

'Ralph Breaks the Internet' has glitches but delivers some winning moments

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
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Rating: <<<< out of <<<<<<

Running Time: 112 minutes

It may be hard to believe, but it's been six years since the release of the original *Wreck-It Ralph*. The animated feature provided a zippy little story about a misunderstood arcade-game villain and showcased a nostalgic mix of familiar characters like Pac-Man, Q*bert and even a Street Fighter or two.

The sequel, *Ralph Breaks the Internet*, heads out on a different path. It isn't quite as effective as the original, but is exceptionally animated and provides enough fun moments to earn it a recommendation.

In the several years since the events of the previous film, Ralph (John C. Reilly) and

Vanellope (Sarah Silverman) have remained best friends. The oversized Ralph seems content with his life, but Sugar Rush driver Vanellope finds herself tired of the same routine, yearning for something fresh.

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After one of their machines breaks down and leaves the future in question, the pair decides to use a router and traverse through the internet to find a crucial replacement part. In the process, Vanellope discovers an exciting racing game environment. Newly invigorated, she wonders if she might be better off in the web. Ralph becomes insecure that his friend is going to leave, which leads to a series of poor choices in order to make her return with him.

As expected, the movie looks phenomenal with the leads transitioning from their blocky, arcade-game environments to a new, higher resolution internet world. There are some laughs as the characters try to hunt down their part on sites like Ebay. And plenty of humor is derived from the contrast between the colorful Vanellope and a new racing world she competes in that bears resemblance to games like Grand Theft Auto.

Later, a virus that resembles one of the characters begins to infect certain parts of the web and is impressively rendered as it grows stronger and larger. It all looks very striking.

Additionally, the story incorporates some nice themes. Vanellope befriends another driver in the form of Shank (Gal Gadot) and begins to confide in her. This leads to an internal struggle as she expresses her own feelings about moving on and her concerns about Ralph being hurt and feeling abandoned.

Not many films deal with issues like letting friends and loved ones leave and follow their own paths; this movie does attempt to deal with these issues in a sensitive way. Still, there are a few missteps.

Speaking of being abandoned, it is unfortunate that many of the classic arcade game characters from the first film are re-introduced in this follow-up, only to be largely forgotten.

Another issue that came up for this reviewer was in relation to the setting itself.

The original was confined within the world of old arcade games. However, very current environments like Facebook, eBay and Instagram are on display. The characters even enter the online Disney domain and interact with various princesses there. While it results in a couple of

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funny lines, one can't help but feel it's dangerously close to watching a lavishly produced ad for the sites featured.

Sill, the movie fares much better in this respect than the recent and crassly commercial effort, *The Emoji Movie*

. Kids will be wowed and there is an attempt to do more here than exclusively pander and advertise product to audiences.

Ralph Breaks the Internet is occasionally prone to glitches, but is generally entertaining and delivers some winning moments when at its best. Most families will find it to be a rush (and for those wondering, there are a couple extra scenes/gags that appear over the end credits).

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