



Hollywoodisation of video games: Blurring the lines of interactive media

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Keanu Reeves made waves by appearing in the E3 2019 trailer of "Cyberpunk 2077" as the anti-hero character, Johnny Silverhand. Despite the initial release of the game known for being full of bugs, Keanu's appearance is still fondly remembered – such was the impact of the prominent Hollywood name. Some other examples of Hollywood stars being motion captured in video games include Rami Malek in "Until Dawn" (2015), Vin Diesel in "Wheelman" (2009), and Andy Serkis – known for motion capturing Gollum, King Kong and The Jungle Book's Baloo – in "Heavenly Sword" (2007).

Of course, aside from motion capturing, Hollywood celebrities had their fair share in video game voice acting as well. Some big names include Mark Hamill in "Batman: Arkham Asylum" (2009), Elijah Wood in "The Legend of Spyro" series, Samuel L. Jackson in "Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas" (2004), and many more.

THE MAGNIFICENCE OF MUSIC

Music is a key driving force behind video games. A good soundtrack adds a critical backdrop in adventure games, while action games are dependent on music with a good tempo to get players pumped for combat. Japanese RPGs are famous for compiling enthralling original soundtracks, with franchises such as "Legend of Zelda", "Chrono Trigger", "Final Fantasy", "Octopath Traveler", "Persona" and "Pokémon" having soundtracks that impress old and new fans alike. "Xenoblade Chronicles 3" (2022) made waves last year for having a whopping 140 tracks, a lot of which are original flute melodies that emphasise key plot points in the game.

The inclusion of major stars in both singing and composing music for video games keeps blurring the line between major Hollywood productions and big-budget video games. The late Michael Jackson, being a fan of video games, had several games which were based on him – including Sega's "Michael Jackson's Moonwalker" (1990), where you can play as the King of Pop in a beat-em-up arcade game. He also made music for other Sega games such as "Sonic the Hedgehog 3" (1994).

In modern times, popular singers and musicians have lent their contribution to making exclusive songs for video games as well, with some examples being Paul McCartney in "Destiny" (2019), Imagine Dragons in "League of Legends"



(2015), Katy Perry and Ariana Grande in "Final Fantasy Brave Exvius" (2015), and quite recently, Ed Sheeran in the latest "Pokémon Scarlet and Violet" (2022).

SET PIECES – THE 'WOW' FACTOR

In video games, a set

predicament – a realisation that in hindsight can take away most of the excitement. However, in a video game, not only are you controlling the character, the perspective offered to you makes it a more personal experience.

As such, set pieces in video games offer a whole other realm of interactive excitement than that of movies. It isn't just Kratos fighting Thor, it is you facing down the God of Thunder as he rains lightning bolts over you. While

which ended up being some of the most well-received games of all time. Despite the event being cancelled in 2020 and 2022, and it being hosted online only in 2021, E3 returns in 2023 – where many new games are expected to be announced. E3 2019 saw over 66,000 people in attendance, while 70,000 attended in 2018.

The Game Awards is an annual event that awards newly released, critically acclaimed video games, including naming a new release



piece is referred to as the one, spectacular moment the developers go all out to provide a 'wow' moment – offering a big, important scene in the most cinematic way possible. This can include the moment the main character meets the big bad guy in the story, when the player is about to come across the major plot twist, or even when the final boss is at its last leg and unleashes the secret weapon.

While big-budget action movies are also dependent on set pieces to make a memorable impact, video games offer a more interactive experience as far as these cinematic scenes are concerned. In a movie, you know you are seeing Hollywood actors in a make-believe

watching Batman take down Bane in "The Dark Knight Rises" still feels exciting, playing as Batman against a rampaging Bane in Arkham Asylum will add more layers of suspense and involvement than a movie possibly can.

WORLD-CLASS EVENTS

Just like there are major feature and award events in the international television industry, video games have their own share of annual events that showcase and award new games. One such example is E3, considered the biggest event in the gaming industry in terms of significance. Past iterations of E3 marked the first official reveal of many big-budget games

as the 'Game of the Year' annually. Just like the Oscars and Emmys have their unique categories of awards, The Game Awards has categories such as 'Best Action Game' and 'Best Audio Design'. It also awards e-sports teams and content creators associated with video games.

Following the above examples, video games have well and truly embraced Hollywoodisation, consequently blurring the line between motion films and interactive media. As more big-budget video games grace our consoles and PCs, we can only marvel at the extent game developers are willing to go to deliver the most cinematic, memorable experience possible.

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