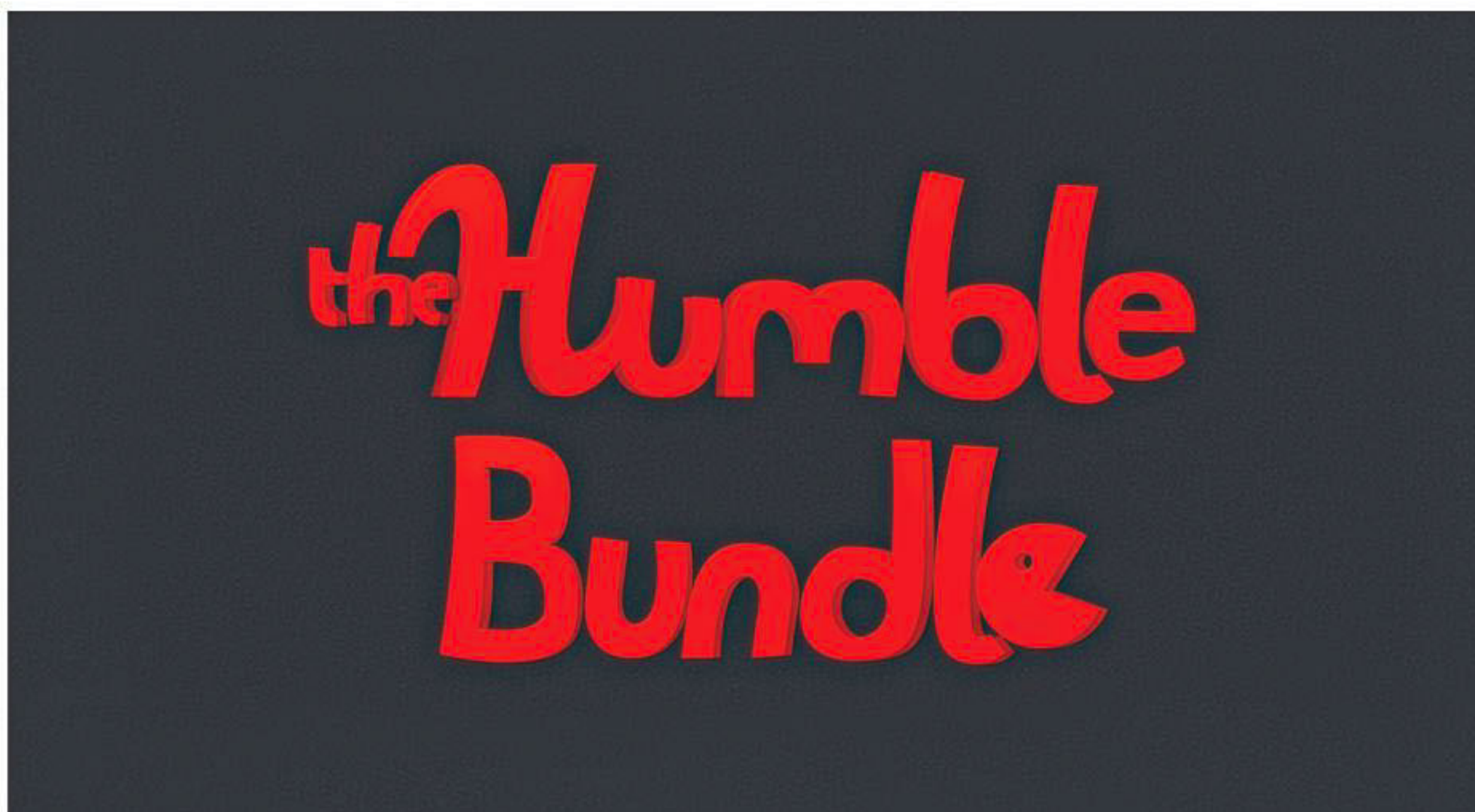


THE BENEFITS OF HUMBLE BUNDLE

NUHAN B. ABID

Games are costly, there's no denying it. Even with the problem of distribution solved for PC gamers in the form of Steam, buying AAA titles, or even continuous purchases of indie/smaller titles, your money spent adds up. That's where Humble Bundle comes in. Originating as a distributor for bundled indie PC games and for charity, the service was quick to expand to major AAA titles, books, music and mobile titles. Every month, subscribers are offered a bundle (often themed, like a collection of a certain publisher, or titles in a specific genre) for which they can pay anything they want and obtain a number of games for a FAR lower cost than they might be originally.

While it's stated as pay whatever you want, the service still locks you out from certain games (usually the more known or bigger titles) if you don't pay a bit more. But even then, it only forces you to pay a maximum of 12\$ (1/5th of what an AAA title might cost) for a bundle to unlock all the games. Obtaining a great game like Stellaris (one of the current bundles' main offers at the time of writing) alongside several smaller (but often as fun or even more fun in rare cases) titles at a fraction



of individual cost feels like a massive steal.

Of course, the real main draw is the Monthly Bundle. At a price of 12\$ a month, subscribers get several games along with a major title (together about some 100\$+ worth of games in retail) for extremely cheap. The Monthly Bundle is often more random, but offers better games than the normal bundles, and unlike the normal bundles, you're only aware of the main title in the Monthly Bundle offer so you can decide whether to

subscribe or not to it.

As if the bundles weren't enough, Humble Bundle has its own alternative store to counter the likes of GOG, Steam and Origin. This means of course, another option for seasonal sales (or a direct market in general, if you're looking to purchase games without giving money to the other distributors). It helps that most of the games sold are Steam keys along with occasional Origin and GOG, so you can always play them on their platforms as well and thus not lose out for

multiplayer if the games offer them.

Another good draw towards using Humble Bundle is how many free games they offer on a regular basis. Every now and then they'll offer a game for free to anyone who claims a key, and while often they aren't the best of games, they tend to drop a gem every now and then, especially during sales (mostly recently they offered Amnesia: The Dark Descent for free).

And as if your purchases being only a fraction of retail cost wasn't good enough, you'd also be contributing to charity (that you can pick out yourself if you want to). Humble Bundle pays a part of your purchases' money towards many different charities, and has raised a significant amount thanks to many buyers and subscribers.

All in all, Humble Bundle is worth the money, saving you hundreds of dollars and often giving you great games to enjoy. It's definitely worth whipping out the wallet for, you'll always get something of value or the other.

Nuhan B. Abid is someone who actually thinks puns and sarcasm are top class forms of humour. Tell him that 'sar-chasm' is TOTALLY the best thing ever at nuhanbabid@hotmail.com

Why you should play Monster Hunter: World

SHAHRUKH IKHTEAR

If you're looking for some of the best emergent gameplay to be experienced on home consoles (as of writing this article), then look no further than Monster Hunter: World (MH:W). Still not convinced? Read on to find out why this game deserves a hundred hours of your time.

If 2016 was the year of open-world titles, 2017 was definitely the year of games as a service. These are games that receive continual updates in terms of gameplay adjustments and content to incentivise players to keep playing them. Where other games focus on delivering content in the form of DLC spaced out across a specific period of time, MH:W is brimming with loads of content right off the bat. Ardent players of the Monster Hunter series invest about five hundred to one thousand hours in one game. The sheer amount of depth and variety is unmatched by any modern game on the market right now.

You play the role of a Hunter of the Fifth Fleet who makes a voyage to the New World. The Guild of Hunters is researching the New World to find out about its habitability and you're the fifth expedition to be sent out. During this time, your objective is to hunt down different monsters for balancing the ecosystem, collecting data, and



making some amazing weapons and armour.

The gameplay of MH: World is what will keep you glued for hours on end. There are 14 weapon types on offer and each of them offers a significantly different playstyle. For example, you have the Switch Axe which deals blunt force damage in axe mode but it can deal out slicing damage in sword mode augmented by elemental force. Then you have the Charge Blade which is unique in the sense that you have to build

charges by repeatedly attacking your target and then you have to store your charge to make a gigantic axe which deals massive damage. You also have your standard ranged weapons in the form of bowguns and actual bows. You cannot use both ranged and melee at the same time. The choice you have in terms of weapons is immense and there's a specific weapon type for each player.

Combat encounters feel a lot like Dark Souls mixed in with traditional

hack-and-slash games. You have to look for clues and tracks of the monsters you hunt, then you have to prepare accordingly to buff yourself against the monster's special attacks, and after you find the monster it becomes an exhilarating fight to the death. All encounters are different thanks to the amazing animation and intelligent AI. Also, there are times when you are fighting one monster only to be ambushed by another, more powerful monster. These are times which bump up the thrill a notch.

The weapons and armour are all crafted from the parts you scavenge during your hunts. And getting all the gear pieces requires an immense time investment. There are also a plethora of more monsters to hunt after you're done with the story and that is the one thing you'll be doing a lot of.

Overall, MH: World is one of the best action games you can play right now. The learning curve is steep but once you master all the mechanics, you'll be slaying monsters left and right. The fun doesn't wear out starting from the first time to the hundredth time. So there's plenty to keep you busy here.

Shahrukh Ikhtear is a sub-editor at SHOUT who stresses himself out while trying to learn marketing. Send him pictures of Philip Kotler as blessings at fb.com/sr.ikhtear