
Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [Blazer](#) on Mon, 23 Feb 2004 08:29:45 GMT

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<http://www.gamemethod.com/archive/366.php>

Including the text of the article in case the link goes away:

Electronic Arts and the Growing Trends of the Gaming Industry

Anyone who plays videogames these days has probably played at least one game produced by Electronic Arts(EA). Brands like Madden, Medal of Honor, The Sims, and big name licenses like

2003, posting revenues of \$2.5 billion dollars for this past year. With strong franchises, a lot of money in pocket, and products on many different mediums, EA seems to have a bright future

growth present a threat to the advancement of games as a whole?

A brief history of EA shows an astounding pedigree. Founded in 1982, EA published many

critically acclaimed EA game was Archon, a top down, chess like strategy game. Other classics included The Seven Cities of Gold, where you explored the New World as Christopher Columbus,

created by the now famous Peter Molyneux and his development team at Bullfrog. In 1988, the famous Madden series was born on the Apple II, and it was quickly ported to the Sega Genesis in 1990, thus beginning the long series of Madden games to come.

In the 1990s, Electronic Arts had continued success with its publishing, licensing, and various acquisitions. In 1992, EA acquired Origin Systems Inc., thus securing the famous Ultima and Wing Commander licenses. Syndicate, another Molyneux classic, was published in 1993. EA Sports was formed in 1991 to develop several other licensed sports games like Madden, including NHL Hockey and FIFA. In 1994 Bullfrog struck again with Theme Park, and Looking Glass Studios' System Shock was released to incredible acclaim. In 1995, the first Need For Speed was released, and Bullfrog fully merged with EA. In 1997, EA released Ultima Online, one of the first persistent online worlds. Westwood Studios, the makers of the popular Command and Conquer series, was also acquired by EA in 1998 for \$122.5 million dollars. In 1999, the first Metal of Honor

branded games. Electronic Arts was now a force to be reckoned with in the gaming industry, but nothing could prepare the world for what would come in the next millennium.

The smash hit The Sims took the PC gaming world by storm in the year 2000. In early 2002, EA reported that The Sims had sold more than 6.3 million copies, making it one of the best selling games of all time, and the Medal of Honor series, the SSX series, and the various sports series developed by EA Sports are all top sellers. Licensed games from franchises like The Lord of the Rings, Harry Potter, and James Bond also make large contributions to revenues.

market. Sales figures for the year 2003 show that EA has no more than four games in the top ten best sellers list (see chart below), a trend that continues from years prior.

Rank	Game Title	Console	Publisher	Total sales
2	Pokemon Ruby	GBA	Nintendo	1,500,000
3	Pokemon Sapphire	GBA	Nintendo	1,400,000
4	Zelda: The Wind Waker	GCN	Nintendo	1,300,000
5	Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	PS2	Rockstar Games	1,100,000
6	Enter the Matrix	PS2	Atari	1,000,000
7	The Getaway	PS2	Sony	829,000
9	NBA Street Vol. 2	PS2	EA	790,000
10	The Sims	PS2	EA	707,000

Electronic Arts is expanding their operations more and more, and with new franchises like NFL Street, updates to old series like Madden, and a sequel to The Sims in production, their financial success as a corporation looks brighter than ever. Many analysts have praised the company and possibility that EA will become the most dominant force in the American gaming market.

But why am I telling you all of this? Why should you be worried that EA rules the American gaming market and dominates sales? Well, if EA becomes too large of a force in the industry, it has some potentially damaging side effects that will hurt us, the consumers.

First and foremost, competition breeds creativity. If EA can knock out the competition, it could (potentially) create a lot of problems for the industry. The early console wars gave birth to many creative and original ideas that helped push the industry to its current status. For example,

SEGA to launch its 16-bit Genesis system unimpeded. Nintendo was forced to catch up to SEGA in the early 90s by developing the SNES, and many console gamers remember this as a time of incredible innovation. As both companies were neck and neck, they were forced to push the boundaries of the industry, which greatly benefitted the consumer. Where there is competition, there is innovation, but if EA can keep selling the same football game every year with just a few small changes, how will games advance as a genre and art form?

With almost 600 million dollars in sales in 2003(not including December), and 20% of the entire when EA has enough money to buy out any studios that bring out a hit game, and secure popular franchises like Command and Conquer or SimCity. A good example is their acquisition of

DreamWorks Interactive (makers of Medal of Honor) in early 2000, and the subsequent exodus of the original Medal of Honor team two years later. One of those original team members, Scott Langteau, became the Chief Operating Officer for the newly formed Spark Unlimited development

wanted to create a place where the people who create game content have the best avenue by where they can get their amazing work into the game...In the past, it was difficult getting those

their own companies, such as Sacnoth (a company made up of former SNK and Squaresoft employees). If EA keeps acquiring budding development studios, and conforming new games to the current market trend, it might result in a stifling of creativity in the industry as a whole. Why innovate when you can stick to the get-rich-quick formula?

As entertainment software slowly grows into a lucrative business, companies once made up of gamers first and foremost are slowly giving way to corporations whose eyes are primarily fixed on

necessarily play games, but are instead primarily concerned about the bottom line. Every company that wants to stay in business needs to make money, however when execs are completely unfamiliar with the art of designing and developing a game, they tend to authorize less risks and more rehash. You could almost make an analogy between the gaming industry and Hollywood, in that major movie studios rarely put out truly experimental films and require most

industry (and possibly, their place in the company), resulting in more and more sequels that guarantee revenues, and less and less creative titles. Case in point: EA has released a total of six expansions for their flagship product, The Sims. These expansions retail at around \$30, but typically contain very little enhancement of the original premise, instead adding new skins and objects to use in game (which I feel should be made available online instead). On top of this, the design flaws of the original game (such as awkward pathfinding) have never been addressed. Despite all of these facts, the expansion packs are top sellers. Why make something better when

Although there are exceptions to the idea that big companies equal less innovative games (Capcom, Konami, Nintendo), the current economic trends (and the tendency for corporate execs to demand larger salaries) point towards a movement towards less chancy titles, which is why

Another example of corporate policy dictating game play is the changes made to Ultima Online in the year 2000. The rising success of Sony's EverQuest prompted EA to change UO in a way that would attract the same user base as EverQuest. Unfortunately, these changes eliminated much of the player vs player interaction that was a staple of UO, and cherished by many players. In the end, many of the older fans left Ultima Online as the ideas that made it groundbreaking were slowly phased out, only to be replaced by ideas that mirrored Everquest more "sugar-coated" game play.

on the making of Medal of Honor: Allied Assault, can see where the money went: the historical

accuracy was terrific, the cinematic style of each stage was painstakingly created, and the musical score was awe-inspiring. However, look at the wave of sequels that Medal of Honor has spawned, all using the same graphics engine and containing the same all-to-familiar game play elements, which unfortunately, still sell many copies. The new Ultima, UXO, will likely be developed with the shinier swords to swing around. EA will always go where the money is, and inventive developers

If we as gamers want the industry to grow and be accepted by the mainstream as art, the boundaries of our medium must be expanded by companies that are passionate about games and what experiences they can deliver to the audiences that play them. With wealthy companies like EA caring more about the bottom line than creativity, the progress of games as a medium will

aim of this article to demonize Electronic Arts or good business sense, but rather, to make gamers aware of something that has been brewing for a long time. Will the continued success of EA hurt the gaming industry as a whole? Only time will tell.

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry
Posted by [Deactivated](#) on Mon, 23 Feb 2004 09:29:12 GMT
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Search results for "EA sucks" in Google:
76,400
<http://www.google.com/search?q=ea+sucks>

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry
Posted by [dal11](#) on Mon, 23 Feb 2004 10:40:47 GMT
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Kinda funny you posted that article. Since i have been able to afford it I have bought games that i found interesting. In the heyday of the snes and genesis I on average bought a game a week. There was never a shortage of good, interesting titles out there for any system. I figured up last year I bought an astounding 3 titles. UT2003, Windwaker, and Generals/Zero Hour. The thing that does bug me is that theres not much to buy thats worth it. Most ARE sequels.Quite a difference from 5 years ago in the heyday of the PSX where the sequel mania started. If anything blame sony for the sucess of the playstation.

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry
Posted by [Blazer](#) on Tue, 24 Feb 2004 01:37:41 GMT
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I'm surprised there are so few comments on this. I guess people see more than a few lines of text and skip it rather than strain reading for 30 seconds

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [MrBob](#) on Tue, 24 Feb 2004 01:42:25 GMT

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I read it earlier, I just didn't feel like commenting.

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [Gernader8](#) on Tue, 24 Feb 2004 01:43:29 GMT

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I dont feel like reading it, I will wait for the movie.

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [tooncy](#) on Tue, 24 Feb 2004 01:45:09 GMT

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<http://www.gamespot.com/features/6087227/p-3.html>

Huge developers like EA truly are sucking the life out of small developers.

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [gam3rj](#) on Tue, 24 Feb 2004 02:08:57 GMT

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dal11Kinda funny you posted that article. Since i have been able to afford it I have bought games that i found interesting. In the heyday of the snes and genesis I on average bought a game a week. There was never a shortage of good, interesting titles out there for any system. I figured up last year I bought an astounding 3 titles. UT2003, Windwaker, and Generals/Zero Hour. The thing that does bug me is that theres not much to buy thats worth it. Most ARE sequels.Quite a difference from 5 years ago in the heyday of the PSX where the sequel mania started. If anything blame sony for the sucess of the playstation.

Yep, Playstation really had the starting point of mainstream gaming. I hate most of EA's franchises, with exception of CnC and Battlefield, which (not counting CnC anymore) were both made by in house developers, not just EA.

EA is the largest 3rd party in the world. No doubt about it, meaning it overpasses even large parties such as SEGA.

But hell, I'm fine playing my first party titles on my GCN so I the hell with EA, the only profit they gain from me is Command and Conquer titles...that are actually good.

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [Nukelt15](#) on Tue, 24 Feb 2004 02:24:37 GMT

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EA is making mass quantities of incredible crap...case in point: Generals, or the lame "Secret Weapons of WW2" expansion for BF1942 (adding things that were never in that war in an obvious attempt to make an otherwise very realistic game more like other FPS games)...or the zillions of Sims incarnations.

Then there's Vivendi, which is just as bad...forcing Blizzard to release what SHOULD have been a PC/Mac title on consoles (I refer, of course, to Starcraft:Ghost, the Starcraft saga's answer to Renegade), cancelling popular TV shows, and other dumb decisions...

Gaming is going to the dumbasses. I predict a couch potato simulator within the next decade.

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [Majiin Vegeta](#) on Tue, 24 Feb 2004 02:33:42 GMT

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EA.. the next microsoft..

long live Nintendo and Sega

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [Creed3020](#) on Tue, 24 Feb 2004 03:24:41 GMT

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Very good article. It not only sheds a brighter light on the current obvious situation but the obvious problems associated with coporations that turn ino giants.

ie Microsoft and EA

My favourite line from that article is true-spoken and summarizes the article well.

Quote:Where there is competition, there is innovation

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [boma57](#) on Tue, 24 Feb 2004 03:38:49 GMT

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Hey, what happens to all great empires?

They fall. It pertains to everything.

If EA makes it to the very top, they'll get cocky with no competition around and eventually fuck themselves up. If they make it that far.

Although I don't see that happening any time soon...Most likely, another company will emerge to rival them and this new company to EA will be like Microsoft/Linux to Apple. The educated to the normal, computer illiterate schmoe*. Because let's face it - A stray good game might float through, but generally, EA is marketing to the average Joe Schlum moron as opposed to...respectable gamers like ourselves.

*I've got nothing against Apple, per se. I use iTunes (This is not to say that I've scraped Kazaa) and Quicktime, and I'd buy an iPod if I had the cash.

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [gam3rj](#) on Tue, 24 Feb 2004 04:01:02 GMT

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EA screws themselves over the day they get so cocky and confident that they make their own console. Heheh.

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [DragonFg](#) on Tue, 24 Feb 2004 18:11:43 GMT

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Majiin Vegetalong live Nintendo and Sega

ditto

I say go Bungie! Halo rules!

LOL I went to Bungie's site and I've never even heard of any of their other games.

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [Deactivated](#) on Tue, 24 Feb 2004 18:45:57 GMT

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DragonFgl say go Bungie! Halo rules!

Bungie is owned by Microsoft. So basically you're saying "Go Microsoft!".

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [DragonFg](#) on Tue, 24 Feb 2004 18:58:19 GMT

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Well I figure Bunie is owned by Microsoft like Westwood was owned by EA.

So Im' basically saying "Go underrecognized, monopoly owned video game companies!"

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [hareman](#) on Tue, 24 Feb 2004 19:38:47 GMT

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<sigh>

I own EA stock and I should complain that they make money. I think not. As for the idea that they are sucking the life out of small developers; where in the world do you think a bunch of guys who are making a Mod for fun (desert combat) can be signed to make the full version and still be having fun!

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [terminator 101](#) on Tue, 24 Feb 2004 20:48:26 GMT

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Majjin VegetaEA.. the next microsoft..

Truer words were never written.

Except that EA is even worse than microsoft

About the C&C:

RIP westwood

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [terminator 101](#) on Tue, 24 Feb 2004 20:50:59 GMT

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TaximesIf EA makes it to the very top, they'll get cocky with no competition around and eventually fuck themselves up.

I look forward to that day :twisted:

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [Renx](#) on Tue, 24 Feb 2004 21:12:58 GMT

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I agree with Taximes and gam3rj.

I think when a rival company comes along, they will get scared and do something stupid like make a consol, which will fail terribly....

Either that or when they become too big of a monopoly, the gov't will force them to break into seperate companies, thus becoming each others rivals...

(an opinion:)

OT: I just awnted to say that, when people talk about the renegade modding comunity coming together to make bigger and better things instead of constant fighting, isn't that the opposite of what's being said here? If they all came together, there would be no competition, and from what i'm getting out of this aticle.....no competition is bad.

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [tooncy](#) on Tue, 24 Feb 2004 22:11:02 GMT

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Either that or EA will get on top, and keep producing Sims after Sims and Medal of Honor after Medal of Honor, untill finally people get bored of the same crap, and stop buying their subpar games. The lack of sales would force them in to bankrupcy!

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [General Havoc](#) on Tue, 24 Feb 2004 22:20:33 GMT

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monitor, had to copy it to notepad.

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [Creed3020](#) on Wed, 25 Feb 2004 01:42:00 GMT

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readable on my monitor, had to copy it to notepad.

wtf are you talking about

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [terminator 101](#) on Wed, 25 Feb 2004 02:01:51 GMT

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Yeah, that blue text is very hard to read. That article on these forums is written in blue I too was unable to read it, so I had to highlight it with the mouse, and then I was able to read it

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [Hydra](#) on Wed, 25 Feb 2004 02:28:48 GMT

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toonyEither that or EA will get on top, and keep producing Sims after Sims and Medal of Honor after Medal of Honor, until finally people get bored of the same crap, and stop buying their subpar games. The lack of sales would force them in to bankruptcy! Hmm... I think you're on to something there....

It is a well known fact that there are millions of C&C fans around the world who are all fed up by the lack of support given to the general C&C community by EA.

What would happen if when all of those people go shopping for video games, that they said, "I think I'll buy something else," when they pick up a game that has the EA logo on it?

EA wouldn't go into bankruptcy, but it would certainly open their eyes to how they are treating the C&C community. They would finally start paying attention to the games formerly made by Westwood after they realize how much in sales they are losing to the C&C community's boycott of their products.

If a boycott of EA products in general was to ever be organized within the C&C community, EA might finally start paying a little more attention to the neglected C&C community, start supporting their old services of C&C games, and might actually start thinking about a good storyline before making a C&C game.

I know it sounds a little far-fetched at this point, and maybe a little stupid, but I believe a boycott of EA games by the C&C community would finally get EA to change their minds about how they treat "old" games like Renegade (which isn't even that old, mind you).

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [loser99](#) on Sat, 28 Feb 2004 04:17:05 GMT

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hydra1945

It is a well known fact that there are millions of C&C fans around the world who are all fed up by the lack of support given to the general C&C community by EA...

I don't know if there are millions. The average gamer probably doesn't know who makes their product. It's like asking what movie studio made a movie. No one pays attention to that. Most people have not played games that are better than EA's since they are far and few between. I can't ever remember the rehauling of a publishing company due to people not buying their products.

I would like to suggest that everyone consider Blizzard Entertainment though. I hear alot of C&C fans just say how much Blizzard sucks because they like C&C better than the "Craft" series, but Blizzard cares more about their products than any company in the industry. If there is a problem they listen. They have an incredible community, and that community has a good relationship with the company. EA simply chooses games that have a mainstream appeal topic so they sell better.

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry
Posted by [tooncy](#) on Sun, 29 Feb 2004 15:01:47 GMT

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C&C was meant to have guns, nukes, and an excellent story. I don't want blizzard poisoning my C&C with 'magic' and 'orcs' and 'wizzards'.

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry
Posted by [loser99](#) on Mon, 01 Mar 2004 01:30:31 GMT

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tooncyC&C was meant to have guns, nukes, and an excellent story. I don't want blizzard poisoning my C&C with 'magic' and 'orcs' and 'wizzards'.

i wasnt suggesting Blizzard make CNC games, I was suggesting that you purchase their products because they are good. Blizzard actually made a game called STARCRAFT!!!! that had guns, nukes, and satifactory story. I guess you dont play games that much, because if you cant get past the fact there is no real difference between casting a spell and firing a weapon thats a problem. Whether a game is about wizards or guns its just a facade, when you have played the games 1000 times your not even thinking about the atmosphere your thinking about the core gameplay, and Blizzard makes very good core gameplay.

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry
Posted by [tooncy](#) on Mon, 01 Mar 2004 02:06:42 GMT

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I've played it, and I don't like it. It just wasn't as good as C&C. I find myself constantly looking at the atmosphere of games. If the graphics, sound, and story suck, usually it effects the gameplay. Also, there is a great difference between a firearm and a spell, one is real and one is not.

Oh, and about me not playing games:

<http://www.n00bstories.com/image.fetch.php?id=1128958056>

(Yes starcraft is on there, but so are some other games I've been meaning to uninstall.)

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry
Posted by [loser99](#) on Mon, 01 Mar 2004 02:42:17 GMT

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First what I meant by playing games alot, is play one specific game alot. When you play a game alot, you stop thinking about certain things, because if you were thinking about everything it will be just too much information and you wouldnt be able to play very well cause your always thinking about "stuff." This "stuff" is non-gameplay elements, like graphics and sounds. When your playing your 1000th game of renegade and and your making an attack against the enemy, you are not thinking about the sound of the gun firing, and you are not thinking about the texture on the gun. You see it, you hear it, but it is not processed as being good or bad. This is proven in basic psychology. What you are thinking about is the core gameplay. I am not saying you do not ever notice graphics/sound, but its only an initial reaction. Renegade has bad graphics and sound compared to newer games out now, but the gameplay is why you play it. It is why you play Red Alert 2 or 90% of those games on your desktop.

Warcraft III is a good game at all levels of play and I think people on this board should try it out if they want to play an RTS. There is tremendous support for it coming from a company that runs itself like gamers want companies to run themselves, not like how EA is run; the whole reason this thread was created. I do not understand why you wouldn't at least support the philosophy behind Blizzard which I was trying to point out.

Subject: Article on EA's "monopoly" of the gaming industry

Posted by [tooncy](#) on Mon, 01 Mar 2004 13:21:52 GMT

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I do agree that blizzard is very good at supporting their games, and I do agree about the core gameplay theory, but if you are being attacked then the sound and graphics DO come into play. Usually, the brain is focusing on the gameplay, but sometimes other factors intertwine with that. For example, I'm almost always listening to the phase tank sound in Renegade Alert, because I can't see it well. And with your example about the gun sound, if you hear a gun firing, your either going to turn around start firing, or run to the nearest tunnel for cover.