ARGUING EXCLUSIVITY

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Exclusives in the gaming industry refer to the release of a game in a particular console only. As it is becoming more and more common for consoles to reserve the rights to exclusivity, a conflicting topic arises; whether exclusives are a good practice or not. Here are some arguments for and against this:

Exclusives are needed for a competitive market

First party titles are like the toys we nagged our parents for in our youth only because little Joey's parents broke the bank just to get him one. We didn't need it, we had plenty of toys to play with but it was the elusive and rare thing that kept on tearing us apart. We had to have it. Only the second kid on the block to have that unique spark in their eyes. From a business standpoint, the exclusivity of video games creates that spark. It creates incentive and lets companies like Sony and Nintendo have something to talk about other than their bank balance while Microsoft sits in the back, counting all the money they never get to spend.

Sony Interactive Entertainment is the primary distributor for all PlayStation titles and they have a family of companies signed to their exclusivity deal of which, the biggest names are: Naughty Dog, From Software, Santa Monica Studios and Media Molecule. Because of this, the PlayStation is always a sought after piece of hardware by consumers. This has always hurt Microsoft because almost all Microsoft exclusives, if there are any, are multi-platforms bridging the gap between the Xbox and PC. So knowledgeable consumers always lean towards the PS4 and the numbers reflect just that, with the PlayStation earning four times as much as

the Xbox One. The PS4 has had some stellar titles come out for it over the course of its lifetime. Off the top of my head I can think of Bloodborne, Uncharted 4, Final Fantasy XV, Until Dawn, Ratchet & Clank, The Last Guardian and Journey (even though it came out initially on the PS3, it was still an exclusive). All of these games act as an incentive to push more people into buying the PS4 which in turn, creates a flux in the market where Nintendo and Xbox are forced to play catch up. It generates growth and it shows.

Nintendo are coming out with the Switch in two months time, bringing their own line of first party titles and Microsoft are backing themselves up with their backward compatibility deals and integrating the PC more into the Xbox division. The incentive and growth that Exclusive Video Games have created in the video market is quite surprising, considering how it is perceived as a form of monopoly and the blemish it has left on the face of history. But it has only helped to nurture competition and creativity in the industry itself and because of which, we get to pick and choose our alliances which fit our varied tastes and preferences.

Exclusives only create an unnecessary segregation

Exclusivity in gaming always felt like a hostage situation to me. When a console proudly boasts that a certain game is available for their platform only, it feels like nothing more than a shallow attempt at trying to be desirable, not through the merits of their hardware, but by through bureaucratic negotiations that does not serve the customer in any way whatsoever.

By making a newly released game "exclusive" the publishers are denying a large

portion of the gaming community from enjoying said product. A perfect example would be Shenmue. An ambitious and critically lauded title that only a few people got to enjoy due to it being tied to Sega Dreamcast. The argument that the developers have the right to disregard a certain platform is not valid either since it's not the developer's decision in most

cases, but the publisher's. The publisher will logically look to the business end of things but when you put a leash on the developer's creation, that practice becomes hard to support.

Another thing that exclusivity brings to the table is the toxicity amongst the gaming community. Pretty much every "console war" ultimately boils down to people bragging about the games that they can enjoy on their platform that the other person can't. This primitive sense of satisfaction of enjoying something that someone else can't is not what games should be aiming to give. Gaming is about the overwhelming sense of achievement when you strike the final blow to the level boss on your 14th try with 5 percent life left, or finally figuring out that one puzzle you have dwindled the last 15 minutes on, or catching that one unsuspecting enemy in the scope of your AWP sniper rifle; it's not about feeling privileged.

My biggest gripe with exclusivity however, is the fact that it diverts the attention from what a gaming platform should really be focusing on. If a console can get away with having mediocre specs with an unreasonable price just because it holds the right to the exclusivity of certain games then it is only holding the consumers hostage. Having to buy multiple platforms to get the chance to play your desired titles is not a fair solution. An Xbox One owner should not be missing out on Persona 5, A PS4 owner should not be missing out on Halo and so forth. You can say that a certain title gives identity to a console but what good does that do if it means denying a large amount of potential buyers from enjoying a product? Blocking the access to a title from potential legitimate buyers on grounds of exclusivity cannot be justified.