

# MEC @ E3 2017

KEY THEMES & TAKEAWAYS

JUNE 2017



**The 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) hosted over 65,000 people, made more than 200 announcements and reveals, and had more than 2,300 games, devices and toys on display across 800,000 square feet.**

---

E3 is the world's premier event for computer, video, mobile games and related products. At E3, the video game industry's top talent pack the Los Angeles Convention Center, connecting tens of thousands of the best, brightest and most innovative in the interactive entertainment industry. For three exciting days, leading-edge companies, groundbreaking new technologies and never-before-seen products are showcased. It is where we first were introduced to Nintendo's Wii, Sony's PlayStation 3 video game console, the Microsoft Kinect Motion Controller and the Oculus Virtual Reality headset.

This year, to compete with other conferences in the industry (i.e. Game Developer's Conference, Gamescom, Tokyo Games Show), E3 strengthened their fan focus, bringing more than 15,000 fans—a major change from other years where the focus was on the usual industry insiders and press. In addition to the typical booths and displays, E3 also added shops around the show selling T-shirts, hoodies and toys connected to top games to amaze and connect with gaming fans.

Companies like Electronic Arts, Ubisoft and Bethesda, as well as console makers Sony, Microsoft and Nintendo, talked about how storytelling is reaching new heights, the classics keeping it fresh, tech pushing boundaries of how we play and the love of nostalgia driving sales.



# WHY E3 MATTERS TO MARKETERS

Whether or not you're a gaming company, E3 provides utility to marketers looking to find fresh ways to connect with consumers. Whether it is finding ways to integrate into new and legacy game titles, learning how the content landscape is evolving for emerging technology (i.e. virtual reality), understanding the devices that have become mainstays in the family rooms of many consumers, or simply trying to get a better sense of what a passionate, brand-loyal consumer sentiment (i.e. gamers) care about and invest in, E3 offers a glimpse into a brand-loyal community that prides itself on connectivity, conversation and transparency.

Not convinced this is a valuable consumer segment to understand? Just look at Twitch, the world's leading social video platform and community for gamers, with 9.7 million daily active users and 2+ million unique streamers per month. Passionate, vocal communities can have massive influence on purchase decisions, both for gaming purchases and general purchases, as well (think CPG, hospitality, entertainment, etc.). Understanding the major themes coming out of E3 allows marketers, regardless of their industry, to find new ways to connect with consumers in the spaces they turn to for entertainment, escape and connection - delivering utility, community and engaged experiences.

**Across the global, there are 2.6 billion gamers. They spent nearly \$100 billion on games last year, not including the costs of headsets, consoles and computers.**  
-Newzoo Research

# MEC @ E3 2017: KEY THEMES

1

**STORYTELLING  
REACHES NEW  
HEIGHTS VIA  
TECH**

2

**THE CLASSICS  
KEEP IT FRESH**

3

**TECH PUSHES  
THE BOUNDARIES  
OF HOW WE PLAY**

4

**NOSTALGIA  
DRIVING SALES**

# 1

## STORYTELLING REACHES NEW HEIGHTS VIA TECH

What separates basic games from the blockbuster titles has always been two components: the technology and the storytelling. If you focus on the storytelling aspect, what separates good from great video game storytelling are complex, layered narratives that allow for players to engage, explore and immerse themselves in storylines that take them to different decades, continents and even planets, offering experiences they could not get anywhere else.



What we saw this year was an interesting intersection of technology and storytelling driving new opportunities for engagement, resulting in next-level gaming that not only offered even richer stories, but also new tech-driven ways to unlock and experience those stories. What's key to understand here is that it is not about adding new technologies (we will get to that shortly), it is about interweaving the capabilities for enhanced storytelling that technology offers to provide new layers between levels, sub-plots amongst larger plotlines and intricacies between the gamers, that make these games so compelling. For marketers, understanding how to generate interesting stories through technology and experiences can make your brand stand out in a crowded space.



# 1

## STORYTELLING REACHES NEW HEIGHTS VIA TECH

### **Detroit: Become Human**

Detroit: Become Human is a sci-fi game that centers around seven different playable characters in the near future. As with previous Quantic Dream games, Detroit will feature an interactive narrative that apparently took Cage more than two years to write, and includes extensive motion-captured performances. ►

### **A Way Out**

EA's new game is a co-op prison break game that can only be played in cooperative split-screen mode. This means that you cannot play A Way Out by yourself. The ability to see what your player is doing in real-time via split-screen provides a unique experience to the game. ►

### **Wolfenstein II**

The New Colossus is a sequel to Wolfenstein: The New Order, set in 1961 America and featuring a cast of pulp movie archetypes. If you want to shoot Nazis in a video game this year, maybe this will be a good way to do it! Also, somebody takes LSD. The New Colossus will come out on October 27<sup>th</sup>. ►

### **Rocket League**

Rocket League is making its way to the Nintendo Switch, with some Nintendo-themed items and cars exclusive to the Switch edition. Rocket League will offer cross network play against other platforms. ►

### **Dishonored II**

The Bethesda game offers a standalone story set within the universe that offers a new angle to the narrative. ►

# 2

## THE CLASSICS KEEP IT FRESH

Many of E3's most exciting announcements aren't about new games, rather about new chapters or iterations of classic titles that many gamers have grown up with. Whether it's integrating new ways of growing the title's universe (e.g. introducing new characters), changing the way a game can be played (e.g. shifting from first-person to another format), or integrating technologies for more complex interactions within the games, we saw fan favorites offering up fresh takes on the classic games.



There's a reason certain titles continue to remain steadfast in popularity and have grown into blockbuster franchises over the years; when there's a strong story to be told, satisfying experiences to be provided, and a level of consistency that delivers, players often remain loyal to their titles of choice. Sound familiar, brand marketers? Comparable to any product, if a brand has a history of loyalty amongst users, finding new and unexpected ways to build out the brand's story, integrate cross-brand experiences and find new ways to surprise and delight can be challenging. However, this is a great opportunity for brands who want to get involved in gaming, but aren't ready to invest in newer titles or even create their own, to partner with established titles.



# 2

## THE CLASSICS KEEP IT FRESH

### **Madden NFL 18**

Classic games like the Madden franchise attempted something new. As a perennial favorite, this version includes a story mode named 'Longshot', which focuses on a young man trying to play in the NFL. ▶

### **Star Wars: Battlefront II**

EA's sequel to the 2015 game includes characters reaching back to Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace, as well as characters (like Rey) from the ongoing trilogy. ▶

### **Metroid**

After almost ten years of waiting (filled only with the poorly received Metroid: Other M and bizarre spin-off Federation Force) Nintendo has finally announced a fourth Metroid Prime game, coming to the Switch. There's barely any other information – no release date, screenshots, or gameplay trailer – but presumably they'll be more on the latest adventures of Samus in the coming months. ▶

### **Assassin's Creed: Origins**

After a year-long break, the Assassin's Creed series is back with a new game with mechanics that take you to the very beginnings of the Assassin's Brotherhood: the age of Ancient Egypt. ▶

### **Age Of Empires Remaster**

To mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Age of Empires, Microsoft announced a remaster of the original game featuring new and improved gameplay. Xbox Live-powered multiplayer, and a fully remastered soundtrack. Every asset has been remade, including tile sets and animation. ▶

### **Mario + Rabbids: Kingdom Battle**

Rumored and then leaked for months, Ubisoft opened this year's press event with the official unveiling of Mario + Rabbids: Kingdom Battle. As the leaks suggested, it is a tactical RPG featuring Mario, Luigi, Peach and Yoshi as well as four Nintendo-clad Rabbids. ▶

### **Super Mario Odyssey**

Super Mario Odyssey is Nintendo's next big blockbuster Switch game, and its out on October 27th. Along with the release date, Nintendo showed a new trailer for the game, showing off some of the new gameplay mechanics and levels. In Odyssey, Mario will be accompanied by Cappy, who players will be able to use to take control of enemy characters (including a giant T-Rex!) in a new Capture mechanic. ▶

# 3

## TECH PUSHES THE BOUNDARIES OF HOW WE PLAY

If it's one thing you can count on E3 for, it's a glimpse into the future of gameplay itself. From clunky devices (remember blowing on NES consoles when they didn't work?) to the different form factors that have proliferated over the years (e.g. handheld devices like Nintendo Switch). As the types of gamers continue to grow and evolve and the role of gaming within the home increases, so do the ways to play games. This year we saw the unveiling of Microsoft's Xbox One X, as well as some classic titles refresh themselves by launching virtual reality (VR) versions for various VR headsets. Surprisingly, in a world being increasingly setup for VR (thanks for companies like Facebook and Google), it was surprising to not see more VR announcements from major players; however, this may be due to a focus on content not hardware.



As devices like smart speakers (e.g. Amazon's Echo), digital media players (e.g. Google Chromecast) and other smart devices enter the home, it's important to understand how hardware like consoles evolve to complement (or challenge) this ever-crowding in-home tech ecosystem. While devices like VR headsets offer new levels of tech-fueled gameplay, it's important to note that there are still expensive devices that many gamers consider 'add-ons' versus necessities. It is the chicken-egg situation with consumers demanding that enough high-quality content is available to justify investing in expensive tech, while device makers are leery to invest in high-quality, experience content experiences until they see device sales increase. These devices require a compelling reason to invest in them, or an enticing way to showcase why they are worth the hype.



# 3

## TECH PUSHES THE BOUNDARIES OF HOW WE PLAY

### **Xbox One X**

Teased in 2016, Project Scorpio, Microsoft's newest game console, finally got a name (Xbox One X) launch date (November 7th) and a price tag (\$499 - \$100 more than the PlayStation 4 Pro). The new console will have more graphical power than the PlayStation 4 Pro (6 teraflops of graphical power that runs at 1172MHz vs. Sony's PlayStation 4 Pro with 4.2 teraflops running at 911MHz), supports 4K gameplay, offers improved graphics on your home TV, and is compatible with all current Xbox One accessories. ▶

### **Nintendo Switch**

Nintendo spoke about the Nintendo Switch's success, and how learning from failures (e.g. Wii U) helped them ensure they focused on "a regular cadence of great content" to drive success. The Nintendo Switch had the biggest initial 2-day sales of any Nintendo console. Nintendo predicts that it will sell 13 million units by April 2018. (Source: Nintendo). ▶

### **Superhot VR**

Originally an Oculus Rift exclusive, the game is coming to PlayStation's VR headset, allowing players to use their physical bodies at the actual input control. ▶

### **Doom VFR**

This standalone VR shooter game designed for PlayStation VR & HTC Vive will be coming to the marketplace. ▶

### **Transference**

Combining VR with '80s-style techno-horror, this VR game from Ubisoft and Elijah Wood's SpectreVision studio will be available for both VR headsets (Oculus Rift, HTC Vive & PlayStation VR) as well as non-VR devices (PCs, Xbox One & PlayStation 4). ▶

### **Fallout 4**

This popular title is getting a VR version, offering players access to the full open-world game via VR headset, accessible via the HTC Vive. ▶

# 4

## NOSTALGIA DRIVING SALES

No matter how many devices, console, titles, characters and stories hit the marketplace, gamers tend to be nostalgic for the games they played in their youth, as well as the devices they used to play them on. Think about the first time you played a video game, whether it was Space Invaders on an Atari, Super Mario Bros. on a Nintendo Entertainment System (NES), or Tetris or Pokémon on Game Boy. Whether you consider yourself a hard-core gamer or not, these are memories of experiences that have driven much of the gaming market, as well as plenty of nostalgia-driven product launches over the years.



With the gamer profile diversifying, this year's nostalgia-tinged announcements excited both casual and serious gamers due to the shared affinity for positive memories and experiences. This was proven by 2016's sold-out Nintendo NES Classic Edition release, which offered easy access to 30 classic Nintendo games, which underscored the notion that sometimes it's not about the most cutting edge vs simpler, satisfying experiences that excite consumers. As gaming becomes an increasingly popular way to connect, not just between gamers but between members of households who own gaming consoles and devices, integrating nostalgia into the gaming experiences offers gamers of all types an enticing reason to engage. Leveraging memories of positive experiences (think nostalgia-  
vertising), consumers will be more keen to engage with your brand.

The logo for MEC, consisting of the letters "MEC" in a bold, white, sans-serif font, slanted upwards to the right.

# 4

## NOSTALGIA DRIVING SALES

### **Yoshi & Kirby**

Nintendo showed off some trailers for new Yoshi and Kirby games coming to the Switch in 2018. The Kirby title showed off some new gameplay where Kirby can befriend enemies, instead of simply eating them for their abilities. Meanwhile, the Yoshi game seems to be a follow up to Yoshi's Woolly World, this time setting the action in a world built out of cardboard, with an interesting mechanic where players can flip over the 2D levels to the other side. Both games offer cooperative gameplay, which should gel nicely with the Switch's Joy-Con controller. ▶

### **Xbox Original Controller & Games**

The original, oversized controller from the original Xbox console (known to some affectionately as "The Duke"), is coming back this holiday season for the Xbox One and Windows 10 devices. This complements Microsoft's announcement of backwards capability for the original Xbox to the Xbox One, and offers diehard fans a nostalgia throwback. They also announced original Xbox games to the Xbox One, resulting in games that look and play better across all Xbox One offerings. ▶

### **Crash Bandicoot**

Crash Bandicoot's remaster collection, N. Sane Trilogy, is coming out very soon with new features and the option to play the entire game as Crash's sister. ▶

### **Pokémon**

In a surprise announcement during Nintendo's E3 2017 livestream, the Pokémon Company's CEO and President Tsunekazu Ishihara announced that a core-series Pokémon game is currently in development for the Nintendo Switch. ▶

### **Beyond Good and Evil II**

Ubisoft finally unveiled Beyond Good and Evil 2. Beyond Good and Evil 2 is the spiritual successor to the cult classic, a prequel that will transport players into a profoundly multicultural world, capturing the spirit of the original with grandiose decors and intense dramas that play out across a vast universe. ▶

### **Age of Empires**

Microsoft is remastering the original Age of Empires with a Definitive Edition that will offer upgraded 4K graphics and improved gameplay. ▶

### **Shadow of Colossus**

The 2005 PlayStation 2 cult classic is getting a HD remake for PlayStation 4. The game content is the same as the original version, but all the assets are being remade. ▶

# “ OVERHEARD @ E3 2017 ”

**“The focus with every new installment of Call of Duty is finding different ways to keep it fresh. We had reached the point (where) the freshest thing we could do and most welcome by fans is to hit the reset button.”**

– Eric Hirshberg, CEO, Activision Publishing

**“We’ve been very thoughtful in the development cycle to make sure that the content would be ready when we needed it to be ready.”**

– Reggie Fils-Aimé, President & CEO, Nintendo

**“The PS4 platform is in its prime, with the industry's best lineup of exclusive and partner titles slated to release this year, taking full advantage of the power of the PS4 system.”**

– Andrew House, President & Global CEO, Sony Interactive Entertainment

**“The focus I had on this show was games you're going to get to play in the next year... Frankly, I loved the fact I didn't have to bring out Gears and Halo just to say, hey. People know we have Gears and Halo in our portfolio, and we're working on other things that aren't on this list.”**

– Phil Spencer, Head of Xbox

**“It's just we have quite a lot on our plate at the moment.”**

– Yves Guillemot, CEO, Ubisoft

**For questions, please contact:**

**Whitney Fishman Zember**

**[whitney.fishman@mecglobal.com](mailto:whitney.fishman@mecglobal.com)**

**MES**