

'2011 looks huge' for video game follow-ups

February 1 2011, By Mike Snider

Batman leads a league of sequels headed for video games this year.

The Caped Crusader's "Batman: Arkham City," due this fall for PS3, Xbox 360 and PCs, joins follow-ups in the "Zelda," "Gears of War" and "Mass Effect" franchises.

"2011 looks huge for new releases, maybe even fuller than 2010," says Leigh Alexander of industry trade site Gamasutra.com. "Many beloved franchises are getting sequels their fans have been waiting for for a long time."

Despite last year's high-profile hit follow-ups such as "Call of Duty: Black Ops," "Halo Reach" and "New Super Mario Bros. Wii," total industry sales were down 6 percent, at \$18.6 billion, according to market tracking firm The NPD Group.

While publishers will again lean heavily on sequels to proven titles, some surprises are in the pipeline. Due Feb. 22 is an over-the-top, first-person sci-fi shooter, "Bulletstorm" (\$60, PS3, Xbox 360 and PCs; ages 17-up). "L.A. Noire" (PS3 and Xbox 360, no price or rating), a detective thriller from Rockstar, developers of "Grand Theft Auto," arrives May 17.

"Sequels are not necessarily a bad thing, but if there weren't games like "L.A. Noire" coming, it would be much more concerning," says Brian Crecente of game-news site Kotaku.com. "You look at the big titles, almost every one that people are talking about has numbers after the title."

Sequels do improve on past games. Already out, "LittleBigPlanet 2" (\$60, all ages, for PS3) adds environments and lets players design their own games. "Gears of War 3," due this fall for Xbox 360, has female squad member characters and a five-player multiplayer mode. "The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword," due later this year for Wii, heightens the sword-wielding action.

Other major threads in 2011 titles:

-Body movin'. More games will take advantage of Microsoft's hands-free Kinect controller for Xbox 360 and Sony's PlayStation Move "as developers get more familiar with what those controllers can do," says journalist Chris Morris. "Dead Space 2" (\$60, out now, PS3, [Xbox 360](#), PCs, ages 17-up) includes second [game](#) "Dead Space: Extraction on PS3" that uses the Move controller. "Michael Jackson: The Experience," already out for Wii, is due for Kinect and Move April 12.

-3-D games. Sony has several 3-D-ready PS3 games, including "Killzone 3" (\$60, Feb. 22, ages 17-up), "Motorstorm Apocalypse" (\$60, April 12, ages 13-up) and "Uncharted 3: Drake's Decision" (Nov. 1, not yet rated). Nintendo's 3DS hand-held system (\$250, due March 27) will deliver 3-D games without the need for special glasses.

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