

# MODS - THE STORY OF THE MEDDLERS

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The gaming community is known to be a devoted bunch. Almost every popular game has an active group of people who create a community around it. To the ones truly invested in the game, the original experience is not enough. It might be a niggling bug in the game, a gameplay aspect that could do with some work, a need for a better UI, or just an itch for something different. This is where modding comes in.

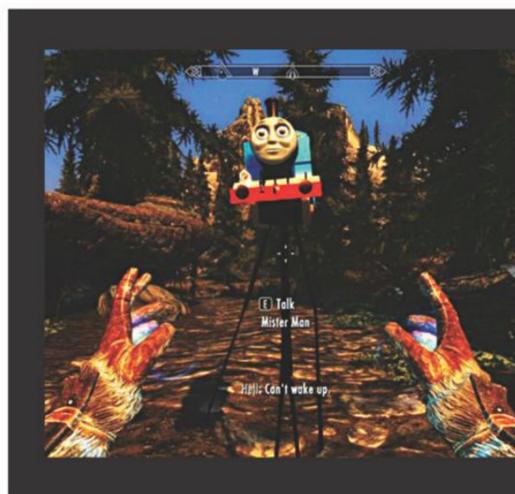
Modding as a concept is straightforward. Any modification done to a game to change an aspect of it can be considered as modding. Examples of modding can be dated back to 1980 when a humorous mod to Castle Wolfenstein was released which replaced the Nazi enemies with smurfs. The developers behind the Castle Wolfenstein project, id software, saw the potential behind fan made content and made it easier for any enthusiasts to create their own modifications to their future game, the ever classic, Doom.

Mods can range between anything and everything. There are often minor bugs that official patches fail to address. It doesn't take the modding community that long, however, to fix things up with an unofficial mod. UI overhaul mods have been always quite popular as the perfect UI design is often more apparent to the gamers who are spending a great amount of time playing the game rather than the developers. Overhaul is a popular term in the modding scene as overhaul mods completely change an aspect of a game. Some mods however, act as literal gamechangers. A completely different story, game mode, or massive changes to the gameplay make these mods a little more than just a fan project.

Counter-Strike is one of the most revered multiplayer FPS games on the current market. The fact that Counter-Strike started off as a Half-Life mod is not

known to many. Valve is known to extend their hand to modders by giving tools to facilitate it. Half-Life always had an active modding community behind it which produced standalone games such as Black Mesa. Another notable example of mods becoming fully fledged games of their own is Dota 2, which evolved from the Warcraft III custom game Defence of the Ancients. This is to iterate the impact that modding can have on the gaming scene. Many-a-times developers incorporate fan mods in official releases or hire the minds behind the mod.

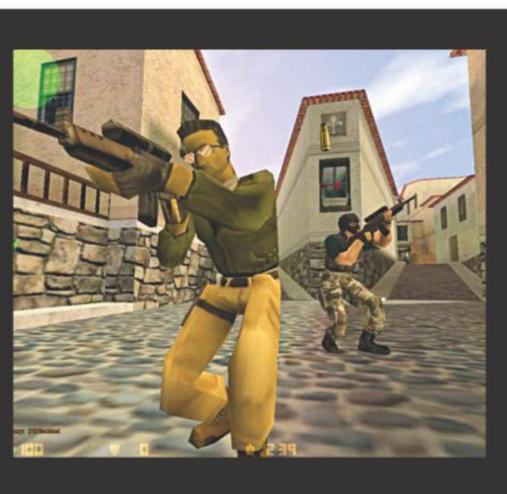
Some games happen to require mods to make the experience a complete one.



The original game, often termed as vanilla game, is modified to such a degree that it changes the feel of it entirely. Two examples come to mind in this case, Skyrim and S.T.A.L.K.E.R. Not much needs to be said about Skyrim. For a single player game to garner the replayability that Skyrim did, mods play a huge and crucial role. When it comes to modding, Skyrim also happens to be the most popular game. There are more than 50,000 mods for Skyrim on Nexusmods alone. The more popular Skyrim mods change the bland UI, give a whole new twist to the combat and even gives the players a true survivor mode where

hunting is a necessity. Some Skyrim mods however, change the game completely such as Enderal. It offers a unique new story, brand new map and enemies, and a different gameplay mechanic.

S.T.A.L.K.E.R. on the other hand is a lesser known title with a cult following. The S.T.A.L.K.E.R. experience is hard to put to words. It has a massive world filled with radiation, creatures, factions and what not. The basic game may seem like a poor-man's-Fallout at first. The gunplay doesn't feel as solid. The UI is disappointing. There are a lot of faults that will strike you from the beginning. However, once the essential mods (such



as Call of Chernobyl) are installed, S.T.A.L.K.E.R. becomes a game unlike any. It offers an atmospheric experience that truly makes you feel like a lone protagonist in a nuclear wasteland.

Installing mods may feel like a daunting task at first for those who are new to it, but it's a lot simpler than it looks. And with mod managers such as the one Nexusmods provide, it's not much of a hassle either. For games and developers that encourage the modding community such as Bethesda, id Software, Rockstar Games and such, the amount and quality of mods the communities have to offer is sure to be a

pleasant surprise to anyone.

The modding community had been simply built upon dedication and love for gaming in general. The only monetary gain the modding community makes are through donations. Although corporations are trying to monetise this practice, the modding community is still going on strong. Most prominent mod creators are against the idea of paid mods and they're still holding firm. Bethesda's Creation Club remains the only major offender to the modding community. It is far easier for the modders to be compensated for their effort as Patreon and other initiatives make it possible for them to get the donation they require effortlessly. Recognition is another important thing that they can gain from these popular mods. The current creative head of id Software started off as being a mod creator who was then picked up by id Software. Examples such as these are not rare. Paid mods serve none other than the big corporation middle man that seek to gain profit from the work of the modding community. Right now the biggest threat to modding however, is the invasive nature of current DRMs. Many developers restrict modding for their games due to security reasons and online play. Rockstar recently faced an overwhelming backlash when they decided to remove modding accessibility to GTA V. They have since backtracked from that decision but this remains a threat for the future. Restriction on modding based on security reasons or monetary reasons is sure to hurt the gaming community as a whole and a massive impediment to the creative minds behind the mods.

*Nuren Iftekhar is your local stray cat in disguise; he interacts with people for food and hates bright light. He got Hufflepuff 3 times straight in Pottermore so no walking around that one. Send him obscure memes at n.iftekh18@gmail.com*