

New 'Assassin's Creed' dives into French Revolution

November 9 2014, by Glenn Chapman

A new installment of blockbuster video game "Assassin's Creed" makes its worldwide debut Tuesday, allowing players to wield deadly skills on the streets of Paris during the French Revolution.

"Assassin's Creed: Unity" is the latest installment of the annual, history-based action franchise from French gaming developer Ubisoft.

"I was surprised how realistic it could be," Ubisoft chief and co-founder Yves Guillemot told AFP at a major E3 [video game](#) trade show earlier this year.

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Billed as the most "dense and immersive" version of the hit franchise ever created, "Assassin's Creed: Unity" casts players in the role of a young man who grows into a master assassin and helps shape the fate of France.

"We have been working with lots of people to try to get the spirit of the French Revolution—what happened and why it happened," Guillemot said.

Top-seller globally

Initially launched in 2007, "Assassin's Creed" has sold more than 78 million units worldwide, making it one of the top-selling video game lines worldwide.

It is Ubisoft's most popular franchise, with a new installment released each year.

"'Assassin's Creed' is certainly one of the annual powerhouse franchises, and it has quite a following," said game industry analyst Scott Steinberg of technology consulting firm TechSavvy.

"Partly because it manages to capture the imagination."

Admittedly, putting out a new version of the game each year stretches the overarching storyline, which features modern-day descendants of assassins whose genetic memory is being mined to solve a bigger mystery.

"That is one of the challenges with an annual franchise, you are constantly pushed to one-up yourself," Steinberg said.

"It is similar to what happens with sequels to movies or television shows. Sometimes the story isn't that successful, but there is always next year."

Steinberg credited "Assassin's Creed" with inspiring other games, such as "Middle-earth: Shadow of Mordor," recently released by Warner Brothers Interactive Entertainment.

Mobile play

The analyst referred to "Assassin's Creed" as a "tent-pole" franchise for Ubisoft when it comes to revenue.

The company reported last month that sales topped expectations in the first half of its fiscal year, bolstered by success of its new "Watch Dogs" game and a "firm back catalogue," including "Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag" released a year ago.

The prior version of "Assassin's Creed" put players in the boots of a bold pirate and tapped into mobile devices to expand play.

The new installment of the game also lets people expand play to smartphones or tablets using "companion apps."

"Ubisoft is one of the more forward thinking publishers when it comes to pushing things in new directions, like mobile," Steinberg said.

"Assassin's Creed" protagonists have included a Renaissance Italian, a 12th-Century Syrian and a Native American during the colonial period.

The franchise has grown to include novels, comic books, mobile games and films.

It immerses players in a believable experience inspired by historical events and has set its games in Italy, Constantinople and even colonial America.

"Assassin's Creed: Unity" is tailored for play on Xbox One, PlayStation 4 or personal computers powered by Windows software and will sell for \$60.

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