

Minecraft: Dungeons Preview

David Nisshagen laughs as he guides his character's blocky form down a narrow, raised platform, surrounded by violet flames. He's just discovered a hidden room in Minecraft Dungeons, and even being the executive producer of the title but he's not sure what's about to happen. The smile on his face can be visible on our Discord call.

He said, "This is very rare." "This is very rare. Okay?" I laugh and tell my friend that he's excited.

He responds, "Yes," but the guy doesn't know the reason. This is so cool. Fela.London Okay, so, as you see, we do have some very spooky and mysterious things here. I just found something that could prove to be very useful later in the game or if I return to the game.

Minecraft Dungeons is an adventure game that is influenced by classic dungeon crawlers such as Diablo or The Binding of Isaac, but with the franchise's patented kid-friendly design. It allows local and online multiplayer, randomly generated levels, and a myriad of familiar enemies, such as creepers spiders, and skeletons. The entire game appears similar to Minecraft, but it represents a innovative approach to game development by Mojang.

Microsoft purchased Mojang the Swedish studio behind Minecraft, for \$2.5 billion in 2014, and today it operates under the Xbox Game Studios umbrella. This doesn't mean Minecraft Dungeons will be exclusive to Microsoft platforms. The full game is scheduled to launch on PlayStation 4, Switch, Xbox One and Windows on May 26th.

For more than a decade, Mojang has focused on Minecraft the world-wide phenomenon that's introduced generations of kids and adults to sandbox-style video games. Minecraft Dungeons is the studio's first attempt at a new category, and has been in development for at least four years.

The storyline of the game is simple and appropriately epic: An villager who was cast out -- known in-game as an illagerfound an orb with power and is using it to infiltrate the world with armies of villagers under his command. The players travel across different regions to take on the Arch-Illager's gang until they encounter the orb-holder.

Mojang introduced illagers to the base Minecraft game in 2016 however Nisshagen stated that the creatures were actually created in the Dungeons development room.

"We needed an enemy that was humanoid, that had a ranged attack and the ability to hunt quickly," he explained. After all, Nisshagen said it was possible to just run from the zombies

in Minecraft rather than fight them in combat, and Dungeons developers wanted something that would encourage combat. "They do pursue you with axes and chase you down, and this was so loved by the Minecraft team that they decided to incorporate it into the game before we released Dungeons."

In actual fact, Dungeons began as an internal idea for the Nintendo 3DS.

"You cannot fit Minecraft, such a complex game, onto that," Nisshagen said. The developers chose to view the world from a top-down perspective rather than the first-person perspective. They wanted to create a world that is full of new opportunities and surprises.

"You can't take the whole Minecraft game," he said. "You need to, not make it easy, but focus on its essential elements. ...We increased our focus on exploration and the feeling of adventure. Players should feel like they are on an adventure. Then we consider the creativity Minecraft players use when they create all the awesome stuff in the game. We try to let them use that in our sort-of progression system, which is the word."

Minecraft Dungeons doesn't use a traditional progression system based on RPGs, and it doesn't force players to play in specific roles. Instead of being limited to a single class like "healer", "tank" or "tank" players can swap out their equipment and combine items to give weapons any abilities they require.

"You can imagine our transforming that sandbox concept into the progression system," Nisshagen said. "There's absolutely no limitations. You can do anything you want. There are some extremely bad choices you could make. However there are many good choices and strong choices you can make.

There isn't a wrong method to play Minecraft Dungeons. This is crucial for developers, especially considering the intended players that Minecraft is aimed at: children and their parents. As the brand, Minecraft is geared toward younger players, whereas dungeon-crawler games are generally built for adults, and feature extensive inventories and progression trees and a challenging combat arena. Minecraft Dungeons is an attempt to appeal to both of these market segments.

"We think that we'll see parents playing with children, or younger and older siblings playing together," Nisshagen said. "There's quite a bit of depth to the system. Anyone who has played before will discover interesting combinations of things to explore from a game mechanics point of view. Then there are the people who just want to play and click and have a blast.

The game has drop-in multiplayer both local and online and each stage adjusts according to

the amount of players. There's no friendly fire, except for TNT boxes, which can hurt allies and familiars alike as they explode.

Cross-platform play won't be available at launch , but it is "absolutely" possible down the road, Nisshagen stated.

He also said that "we're not a big development team." (Mojang's About Page lists 71 employees). "Just being able to release the same game to PlayStation 3, Nintendo Switch, Xbox and Windows is quite a feat actually. We want cross-play to be available as soon as we can. However, we would like to ensure we have the best multiplayer experience on our own platforms first.

In many ways, Minecraft Dungeons is the natural evolution of the Minecraft franchise. For plenty of 2000s kids, Minecraft was the first game they played because it was simple, engaging and social. In the past decade the same players are craving something more challenging and Minecraft Dungeons is an obvious, familiar answer.