

Ubisoft's madcap 'Rabbids' breeding US fans

May 31 2009, by Glenn Chapman

French videogame titan Ubisoft is turning E3 into a playground for "Rabbids," madcap videogame rabbits breeding fans throughout Europe and the United States.

A team of Rabbids, accompanied by a street band from Romania, will "wreak havoc" outside an annual Electronic Entertainment Expo [videogame](#) industry extravaganza that begins Tuesday in Los Angeles.

E3 attendees will be invited to hurl t-shirts and other tchotchkes given away at the event into a colossal faux toilet.

Rabbids will heap offerings on a trash mountain of items that will be donated to charity or recycled after E3 concludes on Thursday.

The stunt is intended as levity as well as an unmasked promotion of an Ubisoft "Rabbids Go Home" videogame making an E3 debut.

The Romanian band's music is featured in the fourth installment of an increasingly popular videogame franchise.

"Go Home" play centers of getting the wacky animated characters to snatch all the "human stuff" they can find and pile it high enough to reach the moon.

"They are like spoiled four-year-olds; distracted by everything," said Ubisoft game producer Adrian Lacey of the Rabbids team in southern France.

"They are the child in everyone; the rebellious creature that does all the things we don't dare do but would like to."

The Rabbid weapon of choice is a bathroom plunger, and antics in games includes cow hurling; pumping carrot juice into mouths, and demolishing portions of Paris by belching.

Lacey notes that "Rayman Raving Rabbids TV Party" was the first videogame to let players control action with their butts.

Players sitting on [Wii](#) console balance boards lean and shift to steer Rabbits in a downhill sleigh race.

"What is true about the Rabbids is there are no regulations; go crazy and have fun with them," Lacey said. "He has an edgy humor."

The Rabbids franchise was launched in 2006, with each subsequent version outselling its predecessor.

[Ubisoft](#) has sold more than six million Rabbids videogames, with one million of those sales in the United States.

"We've seen the appeal just grow and grow," Lacey said. "We are not at the point where we are a 'Super Mario' yet, but it would be nice to get there."

Lacey laughingly equates the look of a Rabbid to "a sack of potatoes on two stumpy legs" and credits their unintelligible language to a team member prone to annoying people with strange sounds.

"He never looks ridiculous because he is," Lacey said of each Rabbid. "It is one of those funny things."

The Rabbids appeal prompted French car maker Renault to feature the characters in advertising and Kraft to use them to promote Capri Sun brand drinks.

"We're always looking for inventive ways to keep the brand cool and relevant with our audience," said Capri Sun senior brand manager Vinay Sharma.

Rabbid fever has resulted in toys and figurines based on the characters.

"They should take over the world," Lacey quipped. "If I keep losing hair, I may turn into a Rabbid."

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