The Future of Gaming: Crash Course Games #29

Crash Course: Games
https://youtube.com/watch?v=bMQprYPlK54
https://nerdfighteria.info/v/bMQprYPlK54

===== Introduction (0:00) =====
Hello, I'm Andre Meadows and welcome to the final episode of Crashcourse Games. That's right we made it to the final level, we go one more, kill screen. Yes we've had a lot of fun here talking about games and we thought what better way to sign off this series than to look to towards the future of gaming.

Now this is the future we're talking about here and I don't have a crystal ball so this episode is going to be a bit more speculative than what you're used to, also this was filmed in 2016 so keep that in mind. But that being said today we are going to do our best to look at some of the major gaming genres we've discussed in this series and make some predictions about where they may be headed in the future.

(theme music)

===== Future of Consoles (0:42) =====

We've talked about a lot of different types of games on this show, we even did an episode on sports! But we've spent a lot of time in this series talking about video games, and as they seem to be changing so quickly with improvements in technology, their future is the most difficult to predict, but I think we can say we're pretty sure about a few things. Video games are going to continue to get more immersive and reach an even broader audience.

From Slug Russell's 'Spacewar!' (exclamation point) on the $120,000 PDP-1, to Bethesda's Fallout 4 on the $300 XBOX One or PS4, improvements in technology have given more players than ever the opportunity to play great games and we hope see that continue in the future.

But the future of the console itself isn't completely certain. Perceptable improvements from generation to generation are diminishing, and the wow-factor players once had from moving from 2D slide scrollers like Super Mario Brothers and Sonic the Hedgehog, to 3D rendered worlds like Super Mario 64 and Sonic Adventure, aren't going to happen again. At least not on our televisions. But this doesn't necessarily mean that consoles are doomed Microsoft's XBOX chief Phil Spencer suggests that 'Consoles will continue to see much innovation but it will soon become more iterative like our cell phones.' And this might already have started to happen if the recent mid-cycle updates of the PS4 Neo and XBOX Project Scorpio are any indication.

Our games might get smarter too, neural networks and deep learning are driving better and better artificial intelligence Google Deep Mind published a paper last year, in which they trained an AI to play 49 video games form the Atari 2600 and it beat a top human player in 23 of those games.

And just this year they taught it to navigate 3D mazes such as those in FPS games like Doom. Maybe one day NPC's won't just walk into walls but react, hide, ask questions and provide valuable aid just like the players. (whispering) And that's when the robots take over, judgment day.

And like we've seen with from move first to cartridges then to CDs, DVD's, Blu-Ray and even flashdrives and SD Cards, games tend to follow the most advanced storage formats. But whats next? The death of optical media seems almost certain, but some players still want to own physical copies of their games. For example, in 2013 when Microsoft announced that the upcoming XBOX One would require an internet connection to allow their system to actively manage and store digital content on their cloud service there was an immediate backlash from players and Microsoft shortly after retracted those hard-wear requirements.

But as I mentioned before console manufacturers seem posed to start iterating much more frequently. As technology columnist Kyle Orland believes 'The console game market may start to resemble the app market on mobile phones in the future. That is digital game libraries may follow the user, but software platforms could remain locked.' This model is actually somewhat similar to the PC gaming model on Steam.

===== Future of Games (3:09) =====

But what about games? Games are only going to get better, right? Well technology reporter Yannick LeJaq suggested that the future of video games could look a lot like television. For example, Square Enix's release of Hitman in 2016 followed an episodic distribution model allowing players to purchase each of its seven mission across an extended release cycle. Some players argued that this distribution model allowed developers to charge more for the entire series, which was clearly true by their pricing. Hitman developer IO Interactive claims that releasing a game in this way allows developers to actively shape and evolve their games over time, as they analyze player behaviours and receive feedback from users. So is episodic games a good thing, or is it just a way to make more money? It's hard to say.

But none of this really matters if the industry doesn't address what columnist Mark Hill claims is the industry's biggest future problem, a reliance on nostalgia. And don't get me wrong, I love nostalgia. What up 90's kids! But in 2015 IGN posted it's top 11 biggest stories by traffic volume from that year's E3 and every story except 1 was either a sequel, remake or existing game.

With the tendency to see more and more remastered games and iterations of existing properties, the industry does seem to be appeasing players with nostalgia, but at the cost of new and original content.

But maybe budding game developers will fix the problem, the barrier to entry for game design seems to be lowering, you have indie game developers, the four man team that started No Man's Sky, even games being funded on Kickstarter. And as it get easier and easier for developers to create great games hopefully with them will come more diverse backgrounds and more diverse stories.

Games are telling more and more detailed narratives, we've come a long way from the first cut-scene in Pacman. Take the last of us in 2013, it has become one of the most awarded games in history, and its use of real voice actors and motion capture shows us just how far we've come from those digital voice of Castle Wolfenstein. Or excuse me (muffled) 'those digital voices from Castle Wolfenstein' But then I suppose of it you consider the almost existent storytelling of Star Wars Battlefront and campaignless Overwatch its harder to guess if improved storytelling is coming or going in future games. OR maybe it will just depend on the game.

===== Future of Board Games (5:02) =====

Now board games may not be evolving at the same rate as video games but they still have a promising future. As we discussed in our episode on American vs. Euro style board games there seems to be a renewed interest in them. Given increasing sales and attendance rates at events like the Spiele in Essen, Germany, and Gen Con Indianapolis, Indiana.

We may also be seeing another shift in board game design towards legacy gaming. Take the release of Pandemic Legacy, season 1, in 2015, in this game each play through slowly and permanently alters the state of the game. The game is designed to be played only 12 to 24 times, and as players complete each session game rules change and characters can be lost and each win or loss effects future game play. The Guardian journalist Owen Duffy called Pandemic Legacy 'an extraordinary triumph of design, not just as a game, but as a piece of episodic storytelling.' And this approach to game design isn't that different than say a RPG campaign in Dungeons and Dragons. This is a framework that allows this style of play to be more accessible to a larger audience, and given the games current first place ranking on Board Game Geek and remember that's out of 10,000 games. With Monopoly being way near the bottom, why ya'll hate on Monopoly? It seems to be doing something players like.

===== Future of Players (6:03) =====

And on that note, what about players? Well considering in January of 2016 ESPN launched an Esports column, we're starting to see are we're likely to see more famous Esports players in the near future. As more traditional sports broadcasters start to take notice, maybe leagues will grow to the point where they get their own special night of the week, just like football, maybe. But these expert level gaming skills will extend far beyond just Esports athletes. Lets go to the thought-bubble.

According to the Gaming Advocacy Group the average gamer is now 31! That is to say that we are entering a time period where the current generation of adults and all the generations that follow will have grown up playing video games. And by the time an American has reached 21 they will have averaged more than 10,000 hours playing video games. To put that into perspective, that's the amount of time a student will spend in school from fifth grade to graduation.

===== Conclusion (6:51) =====

So what does this all mean? Well it means that future gamers are going to be good, really good. Game designer Jane McGonigal theorizes that the United States is well on its way to an entire generation of expert gamers. According to McGonigal gamers learn to be expert collaborators and problem solvers and that 'if future gamers could realize this potential and channel these skills they would have the potential to tackle complex real-world problems.'

McGonigal's theory was put to the test in the online puzzle video game Fold It, which you may remember we mentioned in episode 1. Fold It is an online puzzle video game involving protein folding, and awards high scores to the most efficiently folded proteins. The game allows anyone with a computer and internet connection to log in and try. In 2010 57,000 players effectively outperformed algorithmically computed solutions. And in 2011 players helped decipher the structure of an aids-causing monkey virus that had gone unsolved for 15 years in 10 days. Thanks thought-bubble.

So McGonigal might be on to something, but one thing is definitely clear. We are becoming a society of gamers and surely with all this experience we must be getting good at something! So yes this has been a lot of speculation, but what we do know and can see is that our game worlds are continually merging with our real world.

Blurring reality in VR, teaching us in classrooms. allowing us to lead alternate lives in fantastical worlds, encouraging us to assume the lives of other characters in our own world and of course catching those Pokémon on Pokémon GO. Games help us form friendships and communities, giving us a place to compete with others all over the world and of course just giving us something to do while we wait in line, or sit on the toilet, you know you do it, don't, don't you judge. So whether it be on an arcade machine, a home console, a mobile phone, a basketball court or a dungeon in your imagination or through virtual reality, there is always a place for you to play, because gaming reflects the diversity in ourselves. I am truly excited for whatever the future of gaming will bring, and I hope you are too.

I'm Andre Meadows and thank you for co-oping along with me and thank you for watching. Good game everyone, the winner is you. Game over.

===== Credits (8:46) =====

Crashcourse games is filmed at the Chad and Stacey Emigholz Studio in Indianapolis, Indiana and its made with the help of all these nice people. If you'd like to keep Crashcourse free for everyone forever, you can support the series at Patreon, a crowdfunding platform that allows you to support the content you love.

Speaking of Patreon we'd like to thank all our patrons in general and we'd like to specifically thank our High Chancellor of Knowledge Morgan Lizop and her Vice Prinicipal Micheal Hunt, thank you for your support.