

Ubisoft taking blockbuster 'Assassin's Creed' to big screen

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Ubisoft producer Francois Pelland presents 'Assassin's Creed 3' during the Ubisoft's media briefing at the E3 2012 in Los Angeles, California, in June. Ubisoft is moving into the film business with an adaptation of its blockbuster title "Assassin's Creed" -- sidestepping the Hollywood movie machine by producing the film itself.

Videogame firm Ubisoft is moving into the film business with an adaptation of its blockbuster title "Assassin's Creed" -- sidestepping the Hollywood movie machine by producing the film itself.

With [rising star](#) Michael Fassbender of "Prometheus" and "X:Men: First Class" fame signed on to play the title role, the film will be the first produced by Ubisoft [Motion Pictures](#), a division set up by the Paris-based firm so it can retain creative control over adaptations of its game franchises.

"Ubisoft has decided to never sell its licences because it wants to have creative control," Ubisoft Motion Pictures CEO Jean-Julien Baronnet told AFP.

"There are strong licences and investments in important games that require us to diversify sources of franchise value and synergies."

The firm provided no details about a possible director or release date for the "Assassin's Creed" film, but it can rely on a rabid fan base, with more than 30 million units of the game's franchise sold since its 2007 launch.

The series moves from one generation to another as players follow the ancestry of a fictional assassin to solve a perilous modern-day mystery.



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Previous instalments have been set during the Crusades and in

Renaissance Italy and "Assassin's Creed III" -- set during the American Revolution -- is due for release on October 30.

A hallmark of the franchise has been "historical fiction" that blends rich details from past centuries with fantasy characters locked in a battle between assassins and Templars hunting for a mysterious orb of great power.

Baronnet said that despite Ubisoft's experience in producing a cinematic computer-generated experience, it has decided that a traditional live action film would be the best option for "Assassin's Creed".

"Humans convey more emotion on the big screen. And it shouldn't be forgotten that actors bring viewers into the cinemas," he said.

Plans are in the works for other productions involving Ubisoft's game franchises, Baronnet said, with its motion pictures division separated into film and television arms.

First up will be a television adaptation of its wacky "Raving Rabbids" franchise for French public television and US children's channel Nickelodeon, due for broadcast next year.

Plans are also in the works for adaptations of Ubisoft's stealth franchise "Splinter Cell" and tactical shooter game "Ghost Recon".

For all of its [films](#), Ubisoft will maintain full creative control over scripts, directors, casting and budgets, Baronnet said.



Ubisoft presents 'Assassin's Creed 3,' during the Ubisoft's media briefing at the E3 2012 in Los Angeles, California, on June 4.

"We prefer making the film a 100 percent by ourselves instead of having a studio that could betray the spirit of the license, because this would have a negative effect on the image of the game," he said.

[Ubisoft](#)'s move is a smart one, said analyst Laurent Michaud of European tech consultancy Idate, especially as videogames become more and more cinematic.

"The videogame is a content creator. Instead of giving up this wealth to third parties, it makes more sense to learn to exploit it yourself," he said.

"Who is in a better position to exploit the value of a licence than the one who created it?"

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