

# Dark Disciples II : Introduction

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### 1.0 What is Dark Disciples II?

Dark Disciples II is a CRPG (Computer Roleplaying game) with a fairly traditional fantasy setting. You play a single character and the world is viewed from a top-down perspective. It is the sequel of Dark Disciples I.

### 2.0 Is Dark Disciples II is free or do I have to pay?

DD2 is freeware, but remains copyrighted. You are not permitted to attempt to make any money out of this software (such as placing it on a compilation CD).

### 3.0 What is the current version?

Dark Disciples II is currently at version v3.1.

### 4.0 Copyright Legalities

The music tracks were written by, and purchased from, Bjorn Lynne for a very reasonable fee. Of course, he retains the full copyright of his music. His website is [www.lynnemusic.com](http://www.lynnemusic.com).

### 5.0 Contact Details

Dark Disciples II is maintained at [www.ancient-architects.com](http://www.ancient-architects.com).

If you would like to contact me for any reason, with the possible exception of naked personal abuse, feel free to do so. I'm particularly interested in bug reports and constructive criticism for DD2. DD1 was improved markedly from its buggy, illiterate, beginnings thanks to copious feedback. My e-mail address is [llafebre@bigpond.net.au](mailto:llafebre@bigpond.net.au).

## 6.0 Common Terminology

Here is a very brief list of acronyms and abbreviations used in these documents:

- The original Dark Disciples will regularly be referred to as **DD1**, while its sequel, the imaginatively named Dark Disciples II, will be referred to as **DD2**.
- ‘**CRPG**’ is an acronym for ‘Computer Role-Playing Game’.
- ‘**PC**’ means ‘Player character’ and refers to the hero (or villain) of the story that the player is, er, playing...
- ‘**NPC**’ means ‘Non-Player Character’ and refers to computer controlled personalities that the hero can meet during the game.

## 7.0 Design Philosophy

Just for interest, here are the design philosophies that I followed when writing Dark Disciples II:

- *Deterministic obstacles*: One of the major design focuses for Dark Disciples II was that success or failure in a given task should be deterministic and not, where possible, involve a random dice roll. For example, if your strength is 4 and the door’s strength is 3, then you will always be able to break it down. If, on the other hand, the door’s strength was 5, you would never be able to break it down. Essentially, I wanted to avoid repetitive tasks as much as possible – in this case, the player trying to break the door down over and over again until (s)he succeeds. I also wanted to discourage, as much as possible, the mimesis-breaking tactic of reloading the game over and over again until a desired outcome is achieved (such as avoiding a trap on a chest). Note that combat ‘to hit’ rolls and damage rolls still involve virtual dice rolling as in most traditional CRPGs.
- *Simplicity*: Essentially, I wanted the rules in Dark Disciples II to be fairly simple to learn and play. Hopefully, anyone reasonably familiar with CRPGs will be able to play the game without needing to refer to the instruction manual very often, or at all.
- *Low Redundancy*: I wanted to avoid the scenario where there are millions of different character options but where each has little discernable effect. I also wanted to avoid the situation where skills or spells become obsolete as you advance in levels.
- *Old school feel*: DD2 has a distinctly old school feel and approach to computer roleplay gaming. Don’t get me wrong – I love many modern CRPGs and don’t have a snobby attitude towards them. I just wanted to make an old school game, that’s all (it’s a childhood nostalgia thing). Oh, and DD2 clearly has an old-school *look* due to my limited artistic ability...
- *Modern interface*: Eighties CRPGs often required a lot of note taking and map drawing on graph paper. These activities are not really considered fun by today’s

standards, so context sensitive help, automap, quest logging – all the modern features designed to make gameplay more fun and less a chore – are implemented in DD2.

## **8.0 Known bugs and Issues**

There are a couple of known, ongoing issues with DD2. These are listed here:

- **The mouse cursor is missing!**

It has been discovered that the mouse option 'display cursor trails' causes the mouse cursor to disappear in game. If you go to the mouse settings in your control panel and uncheck the 'display cursor trails' option, the mouse cursor will become visible in game.

- **The game runs really slow on my win XP Pro system....**

This issue only occurs for some people and, to be honest, its exact nature is still somewhat of a mystery. In any case, the following workaround will resolve the problem:

**Step #1:** Click on start, run, and enter "dxdiag", then click OK.

**Step #2:** Click on the "Display" tag.

**Step #3:** In the "DirectX features" section, disable the "DirectDraw acceleration". Click "exit".

The game should now run properly. Note that you should re-enable the DirectDraw acceleration after playing Dark Disciples; otherwise some newer commercial games may not run. I know this isn't an ideal solution – sorry! - but its the best I can do for the time being.

- **Alt TAB doesn't work.**

This problem has been partially fixed. Alt tabbing now works in DD2 but it's buggy.

- **The sound effects 'studder' in Vista for some reason!**

Not sure exactly why this happens. The solution: goto start, control panel, hardware + Sound, Sound, Speakers (properties), Soundblaster Tab. Check (tick) the "disable Sound Blaster Enhancements" box.