PREVIEW
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PREVIEW
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INTERVIEW
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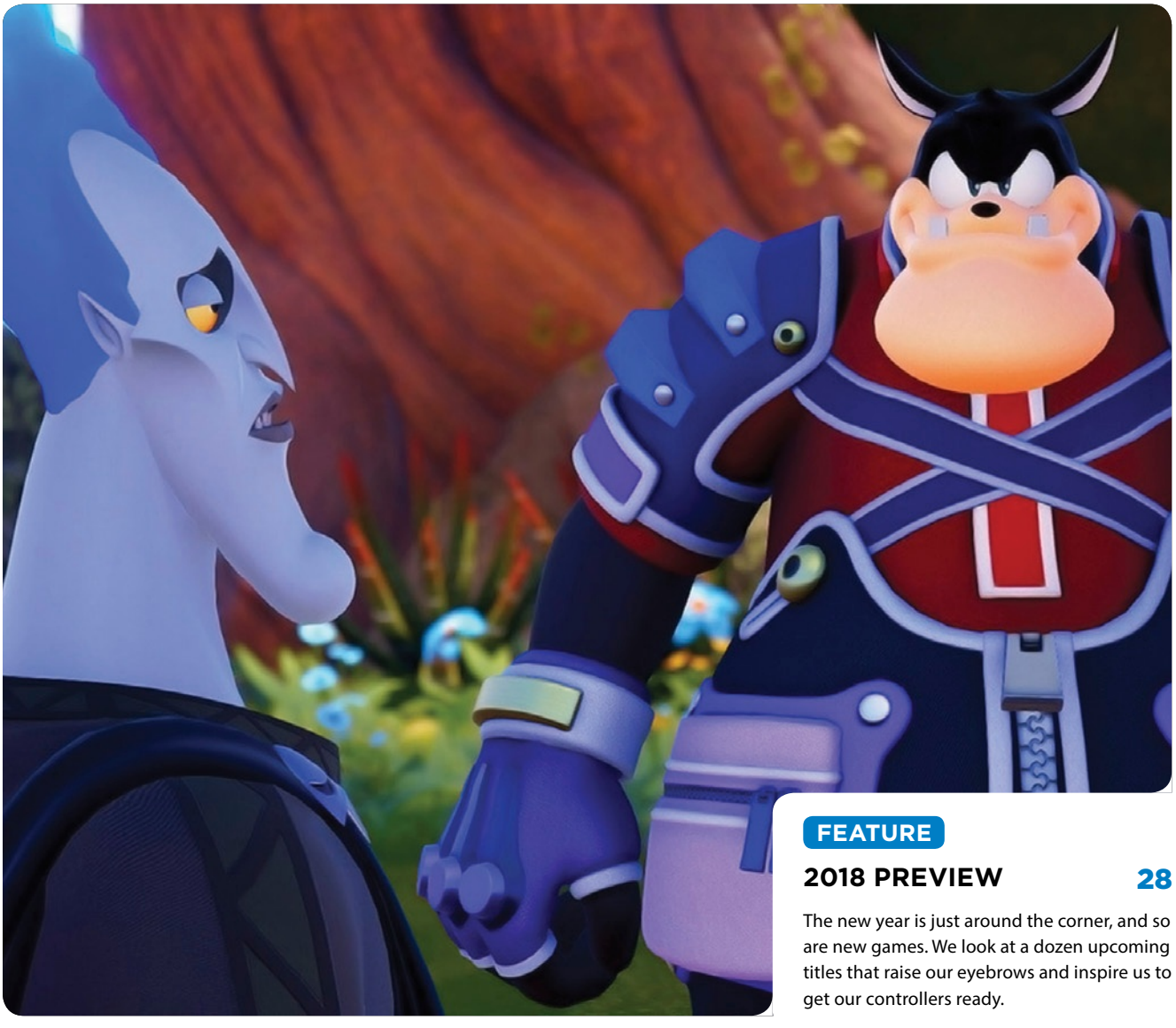


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CONTENTS



FEATURE

2018 PREVIEW 28

The new year is just around the corner, and so are new games. We look at a dozen upcoming titles that raise our eyebrows and inspire us to get our controllers ready.

SECTIONS

EDITORIAL 6

GAME ON 8

5 TO PLAY 14

STRATEGY CENTER 48

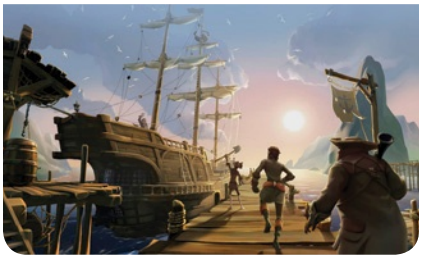
PARTING SHOTS 50

PREVIEW

FAR CRY 5 40

PREVIEW

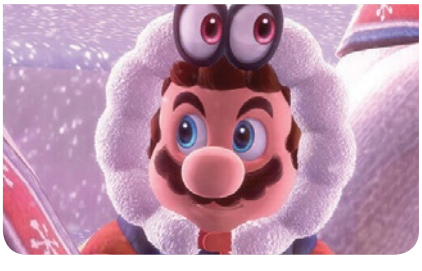
SEA OF THIEVES 42



REVIEW

SUPER MARIO ODYSSEY 44

Mario is back and looking great! This new Switch adventure takes him to places he never dreamed of, in search of more collectibles than you can shake a Joy-Con at.





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WELCOME
FROM THE EDITOR



CAN 2017 BE BEAT?

As 2017 winds down, the time has come to look ahead to the games coming in 2018. Since this year has yielded so many excellent gaming experiences, 2018 has a lot to live up to.

Just look at our Game of the Month, *Super Mario Odyssey* (page 44). Spoiler alert: It's the second game to receive a perfect score of 100 this year, after *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*.

Now, we know that many of the games we'll be playing in 2018 haven't been announced yet. More and more often, companies wait until they have more solid schedules to reveal their plans. Nintendo has been especially quiet regarding next year's Switch games, but we have heard rumblings that we're in for some real treats!

That being said, there are already more than a dozen games we can't wait to get our hands on.

Kingdom Hearts III leads that list. Announced way back in 2013, fans have really been waiting for this one since the last mainline entry, *Kingdom Hearts II*, dropped on the PS2 in 2006. We've seen some of the new worlds and characters we can look forward to (from *Toy Story, Tangled, Big Hero Six)*, and we can't wait.

Then, there is *Red Dead Redemption 2*. Rockstar will finally bring its Wild West franchise to new generation consoles and, if its last great game, *Grand Theft Auto V*, is any indication, we will be playing it for a long, long time.

Then there are exclusive releases such as *God of War* and *Spider-Man* for the PlayStation 4, and *Crackdown 3* and *Sea of Thieves* for the Xbox One. Sometimes it's hard to be a gamer if you don't have access to all the consoles but, rest assured, regardless of your choice, you can anticipate plenty of great titles.

Between our 2018 preview feature and our regular previews this issue, we have listed 14 games we can't wait to sit down and play. And this doesn't count all those we'll be catching up with from this year. In a single day in October, three triple-A titles came out: *Super Mario Odyssey, Assassin's Creed Origins* and *Wolfenstein II: The New Colossus*. One. Single. Day.

If 2018 gives us a couple days of that caliber, we are in for another great year.

So check out all the games we included in this month's free print and digital editions of *Walmart GameCenter* magazine. Happy holidays and thanks for letting us keep you at the center of everything gaming.

MARC CAMRON
EDITOR

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Publisher / Editor-In-Chief
Steve B. Harris

Editorial
EDITOR
Marc Camron
NEWS EDITOR
Mollie L Patterson
ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Ray Carsillo
Josh Harmon
Victoria A.F. Camron

Contributors
Paul Semel
Emma Schaefer
Evan Slead
Nick Plessas
Matt Cabral
Quartermann

Art Direction
Michael Hobbs
Michael Stassus

EGM Media, LLC
8840 Wilshire Blvd.
Third Floor
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
www.egmmediagroup.com

PRESIDENT Steve Harris
ASST TO THE PRESIDENT Angela Adams
LEGAL Bob Wyman
ACCOUNTING Oz Abregov

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES
gamecenter@egmnow.net

Advertising
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR Jeff Eisenberg
ADVERTISING MANAGER Elizabeth Scott

FOR ADVERTISING INQUIRIES
800-875-6298, ext. 120
adsales@egmnow.net

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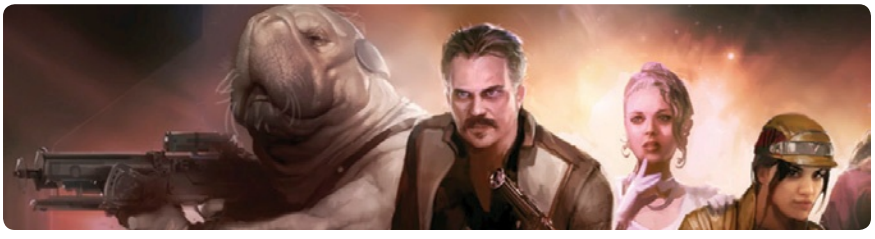
NINTENDO SWITCH

GAME ON

GAMING NEWS, NUMBERS & GOSSIP

BY GAMECENTER STAFF

EA'S UPCOMING STAR WARS ADVENTURE UNDERGOES SOME MAJOR CHANGES



When EA revealed the first video clip of a mysterious new *Star Wars* game at E3 2016, fans around the world were enthralled by the impressive — if short — tease.

Though we never got an official name for the game, details came out that it was being worked on by Visceral Games (*Battlefield Hardline*, *Dead Space* series) and creative director Amy Hennig (*Uncharted*). The story was said to be set between *A New Hope* and *The Empire Strikes Back*, centered around a new character named Dodger, an Imperial draft dodger who later became a bounty hunter. Dodger would have been equipped with a light whip and a blaster — think Nathan Drake combined with Han Solo and Indiana Jones.

Now, however, EA has announced that some major changes will be coming to the game, pushing its expected release from late in the company's 2019 fiscal year to an unannounced later date. The reason for the shift in the game's development? The continually changing video game market and the evolving tastes of gamers.

"Our Visceral studio has been developing an action-adventure title set in the Star Wars universe. In its current form, it was shaping up to be a story-based, linear adventure game," explained EA Executive Vice President Patrick Söderlund, as part of the announcement. "Throughout the development process, we have been testing the game concept with players, listening to the feedback about what and how they want to play, and closely tracking fundamental shifts in the marketplace. It has become clear that to deliver an experience that players will want to come back to and enjoy for a long time to come, we needed to pivot the design."

While Söderlund promises that the game will still offer players stunning visuals and a sense of authenticity in the Star Wars universe, the gameplay will shift to a "broader experience" that will offer up "more variety and player agency" along with "greater depth and breadth to explore." The project will now be in the hands of EA Worldwide Studios, with a team from EA Vancouver already heading up its development.

For now, all we can do is wait to know more about this latest chapter of the gaming side of the *Star Wars* saga. Keep a lookout for further updates on the game in future issues of *Walmart GameCenter*.

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All the great new games on the way to Walmart and Walmart.com

XENOBLADE CHRONICLES 2 NINTENDO / SWITCH	dec 1
KIRBY BATTLE ROYAL NINTENDO / 3DS	jan 19
LOST SPHEAR SQUARE ENIX / PS4, SWITCH, PC	23
DRAGON BALL FIGHTERZ BANDAI NAMCO / XBOX ONE, PS4, PC	26
MONSTER HUNTER: WORLD CAPCOM / XBOX ONE, PS4	26
DISSIDIA FINAL FANTASY NT SQUARE ENIX / PS4	30
EA SPORTS UFC 3 EA / XBOX ONE, PS4	feb 2
SECRET OF MANA SQUARE ENIX / PS4, PSVITA, PC	15
METAL GEAR SURVIVE KONAMI / XBOX ONE, PS4, PC	20
FAR CRY 5 UBISOFT / XBOX ONE, PS4, PC	27
THE CREW 2 UBISOFT / XBOX ONE, PS4, PC	mar 16
YAKUZA 6: THE SONG OF LIFE SEGA / PS4	20

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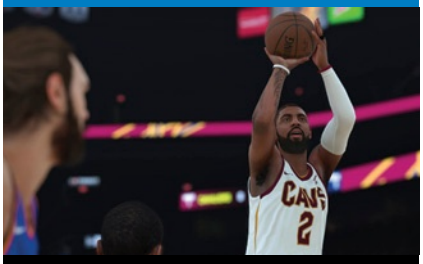
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Walmart's TOP SELLERS

THIS MONTH'S TOP-SELLING VIDEO GAMES ...



01	**NBA 2K18** 2K XBOX ONE, PS4, XBOX 360, PS3
02	**FIFA 18** EA SPORTS XBOX ONE, PS4, SWITCH, XBOX 360, PS3
03	**MADDEN NFL 18** EA SPORTS XBOX ONE, PS4
04	**MIDDLE EARTH: SHADOW OF WAR** WBIE XBOX ONE, PS4
05	**SUPER MARIO ODYSSEY** NINTENDO SWITCH
06	**GRAND THEFT AUTO V** ROCKSTAR GAMES XBOX ONE, PS4, XBOX 360, PS3, PC
07	**ASSASSIN'S CREED: ORIGINS** UBISOFT XBOX ONE, PS4
08	**DESTINY 2** ACTIVISION XBOX ONE, PS4, PC
09	**WWE 2K18** 2K XBOX ONE, PS4
10	**SOUTH PARK: FRACTURED BUT WHOLE** UBISOFT XBOX ONE, PS4

THE FIGHT GETS BIGGER AND BETTER IN STREET FIGHTER V: ARCADE EDITION

For anyone who has yet to pick up the latest chapter of Capcom's legendary fighting franchise, we've got good news: A new version of *Street Fighter V,* packed with more features, a bigger character roster and some bonus content, will soon be on its way.

When *Street Fighter V: Arcade Edition* hits next January, it'll include all of the modes and options that are currently in the original version of the game, along with all 12 additional characters that have come as part of its Season 1 and Season 2 expansions.



Some major changes to the game also will be coming along for the ride. Capcom is answering the biggest request from fans by adding an all-new Arcade mode to the game. The mode will have six different paths, each based around a particular *Street Fighter* era. Fights will be even more exciting, as every character will now have two V-Trigger abilities to choose from and everything from matches to the main menu will be spruced up with an entirely new user interface.

If you can't wait until next year to grab a copy of *Street Fighter V*, or already own the game, don't worry: All of the new modes and gameplay upgrades will be released as a free update to the base edition of the game.

Street Fighter V: Arcade Edition hits the PlayStation 4 and PC on Jan. 16, 2018. Pre-order your own copy on Walmart.com or at your local Walmart store.

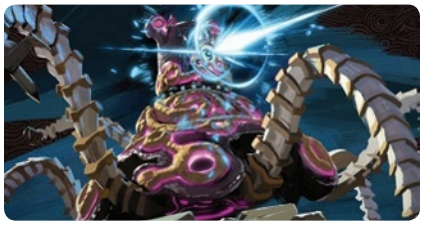
NINTENDO REVEALS SOME SECRETS BEHIND BREATH OF THE WILD'S DESIGN

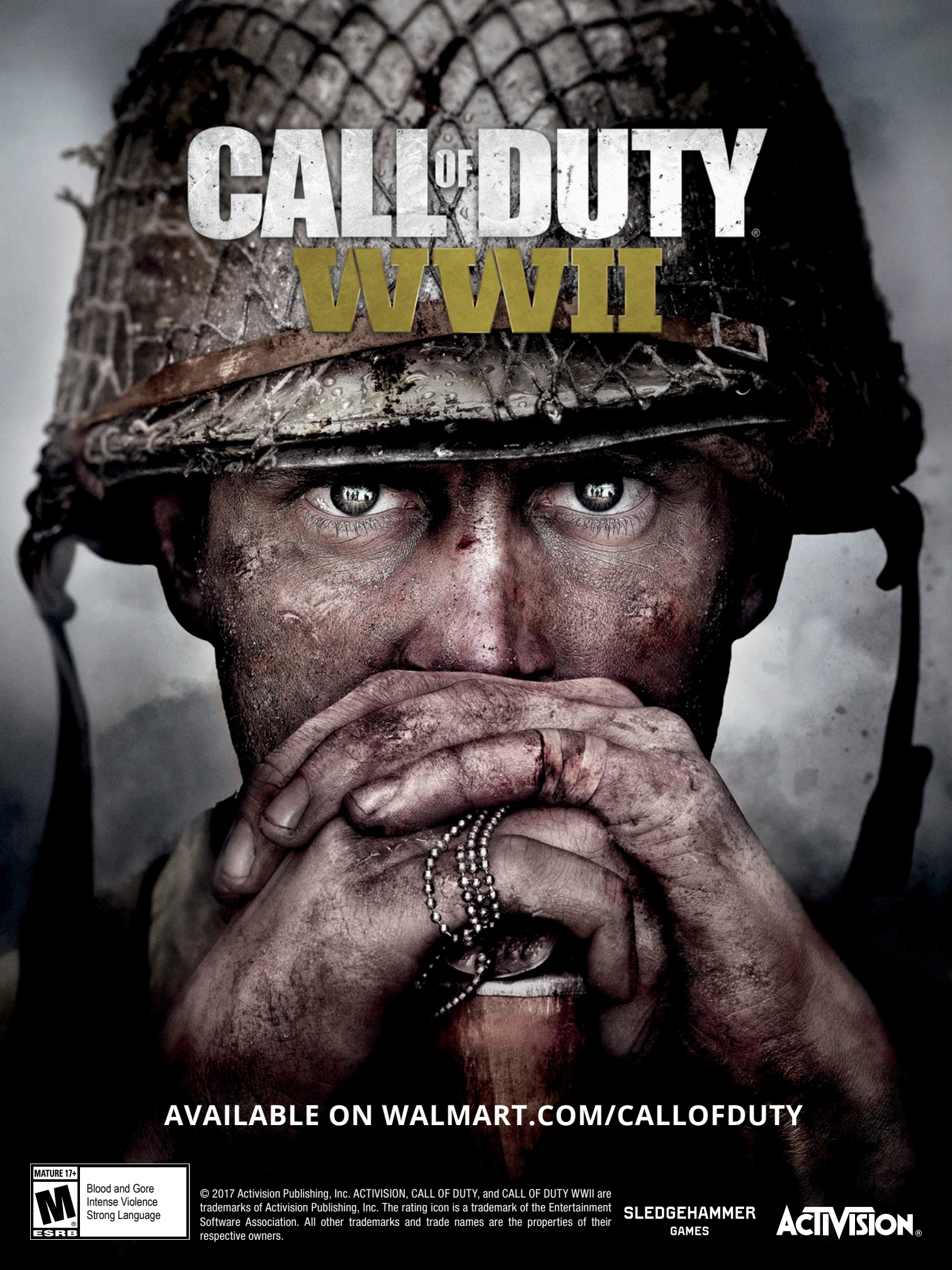
The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild has been one of the most impressive games of the year so far and director Hidemaro Fujibayashi, along with lead artist Makoto Yonezu, revealed a few secrets on how the game ended up being so good at a recent conference in Japan.

One of the most interesting points the duo talked about was the design of the world itself, which included a "triangle rule" that Nintendo established to create intrigue. The thought was to scatter triangle-shaped objects such as hills, mountains or even trees all throughout the world. Then, as players came across these kinds of objects, they'd make a decision: do they go around them or over them? Each triangle could hint at something intriguing behind it, perhaps hiding points of interest such as Korok seeds. Other objects in the landscape were used in different ways to draw attention, such as making a far-off stable visible enough to encourage players to head toward it and check it out.

Nintendo then tracked where players went during initial playtesting for *Breath of the Wild*. If too many players all seemed to be going in a similar direction, the development team tweaked the world to add more interesting options in other directions. That way, players would spread out more and explore in their own way, instead of all having the same experience.

The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild is currently available for the Nintendo Switch and Wii U. Pick up your copy from Walmart.com or at your local Walmart store.





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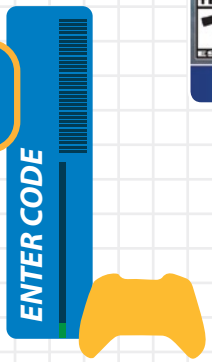
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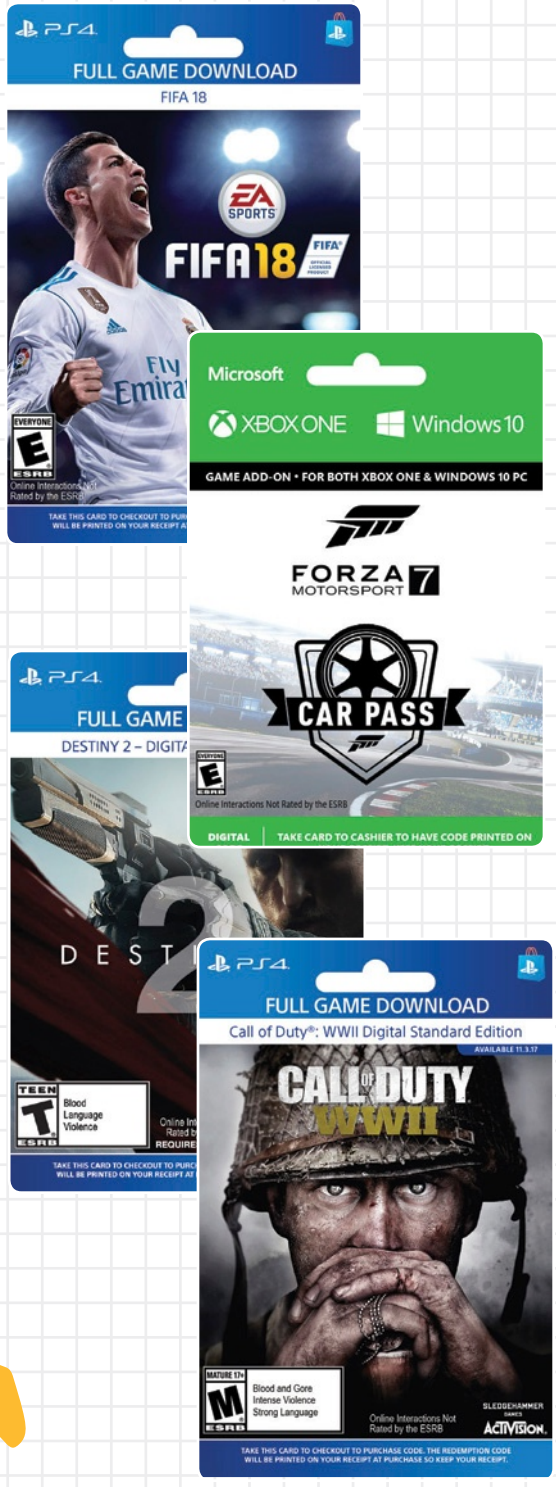
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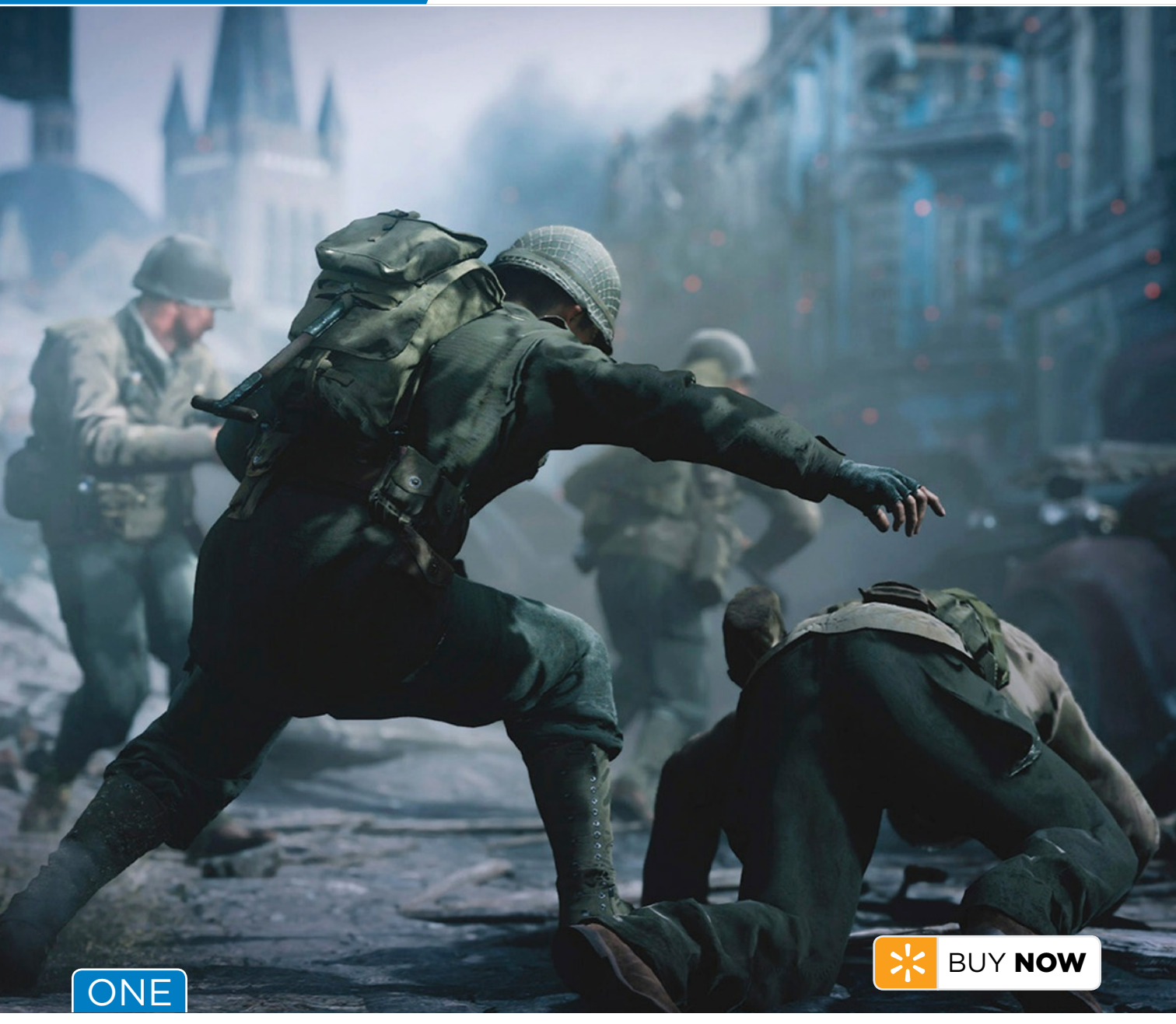
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ONE

CALL OF DUTY: WWII

For the first time in nine years, *Call of Duty* will return to its roots as a World War II first-person shooter. The setting isn't the only callback to this series' past, however: *WWII* is the first *Call of Duty* game since the 2003 original that does not include a health regeneration mechanic. Instead, during the story-driven campaign, players must rely on their squad's medic to patch them up. Similarly, your squad mates provide you with whatever ammo you might need. Multiplayer returns to form with what the developers call "boots-on-the-ground" gameplay. In other words, World War II soldiers didn't have jetpacks, so neither will you. Even the co-op mode is a bit retro, with players battling Germany's army of zombies as they did in 2010's *Call of Duty: Black Ops*.

FACT FILE

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DEVELOPER SLEDGEHAMMER GAMES
PLATFORMS XBOX ONE, PS4, PC
RELEASE DATE 11.03.17

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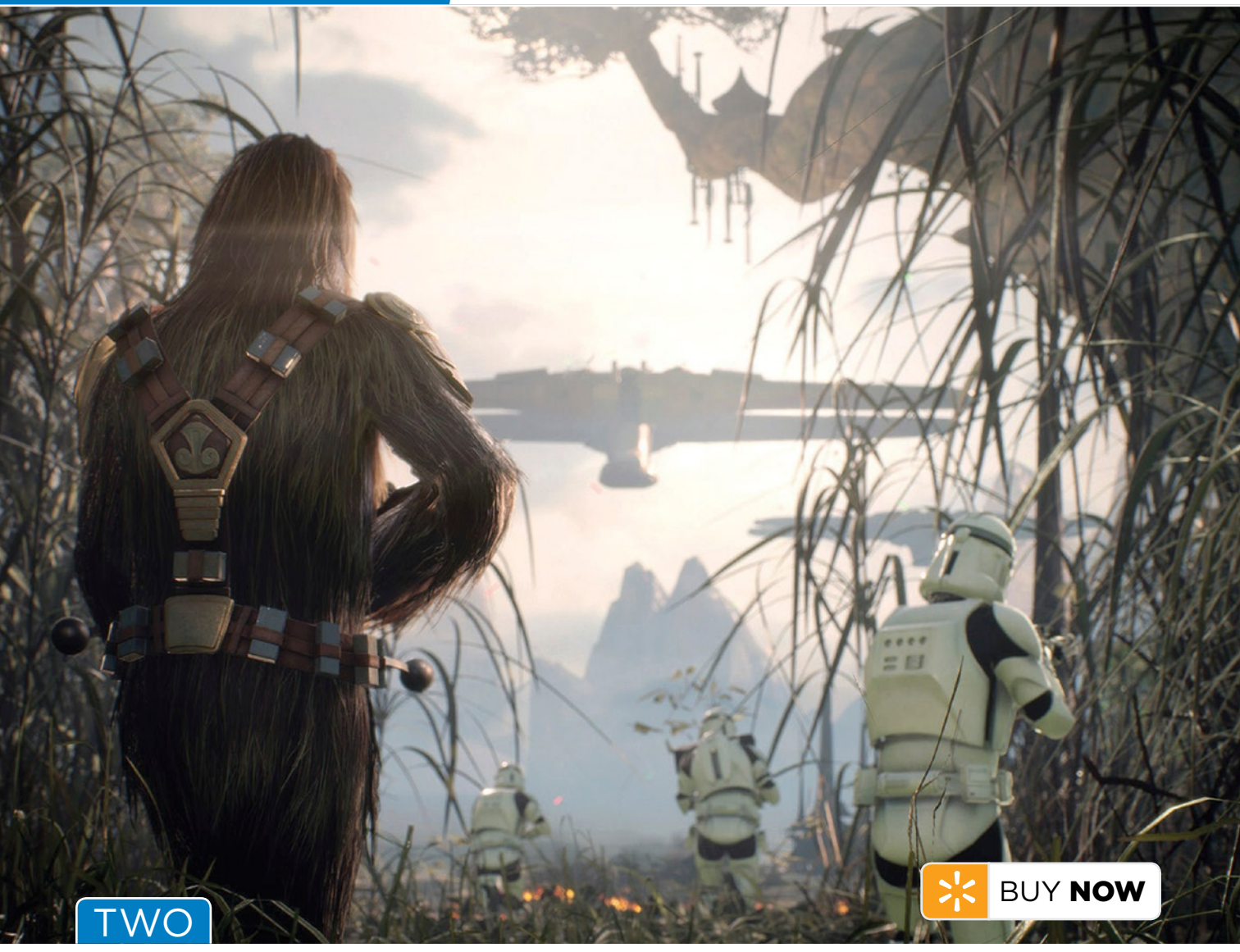
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TWO

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT II

MAY LING TAN, GAME DESIGNER, MOTIVE STUDIOS

"The story begins in the moments leading up to the destruction of the second Death Star in *The Return of the Jedi*. Playing as Iden Versio, commander of an Imperial Special Forces team, the game follows Iden as she journeys across new and familiar planets in the galaxy, and crosses paths with iconic *Star Wars* heroes, while showing us what it was like to be on the other side while the Rebels celebrated their victory on Endor. Along with adding this single-player campaign, *Battlefront II* also adds a lot to multiplayer, including the number of playable heroes, locations and weapons, along with more player choice through deeper progression. Also new is Starfighter Assault mode, where the player gets to live out the fantasy of being an ace pilot in space, as well as Arcade mode, an offline couch co-op mode on consoles where players will be able to customize their matches or play through fixed scenarios."

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DEVELOPER EA DICE, MOTIVE STUDIOS, CRITERION GAMES
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THREE

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WILL HO, CREATIVE DIRECTOR, GHOST GAMES

"For the single-player campaign, we've wrapped classic *Need for Speed* gameplay in a story inspired by classic heist and action movies. A revenge story, it has three drivers trying to make their way on the streets of Fortune Valley so they can bring down The House, a cartel that has corrupted the city's cops and car scene. In terms of the gameplay, our fans have asked for more variety, so we've blown out our core race modes, brought back Drag Races, and added awesome Off-road Races. We also have new Courier Missions that challenge you to find the fastest way to hit multiple destinations. As for multiplayer, we believe it should be accessible and streamlined, so we've carried forward our Speedlists mode from the last *Need for Speed*. It's super easy and quick to match up with other players who want a casual competitive online experience racing through playlists of our best tracks."

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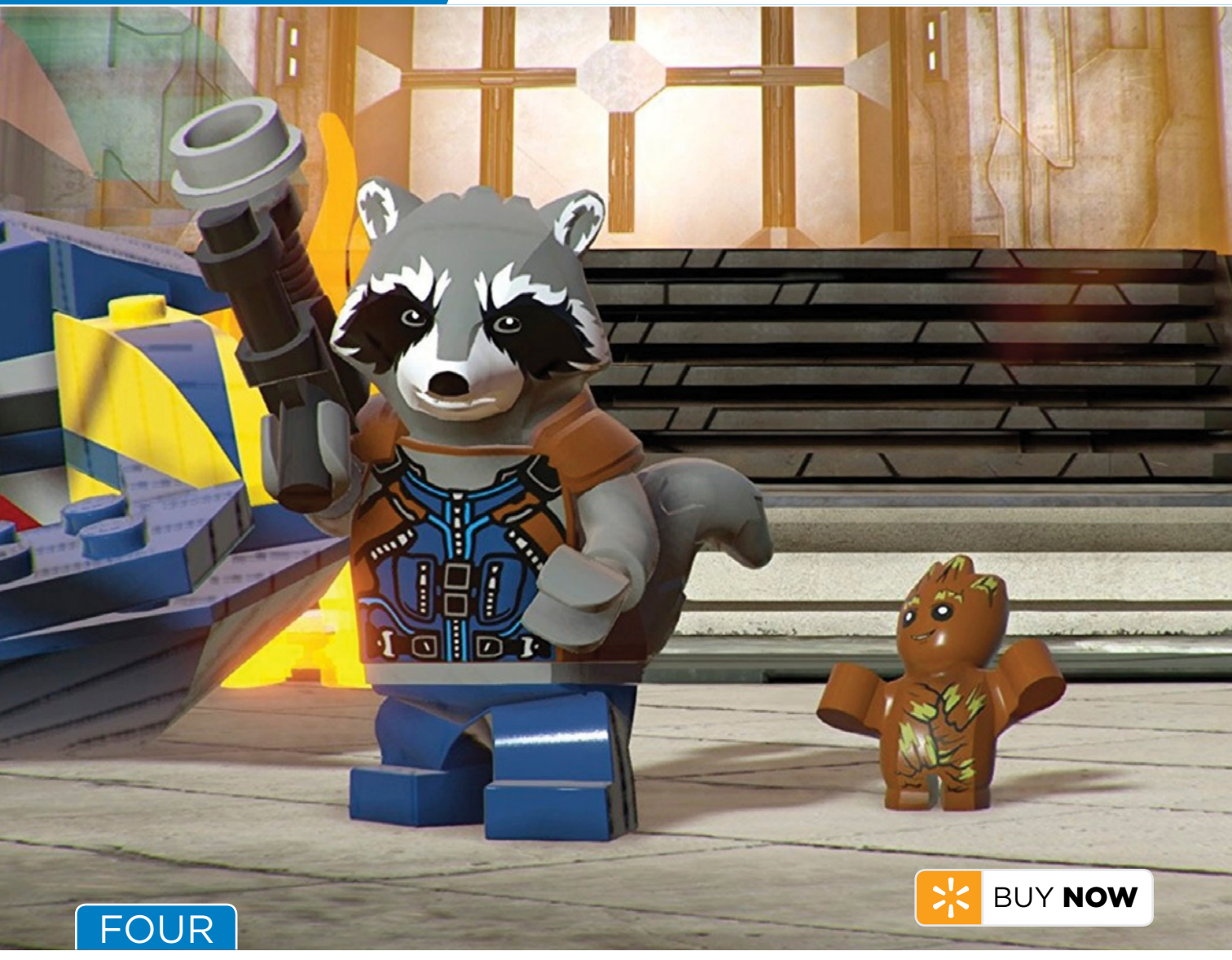
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FOUR

LEGO MARVEL SUPER HEROES 2

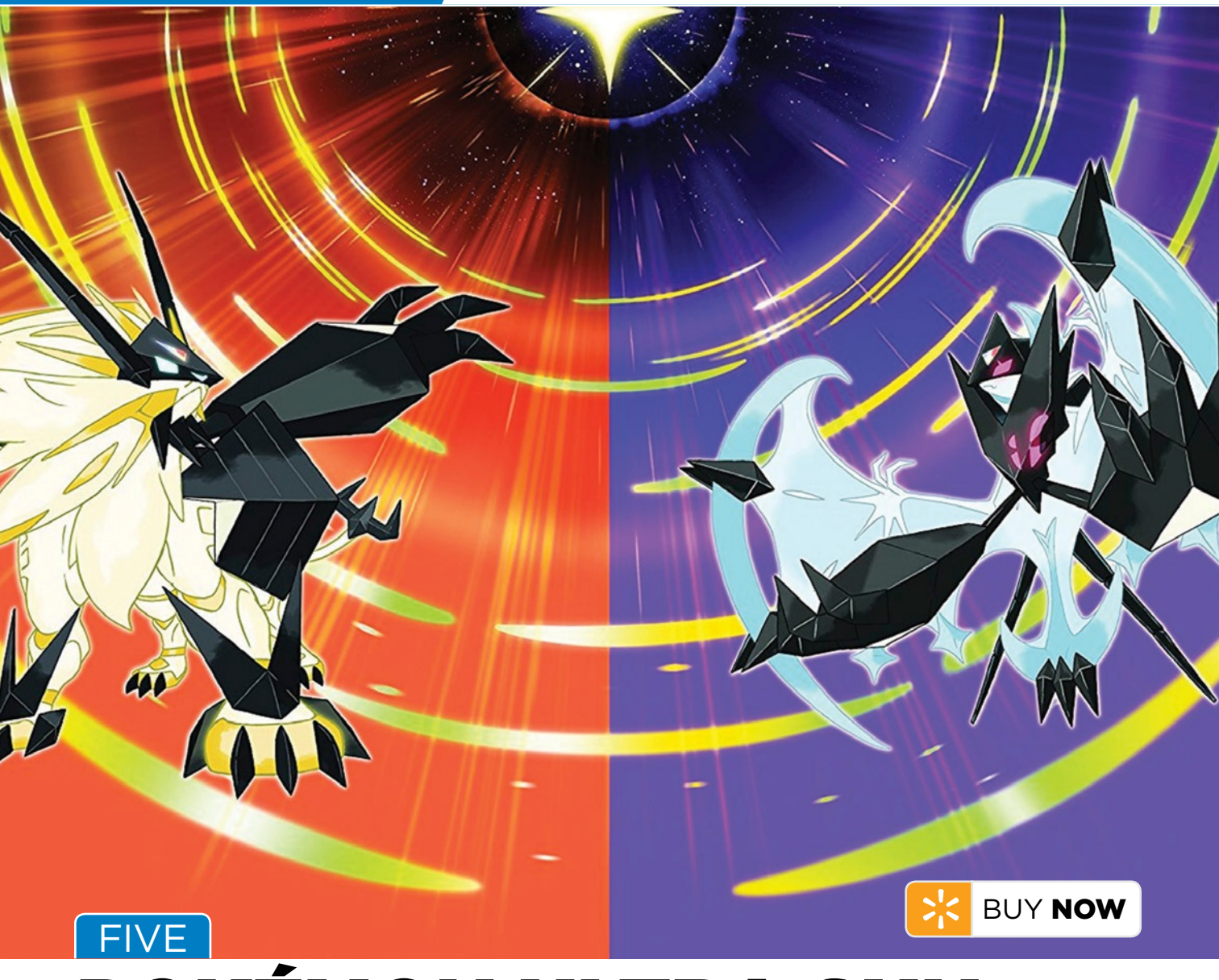
ARTHUR PARSONS, HEAD OF DESIGN, TT GAMES

"*LEGO Marvel Super Heroes 2* is inspired by two classic Kang the Conqueror storylines from the comics. We have an epic adventure that bridges alternate Marvel realities, brings characters together from different time periods, and allows players to take part in not just saving the world but the entire Marvel Universe. There is a connection to the original LEGO *Marvel Super Heroes* game, but the story also stands on its own. While we're proud of the first game, we still wanted to improve every area when it came to this sequel. As such, we've created a bigger and more expansive open world to explore, and invested more time injecting specific attributes and personality into every character. We also have an all-new character creator that allows players to create their very own Marvel characters. We've added an all-new four-player battle mode where players can enjoy our diverse roster in a new and exciting way."

FACT FILE

PUBLISHER WARNER BROS. INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT
DEVELOPER TT GAMES
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FACT FILE

PUBLISHER NINTENDO, TPC
DEVELOPER GAME FREAK
PLATFORMS 3DS
RELEASE DATE 11.17.17

Farming Simulator

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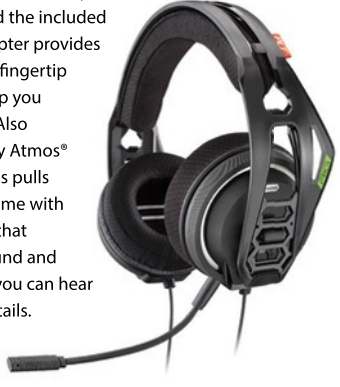
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2018 PREVIEW

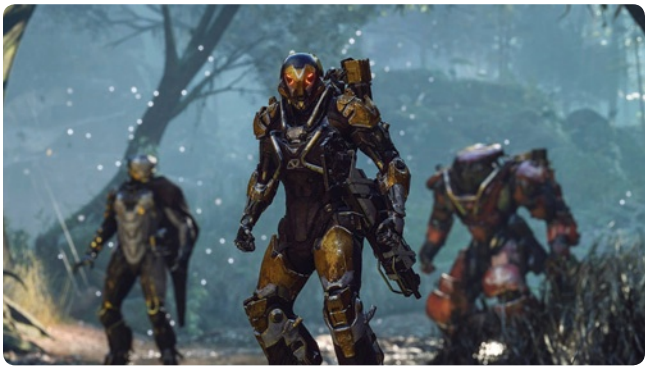
BY GAMECENTER STAFF

The sun is setting on what was truly a banner year in video games, with a brand-new console and a ton of heavy hitters descending on the video game world. This year brought us a new *Assassin's Creed* and *The Legend of Zelda*, saw the return of Crash Bandicoot and Samus Aran, and introduced us to a warrior girl named Aloy and the crew of the *Tacoma*.

While 2017 certainly delivered, 2018 is already shaping up to be outstanding in the world of video games. From RPG to shooter, fighting game to open-world action, every genre in games is looking to receive a significant boost. The 12 games listed here are the ones that really stand out in our minds as the ones we're most anxious to get our greedy, controller-laden hands on.

Astute readers may notice one conspicuous element missing from our list: Nintendo titles. While we here at Walmart GameCenter magazine certainly get excited for Nintendo titles when they're announced, the company has kept its major 2018 plans close to the vest. When the games are announced we will cover them but, for now, we will take a look at the best games we know are headed our way.

ANTHEM

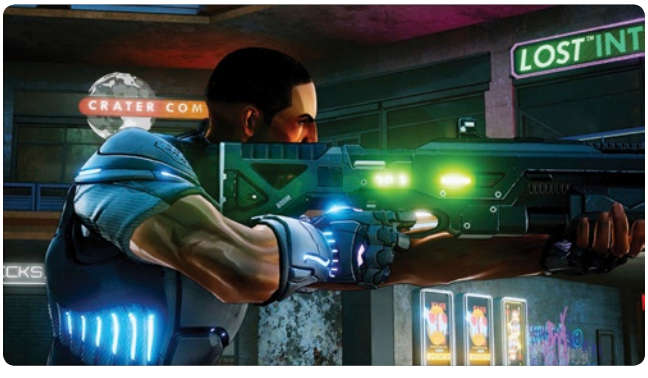


As of this writing, the world has seen one trailer for BioWare's newest game, *Anthem*, but, really, that one trailer is all we needed to get our minds racing about its potential. An open-world shooter set in a final frontier, buffered by the storytelling prowess of the studio behind *Dragon Age* and *Mass Effect?* Sign us up.

Anthem puts players in the role of Freelancers who wear customizable suits called Javelins to brave the wilds of the hostile world. Everything from weapons to abilities can be edited in these Javelins, and players can take their custom-built suits into battle either alone or with friends in a shared-world experience. Ambition seems to be the name of the game here, as *Anthem* strives to broaden the horizons of gamers to sights previously unseen. If the game delivers like the first trailer has, we're all in for a treat.

PUBLISHER EA **SYSTEMS** XBOX ONE, PS4, PC

CRACKDOWN 3



The powered-up super soldiers of The Agency are coming back in 2018, as *Crackdown 3* looks to bring the high-jumping, explosive gameplay of the first *Crackdown* back to the spotlight. Players can choose from multiple Agency members, each with their own skills and abilities, then drop into the world of Pacific City and take down some bad guys. In multiplayer, there's nowhere for those baddies to hide either, as the environment can be destroyed as players see fit to flush the criminals out.

Xbox fans have been waiting since 2014 to crack into *Crackdown*. The recent delay from Nov. 7 to 2018 didn't help either. However, the game has shown us enough to know that the wait will absolutely be worth it, and we are anxious wait to reenlist in The Agency and bring justice to a city plagued with crime.

PUBLISHER MICROSOFT **SYSTEMS** XBOX ONE, PC



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DAYS GONE



Days Gone comes from the minds behind *Syphon Filter* and, while it seems familiar with its "world pandemic creating zombie-like monsters" storyline, there's much more to this game than meets the eye. The open world allows the hero, Deacon St. John, to take multiple approaches to a situation, be it slow and stealthy or guns blazing.

Most impressive is the dynamic weather system, which affects the world around Deacon as well as the enemies. Daytime makes the Freakers become slow and weak, rainfall causes them to slip and slide, and nighttime turns them into forces to be reckoned with. Worst of all, the pandemic was not limited to humans, as the zombie bear at the end of the most recent trailer shows. *Days Gone* should be on every PlayStation 4 owner's radar, as it's shaping up to be one crazy ride.

PUBLISHER SONY BEND **SYSTEMS** PS4

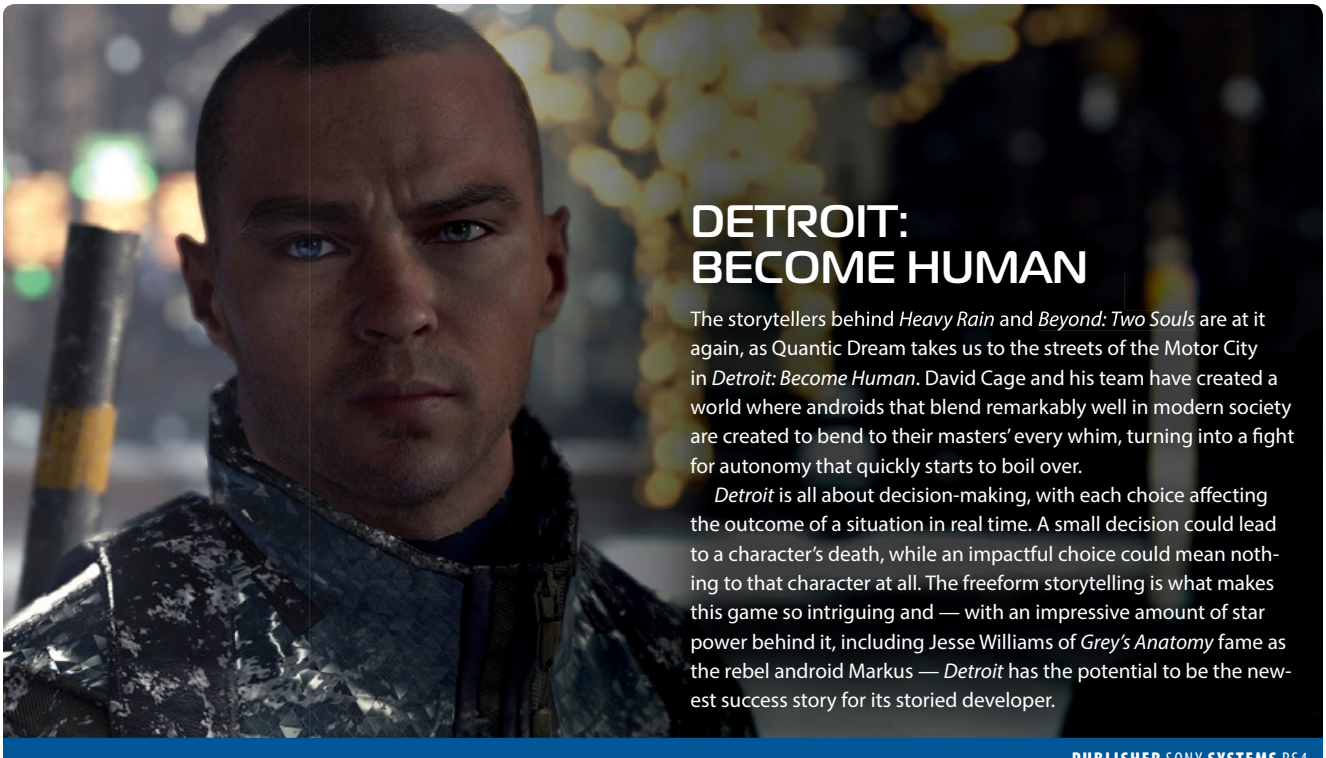
CODE VEIN



Code Vein is intriguing for many reasons, from its beautiful Japanese anime visual style to the story's focus on what seem to be vampires in a post-apocalyptic, dystopian society. However, it's the challenge being promised to us that makes us the most curious, as the idea of a game that tests every one of our abilities is exactly what we need.

Code Vein focuses on exploration as well as combat, setting us free in a gigantic open-world environment and giving us no guidance as to what we'll find there. This is both a blessing, as the freedom to turn over every stone in this bleak world is in our hands, and a curse, as one false move could lead us into an area where we simply cannot win without turning around and going back where we came from. The more we think about *Code Vein*, the more interesting the game becomes.

PUBLISHER BANDAI NAMCO **SYSTEMS** XBOX ONE, PS4, PC



DETROIT: BECOME HUMAN

The storytellers behind *Heavy Rain* and *Beyond: Two Souls* are at it again, as Quantic Dream takes us to the streets of the Motor City in *Detroit: Become Human*. David Cage and his team have created a world where androids that blend remarkably well in modern society are created to bend to their masters' every whim, turning into a fight for autonomy that quickly starts to boil over.

Detroit is all about decision-making, with each choice affecting the outcome of a situation in real time. A small decision could lead to a character's death, while an impactful choice could mean nothing to that character at all. The freeform storytelling is what makes this game so intriguing and — with an impressive amount of star power behind it, including Jesse Williams of *Grey's Anatomy* fame as the rebel android Markus — *Detroit* has the potential to be the newest success story for its storied developer.

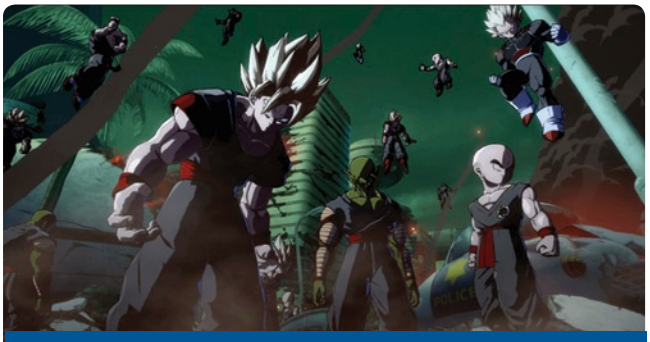
PUBLISHER SONY **SYSTEMS** PS4


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DRAGON BALL FIGHTERZ

Take one of the most popular anime series of all time, pick an assortment of its best characters and locations, and throw them into a three-on-three *Marvel vs. Capcom*-style fighting game with visuals plucked directly from the anime itself. That is the concept behind *Dragon Ball FighterZ*, and it's shaping up to be a wild brawl.

So far, we've seen a handful of familiar faces on the game's roster — including series' mainstays Goku and Vegeta and famous villains such as Frieza and Cell — as well as a few new characters to tell a full "what if" story set in the *Dragon Ball* Z universe. The fights themselves are action-packed, with plenty of signature moves and massive explosions to go around, including some that will smash the entire arena. This is the fighting game *Dragon Ball* fans have been dreaming about, and it's scheduled to be released on Jan. 26.



PUBLISHER BANDAI NAMCO **SYSTEMS** XBOX ONE, PS4, PC



PUBLISHER SONY **SYSTEMS** PS4

GOD OF WAR

Kratos has conquered the most powerful gods in Greek mythology, felling Poseidon, Hades and even Zeus himself. For a while, we thought we'd never see the Spartan again. Suddenly, he resurfaced in a new Norse-inspired world, a small boy under his tutelage in tow. This will be a very different *God of War* experience, but it's one that definitely has our interest.

The change in mythos hasn't changed Kratos' fighting prowess, as he wields an enchanted ax that can be thrown and summoned back on the fly. His son, Atreus, can also aid Kratos in battle, distracting an enemy with attacks and arrows from afar. *God of War* faithful will not recognize this new adventure at first. At the core of the game, though, lies the same adrenaline-packed gameplay we've come to know and love, presented in a new light.



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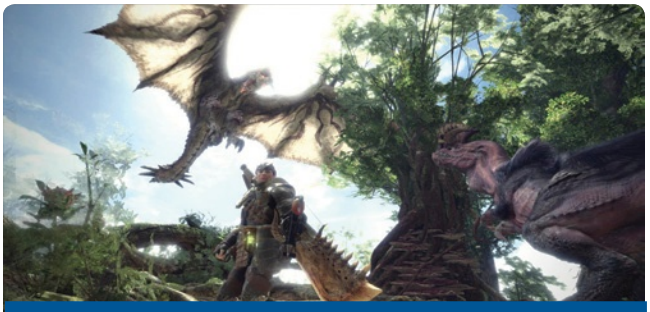
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MONSTER HUNTER: WORLD

The *Monster Hunter* franchise has mostly been confined to portable consoles such as the Nintendo 3DS and PSP, with few exceptions. *Monster Hunter: World* changes that, though, with versions coming for consoles and PC.

Monster Hunter: World looks, feels and plays similar to a standard *Monster Hunter* game, but with big improvements. Maps and monsters alike are larger than ever, but the lack of loading time between locations creates a seamless experience from beginning to end. Also, players can now use the environment to attack a monster or flee from one, as the situation calls for it. *Monster Hunter: World*, features plenty more secrets, and with release scheduled for Jan. 26, players won't have to wait long before starting the hunt.



PUBLISHER CAPCOM **SYSTEMS** XBOX ONE, PS4, PC



PUBLISHER SQUARE ENIX **SYSTEMS** XBOX ONE, PS4

KINGDOM HEARTS III

A sequel five long years in the making, *Kingdom Hearts III*'s fast-paced action RPG gameplay will finally grace consoles once again. Aiming to defeat the Heartless once and for all, Sora leads Donald and Goofy to new worlds within the Disney lore, including *Tangled*, *Big Hero 6* and the game's first-ever Pixar setting, *Toy Story*.

Players will get a new look at Andy's bedroom as Woody, Buzz Lightyear and a few other toys join forces with the *KHIII* heroes to defeat their common enemies. Pixar's chief creative officer, John Lasseter, even participated in this game's creation. A refresher course in the game's lore would be advised as there's a lot going on, so be ready when the *Kingdom Hearts* story finally comes full circle in 2018.



PS4

GREATNESS AWAITS

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT II

EA



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STAR WARS

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RED DEAD REDEMPTION 2

The dormant years between new Rockstar releases seem longer than other devs, even if the company continuously supplies us with online content. *Grand Theft Auto V*, released in 2013, was the last new game we've seen from Rockstar. We expected to return this year to the Wild West in *Red Dead Redemption 2*, but the studio announced a delay because it is building the game and its epic setting from the ground up for new consoles. The scenery alone, as seen in the second trailer, rivals western landscapes hanging in noted museums. *Red Dead Redemption 2* will take us to a time before John Marston roamed the plains, and tell the story of Arthur Morgan during his time as an outlaw with Dutch van der Linde's gang. The same trailer shows Morgan fighting the elements as well as gun battles with his enemies as he attempts to survive

PUBLISHER ROCKSTAR GAMES **SYSTEMS** XBOX ONE, PS4

SKULL & BONES



When one thinks of multiplayer gaming, the mind typically tends to think of team-based shooters or MOBA games such as *League of Legends*. Ubisoft has decided to put an entirely new spin on five-on-five multiplayer, taking us all out of the shooting galleries and battle arenas and thrusting us onto the high seas. Avast ye sea dogs, the time for plunderin' will soon be at hand in *Skull & Bones*.

This new game brings the excellent naval combat of *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag* into its own game, enhancing it for online competitive play and dropping two teams of five against each other in an array of different ships with different abilities, all in a contest to see who can score the most loot in a limited time. It's a fun and frenetic battle of cannons and crashing waves that will offer a refreshing online experience sometime in 2018.

PUBLISHER UBISOFT **SYSTEMS** XBOX ONE, PS4, PC

SPIDER-MAN



Back in the PlayStation 2 era, Treyarch made a pair of excellent *Spider-Man* games, then left the webbed warrior behind in search of other projects. Fans pined for web-slinging games of that quality, and their wishes were granted when Insomniac announced its newest project: a brand-new, completely original *Spider-Man*. Needless to say, the game jumped onto many most-wanted lists very quickly.

We've seen a few action sequences from this new endeavor and it's simply marvelous to watch. Free-swinging around New York City, seamless hand-to-hand combat between Spidey and multiple enemies and a few familiar faces from Spider-Man's rogues gallery have really impressed us. It makes the wait for this game that much harder. What we've seen gives us hope that this long-awaited reboot will produce the *Spider-Man* game of our dreams in 2018.

PUBLISHER SONY **SYSTEMS** PS4



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FAR CRY 5

USE A LITTLE HELP FROM YOUR FRIENDS

FACT FILE

PUBLISHER UBISOFT
DEVELOPER UBISOFT MONTREAL
PLATFORMS XBOX ONE, PS4, PC
RELEASE DATE 02.27.2018

BY RAY CARSILLO

The *Far Cry* series has long taken players to far away lands, or even time periods, and dropped them in intense conflicts that push players to do whatever it takes to survive. *Far Cry 5* looks to do the same, at least in terms of the intense conflict. Instead of immersing players in the savannahs of Africa or some tropical island, though, this time *Far Cry* is looking to emphasize that the greatest threat to someone's safety could be in their own backyard.

Far Cry 5 takes place in the fictional Hope County, Montana, where a dangerous, radical extremist preacher named Joseph Seed believes he is hearing messages from God. Seed believes he, his family and those in his Eden's Gate compound, have been chosen to serve as the reapers of souls and that we are on the precipice of a great culling. So, of course, when the federal police, including a sheriff's deputy who acts as the player character, are tasked with marching straight into Eden's Gate and arresting Seed, things go sideways almost immediately.



Barely escaping Seed's compound with your life, you quickly realize almost all of Hope County belongs to Seed. He has spread his gospel like a poison in the water supply and — aside from a few pockets of resistance — he has succeeded in enlisting almost the entire populace into his own personal army that will do whatever he says.

Part of this is through his family: his three "heralds," as Joseph calls them, with him sitting atop Eden's Gate as "the father." Joseph's eldest brother, Jacob, is ex-military and oversees their soldiers. Joseph's youngest brother, John, is a lawyer that has used the many loopholes of the law to acquire land and continue to expand the compound. And finally, Joseph's sister, Faith, is used to help pacify and instill trust in the populace for her brother.

This time Far Cry is looking to emphasize that the greatest threat to someone's safety could be in their own backyard.

In traditional *Far Cry* fashion, you'll have to take whatever means necessary to dismantle Seed's cult and bring true freedom back to Hope County. Every vehicle from crop dusters to tractors will be at your disposal. Automatic weapons are plentiful but even an old pitchfork can do the job when it comes to taking down a lone soldier. And should you need help, you'll find by causing enough of a ruckus that people, and even animals, will flock to your side with the "Guns for Hire" and "Fangs for Hire" system. *Far Cry* has always put players in dangerous situations and *Far Cry 5* is no different, just turning that notion on its head a bit by showing evil can take root and grow anywhere if you let it.

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SEA OF THIEVES

A PIRATE'S LIFE FOR ME

BY EMMA SCHAEFER

FACT FILE

PUBLISHER MICROSOFT STUDIOS
DEVELOPER RARE
PLATFORMS XBOX ONE, PC
RELEASE DATE TBA

Set sail on the open ocean in *Sea of Thieves*, the new pirate adventure from Rare. Team up with friends to form your pirate crew, then raise anchor, hoist your sails, and head out into a world full of treasure and fraught with peril.

The ocean is filled with strange islands, exotic animals and plenty of loot to plunder, but beware — you're not the only pirate crew sailing the waves. Thanks to the massively open shared world, every ship you see cresting on the horizon will be crewed by fellow players. They may be friends, using their powerful cannons or advanced ships to help take down a kraken and split the plunder, or they may be foes, all too willing to turn those same cannons against you.

You'll have to work with your crew if you want to survive, sharing tasks such as steering the ship, manning the cannons, acting as lookout, or providing some light entertainment playing a jaunty sea shanty on your trusty accordion. Keep an eye out for hidden coves and monsters of the deep, which may provide more and better treasure for your crew to flaunt. Once you've triumphed over the dangers of the sea, lower your anchor in a harbor town, disembark and spend a hearty evening in a tavern sharing drinks, showing off your loot and bragging about your crew's adventures to your fellow pirates.



Sea of Thieves features cross-play, so all players can participate in the same world whether they're playing on the Xbox One or a PC. Both danger and treasure hide just over the horizon, so grab a group of friends and venture out on your journey across the waves.

"Team up with friends to form your pirate crew, then raise anchor, hoist your sails, and head out into a world full of treasure and adventure."


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SUPER MARIO ODYSSEY

STILL KING OF THE PLATFORM GAMES

BY MARC CAMRON

The Nintendo Switch couldn't have had a better launch year. Starting with *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*, the hybrid console has seen hit after hit, with a number of great games still scheduled throughout the rest of 2017.

With so many great releases, Nintendo could have held *Super Mario Odyssey* until next year, perhaps to fill in a month without a major release. Fortunately, however, they decided not to and gamers are all the richer for it this holiday season.

Odyssey brings Mario back to the true 3D open-world goodness of *Super Mario 64* and *Super Mario Sunshine*. However, *Odyssey* goes places no *Mario* game has ventured before, culminating in a game unlike anything you've ever seen.

The game begins in the usual way, with Bowser kidnapping Princess Peach in an attempt to marry her. Nothing particularly novel there. He brings her aboard his airship and flies off with her, but not before Mario knocks the fancy top hat off Bowser's spiky head. This is no ordinary top hat though. It's actually a character, Cappy, whose girlfriend Tiara was also kidnapped by Bowser so the Princess would have something fancy to wear at the wedding too.

Together, Mario and Cappy must chase Bowser's airship. To do so they need a ship of their own: the titular Odyssey. The Odyssey also looks like a hat, but it's a giant flying one powered by moons. So, Mario and Cappy must visit various lands and collect these moons (among other things).

Each land varies wildly, with environments ranging from ice and water, to forests and even the big city. Each has its own aesthetic appeal, including stores that sell themed costumes for Mario to wear, some of which get him into areas otherwise inaccessible.

Along with his usual jumping, butt stomping and climbing powers, Mario can use Cappy in numerous innovative ways. Mario can throw Cappy like a weapon; he can use him like a platform; and he can throw him at certain enemies and objects to possess them.

That's right, Mario flies into their bodies and controls these creatures, making use of their special abilities. He can make Goomba stacks to reach high places, fly as Bullet Bill and even rampage as a T-rex. There are dozens of possibilities, making it a consistently fun mechanic to explore.

With great graphics, flawless level design and more secrets than you can shake your cap at, *Super Mario Odyssey* will surprise players around every corner. Even after you beat the game, there are hundreds more moons to find and places to explore.

No Switch library should be without it.

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*Requires Madden NFL 18 or FIFA 18 Ronaldo Edition for Xbox One or PlayStation 4 (sold separately). Persistent internet connection and EA account required to play. Must be 13+ to create an account.

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Super Mario Odyssey

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MARIO'S ITINERARY

The Golden Path

The "Mario's Itinerary" section of each walkthrough chapter contains straightforward, objective-based tips on completing each kingdom's main tasks. Only those collectibles needed to advance to the next kingdom are discussed in this section. Refer to the "Extend Your Stay" portion of each chapter for comprehensive assistance concerning the collectible coins, Power Moons, and numerous secrets scattered throughout the world.

A Cappy of the Cap Kingdom

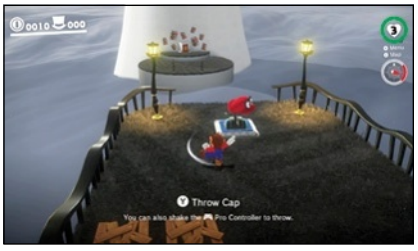




Mario is roused by a mysterious inhabitant of the Cap Kingdom known as a Bonneter—and he's got a fragment of Mario's hat! Get a feel for the movement controls as you run and jump after the escaping top hat. Crest the hills and make your way north over Glasses Bridge to the Central Plaza.

The hat's name is Cappy and he's got a bone to pick with Bowser too. Not only did Bowser take off with Peach, but he also kidnapped Cappy's sister, Tiara. Cappy proposes that he and Mario team up to go after Bowser together. Sounds like a plan!

B To the Top of Top-Hat Tower



Bowser's henchmen destroyed the airships of Bonneton, but Cappy knows of an old airship in the adjacent kingdom. To reach it, you must make your way to Top-Hat Tower.

Practice throwing the cap at the wooden posts and lamps as you cross the Central Plaza. Cappy automatically yanks any posts out of the ground, allowing Mario to collect the coins behind them.

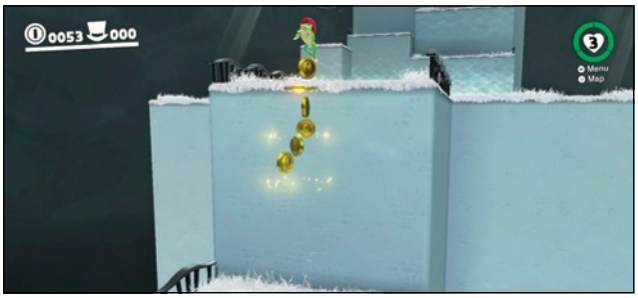
When ready, ascend the steps near the wooden crates and toss Cappy at the switch to retract the Sometimes Bridge.

Toss the cap at the Mini Goombas that appear near the entrance to Top-Hat Tower—it's easier than jumping on them. Then hit all six plants with the cap to make the flowers blossom. Do it quickly to earn a Heart before entering the tower.

The area inside Top-Hat Tower more closely resembles a platforming level that Mario fans have come to expect. Gather up the coins from the blocks and the floats, then approach the frogs.

Of all the uses Cappy is good for, his ability to capture another creature is top on the list. Toss Cappy at the frog to take control of it.

Use the frog's incredible jumping ability to leap through the rings floating off the ground. Continue up the tower, past the Mini Goombas, using the rings as your guide. As a frog, Mario can defeat Mini Goombas by just hopping into them.





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Capture the World

There are dozens of creatures that Mario and Cappy can capture and each has its own unique special ability or move. Experiment by tossing Cappy at everything you see—both friend and foe—to see what works.

SHADOW PLAY

Always pay attention to the shadows cast on the ground, as they often indicate rings, platforms, or collectibles that you may not otherwise see. Sometimes the tiniest of shadows is your only clue that a secret collectible is floating high above.

End the capture near the door and open the chest with a toss of the cap to obtain a Life Heart. This gold and striped Life-Up Heart doubles Mario's health to six segments. Exit the inside of Top-Hat Tower through the red door.



Activate the flag for Top-Hat Tower once outside (now Mario can warp to this location) and proceed counter-clockwise around the brim of the top hat. Numerous Bonneters warn of the damage done by Bowser's henchmen. They need you to reach the top of the tower to stop them. Follow the coins up the ramp to the top.

BOSS: TOPPER

Topper attacks with three spiked top-hats atop his head. Repeatedly toss Cappy at Topper as soon as the battle begins to knock the hats off his head one by one. Dodge his hats as they spin across the ground and make your way toward the fallen Broodal. Leap atop his head to score a hit.



The three hats spin across the arena as Topper recovers. Toss Cappy at the hats to destroy two of the three (and release a Heart) then continue to throw the cap to defend against the third hat.

Topper reappears with all three hats and the process repeats. Rapidly toss Cappy at the Broodal to knock his three top-hats from his head. Topper flees across the arena once his hats are gone, making it hard to jump onto him. Hit him with Cappy to stun him then, once again, leap onto his head to score another hit. Mario only needs to land two hits to defeat this first Broodal.







The Kingdom Next Door

Defeating Topper causes a Spark Pylon to appear. Toss Cappy at the pole to capture it. Spark Pylons allow Mario and Cappy to zip along an electrified wire, in this case transporting themselves all the way to Cascade Kingdom.

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GAME DIRECTOR, ASSASSIN'S CREED ORIGINS

Assassin's Creed has always pushed the boundaries of what we expect from open-world games, but after five annual releases, Ubisoft realized it would need to retool if it was to continue this tradition. Enter *Assassin's Creed Origins*, a look back at the beginnings of the Brotherhood and a rebirth for the series with some heavy RPG influences. We talked with game director Ashraf Ismail to learn more.



VITAL SIGNS

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GAME HIGHLIGHTS

ASSASSIN'S CREED ORIGINS, ASSASSIN'S CREED IV: BLACK FLAG, PRINCE OF PERSIA

***WGC: Assassin's Creed Origins* has a lot more RPG elements to it than previous *Assassin's Creed* games. Why go that route with the series?**

Ashraf Ismail: When we looked at how people consume Assassin's Creed, we saw two playstyles and it was split pretty evenly down the middle, 50-50. Some players were combative warriors and others were playing it as stealth. So, seeing this we asked ourselves, how can we delve deeper into allowing players the chance to craft the kind of character they prefer? We had also just finished *Black Flag* and underneath the hood of the naval aspect of that game was really an RPG mechanism. From how you upgrade the ship to the enemies you face, it was an RPG mechanic. We felt we had taken that big step already, so it made a lot of sense for us to keep going down that road.

> **"We know the competition is amazing out there so we needed to bring something fresh for the series."**

WGC: Now that those RPG elements permeate the entire game, how has that changed stealth?

AI: We had a mandate at the outset of modernizing *Assassin's Creed*. We're celebrating the 10-year anniversary this year and we know the competition is amazing out there so we needed to bring something fresh for the series. The challenge was that we needed to find an answer that was satisfying and good for stealth players, but that wasn't going to break the RPG element. One of the first questions we asked was how do you assassinate someone who is 20 levels higher than you? We came to the idea of stealth damage, so you can still do stealth attacks, but if you don't kill them, they'll turn around and fight you. So it was more of a creative and design challenge but something also unique to our game because not many games have the concept of stealth damage.

WGC: Is there ever a worry that players may face a bit of a grind when encountering high-level missions?

AI: If you want to be that one-hit kill assassin, you can get there, but you have to work for it. You have to work on crafting and work on your abilities. So, it was a way for us to tell players that if that's the way they want to go then invest yourself and you can get there. You can craft that type of assassin, but we ask you to put in some effort. For me, I was more worried that we couldn't come back with the same stuff from past games, even if it was just a different way to build my character, and that was the intent of *Assassin's Creed Origins*.

WGC: Moving around in the world is traditionally another big aspect of *Assassin's Creed*. How is Bayek's locomotion different from assassins that came before him?

AI: We wanted to remove the feeling that the assassin is doing something we don't want them to do, which could happen when navigating the world. So we worked to make sure Bayek is super-responsive to the controls. Next, the world is so organic and there are elements we learned from *Black Flag* in regards to more natural environments, but we were going on such a bigger level here that we had to work on the parkour to make sure it was super smooth. One grander direction we had, though, was if you can see something in the world you can get to it and it would be smooth no matter the terrain. So being able to scale rock faces, for example, was something we added to make sure getting around was accessible and smooth.

WGC: When you play *Assassin's Creed Origins*, what path do you personally prefer: combat or stealth?

AI: Personally, I'm always a mix. I love going in stealth but then at some point, because I love combat, I like having that option there. So I usually lean towards 60 percent stealth and 40 percent combat. Even in other RPGs, I'm always playing some mix of characters. I can never choose one. *[Laughs]*



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