

'Halo: Reach' videogame hits in September

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Microsoft announced on Monday that the latest installment in the blockbuster "Halo" videogame franchise exclusive to Xbox 360 consoles will be released in September.

"Halo: Reach" will be available worldwide beginning September 14, according to Microsoft.

Microsoft Game Studios corporate vice president Phil Spencer touted "Halo" as "a franchise that has become a global entertainment and pop-culture touchstone."

"Reach" will "push the boundaries for what's possible in videogames and help make 2010 the biggest year in Xbox history," he predicted.

The science fiction shooter franchise starring hero Master Chief was made by Bungie studio and has sold more than 34 million videogames worldwide since the first title was released in 2001, according to Microsoft.

"There's no doubt in my mind that Halo: Reach' will be one of the biggest games and hottest entertainment products of the year," said Bob McKenzie, senior vice president of merchandising at US retail chain [GameStop](#).

"Pre-orders for Halo: Reach' have been off the charts... Overall, it's a real testament to the passion of the Halo' fan base."

"Halo" lovers have logged more than two billion hours playing the videogame at the Xbox Live online network accessed using the Microsoft consoles.

More than 2.7 million people took part in a test of "Reach" at [Xbox Live](#), racking up more than 16 million hours of play and completing more than 13 million games during a "beta" period of slightly more than two weeks.

The latest installment in the "Halo" series is described as a prequel in which a squad of heroic Spartan soldiers makes a final stand to defend Earth from an alien invasion.

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