'Skyward Sword' taking 'Zelda' to new heights

November 16 2011, By DERRIK J. LANG , AP Entertainment Writer

In this video game image released by Nintendo Co., a scene is shown from, "Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword." (AP Photo/Nintendo Co.)

(AP) -- Link is getting a workout. Unlike the button-mashing pursuits in previous installments of the popular Nintendo Co. franchise, "Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword" is asking players to flick their wrists, wave their arms and move their hands with the gesture-recognizing Wii controller in order to guide spritely adventurer Link along an epic quest to find childhood sweetheart Zelda.

While the Wii iteration of the previous "Zelda" console game, "Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess," included some simplistic motion controls five years ago, "Skyward Sword" is pushing the physicality further by employing the more precise Wii MotionPlus technology to serve as such weapons and tools as Link's sword, bug-catching net, harp and slingshot.

"It's going to feel like a brand new experience for everyone, regardless of their experience with the series, and I hope that they'll all enjoy it very much," said Japanese game producer Eiji Aonuma, who has worked on the 25-year-old "Zelda" franchise for the past 14 years. He spoke through a translator during a recent interview in Los Angeles.

Aonuma compared the motion control of "Skyward Sword," out Nov. 20, to the three-dimensional graphics of "Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time," which revolutionized the series when it was released for the Nintendo 64 console in 1998 by transforming the mythical land of Hyrule from a mysterious maze-like 2-D labyrinth into a fantastical 3-D realm.

In "Skyward Sword," Link descends from a floating city to such locales as a dense forest, mammoth volcano and sprawling desert in search of Zelda, while encountering mind-bending puzzles, well-armored baddies and time-flipping crystals along the way. Instead of a horse or a train, Link has a giant crimson bird to help him get around this time.

Aonuma said the more physical take on "Zelda" isn't merely a fad. He teased the motion-control scheme would likely be used on a future "Zelda" title for the Wii U, the high-definition Wii successor Nintendo unveiled at the Electronic Entertainment Expo this year that features the ability to use a new touchscreen controller in tandem with a Wii Remote.

Aonuma said the goal with Wii U is to continue to leverage the gameplay introduced with "Skyward Sword," "but to layer on top of that the functionality of the Wii U controller, which has a screen built into it." The hope, Aonuma continued, is to use that "as some type of tool to allow players to further enhance the way they interact with the `Zelda' world."

A non-interactive, high-definition clip of Link encountering a giant

spider was used at E3 to demonstrate some of the [Wii](#) U controller's capabilities, such as changing camera angles, toggling lighting schemes and switching the view between the touchscreen and TV display, but it was billed strictly as a demonstration, not a preview of a future "Zelda" title.

Despite its expansive pedigree, "Skyward Sword" will face competition stiffer than just electric blobs and spitting birds, said Anita Frazier, an analyst for NPD Group, which tracks the retail sales of games. "Between `Uncharted 3,' `Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3,' `Elder Scrolls: Skyrim' and `Zelda: Skyward Sword,' I expect November to be a huge month for new physical retail sales," she said.

More information: http://www.zelda.com/skywardsword/

Citation: 'Skyward Sword' taking 'Zelda' to new heights (2011, November 16) retrieved 3 May 2024 from https://phys.org/news/2011-11-skyward-sword-zelda-heights.html