

Platform: PC

Game Summary: This game is a post-apocalyptic first person combat game, which uses an open-world environment and uses a quest-based progression system. The player can choose either a male or female character at the start of the game but otherwise cannot customize their character. After an initial tutorial section the player must find and complete both story based and side-quests in order collect resources which can be used to upgrade their abilities and weapons. The player takes on the role of a ranger with special armor and weapons.

Early in the game the player is introduced to the world and the main opponent through some dialog and cut-scenes. The majority of humanity has been destroyed after asteroid hit the earth. A series of Arcs were established to preserve technology for mankind. These arcs can be discovered by the player and they contain either special weapons or give the player new abilities (powered by something called Nanites). The overall game goal for the player is to complete a series of missions for three different powers in the world and to combine what they have to face the final enemy. Along the way the player can engage in a series of side-missions so they can increase their abilities and weapons.

Rage 2 is a first person combat game that involves several different kinds of challenges:

- Combat from the First Person perspective and automobile combat.
- Location of resources through various environmental puzzles.
- Using collected resources to upgrade weapons and abilities.

By far the most common challenge is combat. When approaching a combat situation the player can use special sight (which can be upgraded) to view the location of enemies.



The enemies appear in purple and the player can see their location. Actual combat is done through pistol, automatic rifle, shotgun, and a variety of other weapons.



The combat AI (artificial intelligence) is fairly good and the enemy NPCs will try and flank the player and use cover. While there is some stealth to the game it is not designed to be a central point of combat. Because of the typically enclosed environment within which you will be fighting, the combat shotgun is usually the best weapon.

As the player discovers Arcs they will gain access to various weapons and personal abilities. For example, one ability is to throw out a Shield and another ability is to project a force to kill opponents. These abilities are found inside Arcs.



After getting a new ability a short “virtual” tutorial shows how to use the ability.

Driving is another central part of the game. In fact, one of the mainline quests require the player to come in first in a race in order to up their celebrity status and get into a club. Driving in RAGE 2 is similar to the driving in the Mad Max game, which is not surprising because Avalanche Studios worked on this game. RAGE gives the player a car at the start of the game but the player can take over and drive just about any car they find:



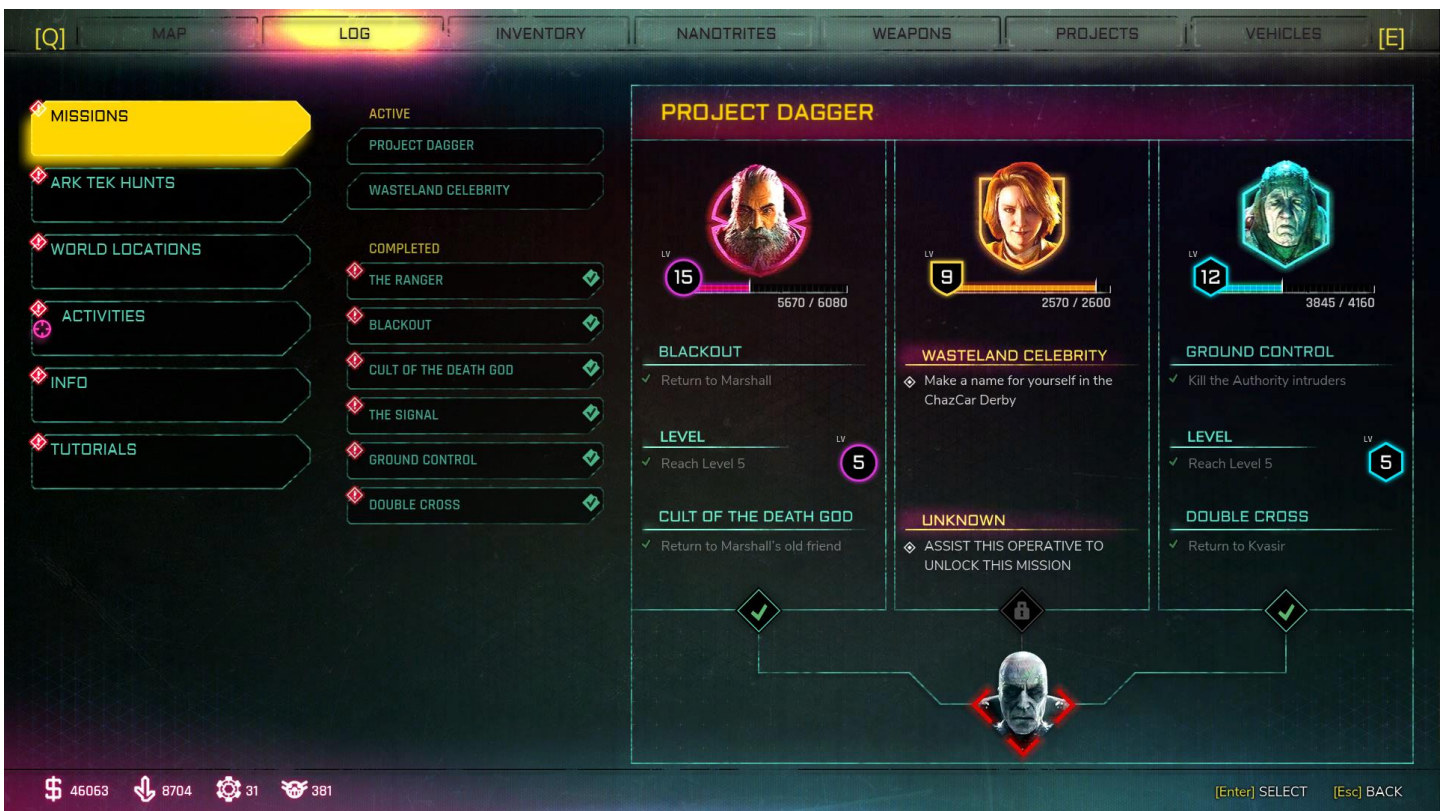
Driving controls in RAGE 2 work better with a controller than mouse/keyboard and RAGE 2 will easily switch the controls between a controller and mouse/keyboard on the PC.

During gameplay the player can find and open chests, Arc chests, and breakable boxes.



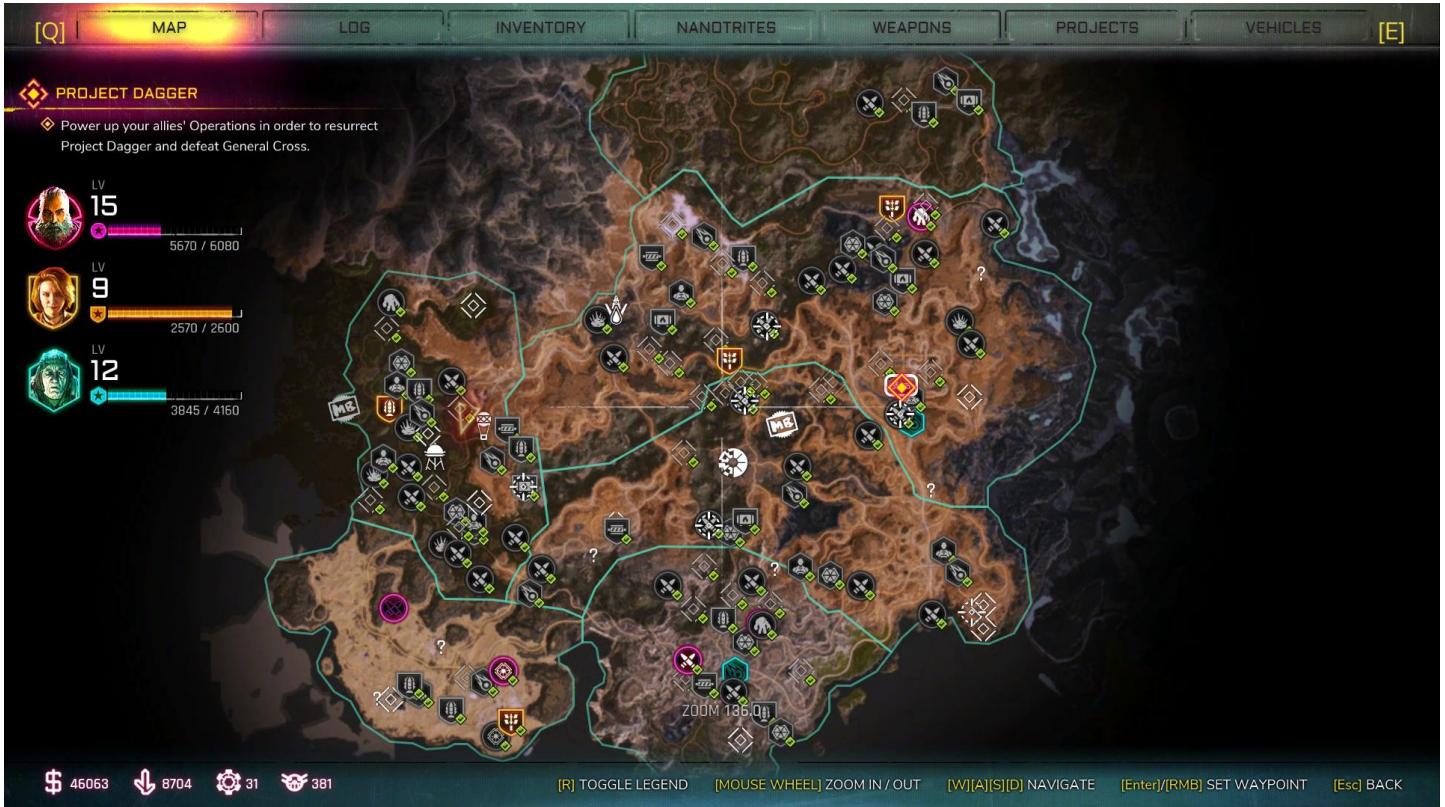
These are hidden around the areas and contain either supplies (breakable boxes), pink boxes (money and nanites), or arch chests.

While the main story quests include a sequential set of quests that must be completed to progress the story to the final:



Your character meets each of these characters and takes on a set of quests to progress the story.

Along with these story quests there are a number of optional quests. These are reflected on the world map:

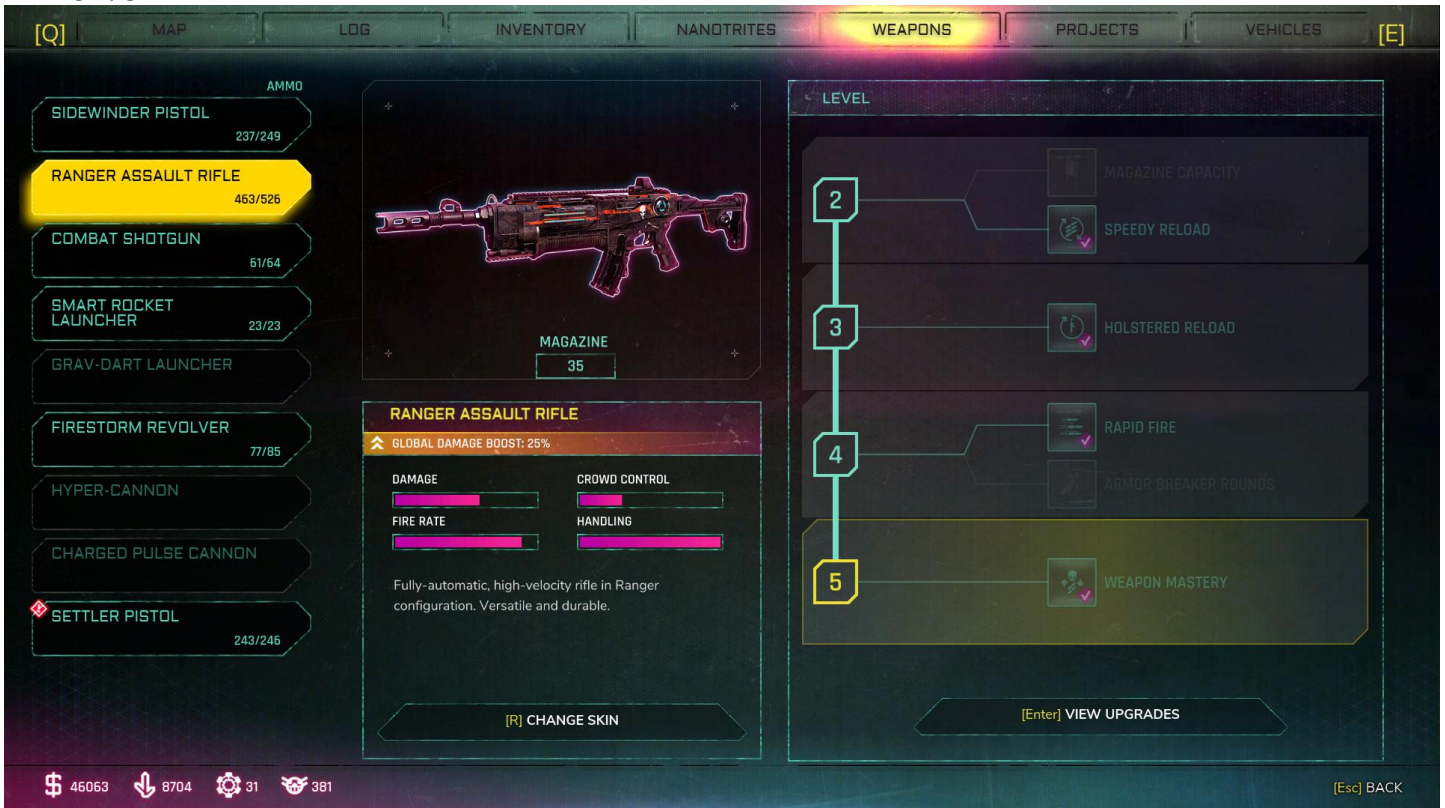


Along with the set of required and optional quests there are cities in each of the areas where additional optional quests can be acquired. These cities include vendors that buy and sell resources and characters that you can interact with to get quests. It also includes bounty boards that have quests you can complete for money.





The game leveling system is based on upgrading your skills and weapons. This can be done by purchasing upgrades or finding upgrades in various areas in the world.



Your character can also upgrade your abilities.

Game Review:

Rage 2 is a game focused more on the game mechanic than on the game narrative and the game world. The game narrative is thin, the characters fairly generic and undefined, and the game world both empty and repetitive. The elements of Rage 2 that are very well done are the combat elements and the vehicle elements. If players are expecting a rich and narratively complex role playing game they will be disappointed. If players only want a good combat and car driving game then they will be (initially) happy until the repetitiveness sets in.

If the primary focus of games is the player experience then this game misses the mark in a couple of ways.

1. While the game combat mechanics are excellent and exciting the combat missions tend to quickly become the same. Side missions include just a few different kinds and don't vary much from mission to mission. Combat mechanics include cover shooting (clearing out a goon squad area), run and gun (clearing out a mutant area), and arena battles (fighting minor mutant bosses and fighting in the Mutant Bash Arenas).
2. The main missions are not clearly defined and the game does not clearly map out a path for mission completeness. Using three separate main missions that must all be completed before getting to the final part of the game is interesting, but it fragments the narrative arc of the game.
3. Side missions are repetitive in nature and often (when finding people for bounty collection) take place in the same areas you have already cleared out.
4. The open world allows the player to go where they want and the map does include several different kinds of areas (desert, swamp, mountain, plains). Also, the enemies and cities vary in each of these areas but not by much.
5. While there is some degree of environmental story telling (data pads) most of the background narrative on the different enemy clans, the history of the world, and even the background story on the main enemy and the three protagonists is missing or not presented in a structured way.
6. Character leveling is not clearly delineated and the menus tend to be a bit clunky. While there is plenty of money and resources to collect using these to upgrade the players weapons and abilities is not clearly shown.

The things the game does well include:

1. Enemy combat and combat AI is well done. The weapons feel good and the sound design is excellent.
2. Car driving (with a controller) is good and car combat can be challenging. Camera adjustment while driving can, at times, be a bit off but generally car combat is good.
3. The core game system loops are well done and the player gets into the pattern of killing all the goons in an area, locating the chests and resources, and going to the next area. This combination of First Person Combat followed by resource collection is done well.
4. Voices and side conversations. When in a city area you can only talk to individuals that have a mission for the player. When you go back and report on the mission you can no longer speak with them. When you sneak up on a goon-infested area you can hear their side-conversations which are typically very interesting. This adds some humanity to the goons and does serve to flesh out the world.

Summary:

Rage 2 can be fun to play for a limited amount of time. While the open world can be repeatedly explored after a while it becomes too repetitive for interesting gameplay. I have played about 50 hours of the game (completing most of the side quests) and the repetitive nature of the gameplay has become apparent. As an RPG this game does not work. As a game where you can kill people in a bloody and unique way then this game works. As a narrative driven game, Rage 2 does not work.

Player Experience: 7 out of 10

Repeatability: 5 out of 10

Graphics and Sound: 8 out of 10

Game Analysis:

Game Mechanics

Game Structure

Game Leveling

Game Narrative