

# Mobile shines in exploding world of games

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This file photo shows people interacting with a Samsung Galaxy smartphone, in New York, on March 14, 2013. The booming popularity of play on smartphones or tablet computers in a realm once dominated by videogame consoles was a hot theme at the major Game Developers Conference that ended in San Francisco on Friday.

The booming popularity of play on smartphones or tablet computers in a realm once dominated by videogame consoles was a hot theme at the major Game Developers Conference that ended on Friday.

Seminars, talks and panels ran the gamut from how to get [smartphone](#)

[games](#) noticed in the growing sea of "apps" to behind-the-scenes looks at the creation of blockbusters tailored for consoles or personal computers.

"You are seeing this massive cornucopia of games now," Tech Savvy videogame analyst Scott Steinberg said on the final day of the weeklong GDC.

"There is an explosion in the type and variety of games and a tremendous number of ways to play."

The power of small studios and [independent developers](#) has risen along with demand for fresh and entertaining games to play on mobile devices or online as services in the Internet "cloud."

Meanwhile, new-generation consoles from Microsoft and Sony are expected to be released this year, reviving interest in immersive [blockbuster](#) titles while ramping up connections to content streamed online.

Industry tracker ABI Research said that successful launches of new Xbox and PlayStation models later this year could get console sales growing again after years of decline.

"Mobile gaming has certainly diminished the opportunities for console manufacturers in the casual [game](#) market and this has impacted Nintendo the hardest," said ABI analyst Sam Rosen.

"The evolving [business models](#) and added competition have also created additional pricing pressures that encourage price cuts sooner than manufacturers would like."

ABI said that Nintendo's freshly-released [Wii U](#) console has faced a "challenging market" since the Japanese firm shipped nearly three

million units during the holiday season at the end of last year.

Microsoft, Sony and Nintendo, along with established videogame titans, wooed developers at GDC while independent mobile [game makers](#) shared tips on how navigate the expanding world of play.

Games remain the most popular applications downloaded to mobile devices.

Hit games are "absolutely vital" to the success of smartphones or tablets and have expanded the range of players, Windows Phone senior marketing manager Casey McGee said while at GDC to promote the software giant's mobile platform.



Customers walk past a console display after purchasing Nintendo's videogame console Wii U at a shop in Tokyo, on December 8, 2012. Nintendo's Wii U console has faced a "challenging market" since the Japanese firm shipped nearly three million units during the holiday season at the end of last year.

McGee contended that players are demanding games that can be played in small doses on the move as well as titles to enjoy at home on consoles when time provides.

"It is like books and magazines," McGee told AFP. "You want some really thoughtful, deep campaign games that are like books; you read them cover to cover and sometimes go back and read them again.

"Then, there are also magazines," he continued. "Things you love for an hour, maybe you love for a week, but they turn over more. That is where you see a lot of independent games and more casual games come into play."

Research In Motion began courting app makers long before the new BlackBerry smartphone platform launched in January, vice president of global alliances Martyn Mallick said at GDC.

"Sometimes there is a misperception that the business user doesn't want to have fun," Mallick told AFP while discussing the effort to win game developers to the BB10 platform.

"That is completely false; business users love to play games."

Games are an "absolutely critical" part of a smartphone platform, he noted.

Companies that make chips powering smartphones or tablets have been busy boosting processing and graphics capabilities with mobile games in mind.

Qualcomm and rivals Nvidia, and ARM each staked out places on the

GDC show floor.

A Qualcomm chip due out this year promised to deliver ultra-high-definition video along with surround sound for games on mobile devices.

"We see a lot of opportunity in the ecosystem for gaming," said Qualcomm senior director of marketing Michelle Leyden Li.

"I know a lot of folks who became gamers when they got a smartphone; we see this trend developing," she noted. "Consoles will stay. We are making gamers out of people who were not gamers before."

Longtime videogame giants including Electronic Arts and Ubisoft have weighed into the booming world of free-to-play mobile or social network games supported by ads or sales of virtual items.

"There is a ton of games out there, on every system and device, and people are more empowered than ever to make them," Steinberg said. "The hard part is going to be finding the diamond in the rough."

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