

If you click on a link and
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I've just been told I need
violent poking may begin

I mean, let's not try and
that fully understood mo:
Fun to build up, even mo

And yet...poking Father
through this handheld va
and decided that in orde
you find yourself setting
moments of silliness reall
here still feels intrusive an



The Save A City challenges don't let you alter the budget, making their tight time limits and stiff goals a real pain.

At least these silly mini-games can be switched off, which is more than can be said for the slightly alarming proliferation of other quirks which conspire to make SimCity's DS debut a merely tolerable outing rather than an essential purchase.

Take, for example, the constant pestering from your citizens. Barely thirty seconds goes by without your on-screen advisor chirruping away, all exclamation marks and incessant beeping. Tap on them and you'll be told there's someone in your office, and would you like to talk to them? As the cast of Grange Hill so sagely suggested, just say NO. Trust me on this. It'll just be one of a small handful of irritating cartoon characters, and they'll take up your time with the same long-winded "comedy" conversations that leave you impatiently tapping the screen to skip to the part where they say they'd like a marina. Best to just ignore them. If you respond to every single one, you'll soon notice that even when you build their damn marina, they'll inevitably be back in a few minutes, with the exact same conversation, asking for...a marina. There is one upside to this constant interruption - you get to sign off each request with the stylus, meaning you can amuse yourself by sealing important civic documents with a crude doodle of a willy. Or maybe some hilarious boobies. Such larks.

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ear on screen so that the

scale, it was also a game
their building blocks.
) attacks.

ction events" sprinkled
one looked at SimCity
r-the-top whimsy. Thus
nster attacks. Are these
yet their implementation



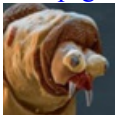
The RCI scale at the bottom shows you which zones are in demand, and what percentage of your zones are being used.

The game is full of moments like this, moments that seem cute the first few times but repeat so often, and with so little variation, that the shallow nature of the conversion is revealed sooner rather than later. The actual city building is much as it always was, though obviously simplified for handheld play, but once your city is spreading and thriving it's all too easy to run out of things to do. Plumbing is now just a case of placing water towers rather than pipe networks. Electricity automatically crosses roads and incomplete zones, so it's entirely possible to fill a quarter of the sizeable game area without ever using power lines. Taxation and funding options are tucked away deep inside the information sheets, where you only need to venture if you've opted for one of the hardcore maps that start you off with just ten thousand simoleons. The emphasis is instead on balancing out the three types of zone - industrial, commercial and residential - and the use of status-changing civic buildings to keep Sim moods high, or crime and disasters low. In this slimmed down DS version it's more of a puzzle game than anything - build as many yellow zones as you can, but keep them away from red zones. Repeat until rich.

- Yes, if I've not played anything from that franchise before
- Yes, if I've not played anything from that developer before
- Yes, always
- Sometimes
- No, I prefer the surprise
- No, I use other metrics
- No

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Dan Whitehead: Dan has been writing for Eurogamer since 2006 and specialises in RPGs, shooters and games for children. His bestest game ever is Julian Gollop's Chaos.

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