



## RoboBlitz

Platform: **Xbox 360**

Publisher: Developer: **Naked Sky Entertainment**

ESRB Rating: N/A Genre: **Action**

Recommended by **42** out of **46** users.

by **Matt Leone** 12/15/2005

Ever since Unreal Engine 3.0 was announced, the creators at Epic have hammered home the point that this technology will allow developers to create next-gen games with reasonable development costs. Development teams won't need hundreds of employees and this is the key to making affordable but pretty next-gen games, the pitch has gone.

Then a couple weeks ago, independent developer Naked Sky Entertainment came along and announced it was using the engine for a budget priced, [Xbox Live](#) Arcade game called **RoboBlitz** -- showing that the technology could stretch even further than many had imagined.

"The important thing to remember is that an engine is just code -- it doesn't include all the graphics and sound that make titles like **Gears of War** look like Gears of War," says Naked Sky lead programmer and co-founder Joshua Glazer. "It's those assets -- the art and the sound effects -- that actually make a game big or small. By using UE3, we get the dynamic lighting, shading and shadows which make next-gen titles look so vivid, but we create our own art, at a scale appropriate for our game, to make sure RoboBlitz fits under the 50MB Live Arcade limit."

Despite its small size, RoboBlitz isn't a [puzzle game](#), 2D, slow-paced, or simple. At first glance, it looks a lot like a third-person shooter along the lines of the critically acclaimed **Metal Arms**, though Glazer notes the game requires a bit of creativity as well. "I hesitate to pigeonhole it as a shooter," he says. "Although there is a fair share of baddie blasting, Blitz [the character] is an engineer at heart, and he often prefers more creative ways of dispatching his foes -- whether it's pulverizing them in a machine press or tractor-beaming them into a mecha space mine. I'd say it's more of a platform [action game](#), ala Mario, than a straight shooter."



Part of this whole thinking-before-you-shoot concept comes from the game's physics engine. RoboBlitz started life as a tech demo for Intel under the name RoboHordes and uses the NovodeX physics engine, and as a result the final game incorporates physics as one of its key gameplay features.

"At NSE, one of our tenets of design is, 'If you think it should work, then it works,' and this is only made possible by our high level of physical simulation," says Glazer. "We want our players to feel enabled in our world, and to feel confident that if they come up with a solution to a puzzle, it will work, even if the designers never thought of it."

"Specifically, take the example of tossing a drone into a shredder," he continues. "Originally, the shredder was designed so that you could disable drones with an EMP burst and then pick them up and drop them onto the shred-wheel: It's slow, but effective (and pretty!). However, one of our designers discovered, quite accidentally, that it's much faster to grab the drone with a tractor beam and just launch it straight into the spinning blades. There are obviously better examples, but my CEO will spank me if I talk about them right now."

RoboBlitz won't just be a freeform action game, either -- the developers are also planning a multiplayer mode, though not for the initial launch. "The initial release of RoboBlitz is strictly single-player, as we wanted to focus on creating gameplay which revolves around Blitz's interaction with the environment," says Glazer. "We also had to jam all our code and content into a 50MB downloadable file, so we had to pick and choose what we could offer. The current plan is for the first RoboBlitz expansion to include a multiplayer mode, which will allow players to compete against each other. We've done some MP tests in-house, though, and let me say that there are few things more fun than smacking your friend with a homing rocket, except for wrapping a tractor beam around his roller-ball while he's planting on a half-pipe, and watching him tumble into a pit of seething sawbots."

RoboBlitz is scheduled to be available as a 360 Live Arcade download in Spring 2006, at a currently unknown price point. Head over to our [media page](#) to check out a pair of exclusive new screens of the game.

Thanks for your feedback!