

## ***Media Today, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition***

### **Chapter Recaps & Study Guide**

#### **Chapter 14: The Video Game Industry**

Video games are immensely popular among a variety of audiences, including older adults and women, and like other media discussed in this book, they are appearing across devices and platforms.

#### **Chapter Objectives:**

1. Sketch the development of video games.
2. Describe video game genres.
3. Review the production, distribution, and exhibition of video games.
4. Chart major social controversies surrounding video games.

#### **The Video Game Industry and Convergence**

Video game production, distribution, and exhibition have become an important part of media in society, and video games fit within the patterns of convergence developed in other chapters.

#### **The Rise of the Video Game Industry**

Three themes emerge within the historical development of the video game industry. Though a chapter entirely dedicated video games might seem unusual, as an industry they fit within the patterns seen in previous chapters, especially convergence. (397)

- 1. The video game did not arrive in a flash as a result of one inventor's grand change. (397)
  - The pinball machine was the first step, and could be found at entertainment arcades. (397, 400)
- 2. The video game as a medium of communication developed as a result of social and legal responses to technology during different historical periods. (400)
  - The Internet brought bulletin boards, multiuser dungeons (MUDs), and massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs) such as *World of Warcraft*. (400)

- 3. The video game industry developed and changed as a result of struggles to control its channels to audiences. (401)
  - The industry has seen concentration and growth in software companies and in console manufacturers, particularly Sony, Microsoft, and Nintendo. (401)
  - See the figure 14.1, which shows a timeline of developments in the video game industry. (398-399)

### **The Contemporary Shape of the Video Game Industry**

- About two thirds of U.S. households have a video game player. About 48 percent of players are female and 52 percent male, breaking the stereotype of teenage boys being the primary audience for the games. (402)
- Video game hardware refers to the devices on which video games are played; these include gaming consoles, which show convergence through their connections to the internet, which allow downloading games and playing with other users. Other hardware includes desktop or laptop computers, handheld systems, and mobile devices. (403-404)
- Some Web sites will draw casual gamers, or those who prefer more puzzle- or word-type games, while others might play social games, which are played through social networks such as Facebook, with their friends. (403-404)
- An avatar is a character that represents a user within a virtual world. (403)
- Video game publishers coordinate the production of video games. Like publishers in other industries, they take care to produce titles they think will draw audiences and sales. (404)
- Console manufacturers have publishing divisions that create games exclusive for their consoles. (404)
- Third-party publishers will create games that work on multiple platforms. Electronic Arts, creator of *The Sims* series and the *Madden NFL* series, is among the most powerful. (404)
- The video game industry also categorizes games very specifically. Video games are quite expensive to make, and it has become more and more “hit driven” since the 2000s. (406)
- Software genres for video games include action games (with subgenres of shooter, competitive fighting, and platform games), adventure games, casual

games, simulation games, strategy games, sports games, and edutainment. (406-408)

- Because of games' popularity among women and older adults, advertisers have taken an interest in video games. They primarily use two techniques: creating custom games (sometimes called an "advergame") and embedding ads in games. (408-410)
- Dynamic in-game advertising changes ads on the fly based on gameplay and other specific contexts. (410)

### **Distribution and Exhibition of Video Games**

- Games reach audiences through cable streaming, Internet downloading, and discs or cartridges. The physical media can be purchased through brick-and-mortar retail or online from outlets such as Amazon.com. Games also can be rented through Redbox or GameFly. (410-411)

### **Video Games and Convergence**

- Convergence enables gameplay across devices, enables promotion of games across media, and enables synergy through licensing fees as games become franchises, such as *Tomb Raider*. (411-412)

### **Media Ethics: Confronting Key Issues**

Similar to other industries explored in this book, ethics questions come into play with video games. These issues include

- concerns over content, such as violence and the hypersexualization of women, with Lara Croft and *Tomb Raider* offering a key example (412-413)
- privacy, such as how much data video games gather, how they use it, and how they secure it (413-414)
- self-regulation, which intersects with both content rating and privacy principles (415-418)
  - The FTC suggests four broad principles, including notice, choice, access, and security
  - Critics argue the accuracy of video game ratings in light of violence and children.