



# E3 2019: A DIFFERENT SPECTACLE

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Despite Sony's decision to pull out this year and the growing discontent in the gaming industry in general, E3 2019 has been an event full of hype and anticipation. The fewer bells and whistles and a heavier focus on games and hardware were a welcome change. This is how the E3 rolled out for the major conferences.

## **MICROSOFT**

Microsoft had arguably one of the best presentations this year. They seem to have taken the shortcomings from their 8th generation console venture as a lesson and are building on the positives. Their subscription service for the Xbox One, which was praised by many for the value it brings, got expanded on with multiple titles added and received a subscription option for PC as well. 'Project Scarlet' – their next generation console – was also showcased to much praise.

However a console is nothing without its titles, as proved by the criticism that the Xbox One received. This time around a lot of promising titles were showcased such as *Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order*, *Blair Witch*, *Cyberpunk 2077* etc. Among the signature Microsoft titles were *Gears 5*, *Ori and the Will of the Wisps*, *Battletoads* etc. But all of it would have felt incomplete if it wasn't for the big reveal of *Halo Infinite*. While no gameplay was shown for many of the titles, it does promise to be an exciting catalogue for Microsoft for the coming year.

Also, bonus points for bringing Keanu Reeves for the *Cyberpunk 2077* presentation.

## **BETHESDA**

Bethesda's conference was arguably one of the most underwhelming ones in recent years. With the next installment of *The Elder Scrolls* still being a long way into the development and the last *Fallout* title being an abject failure, there wasn't much to be hyped about. The new addition of a battle royale mode in *Fallout 76* seemed like damage-control at best. The reveal of the new title *Deathloop* from the developers of *Dishonored* did not create much hype due to it only having a CGI trailer. The new horror title *GhostWire: Tokyo* however was one of the better presentations.

Bethesda is at an intermittent stage where the last batch of their IPs were not popular enough to keep them in the limelight while the upcoming titles are too far away from being released to be excited about. There does not seem to be much to expect from them for the coming year.

## **DEVOLVER DIGITAL**

Despite not being one of the bigger names, the Devolver Digital conference is something everyone looks forward to. After their explosive (quite literal) presentation last year one might have wondered if they could keep up with the charade. Turns out they can. As for the games, their retro game bundle – which is essentially the bootlegs of their own titles – was a unique and interesting idea. *My Friend Pedro* might not be a big title but it looked fantastic as well.

## **PC GAMING SHOW**

While the PC Gaming Show boasted titles such as *Baldur's Gate 3*, *Borderlands 3* and *Shenmue 3*, the conference was divisive for

one big reason. As more and more games were announced to be Epic Store exclusives fans made their complaints heard. Even a much anticipated title such as *Shenmue 3* was barraged with dislikes on their YouTube video because of the Epic Store exclusivity. It is very clear at this point that more and more developers are ready to make the jump to Epic Store, whether that garners bad press or not. The trend is undoubtedly problematic for the gamers for multitude of reasons. But one thing is clear, this dissent will only be magnified in the future.

## **UBISOFT**

Without a new *Assassins Creed* title to boast, Ubisoft's conference felt rather empty. With that being said the reveal of *Watch Dogs Legion* was received with much aplomb. The game promises to bring a unique flavor with the 'permadeath' mechanic and a large array of playable characters. Ubisoft's dedication to their existing IPs was notable even though the content they showed did not have much going for them. Showcases of additional content for the likes of *For Honor* and *Rainbow Six: Siege*, while exciting for the existing players, were not convincing enough to gain the attention of new players. A lack of any information on *Beyond Good and Evil 2*, however, was rather disappointing. Ubisoft also marked their venture into subscription service in the form of 'Uplay+'.

## **SQUARE ENIX**

The big release for Square Enix in the coming year would be the *Final Fantasy VII* remake. The game looks visually stunning with solid gameplay mechanics.

The surprise reveal was the look into *The Avengers Project*. The love for the characters set aside, the game looks quite generic and the reception hasn't been positive either. The Square Enix conference was quite muted this year. The company seems to be banking on its existing IPs and focusing heavily on remakes. If they're as good as the *Resident Evil 2* remake then there's not much room for complaint. But it did lead to a very lackluster conference this year.

## **NINTENDO**

Nintendo had a fantastic E3 this year as well and brought a lot of reasons for Switch gamers to be excited. The next generation *Pokémon* titles in the form of *Pokémon Sword* and *Pokémon Shield* are something the fans have been hyped about for a long time. The sequel to *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild* caught many by surprise. Guessing the next addition to the *Smash* roster is always a hot topic among the fans. Banjo-Kazooie was the welcome addition this year along with the *Dragon Quest* protagonists. Apart from the major titles the Switch received a myriad of titles even including a Switch port in the form of *Witcher 3*. Original titles such as *Astral Chain* were also quite impressive.

With a commendable library that is being expanded with time, Nintendo is looking to make sure the Switch would be a great console to have in the coming year.

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