

Old meets new in 2014 video game lineup

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This photo provided by Nintendo shows a scene from the video game, "Mario Kart 8." (AP Photo/Nintendo)

The usual suspects are back in new video game installments in 2014—Mario, Solid Snake and Master Chief, to name a few— but this year they'll also be joined by some shadowy newcomers with monikers like Aiden Pearce and Delsin Rowe.

Following last year's release of Microsoft's Xbox One and Sony's PlayStation 4, many games scheduled to debut this year will harness the power of those next-generation systems in hopes of fulfilling long-simmering expectations ("Watch Dogs," "Metal Gear Solid V"), pushing

preexisting franchises into the future ("Thief," "inFamous: Second Son") or potentially revolutionizing the medium altogether ("Titanfall," "Destiny").

The lineup for 2014 includes updates to a couple of beloved role-playing series ("Dragon Age: Inquisition," "The Elder Scrolls Online"), new entries in long-running Nintendo franchises ("Mario Kart 8," "Super Smash Brothers") and an interactive parody where passing gas is considered a lethal weapon ("South Park: The Stick of Truth").

Here's a glimpse at some of 2014's most anticipated games:

— "Dragon Age: Inquisition" (for PlayStation 3, PlayStation 4, Xbox 360, Xbox One, PC; fall 2014): After disappointing many fans with 2011's "Dragon Age II," developer BioWare hopes to reclaim the throne with the third chapter of its ambitious fantasy series by providing players with more choices, including the ability to play as a member of the fierce Qunari race.

— "Destiny" (for PlayStation 3, PlayStation 4, Xbox 360, Xbox One; Sept. 9, 2014): Bungie Studios is going out of this world—way, way out of this world—for their first creation since 2010's "Halo: Reach." The sprawling interstellar shoot-'em-up takes place within an always-online universe where gamers can team up to complete missions, battle adversaries or each other.



This photo provided by Ubisoft shows a scene from the video game, "Watch Dogs". (AP Photo/Ubisoft)

— "The Elder Scrolls Online" (for PC, PlayStation 4, Xbox One; spring 2014): The epic role-playing franchise "Elder Scrolls" goes online in this massively multiplayer rendition from ZeniMax Online Studios. Set a millennium before "Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim," the sweeping open-ended version centers on a trio of warring factions in the hard-knock realm of Tamriel.

— "inFamous: Second Son" (for PlayStation 4; March 21, 2014): The latest edition of Sucker Punch Productions' superpowered series has a new setting, Seattle, and focuses on a new protagonist, Delsin Rowe. Exploiting his ability to absorb powers, the graffiti artist-turned-superhero works to takedown the oppressive Department of Unified Protection. Wham!

— "Mario Kart 8" (for Wii U; spring 2014): Mario, Luigi, Princess Peach and all their friends, as well as some of their enemies, are hitting the

road again in the eighth entry of the highly popular go-karting series. "Mario Kart 8" is adding several gravity-defying tricks to the mix, including vehicles and tracks that allow players to zoom across walls and ceilings.

— "South Park: The Stick of Truth" (for PlayStation 3, Xbox 360, PC; March 4, 2014): The long-delayed "South Park" game written by TV show creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone is expected to finally see the light of day this year. The role-playing lampoon casts players as the gang's new kid who must team up with the show's well-known, foul-mouthed characters.

— "Super Smash Brothers" (for Nintendo 3DS, Wii U; 2014): The addictive cartoony fighting franchise comes to Nintendo's latest platforms in 2014 with new combatants, like the cutesy bug-catching Villager from "Animal Crossing," star-loving Rosalina from "Super Mario Galaxy" and the highly flexible Wii Fit trainer from Nintendo's workout franchise.



This photo provided by ZeniMax Online Studios shows a scene from the video

game, "The Elder Scrolls Online" (AP Photo/ZeniMax Online Studios)

— "Thief" (for PlayStation 3, PlayStation 4, Xbox 360, Xbox One, PC; Feb. 25, 2014): After a decade-long absence from the video game world, the pickpocket series "Thief" returns with a reboot from developers Eidos Montreal, marking the return of hooded protagonist Garrett. He's come back to his moody hometown to find it overrun by a money-grubbing regime.



This photo provided by Square Enix shows a scene from the video game, "Thief". (AP Photo/Square Enix)

— "Titanfall" (for Xbox 360, Xbox One, PC; March 11, 2014): "Call of Duty" meets "Transformers" in "Titanfall." The developers at Respawn Entertainment, many of whom worked on the landmark "Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare," are equipping wannabe supersoldiers with gigantic

mechanized robot suits in an always-online shooter exclusive to Microsoft systems.

— "Tom Clancy's The Division" (for PlayStation 4, Xbox One; winter 2014): Don't touch that cash! After a disease spread on Black Friday leaves the United States in turmoil, players must navigate a chaotic, snowy New York as a deep undercover operative in this tactical online shooter that incorporates elements from both the survival and role-playing genres.



This photo provided by Nintendo shows a scene from the video game, "South Park: The Stick of Truth". (AP Photo/Nintendo)

— "Watch Dogs" (for PlayStation 3, PlayStation 4, Wii U, Xbox 360, Xbox One, PC; spring 2014): Interactive art imitates real-life in this surveillance-themed action-adventure romp centering on vigilante Aiden Pearce. With the touch of his smarter-than-smartphone, he can hack into cameras, computers, traffic lights and power grids throughout a high-

tech Chicago.



This photo provided by Sucker Punch Productions shows a scene from the video game, "inFamous: Second Son." (AP Photo/Sucker Punch Productions)

Other games anticipated this year: stealthy prologue "Metal Gear Solid V: Ground Zeroes,"; gothic role-playing sequel "Dark Souls II"; developer Techland's "Dead Island" follow-up, "Dying Light"; crowd-funded, point-and-click adventure "Dreamfall Chapters"; Telltale Games' interactive "Game of Thrones"; and a new "Halo" built for the Xbox One.

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