What's This Game? Avalon Code

Written by Marron
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Many game sites tend to review games right when they come out, or sometimes even before that; but with most of the world in an economic downturn, we don't always have the money to buy and play brand new video games. Because of this, we sometimes miss out on very cool games that we might otherwise enjoy. *What's This Game?* hopes to remedy this by reviewing and suggesting games that have been out for anywhere from a few weeks to maybe even a few months--and gives tips and advice on where to find the games used or for a discounted price. So, keep reading to find out more about the game behind our very first edition of
What's This Game?
:
Avalon Code
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What's This Game? Avalon Code

The world is ending, and you are the Chosen One. But in *Avalon Code*, it's not quite what you might think! In this unique action RPG for the DS by Xseed, the hero is recording the world, not saving it.

As the game opens, Yumil or Tia (depending on if you choose to play a boy or a girl) is given the Book of Prophecy; the world is ending, but Tia will not be saving the world. Instead, she will be recording the world within the Book of Prophecies so that the information can be used to build the next world.

Pretty much anything and everything you encounter in the world can be recorded in the book, from npcs and monsters to items, weapons, and even flowers. Recording things in the Book involves summoning the large book and, well, hitting things with it. Can't go wrong with that, can you? Well, maybe.

Game Mechanics: B
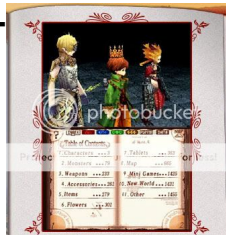
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The game controls are not very clear cut; using the book takes a bit of learning and getting used to, and even the instructions given by the book spirit that help your character in mini-tutorials are still sometimes a little vague. Something that I find interesting about the book is that once you've recorded information about an object, you can *change* it. For instance, if a monster has an attribute that gives him stone skin, you can remove the stone skin so that you can attack him easier--and all monsters of that type will, from then on, appear without the stone skin. These attributes are called "codes", and codes can be added or removed.

This part of the game isn't unlimited, however; you can only keep four codes at a time in your inventory--and each item put into the book can only hold a certain amount of codes. The customization and combination of the codes is fairly open-ended and almost unlimited, though. It's also hard to tell what you can encode in the Book of Prophecy and what you can't, so a lot of time can be wasted trying to add things to the Book.

Story and Gameplay: A-

The story is pretty straight forward. There's very little room for exploration outside of the parameters of the game, and most of the time is spent adding things to the Book of Prophecies between talking to NPCs in town and fighting monsters outside of town. There are four elemental spirits that are a part of the book, and they give instructions on where to go next along with explaining how the book works.

Something fun that I liked about the game is the Judgment Link; this sort of weird-but-fun mini-game tallies how many times you can bounce a monster up and down. Every time you bounce the monster, it will bounce higher and higher into the air--until finally they will soar off into space. This is not only bizarre and oddly fun, but it helps to replenish magic points.

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Graphics and Sound: A+

The graphics in *Avalon Code* are very nice. The 3D rendering is well done, and the art is pretty to boot. The music is also really pleasant to listen to; it's pretty upbeat and catchy most of the time.

Overall: B

The game overall is very unique, and it provides hours of entertainment. Like I said, however, there are problems with the interface and the use of the Book of Prophecy that could be more streamlined and even more clear and easy to use.

Where Can I Find It?

Avalon Code retails for $29.99+tax, but with a little searching, you can find it for around $18 on eBay, which is a savings of about $10 after shipping costs.