SKOAR!*

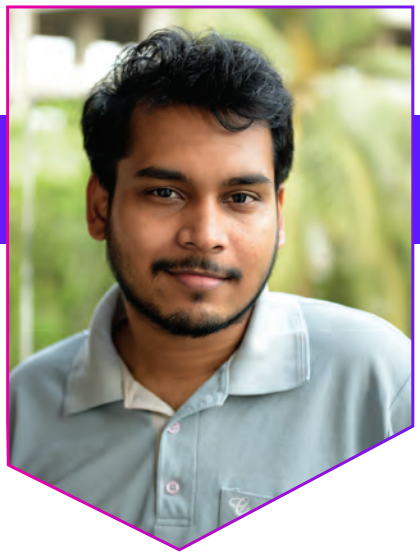
LIVE TO GAME

HUMANS TOGETHER, STRONG

You'll want to grab a buddy for these games



CHINA IS NOT A FAN OF ONLINE GAMING



Manish "Trigger-Happy" Rajesh
SKOAR! Overlord | feedback@skoar.in

China has decided to further tighten the limits on online gaming for people under the age of 18. The official announcement states that as of September 1, 2021, minors will only be allowed to play for one hour, between 8-9pm, from Friday to Sunday, and on national holidays. That's it. Three hours a week. Also, they're really serious about this; all players are required to register with their real names under the new rules. Online gaming companies are not allowed to provide any services to unregistered players. The country will frequently run verifications to ensure the rules are being followed as well.

If you've been following China's actions on gaming, then you'll probably know that this is actually a stricter version of the rules they imposed back in 2019, where minors could still play for 90 minutes a day, and three hours on holidays. Even then, verification was required for online gaming accounts, but not everyone was taking it seriously. Looks like gaming companies will have to take it seriously in China now, or face repercussions.

Shouldn't come as a surprise that gaming stocks of China's biggest gaming companies have taken a hit, such as Tencent, and NetEase among others. Tencent has been taking hit after hit for a few years now thanks to China's stringent gaming policies. China claims that this is all to improve the physical and mental well-being of their kids, and even likened online gaming to opium. Keep in mind that these rules only apply to online

gaming, the govt has reportedly left it to the parents' discretion how long their kids play other games.

In addition to gaming companies, another aspect of gaming in China will also take a big hit. I'm talking about the esports scene. Unlike other professional careers, gaming peaks at a very young age, with people retiring in their 20s. Talent is usually discovered young, and pro teams are always looking to recruit these up and coming youngsters to their rosters. The younger they are, the better.

This means they have more time to develop their skills and get better at the game before "old age gets to them". This is also a better investment for pro teams since their resources and time would be wasted on older players who have less time to develop.

This ban in China effectively stalls possible younger pros from reaching their potential until they're 18.

That's the current situation in China, who have the strictest rules about online gaming in the world, yet have the largest number of gamers. What are your thoughts on the situation?*

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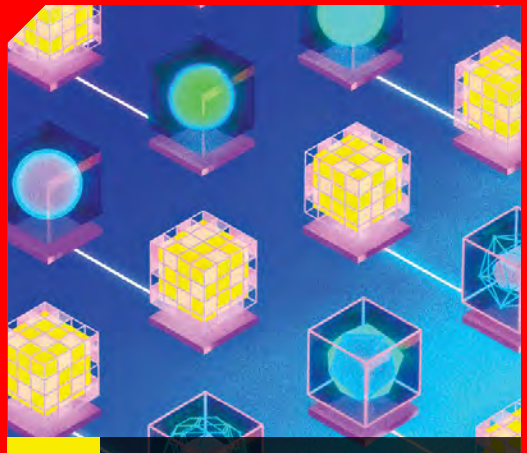
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You'll need a buddy to beat these games



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SKOAR! LIVE TO GAME

OVERLORD
Manish "Trigger Happy" Rajesh

THE LORD'S VASSALS (WRITERS)
Sameer "PsychoMantis" Mitha, Yetnesh Dubey

COURT JESTERS (INTERNS)
Kshipra "faafdaajalebii" Jadav, Omang "Respawner" Baheti, Pareek "Cruciator" Paarth, Jacky "Cranckymagic" Gadhavi, Patrick Gawande

MILITARY COUNCIL (DESIGN)
Art-Director Warmaster: **Anil VK**
Lord General: **Baiju NV**

Cover Magic: **Anil VK**

THE LORD'S COURT (PRODUCTION)
Managing Jarl: **Rakesh Upadhyay**
Executive Dukes: **M P Singh, Mohd. Nadeem Ansari**

***Legal stuff we can't mess with**
MANAGEMENT
Editor: **Vikas Gupta**
Chief Editor: **Robert Sovereign-Smith**
Managing Editor Digit Geek &
Brand Head - Devworx: **Mithun Mohandas**

OFFICE
9.9 Group Pvt. Ltd.
205, Arjun Centre, B Wing, Station Road,
Govandi East, Mumbai - 400088
help@skoar.in
For any business-related enquiries, contact
business@skoar.in

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Editor: **Vikas Gupta**



What's New



APEX LEGENDS IS NOW AVAILABLE FOR PRE-REGISTRATION ON ANDROID

Apex Legends is one of the most popular battle royale games on PC, consoles and is soon going to be made available on Android smartphones. The game will be available on Play-Store to pre-register, some youtubers and hard-core gamers were given an early access to the game to test it with a limited number of players to play with.



DISCORD MALWARE BECOMING A MAJOR THREAT

The cyber-security giant SOPHOS issued a warning a few weeks ago regarding our favour-ite software, Discord, that it is becoming a common target for hackers to spread malwares easily through the software. With over 250 million registered users and 140 million monthly active users Discord is becoming the new target for hackers to spread their malwares as wide as possible around the globe.



FORTNITE GETS ARIANA GRANDE!

The singer who is loved by many and is the idol of many - Ariana Grande has arrived in Fortnite as a playable character with her own set of skins and custom weapons!

At this point, Fortnite is almost synonymous with all of it's concerts involving some pretty big names in the industry and this one, Ariana Grande's Rift Tour - felt no different than the others. According to the current season in Fortnite, the game is supposed to be in the middle of an alien invasion right now. That is reflected by the number of different iconic characters that people can play as if they purchase them from the shop. Characters like Rick Sanchez from Rick and Morty, Superman and a ton others are available to choose from and in the middle of all this, comes Ariana Grande surprising the fans with a concert.



MICROSOFT BRINGING XCLOUD TO ITS CONSOLES THIS YEAR

Microsoft will be bringing it's game streaming service -xCloud to it's consoles i.e. the Xbox Series X | S and the Xbox One later this year.

If you didn't know already, xCloud is a game streaming service by Microsoft where users can stream the games they own instead of downloading the whole game and then playing it. This saves them both time and data. The way that the xCloud integration will work with the Xbox Series X | S and the Xbox One is that if you are subscribed to the Xbox Game Pass then you will have access to the xCloud. This will effectively let you try the game before you buy it.



FORTNITE'S NEW GAME MODE IS SUS!

Fortnite just launched a new game mode and it is absolutely sus! Fortnite has announced a new game mode called the "Imposter Mode" and it carries a lot of similarities to the popular indie game Among Us.

Similar to Among Us, the game mode will have a maximum of 10 players playing in a single lobby. At the start of each round, the 10 players will be divided into two teams. One team will have 8 players and they will be the Agents and the other team will have 2 players and of course, they will be the Impostors. This will also bring a new map to the game called The Bridge.

UP AND COMING



DEATHLOOP

The latest from Arkane Studios, the folks behind Dishonored, is Deathloop. It's got an interesting premise, that's for sure; an assassin stuck in a time loop, with the only way to break out being the elimination of all targets before midnight.

Release date – September 14



KENA: BRIDGE OF SPIRITS

Kena: Bridge of Spirits has been here before, maybe even twice. Because it's definitely something to look forward to, despite the delays. From its looks, the game evokes a Disney movie-like charm, and we can't wait to chill while playing it.

Release date – September 21



SABLE

One of the indie games to watch out for according to our list, Sable features a very unique aesthetic, and what appears to be a very interesting mix of elements, with breath of the wild-inspired gameplay.

Release date – September 23



WHAT WE LOVED (AND HATED) ABOUT THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

BY **SAMEER "PSYCHOMANTIS" MITHA**

FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

Calling Ghost of Tsushima one of the best games on the PS4 would be an understatement. In my review of the game, I said, "I must say I am more addicted to Ghost of Tsushima than I thought I'd be. Every time I put the controller down and decide to call it a day, my hand itches to get back to the game and have one more duel, one more swordfight, take on a gang of Mongols and show them who's boss. Apart from some camera angle hiccups, some random invisible walls and annoying cutscenes I can't fast forward, this is truly a brilliant open-world game, eliminating some of the grinding mechanics plaguing franchises like Assassins Creed. Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order (review) brought with it some great lightsaber duels and I must say, Ghost of Tsushima trumps those duels in every way. A worthy game if you enjoy open-world adventures and my personal game of the year so far".

That verdict hasn't changed. With the Director's Cut, developer Sucker Punch Productions has not only added a new Island to explore, Iki Island but also added some PS5 (review) specific features such as 3D audio, haptic feedback and adaptive triggers for the DualSense Controller and more. While reviews of the new Iki Island expansion are already out, we are going to take a look at 5 things we love about the expansion and 2 things we don't to help you understand whether the Director's Cut is worth the investment.

WHAT WE LIKED

A New Story With A Slightly Better Narrative

Ghost of Tsushima had a great story with a well-told narrative. The story was a personal fight for the protagonist, Jin,

and it was his experiences that drew you into the story. Not only is the story of Iki Island more personal for Jin, but the way the narrative is handled is a level above the base game. Jin will revisit his younger years leading up to the death of his father. The father-son dynamic is well explored in the game. There are not only flashbacks that tell you the story of the relationship between the two but the antagonist in the game has drugged Jin, leading to some very interesting visions that span the expansion. Not to mention the fact that there is a new ensemble of characters that you will interact with during the new journey.



Enemies Are Smarter And More Strategic

In Ghost of Tsushima, you can change Jin's combat stance based on the weapon your enemy is holding. There is one combat stance effective for enemies with shields, one for enemies with spears, one for brutes, so on and so forth. There are four stances in all. In the Iki Island expansion, enemies carry multiple weapons and you are forced to change your stance based on the weapon the enemy is using. This makes the combat feel a little more dynamic and adds a fresh touch to the already excellent duelling mechanic in the game.

There is also a new enemy type called the Shaman. They will chant to buff up nearby enemies adding to their health and also making them more aggressive. While this is something we saw in the Legends multiplayer, it adds an interesting layer to the gameplay when taking down multiple foes during the cam-

paign. Looking for the Shaman in the midst of a tough fight is not only challenging but also adds much-needed tension to the fights. Overall, the combat feels familiar, but the change in the enemy's combat technique makes the game feel fresh.



Diverse Side Activities

While soaking in a hot spring, slashing bamboo sticks and hunting for a fox den was fun, Iki Island adds new side quests to the mix. To start with, you can play your flute using the motion sensor on the DualSense controller to calm animals and pet them. The animals range from monkeys, cats, deer and more. There are also new archery challenges putting your skills to the test. Some of these challenges are quite tricky and fun to play multiple times.



There is also a central settlement that has a duelling arena for those that loved the duels in the main game and just want to spar back-to-back. There are two new mythical tales and both of them are a lot of fun! Won't spoil the details of the tales here. If you enjoyed the mythical takes in the main game, these two are a fresh addition.

Visually Stunning Island

While the island of Tsushima was diverse from lush farmland to hard cold winter, Iki island has a charm of its own. The island is a lot more diverse than you might think and you will be introduced to new traversal mechanics pretty early on. The island also has some distinct characteristics with its glowing water to desolated settlements and more.

New PS5 Specific Features Are Brilliant

The game has a frame rate mode and a resolution mode and you can leave it on the resolution mode and forget about it. This mode gives you a 4K resolution at 60FPS and during my time with the game, I didn't notice any dips. The purpose of the framerate mode is defeated as it only gives you 60fps at a lower resolution. I do wish the developers incorporated a 120hz mode in the game. Maybe via a future update?

The DualSense features are a big highlight of the game. Once you pull the left trigger to engage a bow, the right trigger locks adding tension to pulling the arrow. When riding your





horse across different surfaces, the haptic feedback changes, once again adding to the immersion.

You can also experience 3D audio by connecting your headphones to the controller and it is usually when you use the guiding wind or get into 'ghost mode' or use firecrackers as a distraction, that you can make out the height effects deployed by the game.

WHAT WE DIDN'T LIKE

While Ghost of Tsushima Directors Cut is a brilliant game, one worth revisiting for those that have played it and one definitely worth checking out if you are new to the franchise, there are some things we don't like about the game. Sadly, it has little to do with the game itself.

Paid Upgrade

While DLC and expansions are usually paid, a lot of developers have offered free PS5 upgrades for existing games. Metro Exodus being a great example of this as PS4 owners of the game get the PS5 version of the game as a free upgrade. The new upgrade for Metro Exodus brings features like 60FPS, ray-tracing, haptics and adaptive trigger support and more. So, while it makes sense for the Iki island DLC to be a paid expansion, the upgrade to the PS5 version of the game leaves a sour taste in the mouth. Especially if you purchase the PS4 Direc-



tors Cut today and upgrade to the PS5 version when you manage to get your hands on the new console.

Getting To The New Island Requires You To Finish The First Act

This is a really small nitpick. To get to the DLC, you need to finish the first act of the game. So, if you've started a new game + (like me) and have all the upgrades, you still need to run through the first act, which can get a little annoying. The implementation is exactly the same as the Frozen Wilds expansion for Horizon Zero Dawn. While this integrates the expansion extremely well into the story of the game, we wish it were implemented like the Spider-Man DLC's which can be quickly accessed from the game's menu. Like I said, a small nitpick.

MOAR!

TESTED ON
PlayStation 5

DEVELOPER
Sucker Punch Productions

PUBLISHER
Sony Interactive Entertainment

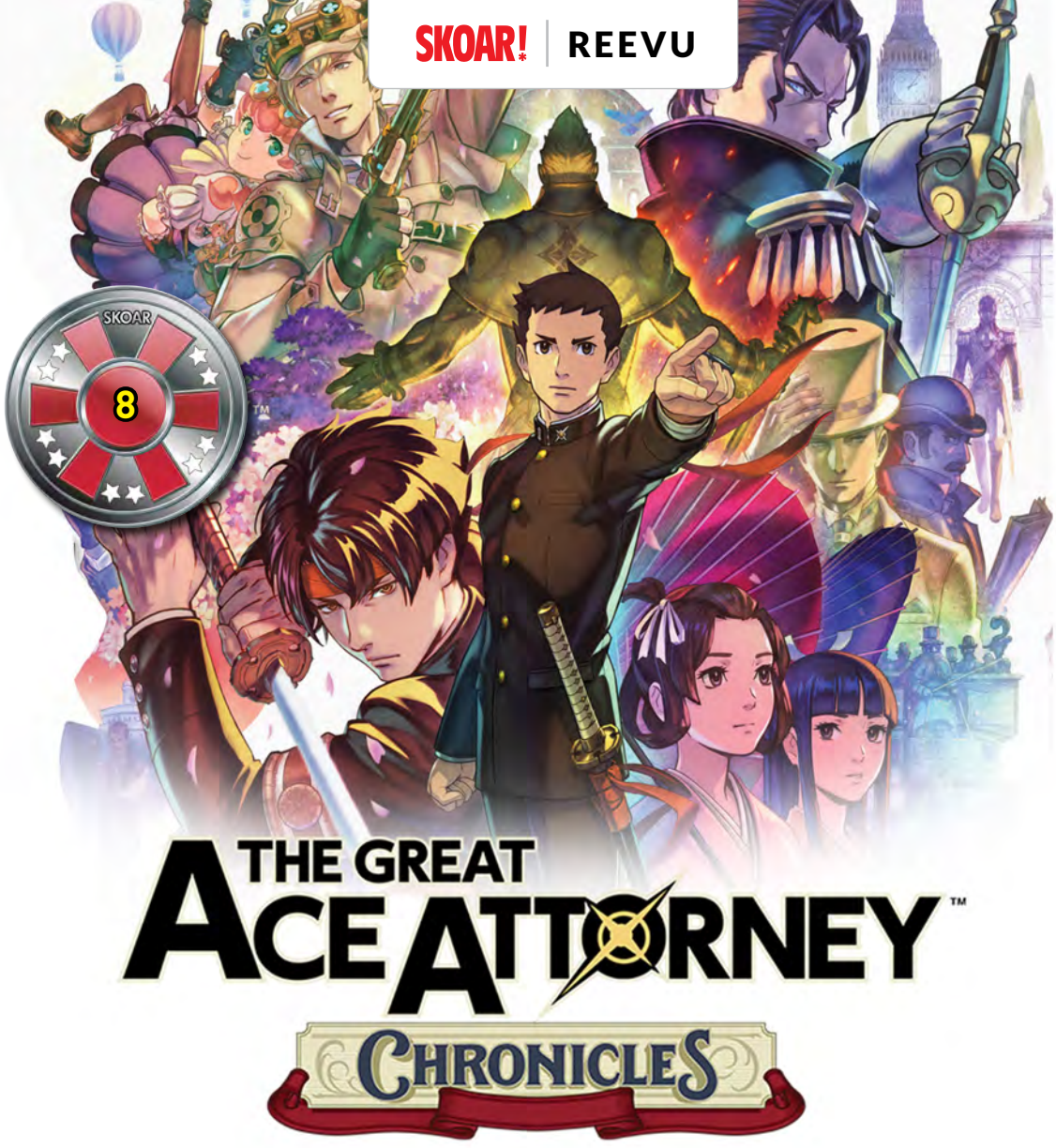
PLATFORMS
PS4, PS5

PRICE
₹3,999

VERDICT

Overall, Ghost of Tsushima Directors Cut is a fantastic reason to revisit the game. The new Iki Island expansion adds fresh gameplay elements and an intriguing story. If you have a PS5, you can take advantage of the new features on offer on the console. While the upgrade path from a PS4 to PS5

leaves a sour taste in the mouth, the game itself still offers an outstanding experience, one PlayStation owners should definitely experience. *



An ace attorney is born

BY **MANISH "TRIGGER-HAPPY" RAJESH**

FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

Capcom's Ace Attorney games have been around for a long time. We ourselves had never gotten into it, mostly due the barrier that is Nintendo consoles not really being readily available in India. However, even if you've never played any of the Phoenix Wright Ace Attorney games, you would have heard about them, in some capacity. It even reached meme status at some point, though we can't be arsed to remember when. Phoenix was also a character in Marvel vs Capcom. The point is, you most proba-

bly still remember a dude in a suit pointing and shouting "Objection!", even if you don't know where he's from. That being said, The Great Ace Attorney Chronicles seems like a good place for the uninitiated to the series to start. The game takes place decades (centuries probably) before the events of the Phoenix Wright Ace Attorney games. So there's no need to worry about catching up or being unfamiliar with characters. Let's get into the review!



GAMEPLAY

We're starting things off with the gameplay because there isn't all that much to it, at least in terms of mechanics. The game plays a lot like a VN or Visual Novel, which are quite popular in Japan. Not too surprising considering Capcom's Japanese roots. The game can be played entirely with a mouse, or if you want to be slightly faster, every action has a key assigned to it. All of it can be rebound. You can use spacebar or enter to read through the text. Now coming to the heart of the Ace Attorney games, the investigation. In case the name didn't give it away, you'll be spending a lot of time in the court in Ace Attorney, and you'll be gathering evidence, examining it and looking for clues to take the case further. Clues you find can be used to convince witnesses to open up with more information, or they can be pressed to reveal more information about the case during cross-examination, anything to reveal the truth. During examination, you will be able to take a closer look at evidence that has been submitted to the court, and move them

around and look at them from different angles. Once you've found what you're looking for, or what you think you're looking for, you can present it to the court. The game has a difficulty system in place, with the easiest pretty much playing the game for you, and the hardest giving you very little room for error. In the middle ground you have quite a few chances to screw up until it's game over. You can save the game at any point though, even before you think you might use up one of your chances, so there's that.

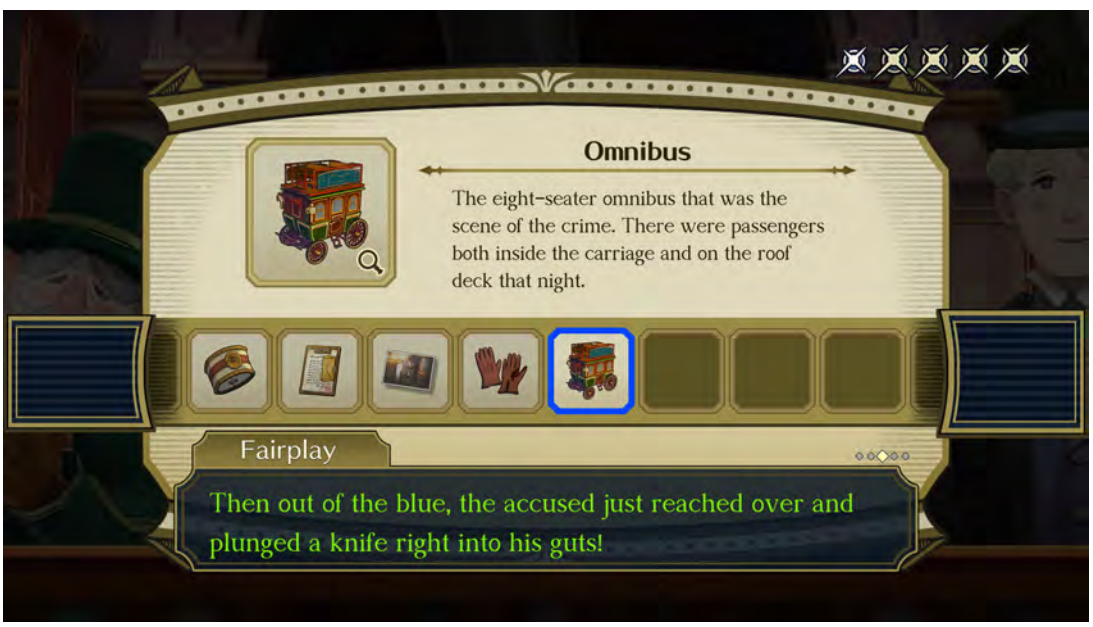


STORY

Next we come to the story. The Great Ace Attorney Chronicles follows the story of Ryunosuke Naruhodo, who is the ancestor of Phoenix Wright. Ryunosuke is falsely accused of murder, and ends up representing himself in court. Spoilers ahead; after successfully managing to defend himself, he finds out that he has the potential to become an ace attorney. The game is divided into 5 chapters, and all of them are related, until everything comes to a conclusion in the final, fifth chapter. Throughout the story, as you progress through the chapters, you will witness Ryunosuke's growth as a lawyer, and see his confidence in his own abilities growing. Even the animations he uses at the start, which are nervous and skittish, start becoming precise and confident. We witness the iconic, first ever "Objection!" from Ryunosuke (and possibly the first "Objection!" ever in terms of chronology, from the series' protagonist) in the very first chapter. Ngl, it was kind of epic.



The story itself is full of twists and shocks, while some things are obvious, others are completely unexpected; things certainly didn't go in the direction we were expecting. The characters are well designed, and play their roles well, drawing your scrutiny and making you wonder whether they're the culprit. The supporting characters are also pretty good, however, we wouldn't say any characters really stood out, it was decent all around. There's no voice acting in the game, except for certain moments in the game, such as "Objection!", "Hang On!", "Yes!", etc. Hopefully, you're prepared to do a lot of reading. The only downside we had with the game was it constantly giving you the same information over and over again. Once or twice is fine, but everytime you miss something, you have to go through that entire section of text all over again.



GRAPHICS

The Phoenix Wright games are usually 2D, The Great Ace Attorney Chronicles uses a 3D, and it looks pretty good. Watching the iconic animations in 3D is pretty cool, including, like we mentioned above, the epic first "Objection!". The character designs, also like we mentioned above, are pretty good. The accompanying soundtrack is great, and changes according to the mood and setting in the game, it gets intense when things are heating up, and slows down during things like cross-examination etc. Overall, this is probably the best looking Ace Attorney game to date.

MOAR!

DEVELOPER
Capcom

PUBLISHER
Capcom

PLATFORMS
PlayStation 4, Nintendo Switch, Microsoft Windows

PLAYED ON
Microsoft Windows

PRICE
₹2339 (Steam)



VERDICT

The Great Ace Attorney Chronicles is a solid Ace Attorney game as far as we're concerned. It's got a good story, interesting characters, good visuals and music, it's quite the package. Each chapter will easily take you north of 3 hours to complete, making this a fairly long game as well for the price, so you can really sink into the story with this one. *



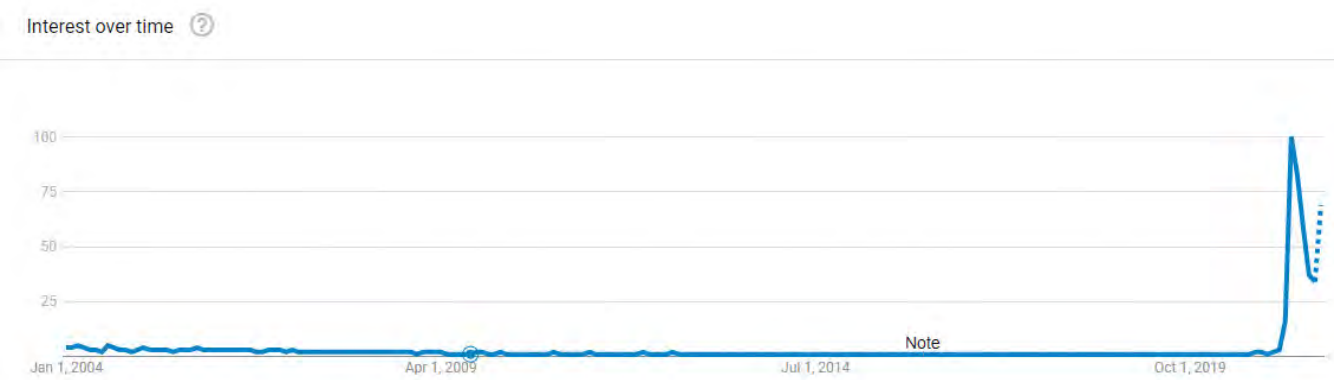
APPLICATIONS OF NFTS IN THE GAMING INDUSTRY

A match made in heaven?

BY **OMANG "RESPAWNER" BAHETI**

FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

NFTs, or Non-fungible tokens, are now sweeping over the world of digital art and collectibles. Massive sales to a crypto-audience are changing the life of digital artists. However, digital art is simply one use of this new form of digital authentication. These tokens, when implemented right, have the capability to change the way the gaming industry functions potentially. The industry is still structured to favour game producers and promote a one-way flow of value in which players pay money to get access to in-game content and gameplay options. NFTs could



Wait who was googling NFts in 2004?

power the framework to authorise and store digital assets that reflect in-game content. The blockchain networks that support this allow player ownership, proven scarcity, interoperability, and immutability. These benefits, when combined, have the potential to promote widespread adoption and a significantly fair value model, creating fresh revenue streams for gamers and game developers alike.

DECENTRALIZED ECONOMIES OWNED BY PLAYERS

There are a slew of reasons why NFTs and video games are a combination made in heaven.

A digitally verifiable token enables the players to "truly own" what they buy. The traditional model of online game economies limits the use cases of items purchased in-game. Hence, it limits the longevity of the in-game items purchased due to their limited use cases. All of a gamer's money would vanish if their account were stolen, deactivated, or if the player just became bored and went on to another game. This approach has persisted because there was no viable alternative until blockchain tech arrived in this form, and revolutionised the industry.

Players may genuinely own and manage what they buy, acquire, or make by creating in-game goods, which can be translated to NFTs. It's about more than simply proving your character's accessory is irreplaceable. Consequently, they may be treated as a commodity, and these goods may be purchased and sold on secondary marketplaces, transferred across games. This leads to the players retaining the value they invested in them in the first place.



CryptoKitties

Cryptokitties: A popular marketplace to sell collectable digital kittens

EMPOWERING DIGITAL ARTISTS AND ENGAGE COMMUNITY INTERACTION

Skins have become digital art for video games. NFTs might allow digital artists who wish to sell such creations. They offer the critical component of scarcity to help artists establish financial value for their work. Scarcity is one of the reasons card collectors spend millions of dollars for a piece of cardboard or why sneakerheads swoon over limited-edition releases.

It encourages fans of the game to involve themselves and make a special edition of in-game merchandise that may even give birth to a new generation of digital artists. It would also increase the engagement amongst the members of the community with in-game merch featuring meta-jokes, memes and



Riot approves. (They made this :3)

pop culture. The ability to contribute to the game would give the players a sense of connection to a community.

NEW AVENUES FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH INFLUENCERS

Subscribers and paid memberships from their followers are significant sources of revenue for streamers. Fans typically pay $5 a month, while streamers make $2.50 per month on average per subscriber. As a result, streaming is a high-intensity job with the necessity of hundreds of subscribers to keep a roof over their heads, making it an unlikely choice for a full-time job.

NFTs can assist bridge the gap between streamers and their dream of living sustainable lives with financial security. Streamers can mint NFTs of iconic moments from their streams, be it an impossible feat achieved in a game or an iconic moment. This also provides an opportunity for the fans to collect unique memorabilia instead of the usual perks. The ability to transform the community's inside jokes into NFTs that people can gather and exchange with one another brings a new level of engagement to streaming that is hard to find anywhere else.



Creeper! (Aww man)

NFT POWERED GAME MARKETPLACES

An NFT is essentially proof of ownership and authentication. If game copies, in their entirety, were sold as NFTs, it has the

possibility to pose a lot of advantages for the developers and gamers alike. Selling game copies as NFTs makes it akin to selling physical copies of the games, allowing players to "truly own" their game copies.

NFT based marketplaces could enable players to trade games or even loan them to their friends, similar to trading game CDs or game cartridges. Using NFTs to validate the legitimacy of a game copy will, in the long run, drive down piracy and also curb the use of extreme measures like DRM.



Cryptopunks: Marketplace to empty your wallet for 8-bit gloomy stares

ENRICHING GAME MECHANICS WITH NFTS

NFTs can enrich game mechanics in unconventional ways. The proof of ownership and scarcity makes it a prime candidate for in-game merchandise and fuelling in-game economies. However, depending on the genre of the game, usage of NFTs can be taken a bit further. MMORPGs could have a loot drop system based on an NFT framework, whereby killing enemies guarantees the player some unique loot.

NFTs can be used in an exciting way with games that support user-designed levels. Take, for example, Mario Maker: consisting of two major components: the level designers and the leaderboards . If we were to integrate NFTs into this framework, the game could potentially award specially minted tokens as proof of achievement and a badge of honour to the players and the level designers for achieving certain milestones. Budding game



Axie Infinity, a(nother) POcKEt MONsters game powered by NFTs

design enthusiasts would collect these badges, which could prove very useful when looking for jobs in the industry, while speedrunners would be able to further legitimise their skills and accomplishments.

Currently, the primary focus in the gaming industry is collectables, limiting the functionality of the technology. They aren't really enjoyable, resulting in significant user dropout. We have yet to see a crypto game that can be played in a virtual environment. The gaming industry is valued at more than $100



Capitalism, now in digital flavors

billion and is continuously expanding. NFTs have the ability to both infiltrate and bring new forms of games into current game categories. Because of its inherent features, effective implementation of NFTs in games might result in a massive increase in value exchange, significantly expanding the gaming business. Millions of dollars have already been traded in today's basic crypto games. At current rates, we anticipate seeing more than $1 billion in transactions this year. *



BY **PAREEK "CRUCIATOR" PAARTH**

FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

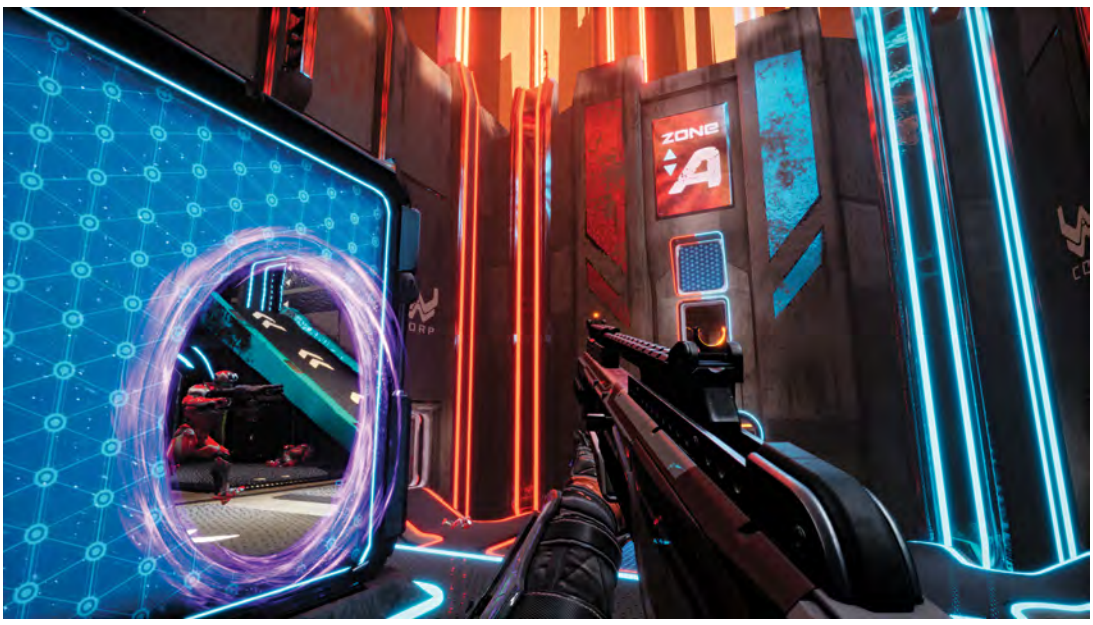
Splitgate is a next level FPS multiplayer game which uses the mechanics of the popular game series "Portal" and the gun mechanics of the Call of Duty franchise. It involves teams of 4 except in a few game modes where it has to be 3 and all of them set in various different maps.

THE GAMEPLAY

Splitgate is one of those fast paced shooters where you can get 360 no scoped out of thin air at any given moment. With its big maps and long ranged guns, you can easily score frags. if you can see the enemy on your screen, you can probably kill them.

After spending multiple nights playing this game, we can frankly say that the game has great potential in the esports world as an up and coming multiplayer shooter.

The tutorial itself gets you well acquainted with the portal mechanics and shows you all the different circumstances under which you could use the portal mechanics. We found this to be a really good way to ease us into the game and make us learn the game from the beginning itself.



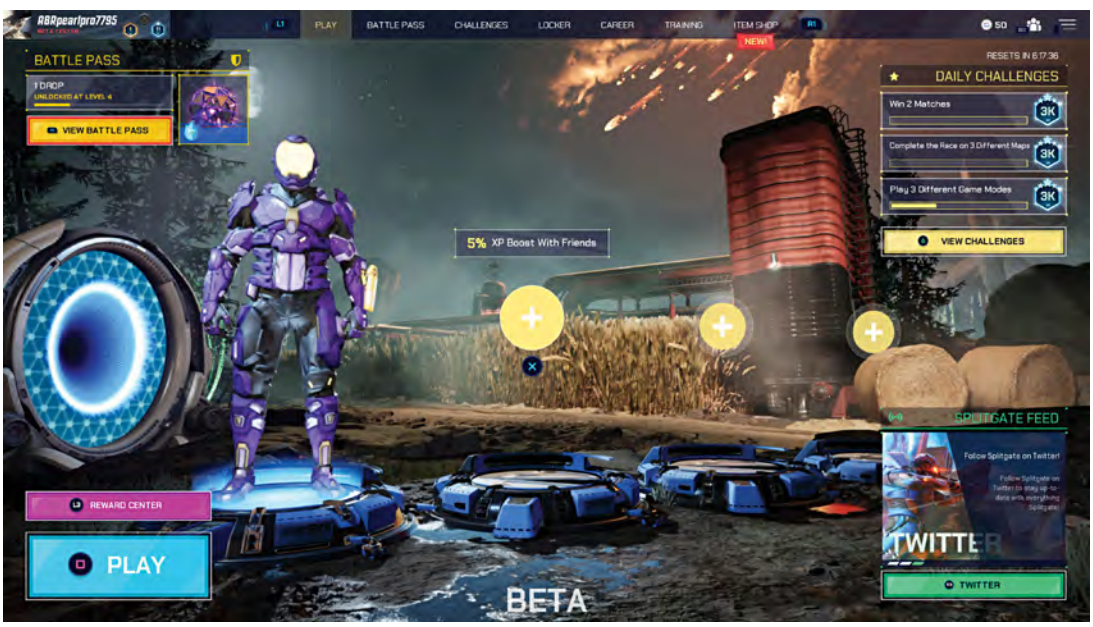
The game also has a jetpack incorporated into each and every player which can be very useful to players having trouble getting used to the portal format – which would be the majority of us.

THE CHARACTERS

Although there are no specific characters in the game which have specific abilities, there's still plenty of looks to choose from. You can obtain said looks from 'Drops' that you get in the game as you level up or move forward in the battlepass.

THE MAPS

Splitgate gives us tons and tons of maps to play on. There



are maps based around various themes such as a forest, a mine, a nightclub, stadiums, and many more!

What didn't feel upto the mark on the maps though was that a few of the maps are a bit too big to traverse through or way too difficult to traverse through and doing it simply on foot



would be a pain and so, that's where the portal mechanics come in handy. You can place one side of the portal on one end of the map and open another wherever possible in order to get to that earlier point.

You could also use your jetpack to traverse quickly but portals would still be the fastest way to get from one point to another plus it makes for great trickshots and who doesn't want those sweet sweet clips amirite?

THE GUNS

Splitgate provides you with a decent arsenal of weapons. From a gun similar to CS:GO's Scout, to one like Valorant's Bulldog which has burst fire.There's a total of 12 different weapons you can use in the game, each one has a different use and you can go ahead and use any of them but only if you find one to pick up in the map somewhere. Why? Because you can't decide what guns you spawn with.(or at least we haven't figured out how to do it yet). Each gun obviously has its own different skins in the game which can be earned through in-game achievements much like CODM in which if you achieve a certain few

kills then you unlock a skin for that particular gun which is your trophy to show off to everyone you play with. From randoms to your closest friends who play the game. You can obviously buy skins for the guns as well from the in-game shop using split-coins from the shop by either grinding in-game or simply spending your hard earned money on in-game content. The choice is yours to make.

THE GAMEMODES

Splitgate brings you all the gamemodes you could ever ask for in its beta itself which is a really commendable job done by the development team. From team Deathmatch to Domination, to King of the Hill i.e. Hardpoint, Splitgate has it all.

Here's a list of all the gamemodes that the game currently offers:

- **Team Deathmatch :** Standard Deathmatch rules apply in splitgate as well, you simply need to kill people and each kill counts for one point. First team to score 50 kills/points wins.

- **Domination :** Three points on the map, you need to capture those points in order to score points. The more points you hold on to for as long as you can, the more points you get. First team to 600 points or more points before the timer ends wins.

- **King of the Hill :** Similar to Domination, But instead of three points, there's only one point whose position keeps changing throughout the match with time and the longer you stay inside the point, the more points you get.

- **Free For All :** 6 Players in the arena, the first one to get 25 kills wins, no teams, no factions, only bloodshed.

- **Instagib :** Similar to Free For All, but the players are only equipped with a railgun which takes time to shoot but is a one shot kill gun.

- **Team SWAT :** Similar to Team Deathmatch in every way except for the fact that headshots grant you immediate kills.

- **Shotty Snipers :** Again, similar to Team Deathmatch in every way except that your arsenal is limited to one Sniper and One shotgun.

- **Gun Game :** As we've always seen Gun-Game go around, here in Splitgate as well, We'll be seeing 22 kills with 22 different weapons with the bonus that if you kill someone with a melee kill you take away one level from them.

- **VIP :** one member of your team will be the VIP who will have double the regular health and will always be marked on the map for the enemies to see. First team to kill the VIP 10 times or the team with more VIP kills before the time ends wins.

- **Team Oddball :** You run around with a ball in your hands and try to save it from the opponents. The longer they hold it, the more points they get. The player holding the ball cannot shoot but however, they can hit their opponents with a melee strike which instantly kills the opponent.

- **Showdown :** Two 3-man teams spawn with random loadouts and eliminate all of the enemy team. Players won't respawn until one of the teams gets eliminated completely. Once that happens, the last team standing gets a point.

IN-GAME PURCHASES

Just like any other free to play game out there, Splitgate has things you can buy in the in-game cash shop, like skins/skin bundles or the battlepass which will give you drops or gun skins depending on what the devs include in the battlepass.

One of the best things we liked about Splitgate is that you can get Splitcoins i.e. the in game currency without actually having to pay for them, you'll have to grind for them a bit but it is still possible to get enough splitcoins to buy one of those aforementioned skin bundles or even the

MOAR!

DEVELOPER
1047 games

PUBLISHER
1047 games

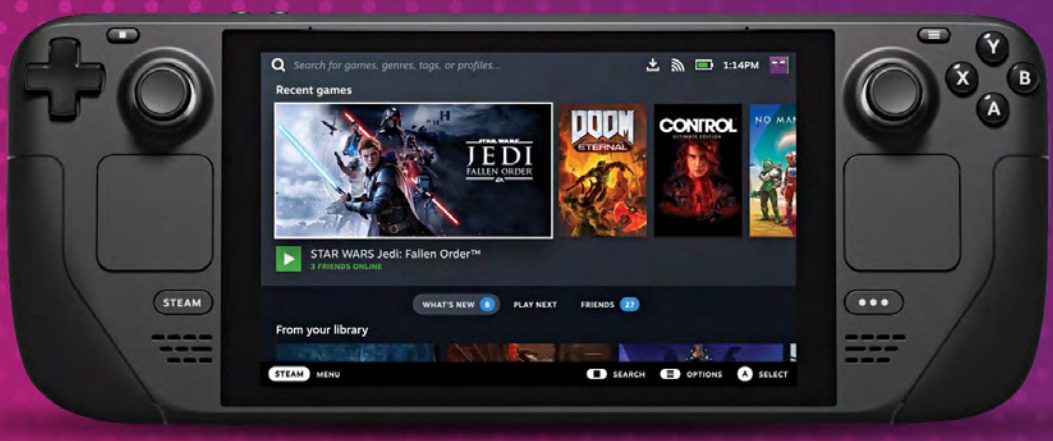
PLATFORMS
PC, PS4, PS5, XBOX ONE, XBOX SERIES S AND X

PLAYED ON PC

PRICE
F2P

battlepass without having to spend anything but your time, which honestly is a great way to reward your players.

Overall, we'd say Splitgate is a game which has great potential in the future and considering the game's popularity just in its indefinite beta, it sure seems like it's going to be a big part of the gaming industry like Apex Legends or Overwatch. *



EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE VALVE STEAM DECK

You have questions, we have answers

BY **YETNESH DUBEY**

FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

Valve dropped a bomb on the entire gaming industry yesterday by revealing its first handheld gaming device, dubbed the Steam Deck. What is it? What are its specifications? Is it a gaming console or PC? People have a lot of questions regarding the Valve Steam Deck. This is why we have compiled a list of some of the most important Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) to help you know more about the Valve Steam Deck.



What is the Valve Steam Deck?

The Steam Deck is a small form factor, portable and handheld full-fledged gaming PC. It has an AMD APU and runs on SteamOS 3.0. For the uninitiated, it is an Arch-Linux based operating system. SteamOS was first released in December 2013. Users can also uninstall the Steam OS and install Windows instead. Inside the box, users will find a power adaptor, a carrying case and the Valve Steam deck handheld gaming PC.

Valve Steam Deck Specifications

Powering the Steam Deck is an AMD APU (Accelerated Processing Unit) which incorporates a CPU and a GPU on a single die. Valve Steam Deck uses a Zen 2 based 4-core 8-thread CPU

running at a clock range of 2.4 to 3.5GHz (up to 448 GFlops) and an 8-core RDNA 2 GPU with 2 compute units running between 1.00 to 1.6GHz (up to 1.6 TFlops). Valve Steam Deck uses 16 GB of LPDDR5 RAM (5500 MT/s).

Valve Steam Deck uses a 7-inch 720p LCD screen with 400 nits of brightness and a 60Hz refresh rate. As per the official description, it is an "optically bonded LCD for enhanced readability." It also has an inbuilt ambient light sensor. Steam Deck weighs about 669 grams, which is similar to holding three 6-inch smartphones at once.

Steam Deck gamepad

The Steam Deck gamepad consists of two joysticks similar to a PlayStation controller, a D-pad, A, B, X, Y buttons, four triggers, a built-in gyro sensor and four additional user-customisable buttons. It also comes with two trackpads that essentially work as a mouse to provide pinpoint accuracy. According to IGN's preview of Steam Deck, the trackpad worked great even in fast-paced FPS titles like Doom Eternal.

Valve Steam Deck variant and price explained

Valve Steam Deck is available in three different options for internal storage - 64 GBeMMC variant for $399 or Rs 29,770,



256GB NVMe SSD version for $529 or Rs 39,470, and 512GB high speed NVMe SSD variant for $649 or Rs 48,423. All models include a high-speed micro-SD card slot for storage expansion.

The only difference between these three models is in terms of storage capacity and read/write speed. Excluding the base variant, users will get an exclusive community profile bundle and the top-spec version will get an exclusive carrying case and a premium anti-glare etched glass. Everything else is identical.

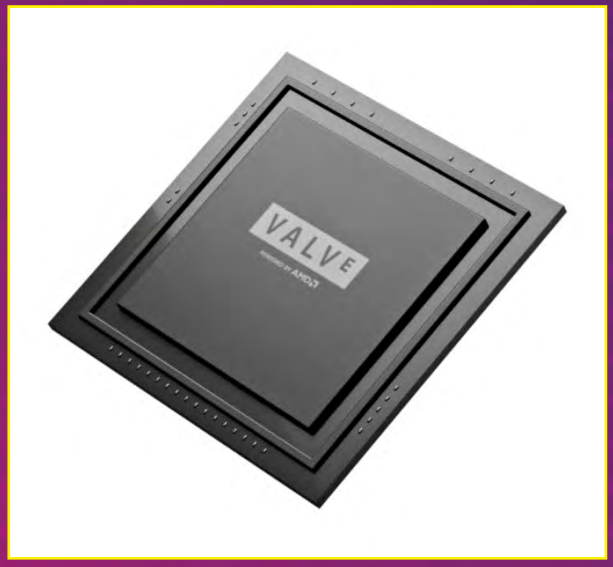
Valve Steam Deck connectivity options

The Steam Deck features Bluetooth 5.0 support for controllers, audio equipment and other accessories. It features no 5G or LTE support and only has built-in dual-band WiFi. It also has a micro-SD expansion slot with support for SD, SDXC, and SDHC cards.

Valve Steam Deck also has a 3.5mm headphone jack for headphone/mic and a USB Type-C USB 3.2 Gen 2 port for external displays and controllers. The display port can power an 8k monitor @60Hz or 4k @120Hz. Ryan McCaffrey of IGN tested his AirPods with the Steam Deck and they worked absolutely fine.

Multiplayer on Valve Steam Deck and controller support

Steam Deck's Online multiplayer works just like a PC. You need internet connectivity to play Online and that's about it. To make voice chat easier, the Steam Deck comes with a built-in mic.



For offline multiplayer, users can easily connect to Bluetooth enabled control-

lers like PS5 Dual-sense or Xbox controllers. The Steam Deck also comes with four reprogrammable buttons on its back.

How's the battery life of Valve Steam Deck

Steam Deck's battery life will depend on the type of game you're playing and its graphical setting. During official testing, the Valve Steam Deck returns 5 hours of battery life while running Portal 2. The handheld's developers pointed out that battery life lasted 6 hours when they played at a 30FPS cap.

Can users change in-game graphical settings in Valve Steam Deck

Yes. Any graphical option that's available in any game on a PC will be available in the Valve Steam Deck. Also, every game will come with pre-tuned graphics settings that are best suited for the Steam Deck.

Valve Steam Deck real-life performance



The Valve Steam deck has around 2 TFLOPS of graphical power, which is equivalent to an Xbox One or a PS4. For Steam Deck though, it is more than enough because it outputs to a low-resolution screen. Valve Steam Deck delivers smooth frame rates at 720p for current-gen PC games like CONTROL, Doom Eternal, Hades, and Death Stranding, according to IGN.

Can users play from the Epic Games Store on the Valve Steam Deck?

Yes. Users can download and play games from anywhere on

the internet, including the Epic Games store, just like a PC. Valve is also working on a cloud sync feature to work between your PC and the Steam Deck. You can continue your progress on the handheld device when you move away from the PC. It goes without saying, but your current Steam library will work on the Valve Steam Deck.

It can play every game on Xbox Game Pass available for PC, every PlayStation game on Steam, old console games via an emulator and so much more. It's a PC and can play everything that a PC can.

Will the Valve Steam Deck support mods?

Mods are a big part of PC gaming and the Valve Steam Deck also supports them without any caveats. It also supports every emulator that runs on a PC including retro-ARCH, Bluestacks, BlissOS, MeMU etc.

Can I use Valve Steam Deck as a PC for work and productivity, does it have an official docking station?

Yes. You can connect the Valve Steam Deck to a monitor and a keyboard via a USB Type-C dock. Valve is working on an official dock but there is no word on its pricing or launch date. However, Steam Deck's developer suggests that players can use any USB Type-C docking station with ethernet and other important slots and it will deliver the same experience.



Valve Steam Deck launch date and availability

Considering the situation with scalpers, Valve will sell Steam Deck through reservations and it will begin shipping in December 2021 onwards. So if you place a reservation after 10,000 people, you'll get a notification to make a purchase after these many people.

Will we have more iterations of Steam Decks in the future from Valve or from other OEMs?

Valve will create a "Steam Deck 2.0" if the current one succeeds financially. They are also open to provide any information that other OEMs need in order to make a "Steam Deck" like device for themselves. Valve thinks that Steam Deck is a new category in the PC space and it'll most likely continue to grow. *



now.gg
MOBILE CLOUD
GAMING PLATFORM

Mobile gaming just one click away

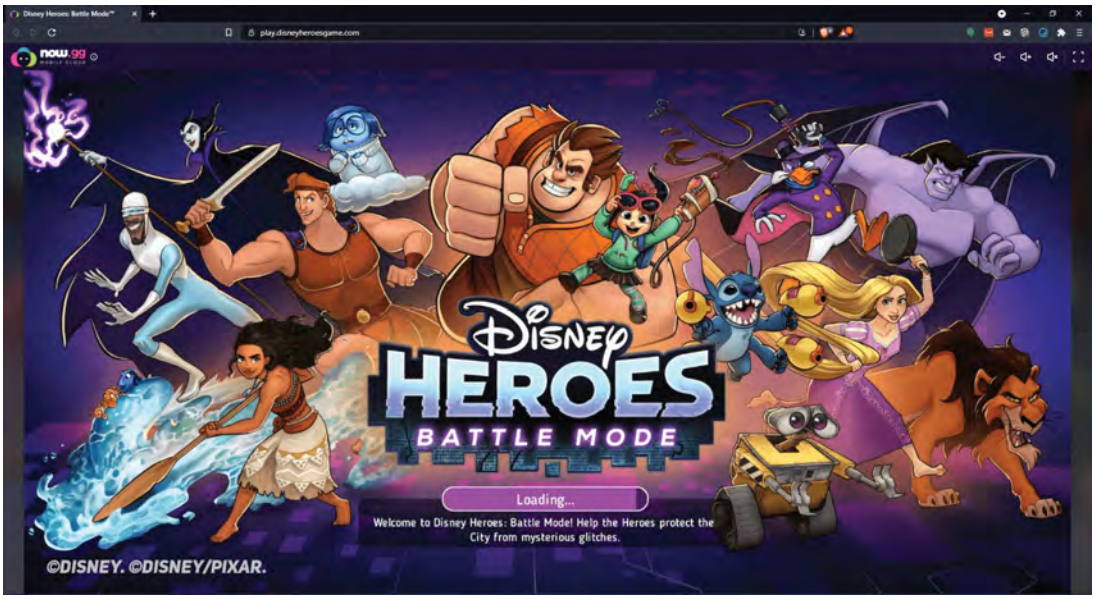
BY **MANISH "TRIGGER-HAPPY" RAJESH**
FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

Now.gg is a new platform-as-a-service, and sister company to Android emulator Bluestacks. Now.gg is a mobile cloud platform, meaning through now.gg, games would be accessible via any mobile device, regardless of hardware specs. That's not all though, while you no longer have to worry about specs or storage, you would also not have to worry about regional constraints, and have access to games that would otherwise be inaccessible in your country. All that would matter would be the speed of your internet connection.

With all that being said, let's take a closer look at what now.gg has to offer.

ACCESSIBILITY

One of the best features of now.gg is its accessibility. Cloud gaming as a whole is yet to fully take off, but we know for a fact that it works, and can work pretty well. The majority of the world uses low to mid-end smartphones, which would hamper their gaming experience. Mobile games are starting to become more intensive and take up a lot more space, a solution where you can easily bypass these crutches is a game changer. Which is what now.gg is setting itself up to be. That solution.

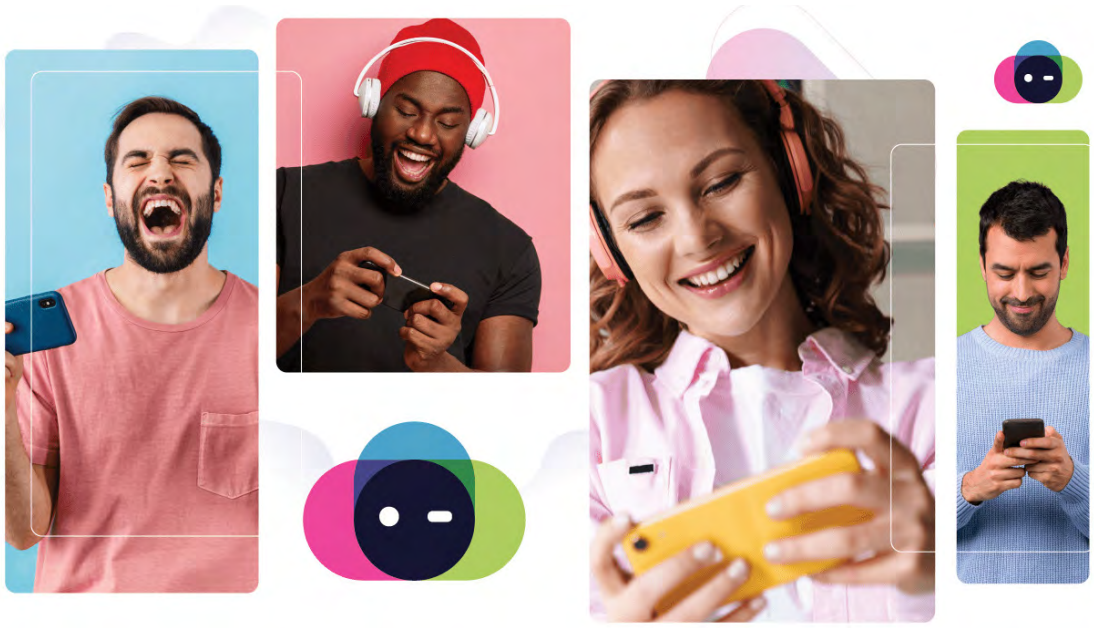


With it being a cloud platform and all that, now.gg streams the game to your device in real-time, without any local downloads, and at the highest possible graphic settings, depending on the speed of your internet we're guessing.

Games are also instantly shareable via now.gg; gamers can simply share a game they've played or are playing, and others can click on the link and immediately access and start playing that game.

ALL INCLUSIVE

The platform is targeted at game developers as well. Mobiles



are now starting to use Arm-based hardware, which is the same as Arm-based servers that are starting to be used in datacenters. Now.gg is powered by its own proprietary distributed Android stack on Arm servers, NowCloud OS. This helps existing Android apps easily make the transition to the cloud, and gives developers an easy way to host their game and make it accessible globally with a link. Of course, as with anything that uses a cloud platform, old or new, and possibly in the future, even games that support other mobile OS, there should be no compatibility issues.

MONETISATION



Plenty of mobile games have monetisation within them, and India as a whole is not too fond of using credit cards as a form of payment. In India, Google Play has introduced other means for payment, including digital wallets, and the India exclusive UPI system, which has seen positive results. Keeping this in mind, now.gg will allow gamers to pay through other digital payment channels as well, on a global scale. This includes pre-paid digital wallets, game top-up ser-

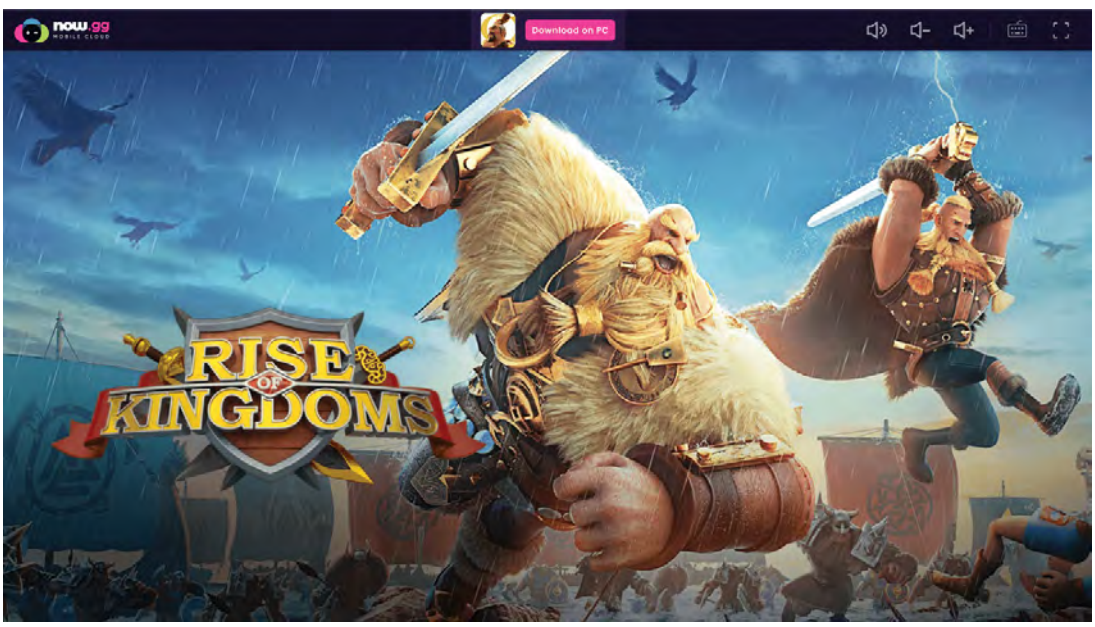
vices like pre-paid cards and such, and even cryptocurrency. This is a win-win for both developers and gamers, the former makes more profit, and the latter get access to more convenient methods of payment.

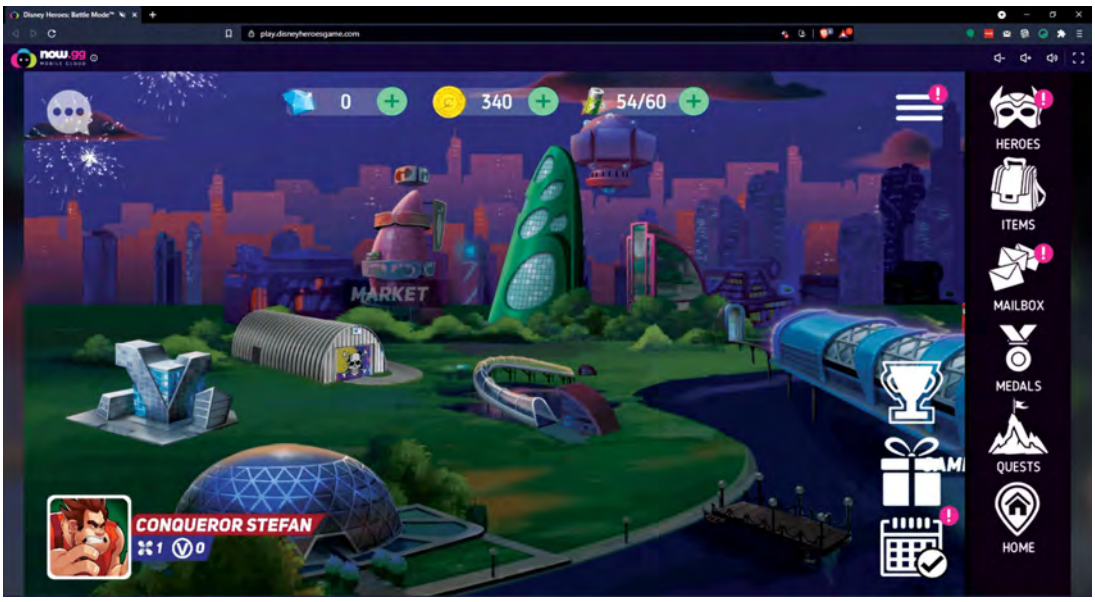
ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF CLOUD GAMING

We've already mentioned some of the benefits for developers, including monetisation and easy distribution, but there's more to it than that. This applies to any kind of game development on the cloud. With the game being developed on the cloud platform, updates are instantaneous globally, you never have to worry about missing an update, or waiting for the game to update when you open it up. You will always have the latest version of the game. This also makes troubleshooting easier for the developer, because they don't have to worry about testing the game in different environments (different hardware specs, OS versions, lite variants etc), there's just one version they need to worry about. For gamers this means less down-time on the games you love, and for the developers this means less time where people aren't playing your games, and possibly paying you.

MORE GAMES OTW

As of right now, ten game companies already use the platform. These include the likes of Plarium, PerBlue, Lilith Games,





Nexon, Perfect World, Scopely, and Smilegate. We gave the platform a whirl and found the experience to be pretty similar to playing a mobile game on an emulator on PC. We didn't face any issues with performance or gameplay. With a solid roster of companies already behind the service, and a fairly decent line-up of games already available to play on the platform, we definitely see more developers adopting the cloud platform in the near future. *

HUMANS TOGETHER, STRONG

You'll want to grab a buddy for these games

BY MANISH "TRIGGER-HAPPY" RAJESH
FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN



IMAGING BY ANIL VK

When we think of multiplayer or online games we usually think of games like CSGO or Dota, or even MMOs like World of Warcraft. Gone are the days when multiplayer was good old local split-screen gaming, or simply friends hanging out and playing games together on a single couch. What we've got here are co-op games that you can boot up and play with your friends, without actively needing to compete against them or other opponents. That means none of the games on this list are PvP games, or at least, they weren't created with the intention of being PvP games. It's all you and your buddies vs the world. So let's get cracking!

PORTAL 2

The (often) undisputed king of co-op games, Portal 2, is a masterpiece. The portal-based puzzle game was pretty fantastic, but then they added another player and doubled everything, now it's double the fantasticness. The game was confusing enough with two portals, with four well, reality starts warping. There's plenty of variety in the puzzles, with pretty much all of them requiring co-operation of some kind or the other. Of course, that doesn't mean flawless co-operation is what ensues afterward. There's going to be plenty of sabotag-



ing going around, the fun kind of course. However, both parties have to make it to the exit to succeed, and communication is often key to make that happen. The characters and their personlities are great and are one of the many reasons this game is considered a masterpiece. Portal 2's co-op experience is the kind that only comes around once, and if you haven't experienced it yet, you're really missing out.

WARHAMMER: VERMINTIDE 2

Left 4 Dead 2 and Warhammer: Vermintide 2 are very similar co-op experiences, in Left 4 Dead you face off against



hordes of undead zombies, in Vermintide you face off against, well, a tide of vermin. In both games, you've got different kinds of enemies that need to be dealt with differently. While Vermintide may initially come across as a L4D knock-off, it's got a lot going for it. The enemies – them humanoid rat looking things, aka, vermin – are a lot smarter than their undead counterparts in L4D. This makes fighting them more challenging, and fun. The game has five different classes, each with their own abilities and weapons, and working together provides the best results. There's a lot more variety in enemies as well, with a nice sprinkling of bosses and swarms of enemies to keep things fresh. Plus, the game's melee combat is pretty fantastic. The best part, you need zero knowledge of the Warhammer universe to get into the game.

OVERCOOKED 1 & 2

Overcooked and Overcooked 2 are both (unrealistic) kitchen simulators that are a lot of fun for the 2-4 players/cooks playing, and not so much fun for the poor customers waiting on their food. The goal of the game is pretty simple, you've got food orders to complete which require you to prepare and combine certain ingredients. In order for that to work, everyone needs to do their part ASAP, like a well-oiled machine. Yeah, that's never happening.



Overcooked keeps things interesting by constantly throwing obstacles your way. Obstacles in a kitchen? We see you asking. Well, the kitchen layouts are constantly changing depending on the level you're playing. Heck, they change even during levels. They're designed to ensure that you're constantly stepping on each other's toes, and sometimes whole sections of the kitchen can become inaccessible! Think on your feet and beat the chaos, don't let your customers leave unhappy.

VISCERA CLEANUP DETAIL

Viscera Cleanup Detail is a unique game right from its premise. Imagine this, the protagonist has just made their way



through the level, with a pile of corpses behind them, broken everything they possibly could for loot and whatnot, and have now moved on to the next level. Enter the Viscera Cleanup crew, who need to clean the level up before the next player passes through. Now imagine a crew of up to 32 players trying to work together to clean up the level. Hint: no cleaning gets done. What you do get however, is a lot of fun and chaos. Cleaning entails mopping up the blood, incinerating body parts lying around, refilling potion containers etc. Just know that things never go according to plan. There will always be someone knocking over a bucket of bloody goop all over the place, and someone else walking right over it and tracking bloody footsteps everywhere. Sigh.

IT TAKES TWO



Hazelight is no stranger to making co-op games (check out A Way Out), and their latest, It Takes Two is their best yet. It's so good in fact, we rated it one of the best co-op games you can play today. Some of the games on this list can be played solo (but they're no fun alone), but It Takes Two, well, takes two. There's no two ways about it. The game features a heartfelt story but really, it's the fantastic co-op gameplay that you want to play it for. The puzzles are great, with plenty of variety, featuring a solid mix of working together, and friendly competition constantly keeping things fresh. The best part is you don't even need to buy two copies of the game to play, every copy comes with a free friend pass for player two!

DEEP ROCK GALACTIC



Deep Rock Galactic is a game about space dwarves who enjoy mining asteroids for shinies, while simultaneously blasting critters who probably want to eat them. The goal is simple, a group of dwarves land on an asteroid. Said dwarves then fill their pockets with the materials they've mined and now need to hightail it to the pickup point within the time limit or get left behind and eaten by the critters.

We mentioned in our review for Deep Rock Galactic that it was a co-op game first, and everything else later. This is because your enjoyment goes up tenfold when you play this game with a group of friends. The game is designed so that you excel when you've got multiple people in the party, all fulfilling

different roles with the different classes available in the game. The game forces you to adapt and think on your toes as you attempt to navigate the asteroid, mining your way through a 3D and fully destructible environment. Oh and of course, the adrenaline rush you and your friends experience when you need to rush to the pick up point is something not many games on this list can provide.

MONSTER HUNTER WORLD

The first "mainstream" Monster Hunter game, Monster Hunter World is the most accessible of the lot, and comes with a lot of QoL features, and guidance for newer players, that the



previous Monster Hunter games don't have. This is a game about hunting monsters, and hunting monsters is serious business; learning about them, the ecosystems they live in, crafting all the stuff you'll need to begin your hunt etc. Bring friends along to quadruple the fun, and the reward. The game is designed to be a co-op game, as can be seen by some of the weapons in the game which are designed to be support oriented. But it's not just the hunting you'll be doing together, once you've teamed up, you'll all meet up in the tavern, enjoy a nice meal together, prepare for your hunt together and head out together to take down your target. It's a hard game to get into, but it's definitely worth the effort.

HUMAN FALL FLAT

When Human Fall Flat first dropped on Steam, it was a slightly amusing, physics-based puzzle platformer featuring blob-like characters that you played to maybe pass time for a bit – and then promptly forgot about. Then, the developers decided to add co-op and there was no going back. This included both two-player local co-op and up to eight players online. If you've played the game then you know how chaotic things can get. And it's the good kind of chaotic, trust us. The goal of the game is simple, get your blobs towards the exit of the level. Getting there is where all the fun – and chaos – lies. Simple tasks like climbing onto ledges and jumping off can be a challenge in Human Fall Flat, adding other players to mix can only



make things harder, or easier, depending on your friends. It's probably the former for 90 percent of everyone playing the game. Work together to figure out how to conquer the levels, or sneakily sabotage your friends and pawn off the blame.

BORDERLANDS 2 & 3

We had a blast playing Borderlands 2 co-op back in the day, and the same can be said about Borderlands 3 as well. The first Borderlands not so much. Now while we can debate which is better between Borderlands 2 and 3, the co-op experiences in both are fantastic. Possibly even better in Borderlands 3, where they've added a bunch of QoL features such as difficulty scal-



ing, instanced loot drops and whatnot. In addition to that, both Borderlands 2 and 3 feature a bazillion guns – with whacky personalities, and legs even – and plenty of chaotic fun. There's a nice variety in classes and within classes too, with many different play styles that you can opt for. Two people playing the same class might be rocking completely different builds. This is a fantastic FPS game to dive into, made even better with friends to join in the chaos.

STARDEW VALLEY

Stardew Valley is a relaxing game, all about escaping the world and hanging out in a farm. With the multiplayer update, you can now bring friends along to hangout with you. Unlike



most of the games on this list, there's no challenge or objective here, everyone can do their own thing, or work together if they so please. The game is plenty good on its own, and feels alive even when playing alone. Adding more people to the mix just multiplies that feeling, and adds a whole new dimension to the already charming game.

PAYDAY 2

Payday 2 is all about pulling off the perfect heist. Imagine this, a group of four players set up for a heist, prepared with a plan, an exit strategy, the works. The time has come, you've arrived at the location, you split up and within seconds someone or the other fudged up and now you've got every police officer in the area after your arse.

At this point, the game's more like Vermintide or L4D, where you're dealing with hordes of cops, rather than a stealth/precision game. As you play, you advance through skill trees until eventually you might be at a point where you could possibly pull off at least one successful heist. Until that day comes though, you're hooked just by the thought of it.



DIVINITY: ORIGINAL SIN 2

Divinity: Original Sin 2 is a great RPG, and it becomes even greater when you bring a friend (or three) along. Divinity: Origi-



nal Sin 2 handles multiplayer in a unique way, your friends aren't simply joining you in your story, everyone's in their own story at the same time. And they don't necessarily have to be your friends (in-game we mean). Maybe their character hates your guts in the game, and they'll do everything they can to secretly sabotage you, including killing an important NPC you might need to talk to in the future. The possibilities are endless, and the game gives you the freedom to keep it that way. This unique approach to co-op gameplay makes Divinity: Original Sin 2 a brilliant game to play and experiment around in with friends. Or people you really want to annoy.

DIABLO 3



Diablo 3 is a massive game with boatloads of content and all of it can be enjoyed from start to finish with 3 other friends. This is a masterclass in ARPG, with tons of replayability thanks to the different classes available. All you and your friends need to do is decide on the class you're going to play and then jump in and start decimating your enemies. At lower difficulties it's mindless mashing, but as your crank up the difficulty, planning becomes essential and roles become important. If you're looking for a similar experience, albeit, free to play, check out Path of Exile, which is also a pretty fantastic ARPG, which can be played from start to finish with your friends if you so please. The co-op elements in PoE aren't quite as rewarding though.

MINECRAFT



Minecraft is one of those games that can fit on 'n' number of game genre lists, it's just that all-encompassing. The highest selling game of all time is many things, and it does all things really well. Anyone can jump in, it's not too difficult, but if you're looking for a challenge, you can still find it in the game. Jump in with a group of friends and work together or do your own thing. Compete for resources or see who makes a fancier base, or set up booby traps for your friends and try to anticipate when vengeance will come. Play the game as an RPG and work your way to the final boss, or just chill and farm. Do your thang. *



FROM BINGE-WATCHING TO BINGE-GAMING

Netflix's expansion plans into gaming are under way

BY **PATRICK GAWANDE**

FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

Lockdown across the world brought difficulties for people and businesses; however, Netflix saw a surge in the number of subscribers. According to a BBC report, Netflix reported almost 16 million new accounts, all of which were created in the first three months of 2020, nearly double the new sign-ups they saw in the final months of 2019. It makes sense, people were bored at home, which resulted in a spike in binge-watching or bringe-gaming the whole day.

Recently Netflix made an unexpected move, in fact, a big move. Beyond movies and TV shows; Netflix is planning to expand itself into video games, this will be a big push for Netflix. The move ultimately doesn't come as too much of a surprise, Netflix already had binge-watching covered, binge-gaming was next on the agenda.

This is not the first time Netflix has experimented with something. Earlier, Netflix also experimented with interactive programming with the movies such as Black Mirror: Bandersnatch and You vs Wild. This made viewers choose characters' moves, and it also created games based on shows such as



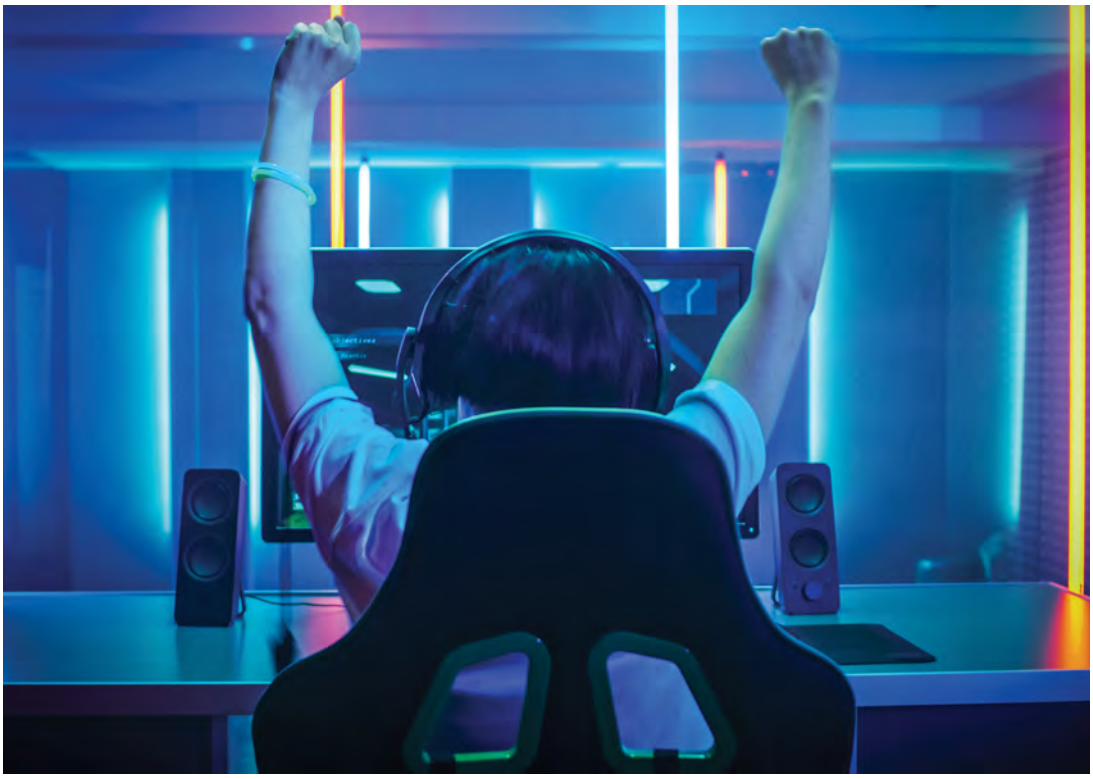
Stranger Things and La casa de Papel (Money Heist). Entering the gaming industry will be a bold move by Netflix; Netflix`s competitors like Disney+, AT&T Inc.'s WarnerMedia and Amazon, do not currently have gaming features within their services.

WHAT IMPACT WILL NETFLIX MAKE ON THE GAMING INDUSTRY?

Netflix did make a bold move, but it is still too early to predict what impression Netflix will make on the gaming industry. Netflix has not yet put forward its plans for the expansion of the gaming service, but it is unlikely for Netflix to become the 'Netflix of gaming' keeping in mind the intense competition from the likes of Sony and Microsoft. However, we certainly expect Netflix to do something out of the box.

WHY IS NETFLIX GETTING INTO GAMING?

According to a report published in Vox, Netflix is describing its move into games as an initial foray — "We think the time is right to learn more about how our members value games," the company said in its quarterly earnings release — but also says it expects to be in gaming for the long haul. "This is a core part of our subscription offering," Greg Peters, the company's chief operating officer, said during the company's earnings call.





For Netflix, it is their first non-video related business. Choosing games as their second business could be because of two factors – According to the report published by CNBC, data and intellectual property are two core concepts of Netflix for success in the video streaming service, Netflix revolutionized streaming video by using streaming video data to recommend what a person should watch and to guide original content production. Another aspect here could be, Netflix wants to compete with Apple, they have a platform called Arcade for games which also provides TV+ service for original video projects however they do charge for gaming but Nextflix reportedly won't be charging extra.

WHO ALL ARE INVOLVED IN THE MAKING?

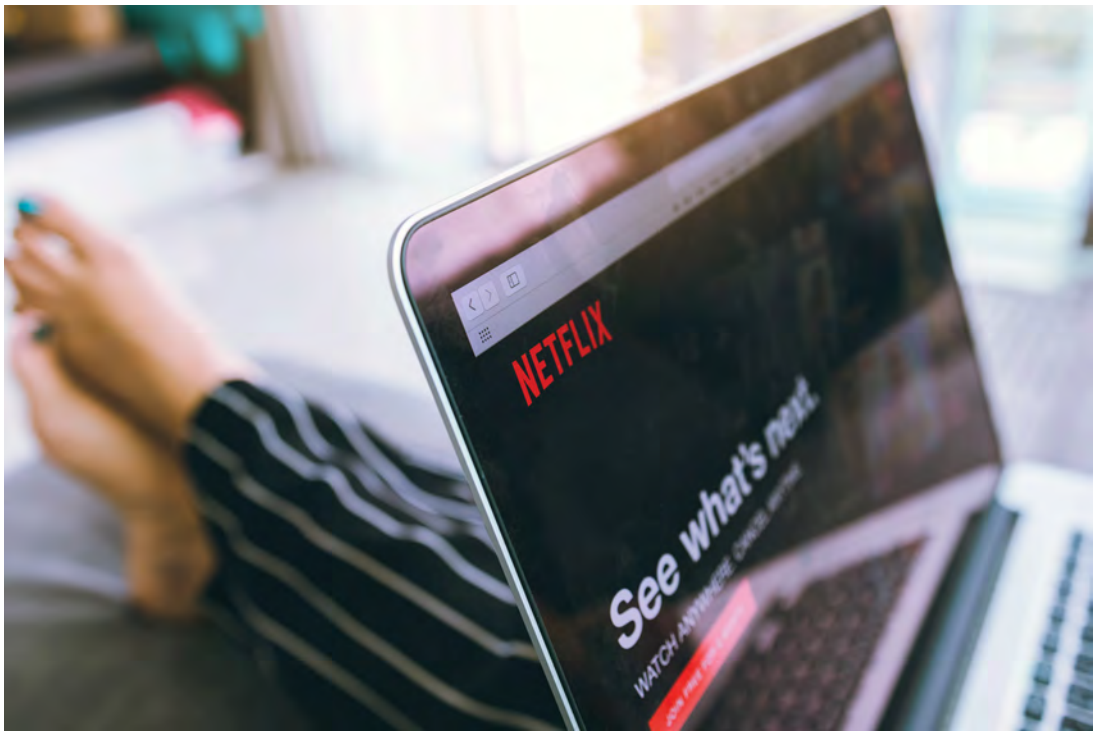
Netflix has hired former Electronic Arts and Facebook executive Mike Verdu as vice president of game development. Verdu previously at Facebook worked with developers to bring games and other content to the Oculus VR headset. There is not much clarity on how Netflix will roll gaming out, they could go with a cloud gaming setup, something similar to what Microsoft, Google, and Amazon work with. Or they could also create something similar to Apple Arcade, which will be worrisome for Apple. Netflix won't be charging extra for gaming, but as this gaming feature will be out next year it will be clear then what



Netflix has in store. Developing games can cost a large sum and this might even impact the company's shareholders.

WHAT WILL CHANGE IN NETFLIX?

Nothing much will be changed in Netflix but what Greg Peters said can give us a glimpse. Netflix will "learn and grow and refocus our investment based on what we see is working" he also added gaming provides "intentionality," which allows users to dictate the characters they want to spend time within different parts of a gaming world. This user-based decision-making



will be taken into account which will help or we can say it will rather guide Netflix to make better games and make creative decisions, and if there is a Netflix-owned character that is frequently used, we might see that character getting featured in some upcoming seasons on Netflix.

"Maybe someday we'll see a game that spawns a film or a series," Peters said. "That would be an amazing place to get to, to really see the rich interplay between these different forms of entertainment."*



DON'T FALL FOR THE HYPE-TRAIN

To hype or not to hype?

BY **KSHIPRA 'FAAFDAAJALEBII' JADAV**

FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

Hype. What is it? Why do we get hyped for video games? How do we know if a game is going to be good to being with? Will they live up to the expectations that the developer of the game has set up for them while announcing the game? To answer these questions and many more, we need to first understand the actual meaning of hype and why video games are actually hyped.

THE FINE LINE BETWEEN HYPE AND OVER-HYPE

In simpler words, we can roughly say that hype means anticipation. The more you hype a game i.e. the more the game becomes anticipated by the audience. Gamers like you or me drool over the thought of finally buying it and playing it on launch day - before everyone else. Sometimes, even non-gamers or the casual gamers might anticipate a game so much that even they want to play the game before everyone else. This is hype. Making people think about your game, talk about your game and embed the thought in their subconscious minds that they want to play the game NO MATTER WHAT.

OVERPROMISE - UNDERDELIEVER

Once we understand what the term 'hype' means, we can work our way towards the term 'over-hype'. To better explain this, let us take the classic example of Cyberpunk 2077. You see, in the case of CP2077, the devs over-promised and over-hyped the game so much that it set very, very unrealistic expectations in the minds of gamers. Not to mentioned these were the people behind the fantastic Witcher III. The first teaser for the game came out on January 11 2013; 8 years ago!

Ofcourse, everybody forgot about the game until they dropped an actual trailer for the game at E3 2018 followed by the famous Keanau Reeves launch at E3 2019.

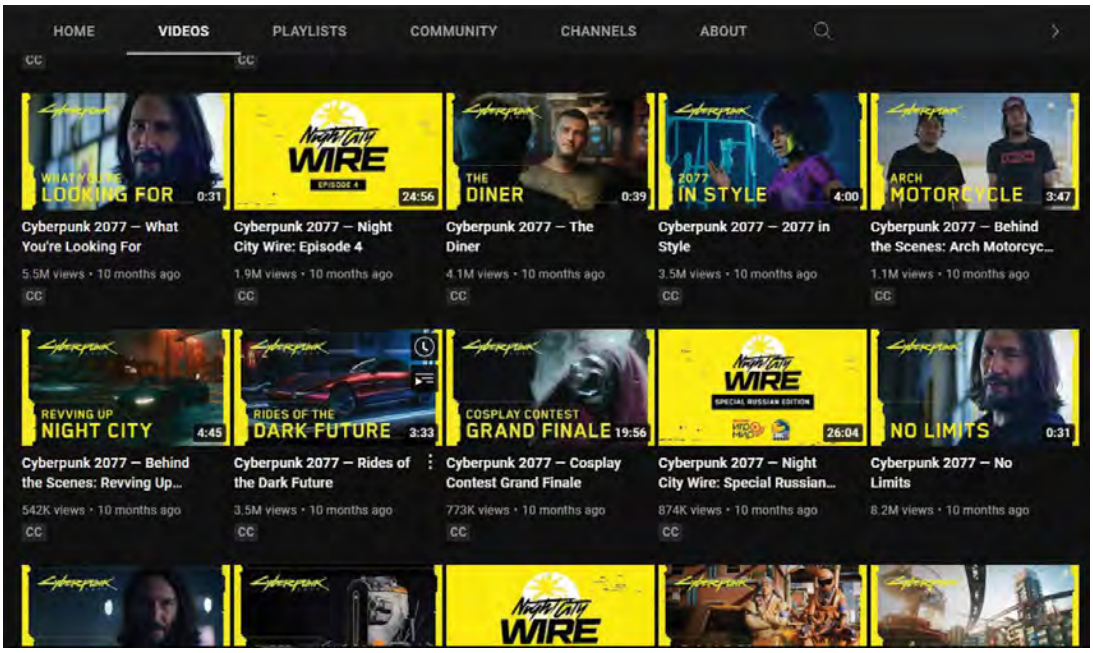


CP2077's first look



You're breathtaking!

Both of these generated enough hype and anticipation in audiences' minds to get them excited for the game. Where the devs really crossed the line was overpromising. If you take a deep dive into past media articles written on CP2077, even before it's release, the devs were promising features that would never see the light of day in the final release. Things like destructible environments, dynamic NPCs, safe houses, etc. were all promised by the devs and were even seen in the trailers but were never actually a part of the final game. Also, if you take a look at CP2077's YouTube channel, you will soon realise that they have a trailer for almost everything in the game.



Every little feature of the game got it's own trailer.

Ofcourse, we are not going to list everything but you get the point. Constantly reminding gamers about how cool your new game is and what features it will have, will obviously create an image of the game in the gamer's mind. An expectation which can only be fulfilled if the gamer gets to play all the stuff that they were excited about. This is why CP2077 has gained a bad repo. Overpromising and under delivering.

HOW TO SELL YOUR GAME - SCAM EDITION

Next we'll take a look at some of the shady techniques used by big game companies for selling their games. It is a given in the industry that whatever game the big game studios push out, it is GOING to sell. And it is going to sell like crazy. But still, how do they improve their profit margins? How do they sell even more copies of the game? These are subtle but effective techniques used by the game studios.

FIRST DAY SALES

Imagine a game that you've been wanting to play for a long time. It may be a part of an on-going franchise like the Mass Effect series, it may be something like a game you've already played but different like Valorant (and how it's essentially a child of Overwatch and CS:GO) or it may be a standalone game, with a unique story and some unique gameplay elements to it like No Man's Sky. Hence, if you are genuinely excited about the game then chances are that you will buy it on launch day. You can't wait to get a feel and experience of the game that you've been waiting to play for the past X amount of time. Not to mention that several other people are doing the same thing at the same time with you. Sure, the first day playthrough feeling is one of the best feelings you can get while playing the game but the game companies are cashing in this very same feeling. You see, the thing that most people fail to realise is that if a game has just launched, there are literally zero reviews and comments about the game out yet. Everything is just pure speculation and why is that? Well because, sometimes even the reviewers are playing the game at the same time as you. Hence, once they complete playing the game enough to review it, get all the necessary footage, edit it and upload it, it is already too late. Hence, if a game is just straight up bad, you have no way of knowing that it is bad because nobody told you that it is bad!



Big companies on the first day of their game's launch

This is the vicious trap of "First Day Sales" and it makes up for a MAJOR portion of the revenue made by the game in the overall sales figure.

EMBARGO DATES

The above points serves as a perfect segue to the next point which is "Embargo Dates". Although the word "Embargo" is thrown around more in the tech and the mobile community, sometimes it applies to games too. If you didn't know, Embargo dates are given to YouTubers and content creators to release their take on the company's product. As YouTubers and content creators, the company sends them a sample of their product before its actual release date. This allows them to perform the necessary tests and do "their thing" with the product and create a video accordingly. Once the full review is ready, the creators will have to wait till the embargo date to show it to the public. Coming back to video games, a pristine example of game companies misusing the embargo dates to their benefits is the case of the infamous Cyberpunk 2077 and CD Projekt Red's dominance. Even though the YouTubers were given beta keys and early access to the game, they were not allowed to release footage of the game till the embargo

date and were only allowed to show footage given to them by CD Projekt Red.

TECH DEMOS!

Basically, tech demos are the game company's way of showing "how revolutionary and mind blowing" their new game would be. But in reality, they're just there to show off and brag about how the game being released is the prettiest looking out there and nothing even comes close to it. This of course, is to fool the audience into buying it only for them to realise that to run the game on the "pretty mode", they will have to sacrifice the framerate to go as low as 30 or even 24 FPS or just dial the graphic settings down to Low or Medium. For example, Crysis was actually a tech demo for the CryEngine, it was designed to be pretty, not optimised.

HOW TO RUIN A RUNNING FRANCHISE

The above paragraph largely covers standalone games or games that don't belong to any particular franchise. So obviously, the games which are related to a particular franchise have to be better than the standalone games, right? These games have a different type of hype. The expectations. You see, if a video game franchise is successful, the fans will always expect the next game in the franchise to be better than the last

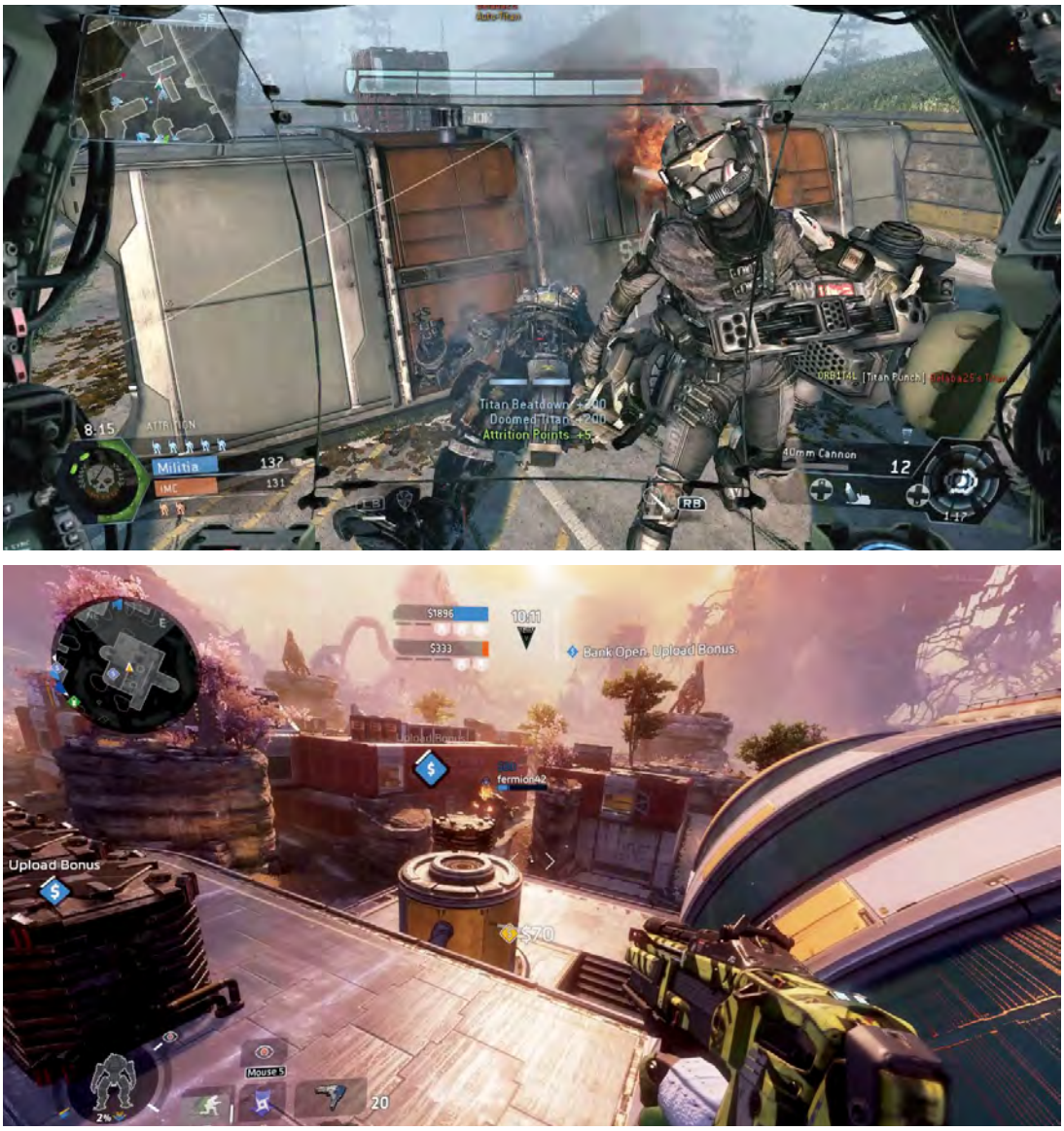


one. Take Call of Duty or Need For Speed or even Halo for that matter. The audience has expected and will continue to expect the next installment to one up the last one. The audience will expect the new one to have an improved story, better graphics, better mechanics and all the good stuff. Sadly, it's not always the case. The legendary video game series Mass Effect suffered from the same fate when Mass Effect Andromeda received negative reviews.

This has two factors in play here.

OVER-EXPECTATIONS

If the previous games of the franchise have been absolute blockbusters then obviously, the audience will expect the followup game to be better than the others but here, people make a big mistake of over expecting from the game. Yes, expecting a good game to be released is fine but setting your expectations so high that nothing can even come close to matching them is definitely going to disappoint you in the long run. Some examples of these games which got much more hate then they deserved are: Titanfall 2. You see Titanfall - the original one was bad and of course, got a lot of backlash due to that, especially because it was very hyped before launch. But the devs actually cared about the series and pushed out a sequel - Titanfall 2 and that game rocked! It was so much better than the original but since it was a sequel to Titanfall, not many people cared about it and many didn't even care to give it a try.



Titanfall 1 vs Titanfall 2

Another game that gets a lot of bad repo is Dragon Age 2. You see, Dragon Age : Origins was a masterpiece and was critically acclaimed by many. Hence it set a benchmark for further installments in the franchise. But when Dragon Age 2 got released, people disliked it simply because it couldn't match up



Dragon Age: Origins, a masterpiece

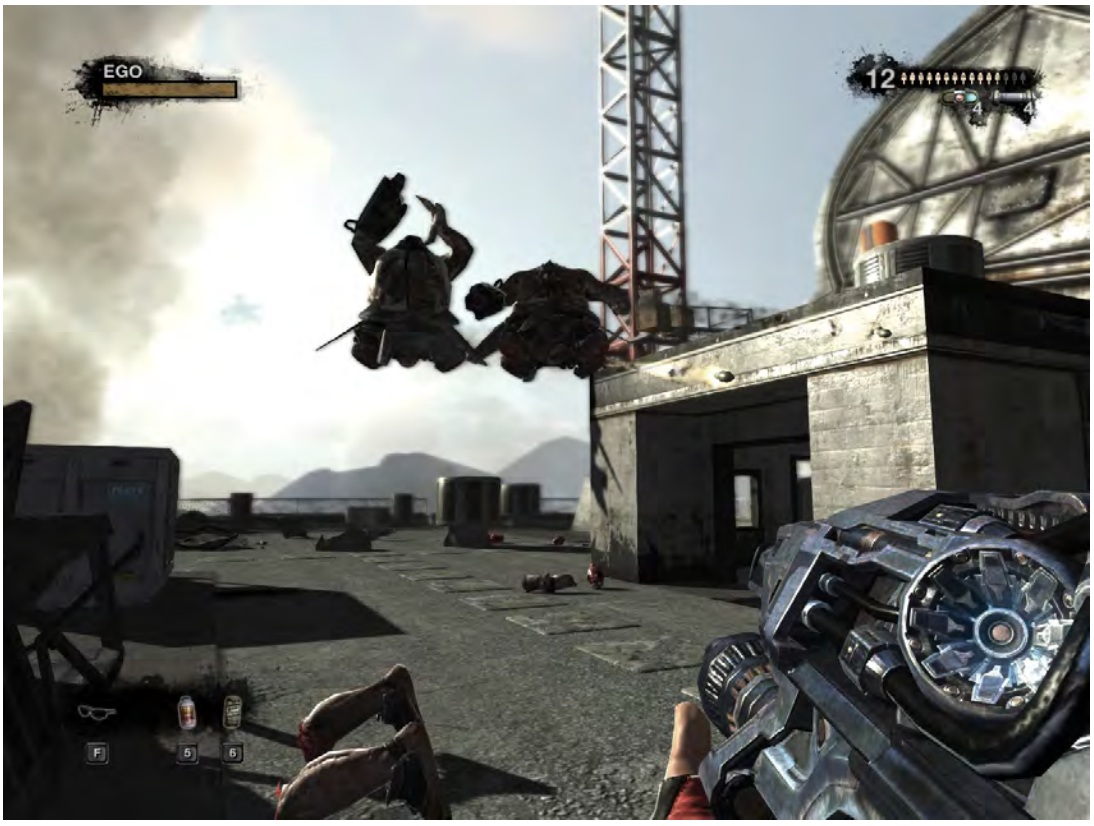
to the bar that Origins had set. Although in Dragon Age 2's defense, if viewed from a standalone perspective, it is still a pretty good game.

IT'S NOT ALWAYS US, IT'S THEM TOO!

Sometimes though, the public is not at fault. It's the devs and the game companies. How? Well, first of all, if you keep a game in production for too long, people are obviously going to overhype it. Let's just take the example of Duke Nukem Forever. That game was in development since 1991 and was finally released in 2011. The game spent 20 years in production! During this time, the game went through multiple teams working on it, the ownership of the game was taken up by another studio and a lot of stuff happened. Finally, when it came out in 2011, it immediately flopped due to its dated graphics, bad humour and honestly, it just wasn't the same badass Duke Nukem anymore.

Sometimes, it is the game studio's fault. You see, it is not common for a game studio to have multiple teams spread

across multiple countries and if a particular studio has made a hit game, it is not guaranteed that it will make another hit game mostly because the other game wouldn't even have been made by the same people that made the first game! The team of the second game might just be halfway across the world. But, many game studios decide not to explicitly separate the teams just because the game will receive an extra push to the audience just because of the name. A game may also turn out to be bad just because sometimes the people incharge just... leave. There have been many cases of people at very high positions



Duke Nukem Forever just didn't hold up to 2011's standards.

leaving their position and the game studio all together. This leaves the team which was working under them quite literally directionless and even if the studio does manage to find a replacement for the one who quit, they might not have the same vision and direction for the game as the earlier one. This clash of vision and direction and lack of motivation too sometimes leads to the downfall of the games.

CONCLUSION

This line taken from a Reddit post sums the whole article perfectly : "The problem is that big game devs like EA and Ubisoft know they don't need to invest in making truly great

games when they can just invest in making mediocre games then put the rest of the money into advertising, making people think it will be a great game."

Ultimately, it's us - the gamers who are being fooled here and it's about time that we get what we pay for. How can we do this? Well, firstly we can be patient. Wait for a few days until the reviews are out. Wait till someone takes one for the team and tries the game out. If you are sure that you will be getting your money's worth, then and only then buy that game. Another thing that you can do is to lower your expectations from big game companies. This is actually happening right now. Square Enix is infamous for having decade-long waiting periods for its games and hence when the studio releases a trailer, people just don't get excited about it. Oh, and DON'T PRE-ORDER GAMES! Let us know some more tricks that you have up your sleeve to escape this corporate trap and actually enjoy the game at – *feedback@skoar.in* *



MOBILE MADNESS

YOU HAVE TO TRY THESE GAMES OUT ON YOUR SMARTPHONE!

BY TEAM SKOAR!
FEEDBACK@SKOAR.IN

Mech Arena

Mech Arena is, as the name suggests, a 5v5 mech shooter game. Mech Arena is developed by Plarium Games Ltd and is still in beta but, amazingly, suffers from less lag and bugs than War Robots, which is another popular mech-type shooter mobile game.

Coming to gameplay, having played other mech shooter games such as War Robots, Robot Warfare and now Mech Arena, this game really has a much higher stability and better performance than the rest of the mech shooter mobile games. The controls are as simple as it gets. You've got two weapons on the mech, one button to fire both the weapons together and two individual buttons to fire the weapons individually. Finally, you have one button to activate the special ability of your mech. There are various categories of Mechs like Tanks, Scouts, Attackers and support, each with varying playstyles and unique abilities. The simplicity of the game is one of the best features of the game.



Each mech has just one special ability, which is far better than War Robots in which each mech has many different abilities and it just gets messy. Each weapon is upgradable to a certain level and yes you also get a companion bot. You can also use the companion bot as the primary mech in battles.

When compared to War Robots, matches in Mech Arena are much shorter, which makes the game more intense and fun to play. The time limit for a match is 5 mins and you can either kill all the enemy mechs or you can capture five territory points around the map and win the battle. There are currently five maps – Neo Hokkaido, Patterson Station, Mesa Verde Annex, Mech Arena and the Mech Verde Facility. In the beginning, you will play against a whole lot of AI mechs as the game is still in its beta state and short of players, however, you will eventually be pitted against real players over time.

Graphics of the game are more vibrant than any other mech shooters we have come across. The lush 3D graphics are enough to keep us playing the game for hours. However, there are some cons too, in the beginning levels you can really boost up your mech's performance by buying upgrades from the store which can be quite unfair. Additionally, there are no rewards for playing with a squad, the rewards are given according to individual performance in the matches. The biggest con or pro, take this as you will, the rewards earned in the beginning are way too much, the XP increases pretty fast. As you keep playing Mech Arena, you earn more valuable items and rare skins.

In conclusion, if you're on the lookout for another mech shooter game, give Mech Arena a try.

LOST Signal

By far, one of the best open world survival games on phones that we have come across. Having played other survival open world mobile games like Don't Starve, Minecraft and GTA on Phone, this game is one of a kind and we have to say, Volcano Force studios have done a wonderful job on the game.

Starting with the storyline of the game, a plane full of passengers crashes on an unknown island and only 2 out of all the

passengers survive and make it to the island, out of which one is your character of choice for the full game. So, when the game starts, you land up on the shore and the game starts; you get some energy from a coconut and you're ready. As you move along, there come mutants with whom you have to fight and survive. The next step is to talk to Jane, who has already built some survival homes.

As the game starts, you get to know the controls and the best thing is the in game perks and controls, it's so widely categorised that you can control even the smallest ability from thirst to the energy of the character. During your journey, gather materials found on the way, like wood, stone and metal to help you



forge the equipment you need to ensure your survival. You also build your house on the camp which has all kinds of machinery to help you forge unique items. The details given to the game are amazing, for example, when you are in the game fighting with the mutants and monsters on the island, your clothes get torn off during the battles and you have to collect the rags from the defeated mutants to sew yourself new clothes.

The best feature of the game is the storyline, and the details given to the game in every way, the customisation really makes this a worthy open world title. Talking about the controls, they are as simple as it can be. There are a lot fewer buttons on the main screen as compared to others.

Graphics of the game are just outstanding, the fights with mutants and the island are realistic, the mechanics of the game are built to make us feel like it's the real world, like when fighting with a mutant, the sound of the weapon whichever you're using is realistic. The only con to the game is the bugs, it's still laggy and has several frame drops during some graphics-heavy scenes, but do keep in mind that the game is in beta.

CollectBits



Locomotive's first original title, CollectBits, is a free-to-play 2D adventure game now available on the play store and app store.

The primary goal of the game is to clean up the "Bits" spread all over the town by other robots. Professional bit cleaner Charo is ordered to clean the town within the time limit set by the mayor of the town. The more bits Charo collects, the more he scores and if he scores enough, he can move on to the next town.

The controls of the game are really simple, in fact there are only three functions, run, jump and throw. A robotic dog named Lucis comes along as the companion of Charo. Charo can throw Lucis to get rid of enemy robots and hurdles while collecting the bits around the town. There are lots of unique enemy robots, some explode, some try to ride over Charo and we have to get rid of them by throwing Lucis at them.

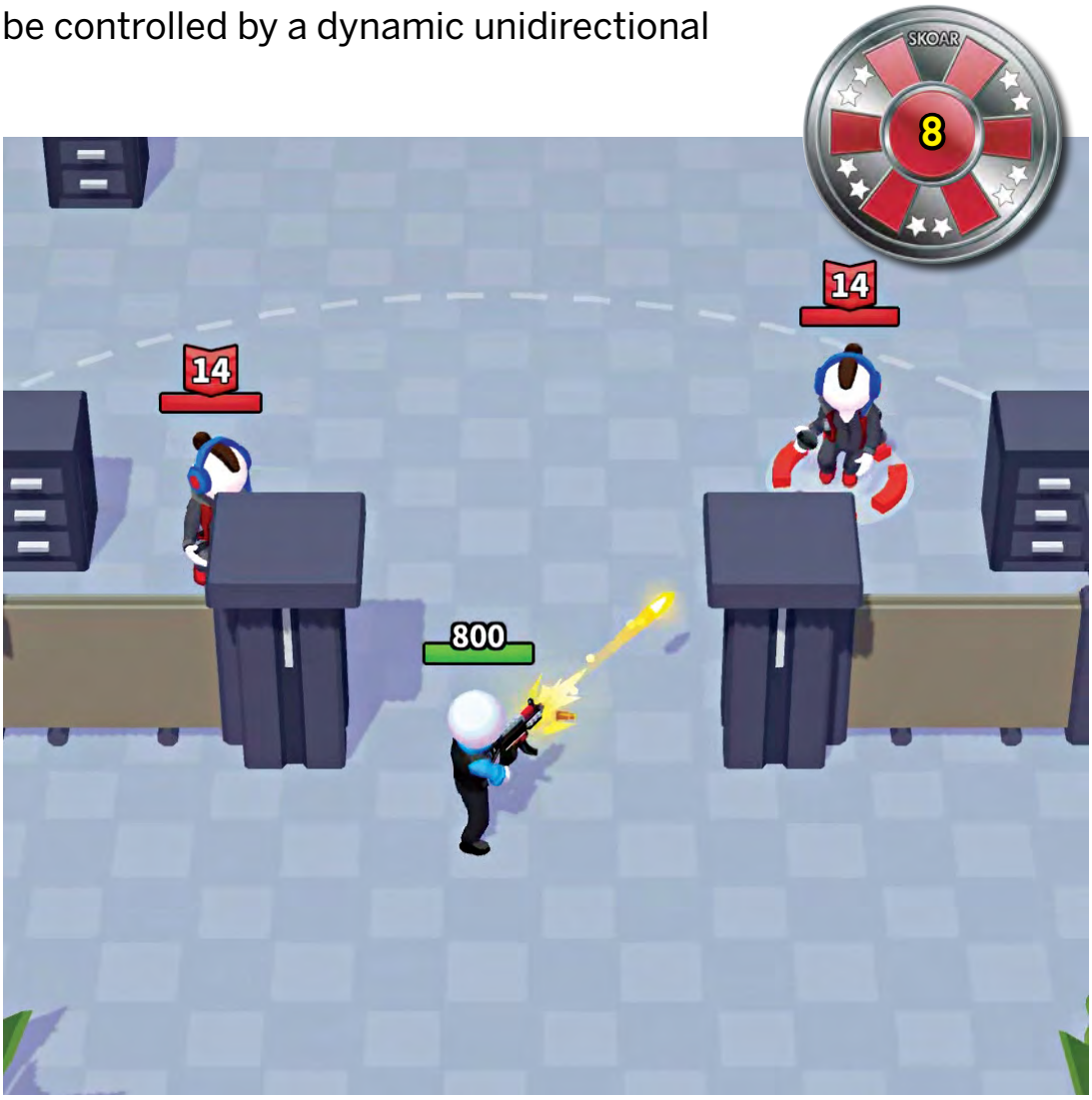
Currently, there are 24 different towns, each with its own unique enemy robots and atmosphere in the game to collect bits from, but the developers have promised to add more as soon as possible.

In conclusion, if you want to play a game to kill time that has psychedelic graphics, give CollectBits a shot.

Squad Alpha

Squad Alpha is a top-down shooter developed by SayGames. The meta for shooters in general is that they're played in landscape mode but Squad Alpha breaks the meta by forcing you to play in portrait mode. The main objective of the game is simple. Kill all the enemies on the level to progress without getting yourself killed in the process.

In the movement department, things are very simple. Too simple actually. The player's movement can be controlled by a dynamic unidirectional



joystick. This means that there is no fixed position for the joystick. It will appear wherever you place your finger. And that's it. There is no jump or crouch or any of those advanced movement tactics.

Coming to the shooting department, thankfully, there are a few options available here. The player is given 4 slots for guns. While playing, the player can choose from any of the 4 guns and the guns will have infinite clips but the number of bullets in one clip will be finite. Hence, if a gun runs out of bullets, the player will automatically switch to the next gun while the last gun reloads. Aside from the guns, there are throwables in the game too - like Grenade and Molotov. Fun fact! The grenade is the most broken mechanic in the game and will probably one shot any enemy that it's thrown at (except for the bosses).

The player will automatically fire the gun as soon as an enemy comes into the range (denoted by a circle with white dotted lines). While trying out the game, we felt like the progression was a bit slow but given the options of customisation and the slow difficulty increase it can be excused. Coming to customisations, there is a lot of stuff to do. You can change which gun you want to take and fill up the slots accordingly. Once you reach a certain level, you will unlock the "salvage" option where you can salvage other guns for parts which can upgrade your current gun. There are options for armor and other gear too. Finally, you can even change the characters once you have enough "character cards".

All in all, Squad Alpha is a must play game if you like shooters without all the blood and gore associated with it. The game has cartoonish graphics and no intrusive ads. The user can CHOOSE to play ads if they want a particular loot-box to open up faster or something but the most annoying part - the automatic pop up ads are disabled here. The game can also be quite challenging once you get to the higher levels which have more tough enemies and different bosses with different abilities of their own and hence these features keep the game from feeling repetitive and boring. The only boring part about the game is the music for a particular stage. After a while, it just starts to feel repetitive and annoying. But the game serves as a great way to pass time and do something challenging.

Marvel Future Revolution

Marvel Future Revolution starts off with the convergence of two planets. The storyline is that A.I.M has built an antimatter bomb to blow up both the planets during the convergence to save their own planet and all the marvel characters are there to stop that from happening. It starts with Starlord saving a lady's life from a collapsing building and not even getting thanked for it. The characters are all introduced one by one while the story moves forward. At last Vision takes the antimatter bomb and uses it in a way to save both the worlds and gets severely injured.At this point is when you choose your hero and start the missions to develop the planets after they have almost been destroyed.



All the characters have their own abilities and power-ups. The controls are simple, one button for each special ability and one to attack, both on the right, and one joystick on the left. Each character has three to four special abilities and one signature move that gives a lot more damage than the rest.

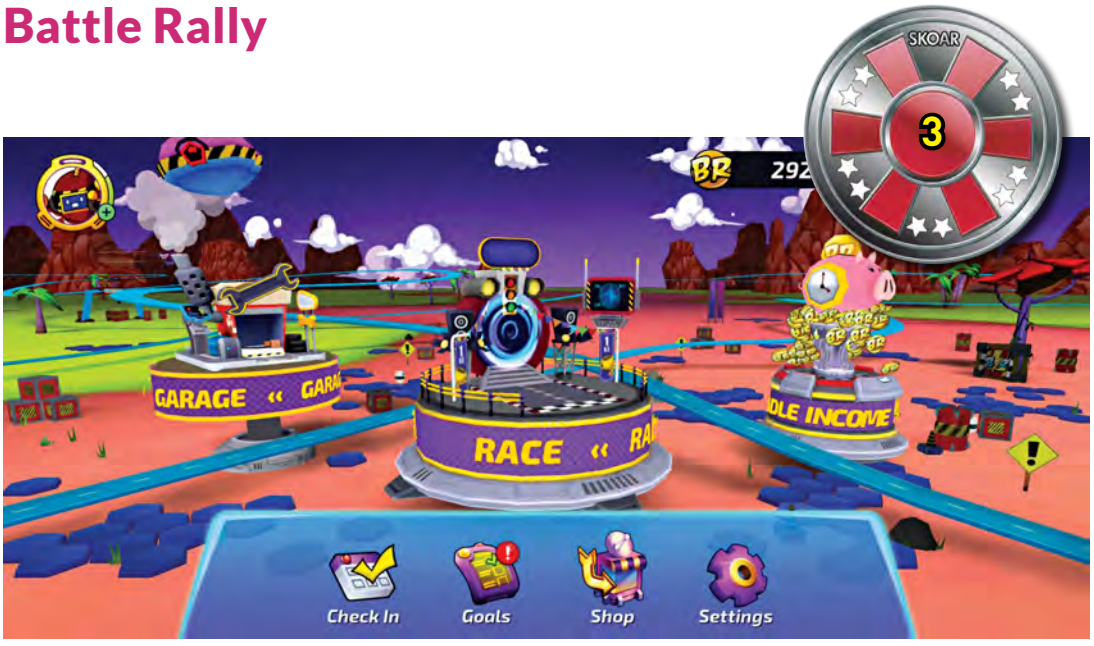
Netmarble built the game using Unreal engine, and the graphics are exceptional. This game is built for phones with upper mid range specs. This is a graphic heavy game, so your phone will heat to some extent no matter how high end it is.

Coming to the gameplay, it is similar to Marvel Avengers on PC. Fight the enemies and complete the missions to move forward in the story and keep upgrading your character. You will

have to choose unique characters for different missions depending upon the mission and for that you will have to keep in mind the abilities of the characters introduced to you when the game started.

They packed this game with action and if you are not a marvel fan, you definitely will be after playing this game.

Battle Rally



Battle Rally is an online racing + shooter game where you are put on a racetrack with 12 other players and you have to win the race. Well, plot-wise, yes - the game is simple. But overall, the game is just a hotchpotch of too many features randomly put together. It is the perfect example for the saying "Too many cooks spoil the broth".

Gameplay wise, the game is just bad. once you hit "Start" you will be put in a random lobby with 12 other people and you need to come first.

Well, the problem is that the tutorial given to you by the game is very superficial. Secondly, the moment you are in the actual race, everything happens so fast and almost all obstacles are so tiny, you don't even notice they're there until you get real close to them.

Also, the game follows a health system i.e. if you loose all of your health before you reach the finish line - YOU LOOSE! Your

screen becomes cluttered with other cars getting hit and trying to get ahead of you. The main problem is that the gameplay is so complicated that the user is just not able to grasp what is going on in front of him/her and for some people, that is a big no no! The game offers you three ways to move and none of them are comfortable to use. The first option is to use two directional arrow keys which are dynamic i.e. they don't have a fixed position. Even Though joysticks are more common, arrow keys are used here which can get pretty confusing sometimes as to move left or right, you don't have to tap the arrow key. You have to slide your finger like you're doing it on a joystick. Second and our least favourite method - the stick. The player is given a stick that slides left to right and of course, it moves the character likewise. The last one is "Tilt" which has no default or customizable settings about the tilt's sensitivity in the settings. You can simply turn the option on or off.

Coming to the characters, there are a TON of characters in this game and each character has its own advantages and disadvantages. There are also special abilities and guns that you can fire with the onscreen buttons.

Apart from that, there is a whole garage where you can upgrade each and every ability of your character and there is a store where you can exchange real life money for in-game currency.

In the graphics department, the game is pretty average. The average bright color palette with cartoonish graphics combined with upbeat funky music that keeps on repeating every 30 seconds.

All in all, we would not recommend you to play this game as it is just a boring and repetitive game with more than necessary elements in it. Sure, the concept of cartoony graphics and racing while killing your opponents sounds good on paper but at the same time, if not implemented correctly, can lead to games like this. *

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