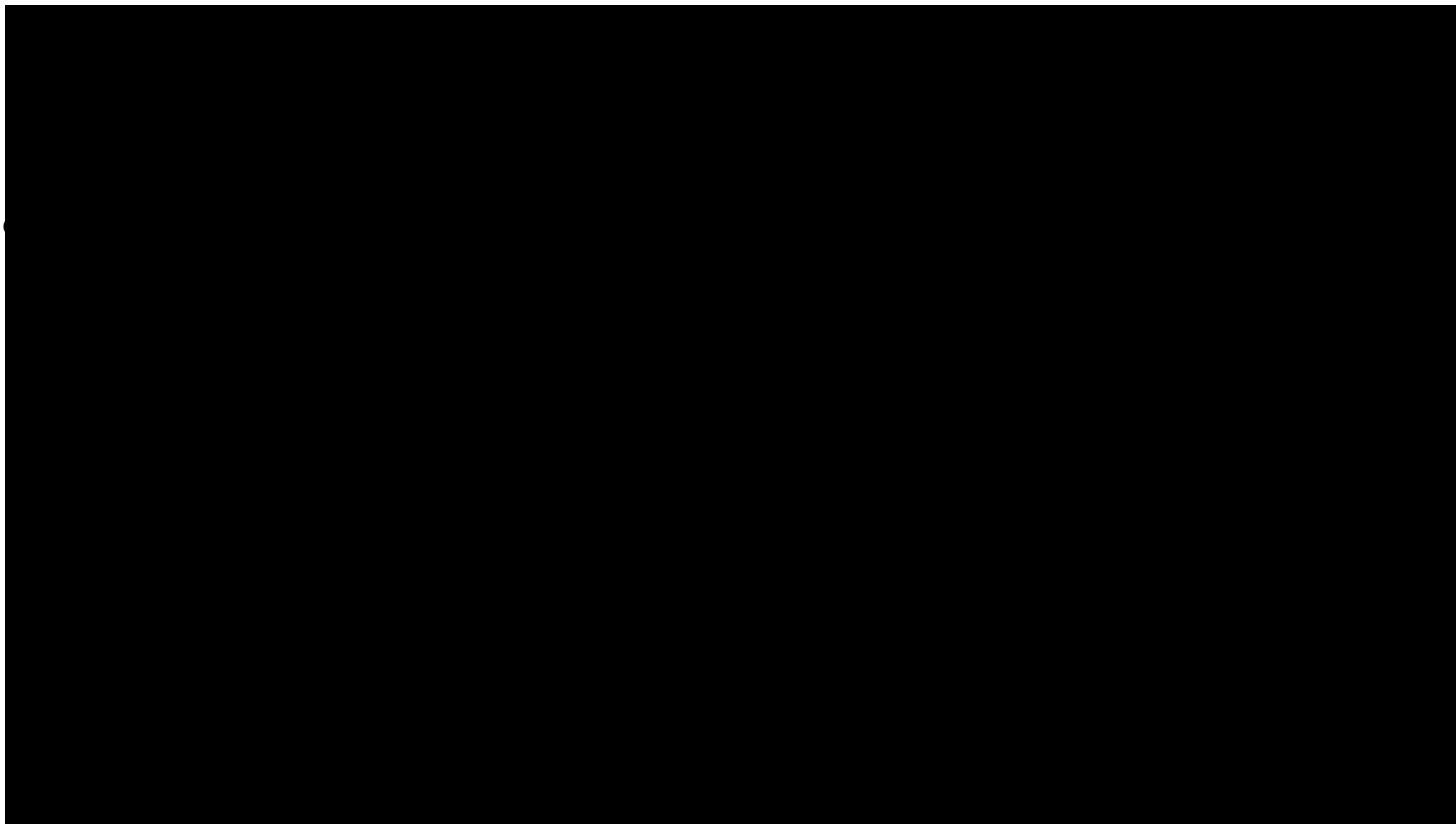
- A reactive systemic and diverse world
- Driven by a strong narrative
- In which you can play with friends
- Where you get rewarded for exploration, experimentation, extermination, exploitation
- With challenging combat



## Why was that so hard?

- Common Codex knowledge: multiplayer RPGs are dumbed down

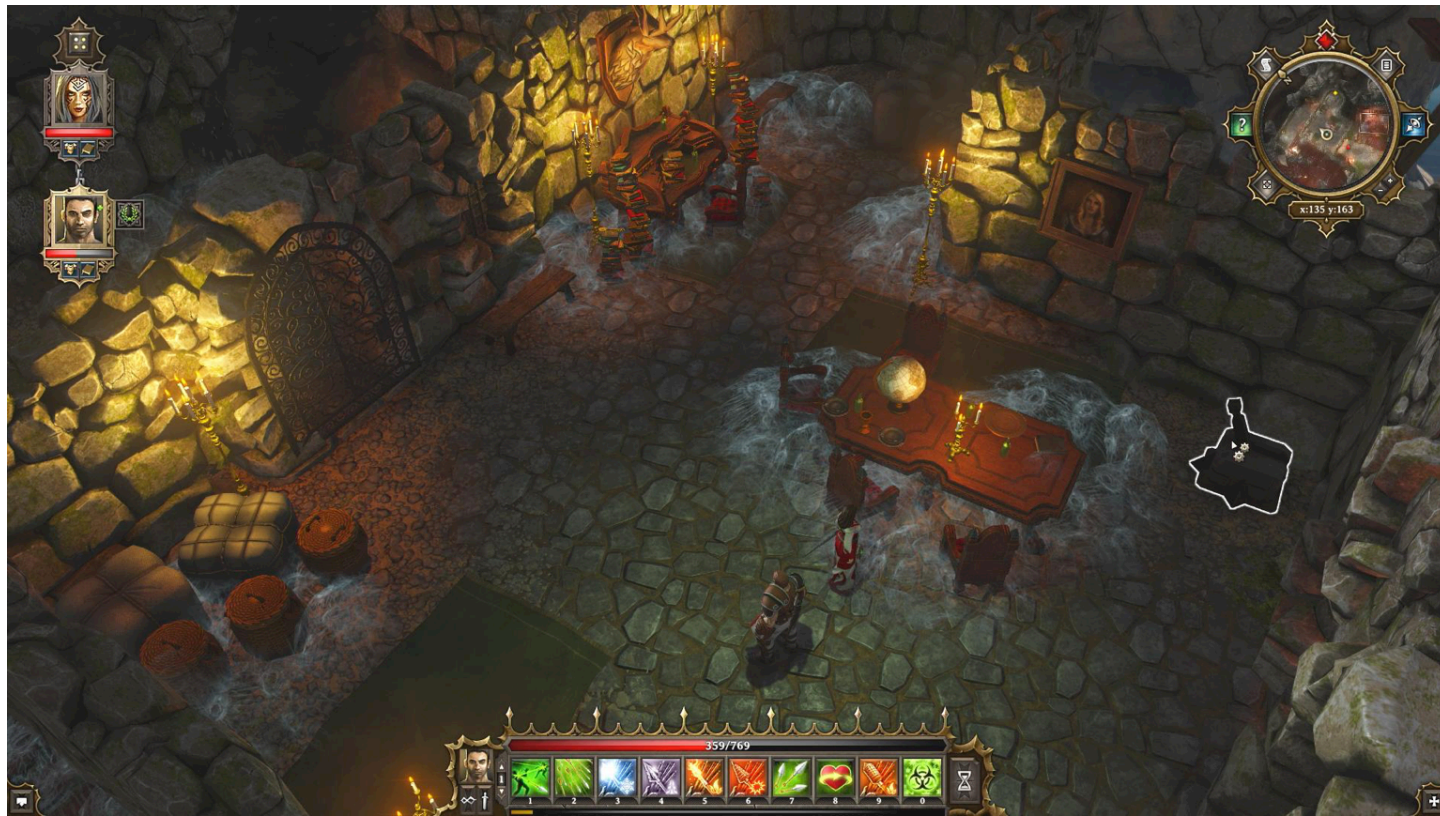








# N+1 Design





## N+1 Design

- Always prepare N solutions + 1 guaranteed fallback solution in case someone mess up every single situation
- You need to completely disallow the way people can become stuck in your game
- **This takes a \*lot\* of iteration, especially since  $N > 1$**



## Sticking to your vision is hard

- There were a lot of attempts to deviate
  - Make story NPCs non-killable
  - Forbid to steal from story NPCs
  - Enable NPC teleportation

> It was very tempting to succumb when the financial stress was the highest





## Sticking to your vision pays off

“Playing Divinity: Original Sin is like playing a Pen & Paper RPG with a good game master.”

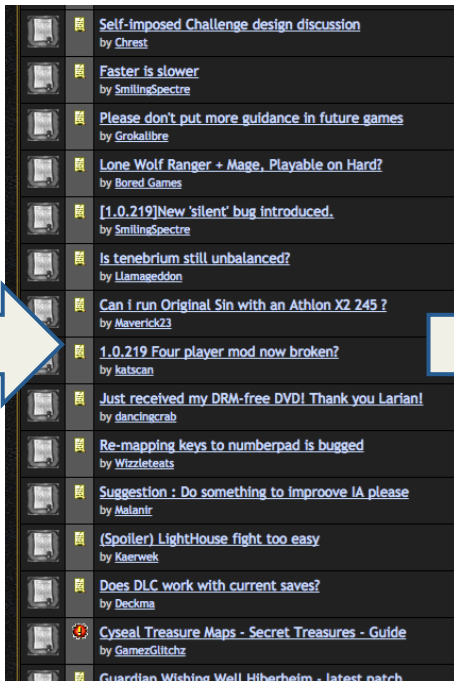
**PC GAMER**







# Player-driven design



1	Balance	Title (priority 1 is the highest)
		I sent the sailors looking for work to the Fabulous Five, but I didn't see have an impact?
596	Design	If Roberts is arrested, they disappear in his room rather than go to the
597	Design	It seems the Young Orc Ranger cannot attack melee? It keeps walking
598	Design	Bureratgard (Black Cove rat) keeps getting stunned on the lightning zone suddenly triggers when players reach there without ever seeing the lightning field active). At least he fares better than Bertrat, who quick shot before they succumbed to his fate).
599	Design	For most levers it's pretty clear what they do due to text or the effect. clearer what it does.
600	Design	There's a Leratt (Rat) at the Dragon Corpse, but he cannot be selected
601	Design	Why some barrels aren't burn if I try to burn them by fire spell? It happens (oli burns but crates not), so I destroy it by warrior.
602	Design	+ sometimes I'll put a wooden chest over a burning
603	Design	In the encounter with Auri's Robot the villagers turn to
604	Design	Arhu robot in the cave sometimes seems not to do
605	Design	Maybe NPCs caused it? At the moment he only looks scary but is a tot
606	Design	Lady Annah uses Resurrect on Grey Wolf, but nothing seems to happen
		The "Cyseal East" waypoint should be renamed "Cyseal Northwest", a East".
		after a fight in which she got gravely wounded, Madora left the party. talking to her now she doesn't seem to remember the incident.
607	Design	When I try to invite her back into the party she states that she would I
608	Design	Like Jake, the Zombie Troll does the annoying poison grunt constantly
		Dug up an ornate chest (under Sir Joval's grave if it matters). It was loc key's called 'key' there anyway?).
609	Design	Oddly enough that chest wont display (Empty) once cleared, questo
610	Design	The back door to the garden is called "Garden Back Door Key".
		The church immaculates namedrop Thelyron when the Source Hunter shocked that Thelyron is a bad guy.



# Player-driven design

## Alpha Update V 1.0.143 - February 14th 2014

14 FEBRUARY, 2014 · DEATHKNIGHT

Hi all!

We know it's been two weeks, but of course we haven't been sitting on our hands or anything. Here's a big update! Below is the full changelist.

If you've played the previous version, the most important thing to know is that the effects of some primary stats have changed, and also the way Action Points are being calculated. We are introducing the affection and affinity system, the combat log, and some more character creation options. The inventory UI has tabs to filter through your items. Map markers will show the locations of the ruins you have discovered, and feedback, tooltips and mouse cursors have been improved. Robes are no longer invisible... :D

ART:

- Physics fixes for objects
- Stub item replacements (whetstone, chest, door, mine, tombstone)
- New icons and portraits
- New effects
- Spiders

CODE and UI:

- Character creation changes: Can change gender, name, icon, colors, hair
- Stats changes (see list @ swen)
- Added tabs to inventory / trade window
- A lot of savegame fixes
- Fixed a lot of network connection problems
- Stability fixes
- Added combat log



M. Doucet · 31. tammi, 2014 23.12

## Thank you, Larian! (again)

I posted a thread like this for Dragon Commander too when it was in beta. I say *thank you* again for bringing your game to Steam in early access form. It came in too late to participate in the Kickstarter. Larian is one of my favorite game companies, and I'm constantly humbled by your interactions with the community. A sign of the times when PC gamers need to be thankful for prompt and frequent updates, but I am still grateful that you strive to keep us in the loop.

Thank you also for including the two original Divinity games with the demo. I hope more people will give them a shot and that it will encourage them to check out the series. It's still one of my favorite games. Throughout the series you have shown a respect for mature gamers with challenging and thought-provoking games, and how much it is appreciated that you're (perhaps) willing to ignore more commercial concerns to make a game for genuine gamers to really cherish and be challenged by.

I don't know if you are planning on producing a "making of" movie for Dragon Commander. One would definitely love to see one. The one you included with Divinity II was a weep, and I was very glad to see at least part of that original vision finally realized in Dragon Commander.





## Player-driven Design is worth it

- We had two options - ignore or embrace. We embraced
- Raze prepped lists for the leads each day
- During weekends we transformed feedback into new tasks
- Exhausting but worth it

**Guarantees delays**



## Polishing

- We all judge games from initial impressions. Get it right.
- Lots of iteration during public testing helps
  - UI
  - Tutoring
  - Accessibility
  - Balancing
- Difference between 7 & 9
- Crunch can't be avoided



**Guarantees delays**



# Quality Assurance

- Try to get all your QA in-house
- If not, be sure you have test-plans & you are the one organizing
- Automated QA is the thing
- Outsourcing QA is very inefficient and very expensive
- Early Access has its uses, but its limited.
- 15K bugs, 3K via EA

 <b>Can't enter Soulforge temple</b> eldberg	3 nov om 11:29vm	 6
 <b>OST from DLC is not full! And in WAV format.</b> [TwitchTV]TorNis	3 nov om 8:14vm	 11
 <b>Quicksave not working. Is it because of daylight savings?</b> Shark Week	3 nov om 7:58vm	 4
 <b>Struggling in the first few levels...</b> Dethica	3 nov om 3:43vm	 21
 <b>first problem with character creation.</b> Tjaranis	3 nov om 3:08vm	 16
 <b>Sorry but...</b> mr_burble	3 nov om 3:05vm	 7

Bug Reporting	287
Suggestions/Feedback	266
<a href="#">Help/Tips/Tricks</a>	284
Editor/Modding/Workshop	217
Rules	80

Regels en richtlijnen voor discussies
---------------------------------------



# Quality Assurance

## Divinity II Publisher vs Developer QA Efficiency

Total amount of bugs	Bugs/Hour	Hours Publisher	Total amount of bugs Publisher	Publisher Bugs/ Hour
5410	0,513221866	9646	2631	0,272755546
Time/Bug hrs	1,948475046		Time/Bug hrs	3,666286583



## Quality Assurance

- Be wary of extra languages
- 5 languages
- 3 platforms
- 2 weeks per playthrough
- Think again about that demo





## Day 1 Patching

- We relied on Day 1 update (+1 month development)
- We put a Steam installer on the DVD without an EXE
- We put "Steam activation and download" on the box

**A very dangerous practice!**

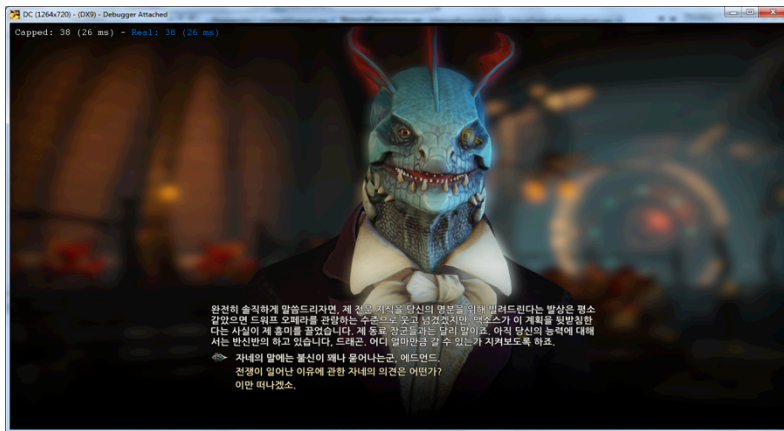
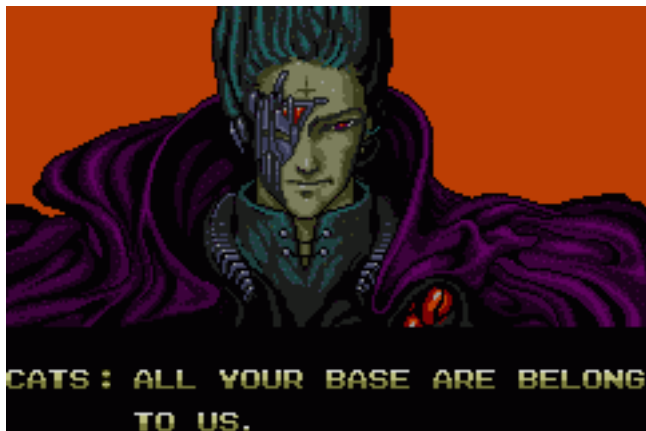






# Localization

- Over 500.000 words
- Localization vs constant iteration
- Battle-tested processes/pipelines





## Localization

>>

No. This must be a joke - all of it.

This is the worst release I ever had. What a huge PR disaster! What a huge Day 1 disaster for our customers!

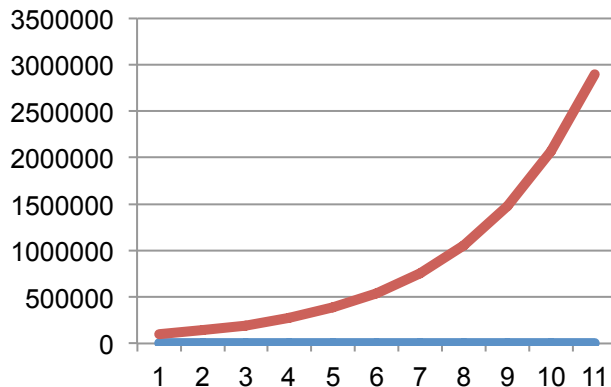
>>

*A distributor. We later realized this was a true turning point.*



# The risks of going all in

- Your game is going to define your future.
- If those are the stakes you're playing with, it is actually reckless not to go all in.
- But the more third parties are involved, the harder this becomes
- Accidents will happen





# **Telling people about your game**



## Be sure you have a target audience

- Compete with state of the art
- Through innovation & quality

Our innovations:

- No handholding coupled to lots of freedom
- n+1 design – so many stories
- Combat system with smaller innovations
- High degree of polish in Turn-Based RPG

**“THE TWO-PLAYER RPG DESIGN  
IS FASCINATING”** KOTAKU

**“MOST CREATIVE TURN-BASED  
COMBAT IN AN RPG”**

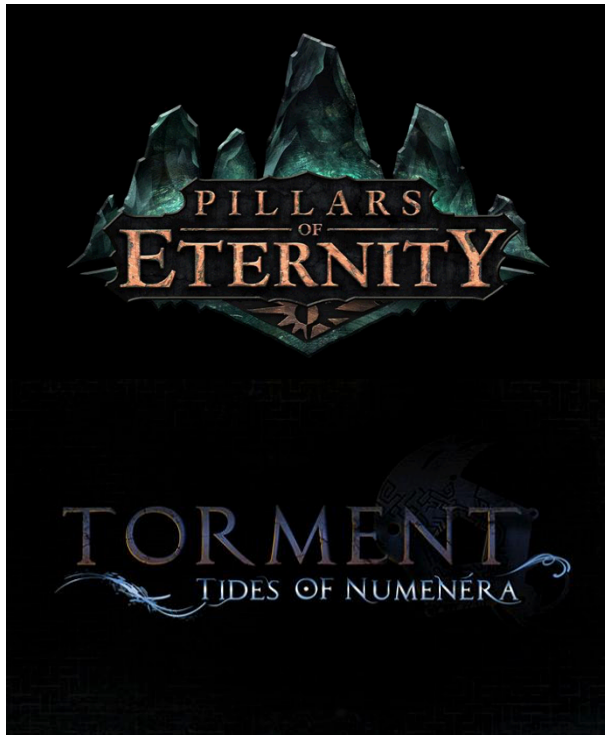
10/10 - QUARTER TO THREE

**“SO MANY DIFFERENT WAYS  
TO DO SO MANY DIFFERENT THINGS”**

9/10 - HARDCORE GAMER



## Be aware of your competition – timing matters.







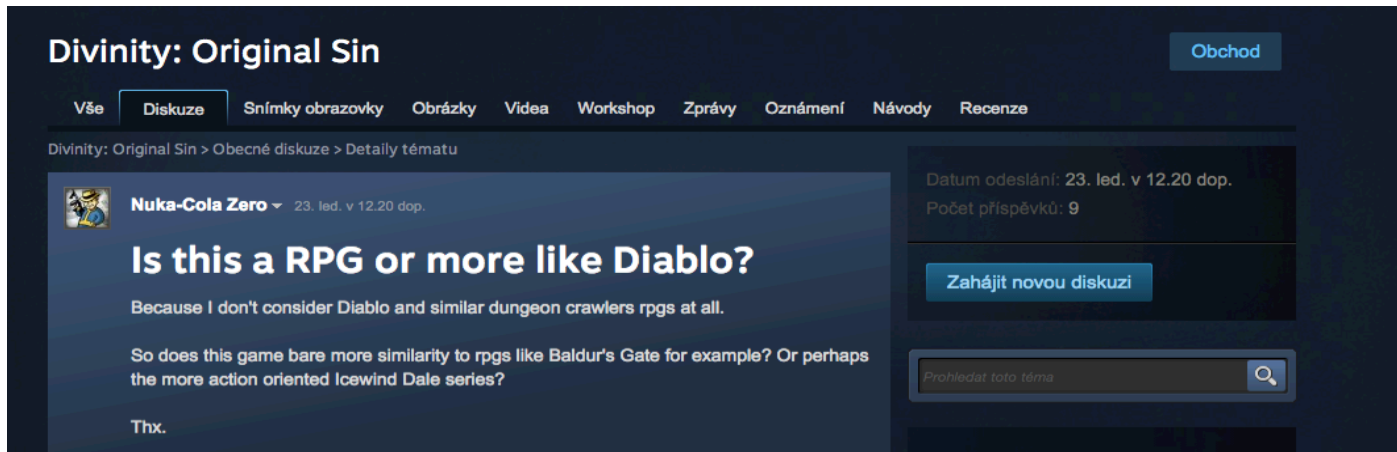
## **Be aware of your competition – timing matters.**

- Continuously monitor your competition
- Read everything you can find about them
- Whenever you get a chance, play their games (demos, betas, trade shows)
- Put your release date on the timeline with your competition
- You will be compared to the state of the art
- Competition can also be – things that grab attention



# Get the message straight and amplify

- First messaging matters a lot
- There are limited opportunities to amplify
- When do you announce?
- Where is your target audience?





## Build a dedicated PR structure

- Dedicated PR manager for PR, marketing and communicating with local partners
- A Global PR Agency
- Local publishers in Russia, France, Germany and Poland.
- Each have their pros and cons
- Pick well!





## Do Press Tours and Exhibitions





## Press Tours and Exhibitions

- We toured a lot, seeking out everybody we could
- We invited key press to our office, explained them our vision
- We did a lot of exhibitions
- Different territories require different approaches





# YouTubers







## Twitch Streams





## Kickstarter updates





# Forum interaction

Please check out our [Rules and FAQs](#)



We are Larian Studios, developing Divinity: Original Sin and Divinity: Dragon Commander. Ask us anything!

GAMING

submitted 1 year ago \* by Larian\_Swen

LARIAN

Hi everyone! After 3 hectic weeks of Kickstarter madness, we are now nearing the end of our Kickstarter campaign for Divinity: Original Sin.

We are also the creators of Divine Divinity, Beyond Divinity, Divinity II and Divinity: Dragon Commander.

We are here to answer any questions you may have about our Kickstarter, our games or our studio.

We are: - Swen Vincke (CEO & Creative Director) - David Walgrave (Producer) - Jan Van Dosselaer (Writer)

For verification (or a wallpaper), this is us: <http://i.imgur.com/4dC5ueW.jpg>

Feel free to visit our [Kickstarter page](#)

**Edit:** Swen won't be answering for a while now since he has to do a D:OS play session with Shacknews

**Edit2:** Swen is back! Reporter didn't show up!

**Edit3:** Thank you everybody for all the questions, the good ideas and the shows of support! We're back to the Kickstarter campaign now for a new update as we reached the 666666 stretch goal. If we find the time, we'll hop in again here and answer some more questions.

314

487 comments share



Top 200 Comments [show all 487](#)

sorted by: best ▼

[–] [Asyreon](#) 26 points 1 year ago\*

Hello Swen/David/Jan, how are you ? I hope you're fresh and ready for the AMA, cause I have a good bunch of questions to ask =D



# Advertising

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PC Gaming Since 1873

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-ROCK PAPER SHOTGUN

**DIVINITY ORIGINAL SIN**

**"IT'S A HELL OF A LOT OF FUN!"**  
-PC GAMER

**Judged: Sniper Elite 3**  
Tim Stone takes aim at the sniper FPS.

**Distant Memories**  
Also remembers the things he remembers. From the past.

**The Living Minecraft**

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**RPS Asks: Why And How Often Do You Finish Games?**  
You complete me, at least

**Remind Yourself Of Rodina's Space Combat And Computers**  
There's a demo to help

**Worth The Wait? - Cube World Getting New Quests**  
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**Planetary Annihilation Early Access Being Sold In Stores**  
Questionable content

**And much more...**

**Read our finest words**

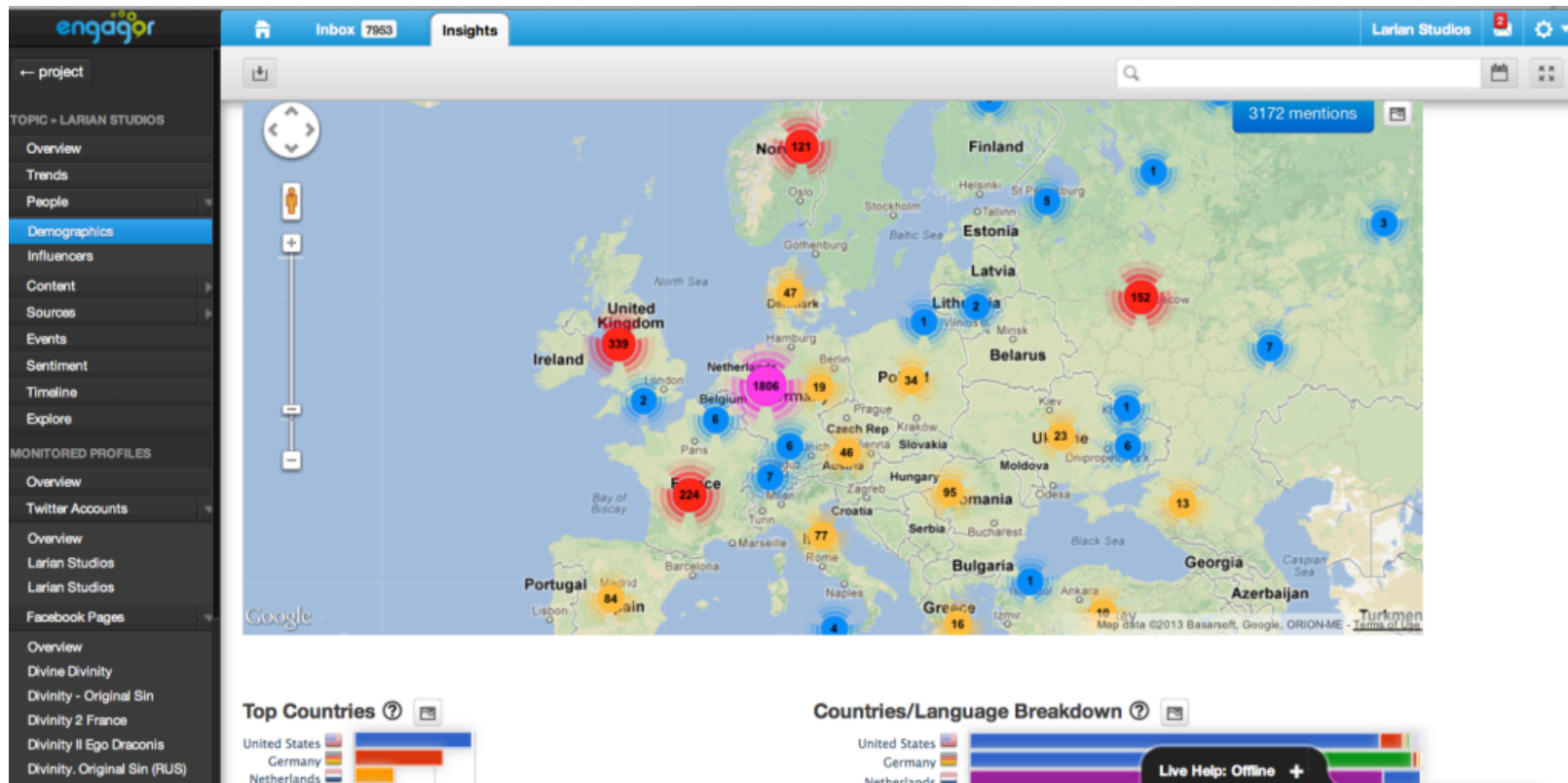
**"FEELS LIKE A MODERN BALDUR'S GATE"**  
-IGN

**FULL VERSION NOW AVAILABLE FOR PC & MAC**





# Monitoring amplification





# Amplification tricks

- Announcing early
- Hiring a video guy
- Starting a blog ([www.lar.net](http://www.lar.net))
- Create stories so other people can tell them
- Populate social media (we were bad at this)
- And then there are the reviews...







# Reviews



**Swen Vincke** @LarAtLarian · Jul 2

@evolvatom **You forget that there are already 1049 reviews** - here  
[steamcommunity.com/app/230230/rev...](http://steamcommunity.com/app/230230/rev...) Just a different type of media



# Reviews

## Divinity: Original Sin PC

Larian Studios | Release Date: Jun 30, 2014



Tweet

42



Like

635

Summary

Critic Reviews

User Reviews

Details & Credits

Trailers & Videos



See the trailer

87

### Metascore

Generally favorable reviews  
based on [59 Critics](#)

[What's this?](#)

**Summary:** Gather your party and get ready for a new, back-to-the-roots RPG adventure. Discuss your decisions with companions; fight foes in turn-based combat; explore an open world and interact with everything and everyone you see. Join up with a friend to play online in co-op and make your own... [Expand](#) ▾

8.8

### User Score

Generally favorable reviews  
based on [1887 Ratings](#)

Your Score



0

**Developer:** Larian Studios

**Genre(s):** Action RPG

**Cheats:** [On GameFAQs](#)


**Rating:** M


[More Details and Credits](#) »



## Dealing with word of mouth

- Interact with your critics, know when to stop
- Players always want more. Careful with promises.
- Have post-release capacity
- Fix save games
- **Never** be negative - Stay polite - beware vocal minorities

 Re: Engraving tools, insignificant, yes, but when...? [Re: EinTroll] #548343 - 08/27/14 04:29 AM

**wibble**   
journeyman  
Registered: 08/11/09  
Posts: 62

EinTroll, This is exactly where 'having patience' gets you. The game has been released a month (give or take a day) and the backer rewards still haven't been completed, still waiting for the drm-free disc (what do you know, there was a delay on that too, at least we're getting it, Larian tried to wriggle out of it until some people made it perfectly clear that that particular matter wasn't up for negotiation)

If you had all taken a leaf out of the book of the vocal minority then all this would have been cleared up sooner. If Larian had though for a second that their whole community would jump on them for this it would never have been as shoddy as it has been, but some people shout and more people shout them down, effectively doing Larian's damage control for them.

..and you expect Larian to jump? LOL.



## Selling in different channels

- Maximizing availability isn't without its perils.
- Each extra channel means extra support/hassle
- Beware anti-monopoly law – distributor decides price
- Players compare channels – be ready
- Lifecycle management is important
- Digital/Retail 95%/5%





## Aggressive triage

- We all want critical acclaim and high sale numbers.
- The first is needed for the next project; the second is to fund other projects.
- The 90%/10% rule.
- Focus on development - content is king. The rest will adapt.



## Regional pricing

- Beware the dangers of regional pricing
- Even regional retail deals can affect your digital
- Players compare channels – be ready

USD	GBP	EUR	RUB	BRL	JPY	IDR	MYR	PHP	SGD	THB	KRW
\$ 5.99	£ 3.99	€ 4.99	py6. 199	R\$ 9.99	¥ 598	Rp 55,999	RM 15.00	P 199.95	S\$ 6.50	฿ 149.00	₩
\$ 5.99	£ 3.99	€ 4.99	py6. 199	R\$ 9.99	¥ 598	Rp 55,999	RM 15.00	P 199.95	S\$ 6.50	฿ 149.00	₩
\$ 19.99	£ 12.99	€ 19.99	py6. 299	R\$ 34.99	¥ 1,980	Rp 135,999	RM 38.00	P 499.95	S\$ 20.00	฿ 369.00	₩
\$ 19.99	£ 12.99	€ 19.99	py6. 299	R\$ 34.99	¥ 1,980	Rp 135,999	RM 38.00	P 499.95	S\$ 20.00	฿ 369.00	₩
\$ 29.99	£ 17.99	€ 29.99	py6. 499	R\$ 49.99	¥ 2,980	Rp 199,999	RM 56.00	P 759.95	S\$ 29.00	฿ 559.00	₩
\$ 39.99	£ 29.99	€ 39.99	py6. 599	R\$ 69.99	¥ 3,980	Rp 269,999	RM 75.00	P 999.95	S\$ 39.00	฿ 729.00	₩
\$ 0.00	£ 0.00	€ 0.00	py6. 0	R\$ 0.00	¥ 0	Rp 0	RM 0.00	P 0.00	S\$ 0.00	฿ 0.00	₩
\$ 9.99	£ 6.99	€ 9.99	py6. 249	R\$ 19.99	¥ 980	Rp 89,999	RM 23.00	P 319.95	S\$ 10.50	฿ 219.00	₩





## Over deliver

- People talk about things that are in your game they didn't expect to be there
- it's something that doesn't stop on the release

[+ FOLLOW](#)

### *Divinity: Original Sin's* First Free DLC Has a Cute Nod to *Smash Bros*.

**András Neltz**

Filed to: DIVINITY 9/16/14 4:30am

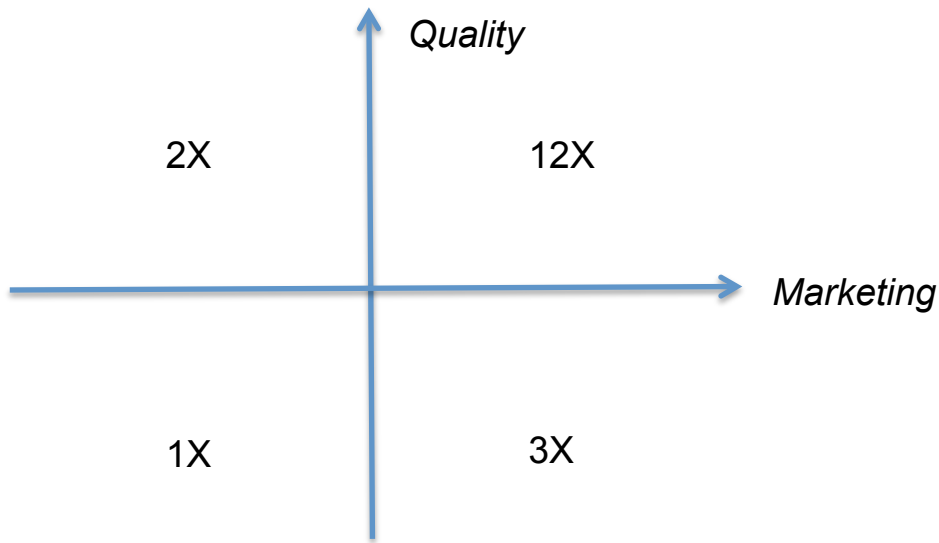
15,227 🔥 5 ★





## What did it cost?

- We spent about 10% of our budget on marketing & PR



Supposed impact of quality and marketing on sales



# Lessons applied



## Our next steps...

Still trying to make CRPGs that feels like a pen & paper RPG come to life

- Hiring so we can iterate faster & improve our craft
- Hiring so we can boost our amplification opportunities
- Internalizing as much as we can
- Working on over-delivering to existing players, big time
- Experimenting so we can stay a step ahead
- Limiting our commitments to third parties
- Preparing to announce 2 new RPGs



# Swen Vincke

@LarAtLarian



<http://Larian.com>  
@LarianStudios