

NintendoWorldReport

Issue 7

POWERED FF



Special



Round-Up

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THIS MONTH

By Nicholas Bray

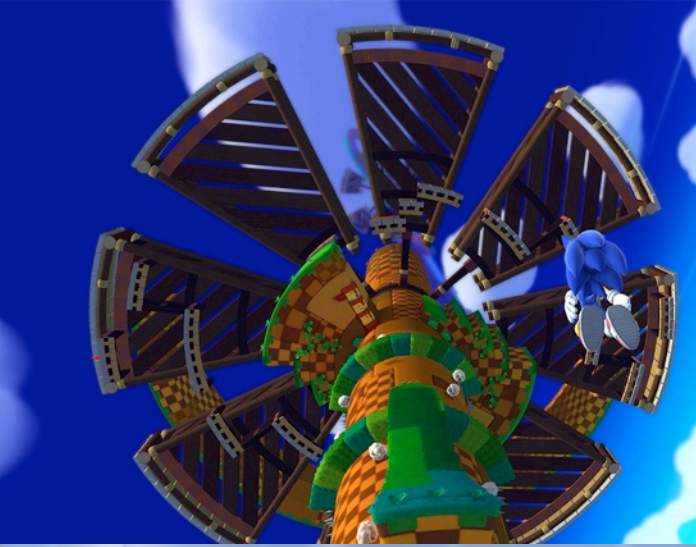
This month's issue is bursting at the seams with a page count of 65! This issue features only our E3 coverage, so if you missed some of the articles over the past few weeks, you will be able to catch up on all of it here. We hope that having our E3 2013 articles all in one place will be a great way to read it now, and also as a way to look back on in the years to come.

Please enjoy the issue!

We need your questions for the mailbag! Send them to: poweredoff@nintendoworldreport.com.



Wii U Impressions



Mario Kart 8

Impressions

Original Publication: June 11, 2013

By Guillaume Veillette

Mario Kart 8 does not exactly turn the series upside-down.

The Mario Kart 8 demo definitely has an air of familiarity to it. You can select one of 12 returning characters, choose a kart or a bike, and use the same control options as in Mario Kart Wii using a Wii Wheel or Wii Remote, or play with the GamePad using the control stick or motion controls. Returning from Mario Kart 7 are the glider and underwater racing.



The biggest change: a sort of hover-kart/bike transformation that allows you to cling to walls or ceiling. This transformation is triggered in specific sections of a track and the player has no control over it beyond the choice of taking the occasional alternate path.



The trailers for the game make racing on walls or ceiling look disorienting, but during actual play, the camera is tied to the kart in order to keep the controls consistent. But while this allows the game to remain playable and simple, it also means this new mechanic lacks "oomph". Since the track remains under you at the bottom of the screen at all times, racing feels the same on whatever surface you happen to be on. The main impact is having to look for shortcuts and alternate paths on the walls.

Beyond that, the tracks are wide to accommodate 12 players when racing online and the game looks very much like a high definition version of the Wii game. There are perhaps more

details that are easy to miss while playing, but are nice touches when looking at someone else play. For instance, one of the tracks takes place in the streets of a town with a European air to it, and ads for Galaxy Airlines and shops such as "Mario's Workwear" help add some character to the place. The other tracks include a Ghost House with no real surprises to it, and what I can only describe as a generic Mushroom Kingdom circuit.

The lighting has gotten a nice upgrade and fireballs light up and explode beautifully, but that is about the most noticeable graphical improvement. The framerate is fast and steady (at least in split screen, two player mode), and the art style remains simple and familiar. There is no way for one player to use the full TV screen and the other to look at the GamePad in the demo.



With the most refreshing-looking addition to Mario Kart 8 being less of a game-changer than it appears, those looking for a fresher Mario Kart experience will be disappointed, while those who are just looking to do tricks and pop wheelies in HD are getting exactly what they want.

Pikmin 3

By Jonathan Metts

Learn about the new and much-improved Pikmin 3 demo, including multi-tasking and competitive multiplayer.

Having played Pikmin 3 demos at back-to-back E3s, I'd say the game has come a long way in the past year. Nintendo

wised up this

year and gave

me a Wii Remote Plus and Nunchuk right away, noting that their teams vastly prefer this setup (though joystick/button play is also supported on both GamePad and Pro controllers). It's worth noting that you have fairly little camera control in the pointer scheme; a tap of the Nunchuk's Z button will simply re-center behind your lead character. One new feature lets you target an enemy or item by pointing the cursor at it and holding Z; then, you can shake the Nunchuk to send every Pikmin at the target in one huge, all-out strike.

The ten-minute single player demo offers a choice between two levels -- one that's similar to what we played in 2012, and one new, more difficult one. I chose the latter and was given the standard goal of collecting as many items as possible. Each piece of fruit, enemy carcass, or pellet generates new Pikmin sproutlings, and some of the real-world items are gold-colored with a coin value displayed. The quantity and value of items gathered is shown at completion of each level, and a demo rep told me that these may be posted to an online leaderboard for comparison with your friends' scores. Take that with a grain of salt, for now. (The game still appears to have no online multiplayer, which is really frustrating.)

Right away, I found a group of the new pink Pikmin just hanging out near the Onion base. These little guys hover mid-air when you throw them, which affects how they attack and also lets them lift gates that are otherwise indestructible. The pink ones also take different paths when collecting items and returning to your astronaut character -- which means they can be faster, but it's also harder to keep up with your supply routes because they are quickly separated from other,



less mobile Pikmin. A very funny new animation shows that non-flying Pikmin will grab onto an item as it is lifted up, struggle to hang on for a few seconds, and eventually fall off in despair.

The other new mechanic on display is multi-tasking with the three astronauts. You directly control just one at a time, and rather than merely flipping among them (as in Pikmin 2), the excess heroes can follow around your main one along with the mass of Pikmin. You can tap C on the Nunchuk to cycle through the different Pikmin colors, and then to the astronauts, who can be thrown at a low angle (like the big purple Pikmin). This allows them to get up to ledges that you can't climb otherwise. Once up there, the thrown astronaut will start pulling up nearby embedded Pikmin. You can also press the minus button to zap control over to that guy. By throwing both extra astronauts up higher, then switching to one and throwing the third up to yet another ledge, you can reach heights that

were never accessible in previous games. This feature seems destined to be exploited in many of the game's more difficult puzzles. In battle, the additional characters are seemingly useless (they won't attack enemies) -- but perhaps other new mechanics will change that.





then, I happened to see a yellow butterfly pass overhead and land on a nearby ledge, and that was another tile that would complete my bingo. I went directly after the butterfly, dispatched it from below, and carried it back to my base very quickly due to the relative size compared to that apple. Victory was mine before the opponent even realized what was happening. This mode was definitely a fun twist on the classic Pikmin structure, as we were focused on specific kinds of items. Conflict was sporadic but intense whenever we both set eyes on the same resource. Things got chaotic and, frankly, very confusing whenever our armies clashed (they were only distinguished by leaf/bud/flower colors), and it seems the Pikmin usually prefer to fight each other than work on carrying off the prize.

I should also mention that the above level is playable in the two-player cooperative mode; presumably, this should apply to the entire main campaign. There is a new, separate competitive mode called Bingo Battle. It's being shown for two players but may support more; as usual, details are hard to pin down. For this mode, each player has a vertical split-screen and a 4x4 bingo card showing various items that can be collected for the onion base. Some are of limited quantity in the level and will be X'd out when no longer available -- that means you need to complete a row or column some other way. There are many paths to victory, but some items are much more challenging than others. My very first match-up came down to the wire, as both of us were fighting over the same giant apple, and neither had enough strength to carry it due to excessive Pikmin-on-Pikmin violence. Just



Sonic Lost World

Impressions

By Michael "TYP" Cole

Original Publication: June 11, 2013

How does Sonic fare in the Lost World? Check out our initial impressions of the Wii U game from the show floor.

Sonic: Lost World was among the more popular demos at Nintendo's booth on the first day. And while the controls at times seem somewhat elusive even to this Sonic veteran, the imaginative level designs hold a great deal of promise.



The E3 demo contains three levels that showcase the variety in level design. The first level, reminiscent of Green Hill or Emerald Hill from the Genesis games, has been compared by many to Super Mario Galaxy, and with good reason. Sonic travels amongst planetoid-like objects, grabbing rings, bouncing off springs, and attacking robotic baddies to save the innocent, fluffy critters captured within. Controlling Sonic is quite satisfying in this level, as there are few places where Sonic can fall off. Instead, there are branching paths on several planetoids, depending on whether you go up or down, left or right, etc. This level also featured the laser attack from Sonic Colors, in which you aim with the touch screen and flick to initiate. I found the touch screen controls to be finicky, but to be fair no one else in front of me in line seemed to have any trouble.

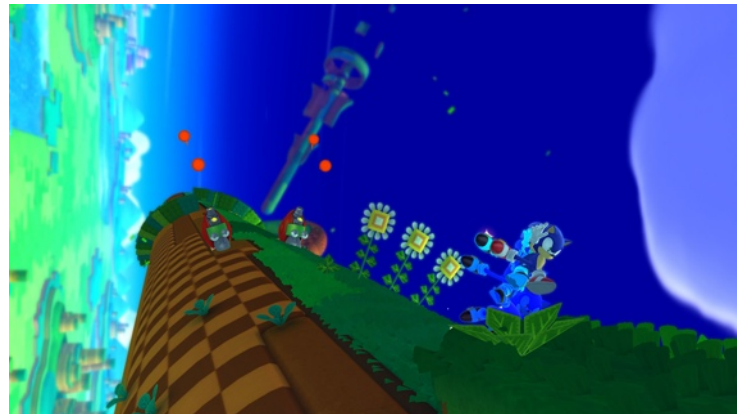


The second level is a 2D side-scrolling scene similar to those found in Sonic Colors (down to a sweet tooth motif similar to the one found in the Wii game). I was not able to get hands-

on time with this level, but like the first it includes secret branching paths and old-school references such as the blast cannons from Oil Ocean in Sonic 2.

In the third level on display Sonic continually runs forward, and the challenge comes from navigating the tunnels and pathways, moving left and right and jumping to avoid falling off. These sequences are interspersed with sections in which Sonic free-falls, and you must avoid baddies, grab rings, and control the speed of your fall (pushing R as desired to fall more quickly). This level was fun, but I fell off a few times, once because of a homing attack placed me someplace I had not anticipated and once because of what seemed like an overly sensitive analog stick.

As with other 3D Sonic games, the combat mechanics felt a bit obtuse. For example, Sonic can perform a kick attack by jumping with A and then pressing X—but only if there is actually a nearby enemy—so it is difficult to practice. Meanwhile, Jumping and pressing X can also cause Sonic to bounce not unlike when Sonic has a water shield in Sonic 3 & Knuckles. Pushing A while in mid-air triggers Sonic's familiar homing attack, which is very generous with locking onto the enemies and springs.



Overall I'm still interested in Sonic: Lost World—the levels are cleverly designed and are visually appealing with bright colors. However, I remain apprehensive about the game's controls. I suspect some of my troubles were user error—I'm fairly poor at Sonic Colors, after all—but after playing the demo I fully expect this 3D Sonic game to wrestle with the same control challenges as prior entries.

Mario & Sonic at the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games

By Alex Culafi

Impressions

Original Publication: June 12, 2013

It sure is another Mario & Sonic game, though it might not be too much else.

Mario & Sonic at the 2014 Sochi Olympic Winter Games is the latest in the Mario and Sonic franchise. Although we know the game features mini-games based on every single olympic event, the demo only features snowboarding, bobsledding, and a final race that somewhat combines the two.



Snowboarding is a simple downhill race where players tilt the GamePad or Wii Remote downhill to best a series of opponents. Buttons are barely used, and strategy comes into play when you realize the only real way to speed up is to jump off of a series of ramps (by lifting the controller) at the right time. It's simple, but fun enough for a party experience.

Bobsledding is also a matter of speeding downhill using the gyro aspects of either compatible controller. The difference in this game is that it appears to be more of a time trial because the space to speed down the hill is narrowed significantly. Gaining speed is done through grounded speed boosts rather than jumping. It was very clunky, unoriginal, and not very fun.



The final event features a race of snowboarders against sledgers downhill, incorporating multiple ways to boost speed, like the aforementioned ramps, alongside various terrain that allows one type of vehicle to speed up or one to slow down (snow assists snowboarders, ice to sledgers, and sand to neither).

Though the demo was certainly monotonous and a bit weak, it was so limited that it's impossible to tell how polished the final product will be. Unfortunately, the games presented during E3 do not ignite positive expectations.



By Aaron Kaluszka and Neal Ronaghan

Original Publication: June 12, 2013

We played the (local-only) multiplayer. It is bonkers!

The last time we played The Wonderful 101, it was still titled Project P-100. Like other games from developer Platinum



Games, the game is a frenetic action game that will require nimble fingers and the ability to filter out the intense visuals so that you can figure out what you're actually doing. The game features Viewtiful Joe-like characters – the main character looks like Joe, but I also saw a Silvia look-a-like. It looks a bit shinier than last year; the graphics have been improved as well as the controls.

Instead of a single hero, you collect bystanders and have them join your team. The more people you can collect, the more powerful your attacks become and the longer reach you gain. To "Unite" powers, you draw shapes including a circle for a fist, a line for a sword, an L shape for a gun, and an S for a whip on the touch screen or by using the R-stick. The formation glows in a representative color to let you know what power you'll be activating with the A button. I found the stick easier to use in the middle of action, but the touch screen shows characters as dots on a map, which makes it easier to see what command you're performing on the touch screen. You can also use the characters as bridges to climb to hard-to-reach areas. To perform the special moves, you have to keep a battery meter charged by collecting scattered batteries. These moves are sometimes used to solve puzzles – in the demo, I had to start a ferris wheel by turning into the fist and turning a giant crank.



The demo included a series of boss battles, beginning with a boss made of dozens, if not hundreds, of drills. Each battle makes you think about which weapon formation works best. In this case, the whip was necessary to tear off the enemy's armor. But you still had to pay attention to its attacks so that you wouldn't get crushed (which I did, many times). The second boss was some sort of jelly cuttlefish that arrived in a flying saucer and which required slicing with the sword attack and who would trap you with gelatinous blobs.

The last boss that was reachable within the time limit was Gagujin, an immense robot that tore apart the city as you jumped from building to building. These jumps are completed through stylized quick-time events, though rather than just button presses, gestures were sometimes required. As the buildings collapsed, you had to lead your party from girder to remnant of platform. It's no easy feat, but the game lets you retry.



The missions are chained together seamlessly, and while it may seem intimidating, it's not too difficult to get a handle on. At the end of each mission, ratings are given which score players on time, combos, and damage, going with a medal scale going up to the apt platinum. The platinum medals seem to have special significance, perhaps for unlockables.

There's a lot going on in The Wonderful 101, but if you want action, you'll definitely find it here. It's a brawler at its core, but it's full of unique features and it captures the non-stop action hero feeling well.



Additional Info

With experimentation, we discovered some different Unite abilities. In the frantic multiplayer, I unearthed four different abilities. First off, there is the hang glider, created with a triangle, which lets you hover through the air. You can also create a bomb (by drawing a bomb), which can be lobbed to explode over groups of enemies. A hammer is, well, it's a hammer that can be used as a melee weapon, which is also generated from drawing its likeness. One of my personal favorites was the claws, which could be drawn into being with a lightning bolt symbol. These were fast and quick melee weapons.

So, apparently the five-player local multiplayer was highlighted as well, which Aaron didn't get a chance to try yesterday. I (Neal) got to check out the multiplayer, which used Pro Controllers. It was absolutely chaotic; as you can imagine, having five groups of Pikmin-like mobs on screen at once is very busy. I was using a Pro Controller and had a lot of trouble figuring out where my group was in the chaos.

The multiplayer is a cooperative experience kind of similar to how Luigi's Mansion: Dark Moon's multiplayer works. There is a score attack component, because you are rewarded for getting a higher score and accruing more heroes to your team. You have to work together, though, because if one player dies, then everyone loses and must restart the stage.

We'll probably find out more about the multiplayer before the game comes out, but we know there will not be any online component to it.



Wii Party U

By Guillaume Veillette

GamePad games make for a bigger, more fun party.

Snubbed by some party games fans because it didn't have Mario in the title, Wii Party on the Wii console was

a very fun game with deeper, more interactive games than is usual in this genre. Not content with having players mash a button or rotate a control stick as quickly as they could, the mini-games would have you try to deceive your opponents, or use the Wii Remote in some novel ways to offer games that could be played around the house and not just on the television.

Many of these same mini-games are back with new twists and new coats of paint in Wii Party U, along with some new ones with their own twists that show up, but the E3 demo centered more around games that use the GamePad. Those GamePad games are a blast.



The first game I tried instructed the player using the GamePad to adopt a specific expression. In my case: "You are about to buy a car". I made my best pensive "should I buy this?" face and hit the shoulder button to snap the picture. My face then appeared on the television and the others had to guess the face I was making. Unfortunately for me, all of the choices involved "is considering buying..." so it wasn't the slam dunk I was hoping for. My "I would buy this at a high price" expression had to be more specific, but how

Impressions

Original Publication: June 19, 2013

does a "I would like this buy this car" face differ from a "I would like to buy this soda" face, I ask you?

I then passed the GamePad to someone else and had to decide if he was "about to surprise a friend" or "showing his molars". Guessing correctly would give 10 points to myself and the player with the GamePad, so it is always in your best interest to be as expressive as possible. However, purposefully guessing incorrectly can be part of your strategy if you are leading in points, and Wii Party U is rife with opportunities like this one to screw with other player by sacrificing a few points.

Another four player game, Operation: Sandbox, gave a giant tank with several hit points and one-shot kills to the player with the GamePad, and smaller tanks to everyone else. The giant tank has more cumbersome controls, with the two analog sticks assigned to their respective tank threads, while the smaller tanks are more agile and easier to control. The cannonballs that are fired actually roll on the ground, so you can use the slopes of the sand dunes to curve your shots.



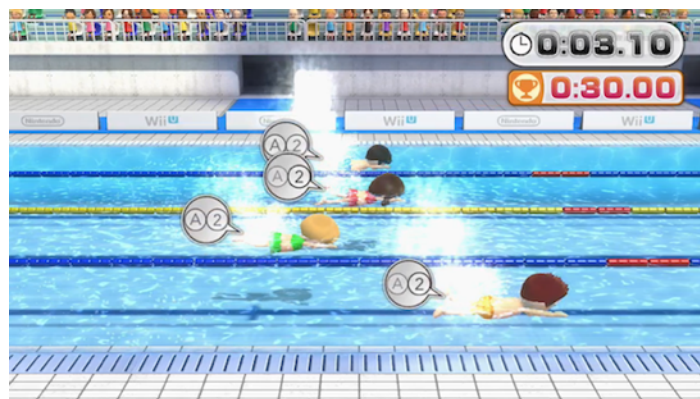
There is also a selection of GamePad-only games. Two players look down at the screen and use their analog stick to control the action. I played simple foosball and tabletop baseball matches this way which were very fun. Other games, such as a marble maze, involve tilting the GamePad, requiring cooperation.



There are a lot of different modes offering various ways to string mini-games together (including a board game) that I didn't get to explore, but jumping from one game to the next in Free Play was fun enough. The scores weren't carried over from one game to the next in this demo (we kept switching people and Miis anyway), but I was assured that there are persistent stats in the game. It does track which games a specific Mii has played the most, for how long, etc.

Wii Party U does not offer online play. While I can understand the absence of simultaneous multiplayer online to a point, not even being able to send a challenge on a specific mini-game to a friend seems like a missed opportunity to me. The only online feature is the most basic form of Miiverse integration, where you can post the outcome of a game and have people comment on it. It does not appear that the imagination displayed in the mini-games' design carried over to Wii Party U's Miiverse features.

Still, there is no doubt in my mind that Wii Party U is going to be one of the best party games on the system. Look forward to its release this fall.



By Justin Berube

Mario is back again in an adventure that feels both fresh and familiar.



Super Mario 3D World is clearly a mixture of Super Mario 3D Land and Super

Mario Bros. 2 (USA). This causes the game to feel fresh while at the same time giving Mario fans an experience that is also familiar, especially with the multiplayer mode.

I first played Super Mario 3D World with the Wii Remote on its side like an NES controller. The game's controls were basic. Movement is handled by using the D-Pad, run with the 1 button, jump with 2, and duck with the B Trigger. The only flaw here is that the B Trigger is a big awkward to press when holding the Wii Remote in this fashion.

Using the Wii U GamePad was much more straight forward. Controlling a character could be done with the D-Pad or the Control Stick. Jump was A, run B, and ducking with Z1. Hopefully the final version will allow players to use Wii U Pro controllers as they would be the ideal way to play this game.

Mario and crew retain several abilities from previous games. Ducking while jumping causes the characters to do a back flip. Wall jumping, the twisting back flip, long jump, and the ground pound also return. Running in tight circle for a while, and then jumping, will cause the character to spin jump. At one point I was also able to do a forward roll, but I have no idea how I did it.

Each character has their own unique strengths and weaknesses. Mario seemed to be the baseline character. Luigi jumped the highest, but his constant kicking did make landing in the right spots a bit harder. Toad seemed to be the fastest. Peach was very slow, but could use her dress to float like in Super Mario Bros. 2.

The characters' strengths and weaknesses didn't seem to matter in the first stage I played. This is because at the beginning of the first stage all four of us playing the game

needed to hop on an aquatic Yoshi like sea monster. This character apparently has no name yet (I asked).



Once all players hopped on the back of the beast, teamwork became very important. The camera gave a behind-the-back view of the action as the sea monster swam down a straight course full of traps, hidden secrets, and more. Pressing left or right would cause the creature to swim in that direction, while also still barreling forward. The speed at which the monster would turn appeared to depend on how many of the players were currently controlling him in a given direction.

It's also possible to make the sea monster jump by pressing the jump button and any player can control this. This made the stage a bit chaotic at first and really caused everyone to cooperate in order to reach the end goal.

The first stage also had boost pads, which would give the sea monster a quick boost of speed. Boosting appeared to be the only way to reach certain secrets, some of which even appeared behind waterfalls. Rings also littered the level and would give everyone playing more points if they made their way through. My team of players also managed to find a green star.





diagonal attack dive towards the ground. The most fun part though was easily just climbing up to the top of the flag poles. This will never get old.

The final standard level was full of the new Clear Warp Pipes. Going in one of these new pipes would send the player though automatically. There is, however, some control. The pipes often branch out and holding the appropriate direction would send the player down a new portion of the pipe. This gameplay mechanic was used in several exciting ways.



At one point, every player had to pop out of specific portions of pipe in order to grab different keys before the path, leading towards the end of the stage, would open. The end of the level also featured a mini pipe maze. Going through it correctly would drop the player off at the top of the flag pole at the end of the stage. Go the wrong way here and the player would be dropped beneath the top, or next to the pole completely.

The fire flower was also introduced in this stage and works as expected. It is especially useful with clear pipes around since a fire ball will travel through a pipe and kill any

enemies weak to it which lurk inside. Pipes full of enemies often led to various rewards such as coins or hidden warp pipes.

At the end of the river was a warp pipe that led to the end of the stage. This is something familiar to anyone who has played Super Mario 3D Land. After hopping on the flag pole, the game gave a total score and the demo was reset.

There were also three more standard stages to play in, as well as a boss fight. The standard stages were all very reminiscent of Mario 3D Land, but they also appeared to have much more going on. Each stage had secrets, which is to be expected in any Mario title.

The first of the basic stages appeared to be set in grasslands full of moving platforms and obstacles. The second of these stages was set in a more dirt-like and underground setting. The second stage gave out the new Cat Suit more than any other.

Using the cat suit is a ton of fun. Just jumping on special surfaces will have the player grip it. Moving around felt similar to around on fences in Mario World. Hitting the run button while a cat allowed Mario to scratch at foes. Hitting the same button while jumping sent the character in a

The final stage was a boss fight against a snake like enemy wearing a crown. Only the snake's head was poking out of the ground and he had a weak point on his head. The problem was his head was too high to jump on normally. In order to reach the top players needed to jump on the heads of smaller snakes that would occasionally pop out of the ground and slowly work their way up to the height of the main boss's weak point. This ended up being somewhat challenging especially while dodging attacks and trying to accomplish the same exact task as several other players.

Overall, the Super Mario 3D World demo has me wanting more. The multiplayer aspects will be a ton of fun and each stage will have replay value since there are hidden routes and green stars.

The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker HD

By Neal Ronaghan

The Wind Waker HD demo showed off Outset Island and the Helmaroc King.

For the first time, we got to see Wind Waker HD in motion and while the demo showed very little actual gameplay, it



was beautiful to see live. With new shading and updated graphics, Wind Waker HD makes the GameCube classic look like it probably does in your fuzzy memories of the original version.

The actual demo itself was split into two parts, the first was Outset Island, where you could roam around the opening area of the game. Link had no sword in this area, but I was able to seamlessly alter my inventory while moving, moving the bow in my inventory to X, Y, or R. The bow can then be controlled with either the right analog stick, or by tilting the GamePad. It was very similar to the bow controls in Ocarina of Time 3D.



Outset Island also had some roaming Tingle Bottles on the shore that showed off Miiverse messages when found. After you find a bottle, you can bring up the post on the GamePad at the touch of a button, all within Wind Waker's interface. It's like how Miiverse was used for New Super Mario Bros. U, but with a Zelda twist. Also, Tingle Bottle is a really funny phrase.

Wind Waker HD also has off-screen play, which is activated with a press of the minus button. It's not quite seamless, but as long as you're not switching the screens in the middle of a

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battle (which I did), it's not an impediment. You also can't switch from the TV to the GamePad (or vice versa) during cut scenes.

The second portion of the demo was the boss battle with the Helmaroc King. After journeying up the tower, you fought the giant bird by smashing his headplate with the hammer, just like you did in the original. The boss was just as great of a spectacle as it was in 2003. After defeating him, I was able to experiment with an array of Link's weaponry, ranging from his bombs to the grappling hook. I even got to throw the boomerang!



While we don't know of much other improvements to the game outside of the fast-forward button for sailing, the improved graphics, and the GamePad use, Wind Waker HD is still a loving recreation of a fantastic game. I know I'm psyched to check it out when it comes out in North America this October.



Bayonetta 2

By Kimberly Keller

The intense visuals of Bayonetta are back in Bayonetta 2 and it doesn't disappoint.



The demo at E3 allowed me to play three different battle stages and gave me an interesting option: controller or touch screen.

The idea behind the choice is to make the game easier for newcomers to the series. The touch screen allows players to directly tap target spots on enemies by slashing, tapping, or holding down the stylus, making it the easier option. I decided to try it out and was promptly given a second, almost comical, option: easy or very easy.



Gameplay is pretty easy to figure out with the touchpad, basically go nuts with the stylus whenever you see a purple target circle over an enemy. Occasionally Bayonetta's special attack, Umbra Climax, pops up on the bottom of the screen as a tappable attack option.

You see, Bayonetta has a new haircut but apparently kept the hair. This new fashion statement lends itself to Umbra Climax by growing and weaving itself away from Bayonetta's body (with key areas still covered) and opening a portal for a monster to come through and attack your enemy briefly. During the attack you need to repeatedly tap a target for bonus points. Even though this attack option popped up fairly frequently, the lush graphics kept it interesting.

Bayonetta can be moved easily by tapping where you want to go, but that isn't really necessary when battling. Once I tapped a target, Bayonetta automatically moved toward the

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spot, her distance changing based on the weapon being used. Once killed, an enemy spouted golden rings to collect.

For normal attacks, the demo gave me the option of two guns or a sword and whip. The guns work better for long range attacks, but the whip allowed me to hit multiple enemies at once. However, it was a little difficult to hit more than one foe with the whip during the demo and only the

first stage provided me with multiple enemies who didn't really stay close together for my whip attack.



Besides attacking, I could also jump by swiping up on the touchscreen or evade by swiping backwards. If I timed an evade just before an enemy attacked, I entered Witch Time. Witch Time slows down all enemies in the area briefly and opens them up to attacks.

All stages were very fast paced and featured different moving backgrounds. The first featured multiple angelic type beasts for me to fight while on a train type vehicle and blended into the second stage which pitted Bayonetta against a larger demonic monster. Jeanne, from the first game, shows up during these stages and helps fight. The representative did tell me she plays a key role in the game, but wouldn't say if she would be a playable character or not.

The final stage features a large boss called Gomorrah. The whole stage was stunning as Bayonetta jumped into the sky and grew wings to help her fight easier. Now that I could fly, I had to keep a sharp eye out for targets located around the monster's body as Bayonetta flew around him.





The three stages gave a clear idea of the different ways to battle but no story elements were really seen. Something that looked like Jeanne's soul was pulled from her body into the darkness by shadow-like creatures at one point, but Bayonetta fought on. After completing each stage, I was given a rank based on the amount of rings I collected and the tapping bonus I received during Umbra Climax attacks. At the end of the demo, all three scores were averaged and I was awarded a golden statue.

Later I will try out the controller option and see how the gameplay compares to the ease of the touchpad. The game will be released sometime in 2014.

Additional Info

The hardest setting for the demo, normal, completely ignored the touchpad and altered attacks noticeably. For starters, Bayonetta wouldn't completely auto run to targets when you attacked; I felt more involved in the game now that the control stick mattered and I could finally strategize. The whip became a huge ally as combos and movement created a larger attack, successfully hitting large groups of enemies.

To her credit though, Jeanne helped out a lot more in normal mode, decapitating enemies with her glider occasionally and reappearing for combo attacks.

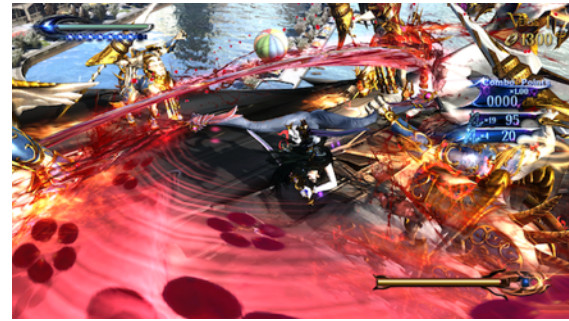
Umbra Climax surprisingly changed as well. No longer could I summon a monster to chew on my enemies for a while, instead the game allowed me to control a large pillar of hair with purple symbols surrounding it which I bashed through my enemies repeatedly.



Although, more often than Climax I triggered Torture, a combo move that placed a conveyor belt under an enemy leading straight to a grinder. Bayonetta would then kick the fleeing enemy into the device and smile as blood splattered on the battlefield. Clearly this is not a kid friendly title, but her methods are morbidly satisfying after you've been kicked around by monsters.

Normal mode was insanely fun, but I'm glad I tried it second. With more enemies and deadlier attacks, I had to pay close attention to my movements and time my evade maneuver well to take advantage of Witch Time. Finding your bearings while flying in the final boss level takes some getting used to and attack points aren't as frequent; even changing position based on Gomorrah's movements.

During the touchscreen playthrough I could hold down colored lollipops on the screen to help out



Bayonetta:

red for health, blue and green for battle related boosts. These were suspiciously absent from normal mode. Oddly, health replenished periodically during the demo, but the representative couldn't explain how I triggered it.

E3 showed off Bayonetta fantastically. Sure, no one could tell me anything about the story, but that's okay as the real fun is in the crazy battles. Gigantic monsters, crisp details, and responsive attacks push this game to new heights.

Donkey Kong Country: Tropical Freeze

By Jonathan Metts and Michael "TYP" Cole

We get our monkey paws on the new Donkey Kong Country for Wii U from Retro Studios.

Based on some hands-on time with the E3 demo, DKC: Tropical Freeze is a very straightforward but fun sequel to the popular Wii and 3DS title.



The basic gameplay and controls are very similar to DKC Returns when using the Wii Remote and Nunchuk. You grab and jump with the buttons, and shake the Remote (or Nunchuk) to perform a roll, and the Kongs can team up to combine their powers. Diddy's hover pack is back, as is DK's ability to ride Diddy. If Diddy is on DK's back, the big guy can roll forward over very long distances as long as you keep wagging. Some demo stations at E3 featured off-TV play for single player, in which you control the game using more traditional button-based controls. Many fans will be happy to hear that when using the GamePad, you can perform a roll and pound by pushing a button (Y) — it controls pretty much as you would expect a DKC game to control. Unfortunately, I had to use the analog stick to move — there was no option to use the D-pad in the E3 demo, which felt a bit strange for a 2D platformer but certainly not enough to be a problem. Classic and Pros controllers were not supported in the E3 build, nor was the GamePad an option for the two-player stations; the Nintendo representative at the demo kiosk could not comment on whether the final game will support these options.

Four levels were on display for the Kongs' E3 showing, with Donkey Kong and Diddy Kong playable in each in single or multiplayer. The first level was a relatively tame introductory level that showed off some of the game's familiar and new mechanics, such as the ability to "pluck" items from the ground, and all levels featured the obligatory puzzle pieces, KONG letters, and bonus stages. The mine cart level required the player to jump and duck through a jungle environment, making split decisions as the path forked and merged and to avoid or jump on baddies. The last level featured challenging blast barrels and collapsing environments and required careful timing to nab collectables and avoid explosives floating in the air and falling onto you from collapsing pillars. One bonus stage in this area required

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Original Publication: June 15, 2013

explosives to blast out the entrance, and there were other similarly hidden bonus barrels and entrances squirreled away on other stages.



There was also a boss stage in which DK and Diddy faced off against a nasty seal and his minions. The battle took place in a U-shaped arena, and the Kongs have to jump on top of him as he slipped from side to side on his belly. As the battle progressed, the seal would spend time in the foreground or background, sending his minions or tossing fish to avoid before resuming his own attack, eventually mixing things up by rolling (invincible) and jumping in an attempt to land on me. Overall the boss seemed fairly easy, given the player can sustain five hits and still survive, though the boss difficulty may ramp up later in the game based on the bosses in DKC Returns.





Some new enemies have helmets; this means you can still jump on them, but they will be knocked out instead of completely defeated. You can then pick them up with the grab button (like a barrel) and use them to hit target switches or other enemies. Tropical Freeze also brings swimming back from the original DKC trilogy, air gauge (and replenishing bubbles) included. The jump button paddles forward, while rolling underwater produces a powerful dash that can be used to attack. Some environmental features are also affected by the dash move. One more note: as in previous Donkey Kong Country games, it often pays to move past the camera framing and look for secrets on the borders of the screen. This level design quirk has also been exploited by the recent and upcoming Rayman games.



Presentation-wise, Tropical Freeze looks impressive but very similar to the prior game, just in high definition. The more dynamic camera angles allow players to see more of the level architecture, and in some cases frame the action to heighten tension, but do not add much in terms of gameplay in the demo. The music was difficult to hear in the E3 booth, even with headphones for off-TV play, but what I was able to make out was jazzy and sounded like new compositions.

Tropical Freeze may not be the fresh new game Nintendo fans were hoping for from Retro Studios, but the demo was still... a blast. (Sorry, I had to!)



DuckTales Remastered

Impressions

Original Publication: June 12, 2013

By Guillaume Veillette

Uncle Scrooge and his gang are back, and they won't shut up about it.

Just like everyone else who has watched the DuckTales show and played the game as a kid, I have



longed for the NES classic or its sequel to be released on Virtual Console. So many of its elements came together just right. The sprites looked like the characters of the show, the premise of the game made sense (Scrooge hunting for treasure around the globe), and while Unca' Scrooge has never used his cane as a pogo stick in his TV adventures, the gameplay mechanic was inventive and felt great.

It comes as a great relief to me that Wayforward-developed remake DuckTales Remastered does so many things right. Primarily, the controls are just as responsive if not more so than the original, which is necessary to tackle the old school platforming challenges ahead. In fact, the pogo stick controls have been simplified: you only need to press the B button while jumping to initiate it. Pressing down is no longer required, and I welcome the change, though die-hard fans can switch to "Hard" controls in the game's menu.



There are three difficulty levels to choose from which do more than just increase the damage you take from enemies and obstacles. On the Easy difficulty, pressing Start shows you the full map of the level right away. On the Normal difficulty, you discover the map as you explore. And on the Hard difficulty, you get no map at all, and in addition will get fewer healing items. The representative at the demo kiosk

could not confirm any other changes such as extra secrets or alternate endings.

The levels are faithful recreations of the originals, complete with remixes of their catchy tunes. However, several changes were made to ensure that veterans won't blow through them in 30 minutes. First, the levels contain additional areas, such as a new section after riding Launchpad's helicopter in the Amazon level. Second, they have more to do in them: instead of just having to reach the exit, you may have to scour the levels to find key items. Finally, the bosses have more attacks and patterns at their disposal and take much longer to dispatch.



The 2D characters are incredibly expressive and well-animated, particularly during in-game cutscenes. The backgrounds are beautifully detailed and varied. The Transylvania stage is particularly striking with its cobwebby rooms, gigantic portraits on the walls, and sumptuous mountains as you ride the mine carts.



As you can see, there is a lot to be excited about this remake for fans of the original DuckTales game. However, I do have one gripe with the flow of the game: the constant interruptions. I have rarely seen cutscenes this intrusive. They make the game stop to a grinding halt so that we can hear the characters very slowly provide exposition. You can quickly skip them by pressing Start and choosing Skip Cinematic in the menu, but there are so many of them that it remains disruptive. In the Amazon level alone, every time Scrooge finds one of the eight or nine giant coins required to reach the boss, he stops to talk to Launchpad on his radio. By the time you've finished the level, you've been interrupted a dozen times. I understand that they help kids be invested in the story, but for the people who just want some old school NES action, they are incredibly annoying.

Still, I am looking forward to the game more than I was previously. Hopping on a pogo stick remains as fun as ever, and the Wii U version of the game may have the edge in terms of controls due to its digital buttons (on a PS3 controller, Scrooge tended to quit pogo-ing in mid-air for no reason). The game looks sharp on the GamePad's screen, though I vastly preferred watching the action on the big screen. The Capcom representative couldn't confirm if the game can also be played with the Wii U Pro controller or, for extra authenticity, a sideways Wii remote.

Look forward to downloading undiluted nostalgia (and a very fun game in its own right) on your Wii U in the coming months.



Skylanders: Swap Force

By Neal Ronaghan

The third Skylanders game appears to be a bigger leap than the second.

For the next Skylanders adventure, Skylanders: Swap Force, the characters journey to a new area, Cloudbreak Island, with a new developer, Vicarious Visions. The results so far are enough to make me excited for the October launch on Wii U (and Wii, which is a port handled by Beenox).

The most impressive thing from Swap Force, is, honestly, the fact that you can jump. We've known about it since the game's January reveal, but it's still that I keep smiling about when I actually play the game. I loved the first two Skylanders games, but the lack of jumping was always something that stood out. The reason it was excluded was touched on during a presentation at Activision's booth. Basically, Toys for Bob thought that jumping made each playable character too similar, since the action is similar. Instead, they focused on attacks to differentiate the characters.

Jumping doesn't change the flow of the game much, though, as I learned in the E3 demo,



which showed off a mission in a jungle setting. It had all the Skylanders staples: hidden areas, collectables, elemental focuses, and more. What jumping does is just give you an added feeling of maneuverability, which also translates well with the new Swap Zones, where you can move through certain areas of the game using powers from the new Swap Force characters. I got to play one of these sections, which put me in the shoes of Wash Buckler who used his octopus legs to climb up a wall while avoiding obstacles. It's a new style of playing that adds to the variety of gameplay styles to the series.

The demo didn't show much more, though I was able to tool around with swapping Wash Buckler and Magna Charge, two of the new Skylanders. I could make them Wash Charge or Magna Buckler with an easy switch of their tops. I also played as Series 3 Stealth Elf and Crusher, one of the giants from last year's Skylanders Giants.

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Original Publication: June 12, 2013

I did notice some Nintendo Network integration. On the GamePad, I could switch to something on the menu that would lead to a high score table, meaning players can easily compare their scores and times for levels with friends.



And that's not all. All Skylanders can now go up to level 20, and each part of the swappable characters is upgradeable. So, the top half of Stink Bomb, the stealthy ninja skunk, has a different upgrade path than the bottom. If you want to hear some other delicious Skylanders names, I also saw Nightshift, an undead vampire boxer; Free Ranger, a storm chicken who can turn into a tornado; Freeze Blade, a water-based ice-skate wearing being; and Star Strike, a new magic element.

It's not all sunshine though, as some modes and items are going away. The awesome football-inspired multiplayer is getting axed, because apparently no one played it. That breaks my heart as that was my favorite multiplayer mode. Also, the Adventure Packs from Spyro's Adventure no longer produce extra levels.

However, Swap Force will have two new Adventure Packs and two new Battle Packs.



With 16 Swap Force characters and 16 new Skylanders characters, alongside a variety of new poses of characters from the past two games, the Skylanders series will have enough new content to keep ardent fans happy. As one of those fans, I'm looking forward to October to get my hands on this title.

Scram Kitty and His Buddy on Rails

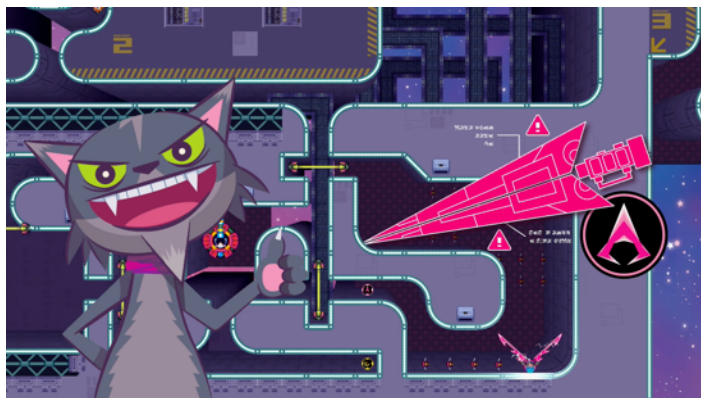
By Aaron Kaluszka

Scram means scratch in Welsh, but the unique name is only the beginning.

This game's bizarre title is quite apt. In Scram Kitty, you control the kitty's buddy, who must travel on a rail-bound vehicle battling through a mech and mouse-infested space station. The game is sort of a shooter, but you can also jump from rail to rail and gravity will pull you toward the nearest structure.



Through you can only travel in 2D, you fully use those two dimensions, skating left, right, up, down, and around various snaking rail structures that make up the game. You must navigate various levels, avoiding obstacles, and destroy onslaughts of enemies. You can shoot in front of you, side-to-side, or diagonally.



You can also pick up different weapons that will let you break through similarly colored barriers to complete your mission. That mission is to collect sets of keys in order to unlock the door to escape. You can approach this in multiple ways, going for speed (there are special speed-run keys) or taking more time to explore and deal with enemies.

Scram Kitty uses the Wii U features to display slightly different views on each screen. The GamePad view is meant for the player, while the TV view is meant for an audience, as it shows a wider view. The Scram Kitty itself pops up on the TV screen to show his reaction – happiness when you collect a new weapon, horror when you're hit.

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Original Publication: June 13, 2013

I can't think of any other game like it, though there are elements of shooter games like Bangai-O, Somer Assault, and Tempest, with a bit of Mario Galaxy gravity effects thrown in and a graphical style similar to Drill Dozer. The game's developer worked on Star Fox Command and the PixelJunk games while at Q-Games. After completing a couple PlayStation Minis, Scram Kitty is Dakko's first Wii U game.



Scram Kitty is the most unique game I played at E3, and while only two levels were available, I see lots of potential for the fast-paced rail and gravity-based shooter-platformer.



Disney Infinity

Impressions

Original Publication: June 13, 2013

By Guillaume Veillette

The Monsters University playset plays it safe.

Right before the official start of E3, Disney held a press event for its new Disney Infinity platform with a strong focus on the



movies that they want to promote this summer. The representatives were staying mostly mum on questions about the inclusion of classic Disney characters, but Nintendo World Report did get some hands-on time with the Monsters University playset.

In the Monsters University play set, you play as... whichever character you own a figurine of, and explore its campus freely. There is a story conceit behind the game (a prank contest with a rival school) and you have to find different booby traps and place them all over campus to score points for your team, while sabotaging the opposite team's efforts.

To set traps, you have to enter a menu and cycle through the ones that you have unlocked. The process is simplified by the GamePad's touch screen, but does halt the flow of the game: while cycling through menus, you are not doing anything else, even if monsters are going on with their lives on the television screen. Once you've set your trap, just be careful not to get too close to it yourself... unless you want to. See, certain traps can send your character flying, and therefore could allow him to access places he can't get to on his own.

When not setting traps, you are mostly accomplishing missions given to you by the fellow Monsters University students you talk to. They range from rescuing a toilet-papered student stuck on a rooftop to tearing down the denigrating posters that the rival university has put up.

The platforming is very standard fare: double jump, climb on stuff, collect doodads. The controls feel somewhat loose and can frustrate during the more precise platforming sections. Sully, the character I played as, was fairly slow, but thankfully

there is a number of ride or mounts that you can call at any time.



If I don't sound

excited about the infinite possibilities of Disney Infinity, it's because I'm not. At least, not based on this playset. The ability to mix and match Disney properties inflame the imagination, yes. But all of the most exciting tools in the world won't draw me in if they are used to create simply competent platformers.



Deus Ex: Human Revolution Director's Cut

Impressions

Original Publication: June 13, 2013

By Justin Berube

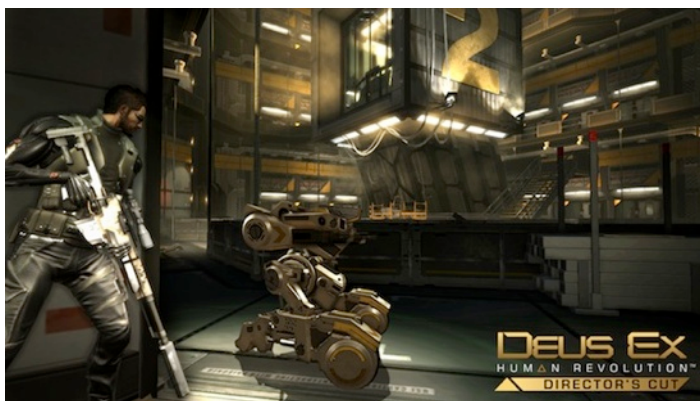
This demo needed some cybernetic implants of its own to help new players.

I decided to play Deus Ex: Human Revolution Director's Cut due to a strong recommendation from a friend. I didn't know much going into the experience other than it's a first person shooter with RPG elements and that different abilities are gained through cybernetic attachments given to the game's main character.



The demo opened up with the main character starting in a back alley of some sort of warehouse. I was able to meet up with some gangsters that offered to sell more ammo, guns, and other various upgrades. From this point I immediately had a hard time figuring out where to go. It's only after messing around a bit that it becomes apparent the game gives you an arrow, with the approximate distance, to help the player figure out where to travel.

My difficulty playing the game continued from here since this demo offered no tutorials and nearly every button on the GamePad was required to do something important.



After making my way through a warehouse I came to a loading dock full of enemies. At first I attempted to shoot them all, but this led to a quick death. It was at this point I realized that this was a stealth portion of the game, however



I had no way of figure out how to be stealthy enough to succeed. Instead I just ran as quickly as I could to the next checkpoint. Surprisingly this worked.

This ended up being the theme of my time with the demo. I did eventually figure out I could, for a limited time, get the main character to turn invisible. I wish I had known this earlier as it would have helped.

At the end of the demo there was a boss fight, but he proceeded to destroy me even after multiple attempts.

One other concern I had with this game was the aiming didn't seem smooth enough for a shooter. I had a hard time positioning the aiming reticule exactly where I wanted it. When titling the stick in any direction it seemed to always miss. It felt a bit slow as well.

It's really hard to judge Deus Ex: Human Revolution Director's Cut based on the demo. I've heard many people say good things about this game, however the demo provided absolutely no tutorial to assist new players which made it extremely difficult. It's a game I'd be willing to give another chance, but the demo clearly didn't do it justice.

By Jonathan Metts

Original Publication: June 13, 2013

It keeps going, and going, and going...

A year ago, Cloudberry Kingdom had an ongoing Kickstarter campaign, and we spoke with its creators,



Pwnee Studios, having never actually played the game before. They're back at E3 this year, but with a near-final multiplayer demo of the game right in the center of Nintendo's giant booth. I've put some time into the Steam beta, but this was my first chance to try the game with other people, and running on Wii U. Good news: this version looks exactly the same, and it clones everything to the GamePad screen for easy remote play. Better news: multiplayer raises the game's appeal to a whole new level.

Cloudberry Kingdom is one of the simplest 2D platformers I've ever played. You move left, right, and jump -- there's not even a run button. The game is fast enough without one, and learning to manage your momentum is actually a key skill. The game's AI-designed levels are each about 5 to 15 seconds long, and their difficulty ramps up constantly as you keep playing. The game "plays" every level to ensure it's possible before loading it up for you; we actually got to see this feature in action on some of the most insane settings, but it's not clear whether the final game will allow this kind of spectator mode. (So far, it has been used to cut some of the trailers.)

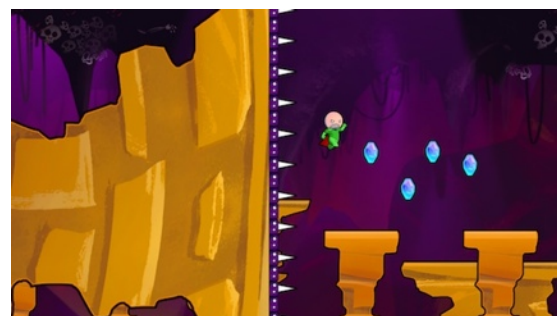


The cool thing about multiplayer is that it's entirely cooperative -- players clip through each other, so there's no concern about pushing a friend into the nearest pit. The game is hard enough without Mario/Rayman trolling.

Everyone shares a pool of extra lives, and you only lose one if everyone dies on the level. In other words, only one person has to make it to the end for everyone to proceed. This effectively multiplies your chances of surviving to see the next sadistic level, with the only consequence being that the visuals are slightly more chaotic with extra characters running around. Every mode in the game can be enjoyed with up to four players.

I also got to play a bit of the campaign mode, which is being shown for the first time here at E3. It consists of over 300 hand-crafted levels, some of which are longer than the auto-generated ones and therefore contain checkpoints. A comical story is told through CGI movies that are rendered in a striking papercraft style. The main character is Bob, who was described as Mario plus 40 years of aging, a grizzled hero who is sick of rescuing the princess over and over. The campaign evolves as you play, introducing new abilities (or handicaps?) every twenty levels, with stages designed to accommodate and challenge those tweaks.

Cloudberry Kingdom is perhaps the most fun I've had on the E3 show floor this week -- the game is very hard to



put down, and almost as entertaining to watch as it is to play. Kickstarter backers will be able to redeem their own Wii U copy later this summer when the game arrives on eShop, and a 3DS version is in the works too. If you're perpetually in need of something to play for Wii U, this game may be the perfect antidote -- it goes on forever and changes every time you play.

Phineas and Ferb: Quest for Cool Stuff

By Alex Culafi

Or in other words, the quest for originality.

Phineas and Ferb: Quest for Cool Stuff is a new hybrid action/adventure game currently in development by Majesco for 3DS, DS, Wii, and Wii U. Though the game is split between the adventure-game type "Exploration" mode, platforming sections where Phineas and Ferb control an upgradeable giant robot called the All-Terrain Transformatron Vehicle (A.T.T.), and stealth-platformer segments starring Perry the Platypus, the Wii U demo I played focused on the latter.



The Perry segments I played where I controlled Perry as he infiltrated Doofenshmirtz's lab (in order to stop evil schemes and whatnot), the platforming was very by the numbers. Jump the same way you have thousands of times before, platform the same way you have a thousand times before, collect items to upgrade your experience the same way you have a thousand times before, and stealth segments that everyone (except the child-focused audience) has probably seen before.



Though very by-the-numbers and generic to someone who has been playing platformers for years, the mechanics were extremely polished. As Perry, you can of course jump and climb through (mostly) linear levels, but Perry can also do a stealthy low crawl that allows him to not be spotted via

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Original Publication: June 16, 2013

searchlights and lasers and such (though other forms of stealth do exist, like having to jump through or around lasers at the right time). The physics felt really tight and, though easy, there were two or three segments where I did once or twice, which to me at least suggested that a younger group playing the game could be up for a healthy challenge.

Though all versions are mostly identical, the DS version is an outlier by having fewer levels than the other versions. Beyond that, the Wii U version will likely stand out among Nintendo systems for its off-TV play and prettier graphics than other versions. Though certainly not for me, maybe the game will hit its target audience when the game releases on August 13.

Funfair Party Games

By Alex Culafi & Justin Berube

It's about a carnival that features games but isn't Carnival Games.

Funfair Party Games is like visiting your own personal amusement park right on your 3DS. It includes 11 carnival-like games. All of the mini-games were score based, and competition is what Funfair Party Games is all about. It will include online leaderboards as well as both local and online multiplayer. And though the game allows for button-based controls, the game prides itself in using gyro controls, to the point that we were outright told that it was the optimal way to play.

A few of the games include:

- Shooting Gallery, which tasked players to use the motion controls to aim and shoot at various targets. Reloading was performed by tilting the 3DS down and quickly back up.
- Strike the Bell, which was the classic carnival game where a person slams a hammer down in order to launch a piece of metal up to hit a bell. To do this the player had to rhythmically lift the 3DS up and down before hitting X.
- Slam Dunk, where you shoot basketballs into the 5-feet-away arcade-style hoop. Like all other games, the gyro controls are used to shoot the basketball.
- Tin Can Alley, another classic carnival game of knocking down cans by throwing a ball at it. It's straightforward, but the physics of the cans falling looks nice.
- Claw Crane, which used the motion controls in order to navigate a crane inside a claw machine.
- Camel Derby, Ball in Glass, and Ball Roll all controlled similarly. They all require the player to push the 3DS forward in order to launch a ball in the same direction. The objectives are different in each game, but they all felt similar.

Overall, we thought the motion controls were problematic. While moving the 3DS around, we often felt the top screen

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Original Publication: June 12, 2013

of the 3DS was wiggling around too much, which made us fear for the safety of our 3DS's. That said,

Joindots showed an earnest commitment to the game and promise that the gyro controls offer a learning curve rather than a problematic playstyle. Though we don't entirely agree, only time will tell if the public will share Joindot's stance on the matter when the game releases this summer.



Nintendo 3DS Impressions



Yoshi's New Island

Impressions

Original Publication: June 11, 2013

By Alex Culafi

Three level segments, a boss fight, giant eggs, binoculars, and one cute little baby Mario.

Developed by Arzest, Yoshi's New Island is the third entry in the Yoshi's



Island series. The demo present on the E3 show floor featured three level segments as well as a boss fight, and is equally filled with promise as it is with skepticism.

The game handles like a Yoshi's Island title in many ways, featuring all of the enemy swallowing (with the Y button) and egg throwing (with the A or shoulder buttons) you would expect. Jumping and flutter-jumping is handled by the B button, and handles with roughly similar physics to previous entries. Furthermore, getting hit still knocks Mario off Yoshi's back as he flies around in a bubble and needs to be retrieved within the time limit or else you get a game over. It's still a collectathon with flowers (now potentially more than 5 per level), red coins, and little stars that increase your Baby Mario timer.



As Yoshi carrying Baby Mario, levels are less about getting from point A to point B and more about exploring levels and collecting items, while inevitably getting to the goal (note: the goal rings in previous entries were not present in the demo, but for all we know they could still be in the game). Two of the levels were set in a field-like stage (think the Nintendo Direct showing in April), while the third stage was set in a cave. The levels felt very much like they belonged in a Yoshi's Island game, with the difficulty balance (rather low) also reflecting this. Lastly, the boss, a large version of the common bat enemy found in previous entries, was a simple affair of turning the surrounding bats into eggs and throwing them at the bat twice.

In addition to the old stuff now, the Yoshi's New Island demo introduced two mechanics.



The first is the huge throwable Yoshi egg seen in the original footage of the game. The egg itself breaks through rocks in the area to collect stones and open up pathways. It doesn't change the game excessively, but it sure is a neat addition. You can also swallow enemies like giant shy guys to make giant eggs. The other new "feature" I saw was a pair of binoculars that you can grab for a brief look at the entire surrounding area, which is very useful for knowing where to throw a giant egg.

Although the game was fun and felt like Yoshi's Island, the physics do feel like they could use a bit of fine tuning. Jumping around feels a bit clunkier than older games, and egg-throwing while stationary takes twice as long as it should.

On a positive note, the game is really pretty, and looks less sterile than older footage may suggest. The game looks really smooth in 3D, with an art-style that combines old Yoshi's Island with that of Yoshi's Story. The 3D also makes the game pop in a small yet quite effective way. The music also sounded pleasant, and Yoshi and Mario's sound effects sound right at home with the franchise.

Because the team has something of a history with Yoshi's Island DS, I am a bit reserved about the final product. That said, what I played definitely felt like a Yoshi's Island game on 3DS, and that is a good thing.

By Andrew Brown

Original Publication: June 11, 2013

Let's a go! The E3 demo for Mario & Luigi Dream Team features three scenarios: exploring the real world, the dream world and a boss battle example.

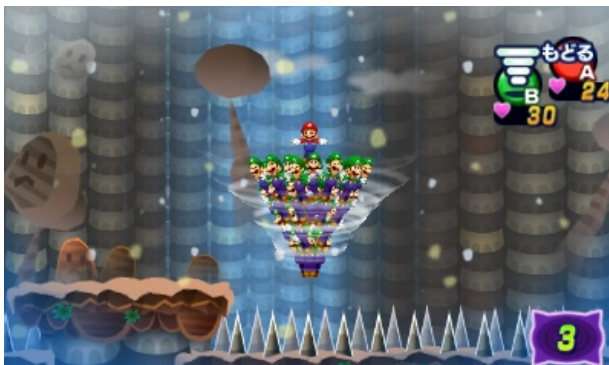
I got a chance to try out the real world scenario, which features some lush overworld plains, not unlike the opening areas



seen in previous titles. The biggest and most obvious addition to the franchise is the graphical overhaul, presenting the world using colorful and simple 3D models with cartoonish textures. The characters are 2D sprites, but they lack the cartoon outlines and pixel look from past titles in favor of a new painted style. The animation is as fluid as ever, with plenty of squash and stretch as the Bros. bounce around the screen stomping enemies.

As can be expected, the A and B buttons are assigned to Mario and Luigi respectively, and they jump independently from one another to traverse the landscape. Plenty of staple elements to the Mario & Luigi series are present right from the get go, and pressing the R button will cycle the jump command to hammers and specialized jump techniques. I noticed hidden "x" spots in the ground where Luigi could hammer Mario underground and pop out to reveal buried beans. Various seesaw platforms that required hammering would allow you to spring yourself to new locations or rearrange the height of corresponding platforms to create staircases; there seems to be plenty of puzzling platforming action to be had in this title.

One new jump technique was a special drill move that sends Mario and Luigi hurtling forward and smashing through rocks, which was used creatively in



one valley area where the Bros. fly into a suspended, rotating cannon and then fire themselves out in a different direction to smash boulders blocking their path forward.

Overall the game looks very promising, and features the same style of humor and charm present in each of previous titles. I'll go back in for another crack at the game over the course of the day and I'll be back to update later on when I've had a chance to play the other two demos available here at E3.

Additional Info

After getting some more hands-on time with the game, I'm able to shed some more light on the other demos. The second playable scenario features Luigi's dream world, the inhabitants of which appear to revere Luigi as a kind of omnipotent, "Luiginary" being. In this world which is presented as a 2D sidescroller, when an enemy attacks the Bros, only Mario will initially be present to do battle. In these solo battles, Mario is given a little more freedom of movement to dodge and counter enemy attacks, and he can run up and down within a small space on his side of the battle screen. A new Luiginary battle option is available here, which lets Mario summon a massive group of Luigi clones called Luiginoids to assist him in battle. These are the attacks seen in the promo videos. The first one, Luiginary Stack, has groups of Luigis charging forward in a crowd and hopping onto other groups, eventually piling up into a tower of green Luigi stompage and dropping onto the opponent. The other, Luiginary Ball, has Mario rolling an increasingly large ball over a long winding trail of Luiginoids to bowl into the enemy, squishing it in their path. It was the boss battle demo that also featured these battle tactics, with Mario fighting Bowser by himself with the help of the Luiginoids.

At certain points throughout this dream world, Luigi can interact with the scenery to create various structures for Mario to climb on, such as a leafy mustache that could stretch by manipulating the sleepy Luigi's mustache in the real world, making it latch onto Mario and slingshot him to new heights. Another scenario showed Mario hopping onto a giant stack of Luiginoids and smashing through cliffs and floors while trampling enemies. The whole game oozes with personality and quirky dialogue, and it's bound to be a hit for players who liked the previous games.

The Legend of Zelda: A Link Between Worlds

Impressions

Original Publication: June 13, 2013

By Neal Ronaghan

You guys. This Link to the Past sequel is pretty rad.



The demo for the Legend of Zelda 3DS

game, now called

The Legend of Zelda: A Link Between Worlds, is largely the same as the demo we played a few months ago, with the dungeon showing off the verticality of this 3D experience. The only difference was that we were able to explore the overworld this time.

The overworld is an improved recreation of the overworld from Link to the Past. It is a blast tooling around a familiar locale with added vertical sections and rather fantastic 3D effects. And the familiar foes? Well, I loved fending off knights, octoroks, and armos knights. The section led to the dungeon from the earlier demo, which, as far as I could tell, remains unchanged.



I completely adore how this game plays. Especially after playing another portable 2D Zelda (Oracle of Seasons) recently, it is nice to see the style kind of evolve more. I love the addition of the wall merging (or whatever it is officially called) where Link turns 2D and goes into walls. You can do it anywhere in the game, which is so cool and leads to a lot of possibilities for puzzles and secrets.

Before playing it, I was interested in A Link Between Worlds, but it honestly jumped to one of my most anticipated 2013 releases. The game's action is fast and the puzzles are exactly what you'd want to see in a Zelda game. I'm straight-out

stoked for this to come out later this year, during the period Nintendo is labeling as "holiday."



By Michael "TYP" Cole

Sonic Lost World for 3DS holds a lot of promise. Find out why it might even be better than its Wii U counterpart!

The Sonic Lost World E3 demo for Nintendo 3DS strongly resembles its console big brother, right down to its art style and soundtrack. While it is easy to dismiss the 3DS version as a downgrade or lesser version at first glance, the demo's impressive 3D visuals, interesting level design, and surprisingly responsive controls left me more impressed by the portable entry than its console sibling.

The first two levels in the demo are three-dimensional levels that take place in Windy Hill Zone. The introductory level explains the various game mechanics and controls, which are similar to, although slightly different, than the Wii U game's and—from what I could tell—more responsive. Sonic jogs at a moderate pace when only using the circle pad and increases speed when either shoulder button is held. Sonic handles surprisingly well: I found it easy to change directions to maneuver around obstacles and pits, even when running.



In the Wii U demo Sonic felt somewhat loose and easier to over-steer, but I had no such problems when playing on the 3DS. Sonic can also jump and double-jump (A or B without a nearby enemy) which does not result in Sonic becoming vulnerable, unlike on the Wii U. Sonic can also perform his homing attack by pushing the jump button when in midair and while auto-locked onto one or more enemies. He can also perform an aerial kick and ground bounce (which are confusingly triggered via similar jump-then-X button combinations) while the spin-dash is mapped to Y.

These 3D levels also highlighted some features not showcased in the Wii U 3D levels on display. Just as in the Wii U demo, Sonic will climb walls and other obstacles when holding down the run (shoulder) button. But in the 3DS game, the wall-climbing mechanic also allows Sonic to run

sideways up walls and even wall jump between parallel walls in narrow spaces. The second level also featured an asteroid whisk power-up, in which Sonic transforms into a small planet and can demolish enemies and the environment, turning them into asteroids (moons?) that orbit around him until the power times out. These levels look great in stereoscopic 3D, with a great sense of depth, all without coming off as distracting or showy.



The third level on display is a 2D side-scrolling level set in desert ruins. I found this level to be fairly challenging because of how it incorporated switch puzzles in which Sonic must stun boulder-shaped baddies on the switch in order to move blocks that are in his way or to create paths. Many of these puzzles required you to move quickly once the boulder baddie was stunned in order to progress.

Other areas of the level required Sonic to destroy all of the enemies in order to progress. While the notion of kill rooms are cause for concern, as they became a serious pacing problem in Sonic Rush for DS, this level was interesting enough to hold my attention. Most of these areas were reasonably large and required timing and skilled wall-jumping to find and reach all of the enemies. Oddly, the 2D level on display suffered from an occasional drop in framerate that I didn't notice on the first level.

Overall the 3DS demo of Sonic Lost World was a pleasant surprise, and I look forward to its release later this year.

Rune Factory 4

Impressions

Original Publication: June 13, 2013

By Kimberly Keller

The complexity of this game is wonderful and insane.

Rune Factory 4 is a beast of a game. Hidden under the smiling faces and pastel colors is an insanely complex experience that features something for just about everyone.



I've never played a Rune Factory title before, but after playing the extensive demo at E3, I am definitely looking forward to its 3DS North American release this summer. Besides following the main story, players can focus on different elements they'd like to master. Social interactions, dungeon crawling, farming, managing a shop, running the town, attracting tourists, and skill building can sure take up a lot of time; in fact, our XSEED representative claimed to have logged over 300 hours in the game.

Starting on the outskirts of town, we explored forest with our amnesiac main character, a princess who fell from an airship and landed on a dragon. Luckily, this was a nice dragon who was the guardian of the town she ruled over. Rune Factory 4 is actually the first title in the series to allow players to choose a boy or girl from the beginning, so the princess could actually be a prince instead. While exploring, we encountered large ants and beetles that would respawn every time we exited the area and even stumbled upon a boss battle.



To help you fight, townsfolk can be recruited if their relationship level has reached three or higher, but there is a

knight character who will always agree to accompany you regardless of your relationship level with him.

To fight monsters, players can choose from a wide variety of weapons: wands, hammers, axes, and more were available from the princess' inventory accessed by pressing the L button. We used a short sword during the demo, and other items can be purchased, gifted, or even synthesized.

Back in the town square, tourists and residents alike were milling about holding fishing poles for the day's big fishing competition. Holidays can be created by the player by making official orders from the castle. A calendar helps keep track of special days, which do pass by very quickly, 30 minutes equals one day in Rune Factory 4. Seasons change every 30 in-game days which affects daily activities, weather, and citizens' outfits.



All of the people we interacted with had humorous dialogue and distinct personalities, and dialogue changes often to keep characters from stagnating. You can improve your relationship with characters by giving gifts based on their tastes, remembering birthdays, and having conversations. You can even date, marry, and have kids with an eligible member of the opposite sex.



The castle is a good hub for decreeing royal orders and working on skills. A menu shows all the actions of the Order System, which is a new feature for the series. The main character can do many actions as a royal, each costing prince/princess points which are earned depending on how well you run the town and gain the people's admiration when you complete tasks. Festivals can be created or cancelled and new shops can be constructed. Even less obvious options are listed like changing the game's background music, the weather, and our favorite: destroying all the castle's furniture.

Certain items trigger skill building options, like cooking which requires ingredients and recipes, as well as RP, which is used for most actions in the game. If too much RP is used up, HP will be drained instead; Items or sleeping recover RP.



As this game is a spinoff of Harvest Moon, farming works basically the same. The farm is located behind the castle and requires occasional tending and weed pulling to prosper. Animals are also kept nearby and can be interacted with. The shop option works differently, as the prince/princess serve as a mobile shop, directly showing off items for sale by talking to people. If someone is interested in an item, they'll suggest a price and players can choose to haggle if they wish.

Three save file options means you are free to try out different paths for your character and experiment. There is a lot to keep track of as the game progresses, which is something we really enjoyed. Rune Factory 4 has really gone above and beyond normal RPGs to create a game that is charming, fun, and extremely thorough.



Shin Megami Tensei IV

Impressions

By Guillaume Veillette

Original Publication: June 13, 2013

Explore dungeons and kill some demons. Or romance them.

I wouldn't hold it against you if you believed that the Shin Megami Tensei universe is impenetrable and probably not for you. Between the Japanese name, the concept of bargaining with and fusing demons, the dozens of spin-offs and a history dating back to the Super Famicom days, the revered series does not exactly scream "approachable." Despite having played some games in the Persona sub-series, even I walked towards the Shin Megami Tensei IV demo with some trepidation. My familiarity with some key combat mechanics helped, but clear menus make the game accessible to any RPG fan.

The first area of the demo consisted of a dungeon. A helpful map is revealed while exploring and marks automatically the main points of interest on the bottom screen. On the top screen, you control your character from a third person perspective and can swing the camera around with the shoulder buttons. The enemies show up as blue mist-like forms, and charge at you when they notice you. If you time it correctly, you can swing your sword at it to cause damage before the battle has even started.

The battles themselves are a turned-based affair, but go by very quickly if you know what you're doing. In classic SMT fashion, you can discover an enemy's weakness through either trial-and-error or scanning it. Hit it with an attack of the appropriate element (fire, electricity, light, etc.) or type (slashing, piercing) and you stun it, allowing you to attack again immediately. As long as you are careful that the enemies don't do the same to you, the fights are over very quickly.

However, fighting is not the only option. Aside from the main character, your party will consist of demons that you recruit by talking to them. You can choose to talk to any demon that you encounter, aside from bosses. Requirements can vary to recruit them, and that's where the game is a little bit more opaque. One demon I talked to asked me to give him certain items. Once he got what he wanted from me, he said thanks and fled. Another one asked me how I felt about about bugs. I could say that I liked or that I hated them, but I just had to pick the third choice: "I used to be one". Very impressed that

I shed my insect carapace to become a squishy human, the demon joined my party.



All of the demons active in your party gain experience points and can level up after a fight. Usually, they will learn new skills, but you will have to choose to abandon old ones to make space for them because of the limited number of slots available. Occasionally, the demons will evolve into a different demon. And when certain requirements are met, they will teach your main human character one of their skills. Should you choose a skill that your character already knows, you will make that skill even more powerful.

The first third of the game is mostly linear dungeons but once you reach Tokyo, the game opens up. In the city, you can explore larger areas in the same way that you explore the cramped dungeons, but once you reach the edge of an area, you exit to the world map, which is a series of points of interest connected by roads. You can still find items and get attacked by monsters in this view, though you lose the ability to take a swipe at them before combat begins.

The game demoed surprisingly well for an RPG. The 3D effect looks great while exploring dungeons, but the 2D sprites during combat take some getting used to. All of the main cutscenes were accompanied by competent voice acting and the dialog with demons was as twisted as you'd expect.

The quick pace of the battles, the interesting setting and the demons afraid to gain extra pounds by gorging on delicious human blood are all right up my alley, and I can't wait to get my hands on the full game next month.



Aban Hawkins & the 1,001 Spikes

Impressions

Original Publication: June 13, 2013

By Aaron Kaluszka

Jump, jump, don't die.

1,001 Spikes is a retro-styled platformer, and as the name suggests, levels are full of spikes and all sorts of

other traps and enemies through which the Indiana Jones-style character must survive. Unlike other current efforts, such as Cloudberry Kingdom, 1,001 Spikes is reminiscent of classic, methodical platformers and features hand-crafted levels. Aban Hawkins & the 1,000 Spikes was Asada's second release on Xbox Live Indie Games, the excellent work of a flyer designer in his spare time. 1,001 Spikes is a refined version, which Nicalis is helping port to a variety of systems, including Wii U and 3DS.



1,001 Spikes looks and plays very much like an NES game. The graphics, art, and sound hew closely to the restrictions of the NES, and the game design seeks to match the difficulty of that era as well. Though the game is difficult, it is never cheap -- it always warns you that something bad is about to happen (for instance, some spikes appear in repeating patterns, while others are activated by proximity). However, it will still take many tries to complete difficult areas in part due to slightly archaic jumping mechanics, but mostly due to the designs themselves, which are often made such that you have to keep moving, with little time to rest or plan.

One hit kills you and puts you back at the start of the relatively brief levels, but the loss is slight and instructive. Within each level, you have to obtain a key to open the exit and then make your way to that exit. But make a wrong move (like mistiming a falling platform) and you might get stuck. Due to the need for repeated retries, the game starts players with 1,001 lives.

Unlike most modern games, the jump button doesn't make you jump as long as you press it down; you always jump the same height. There are actually two jump buttons, a high and low jump, and both must be used, sometimes in alternation. Similarly, momentum doesn't play a role in jump distance, much like Mega Man, so there is plenty of ledge balancing.

While 1,000 Spikes was tuned in a way that Asada himself felt comfortable playing it, the game is being slightly re-tuned for a smoother experience. Though this type of game is not for everyone, fans of "NES difficult" platformers should find much to enjoy, from the 8-bit music to the devious designs. And though all of the graphics are made of sprites, the 3DS version includes parallax effects, much like the 3DS versions of Nicalis' other games.

1,001 Spikes is a great game for fans of old-school platformers-- the kind that puts the focus on navigating a packed screen full of platforms and traps rather than the Mario style. Though you'll likely see the "YOU ARE DEAD" screen over and over, you've got 1,001 chances to make it through this fun little game.

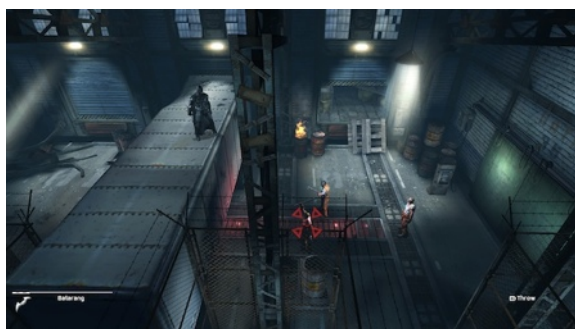


By Jonathan Metts

Original Publication: June 13, 2013

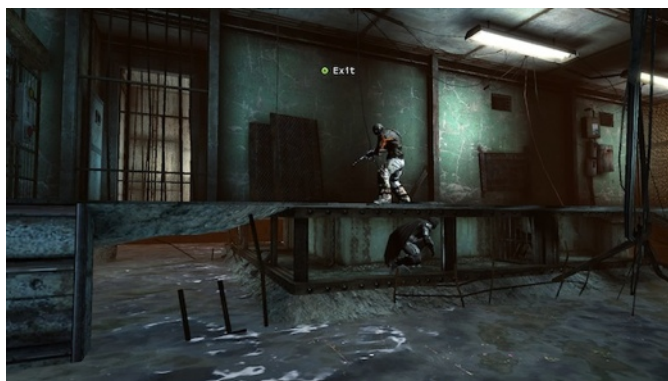
The dudes who made Metroid Prime are now making a Metroid-inspired Batman game on 3DS. Sorry, I can't be subtle about such an awesome pairing.

We were pleasantly surprised to find that the 3DS version of this handheld Batman game is playable at



E3. The demo takes place early in the game and is entirely outside in the city of Gotham. Apparently, most of the full game is set inside Blackgate prison, which will feature non-linear exploration and branching paths. Batman will find important upgrades along the way, while boosts to health and other basic attributes are hidden everywhere (much like missile expansions in Metroid). Though exciting, none of those elements were shown in the E3 demo.

Blackgate is a 2.5D game, meaning that Batman's movement is always two-dimensional, even as the environments wrap around him. The effect is similar to Klonoa, or the new Donkey Kong Country on Wii U. Occasionally, you can even use the grappling hook to move in or out of plane, which gives the game a surprising 3D feel. Completing the immersion, enemies can surround Batman in 3D; he will face them as needed and pull them into his own proximity, allowing for follow-up on the main axis of movement. All of this allows the developer, Armature Studios (founded by three ex-Retro Studios guys) to establish a fully 3D world that accurately captures the feel of Batman's console games, even as player movement is reliably two-dimensional. We've seen this recently in Castlevania: Lords of Shadow: Mirror of Fate, but this unfinished Batman demo is already more impressive.



For a 2D game with plenty of platforming, it's interesting to note that Batman cannot jump at will. He will take a running leap from ledges, as in a Zelda game, and you can even glide from a higher point, but vertical movement is restricted to climbing and grappling. This actually gave me a distinct association with Bionic Commando, which is another great touchstone for understanding how the game feels. There was plenty of hand-to-hand combat in the demo, and it perfectly captures the heaviness and rhythm of fighting in Arkham Asylum and Arkham City on consoles.

Batman's tools are all present, too. You can tap on the lower screen to activate Detective Vision – essential for stealthily eliminating guards and locating hidden entrances. Holding a thumb on the touch screen brings up the Analyzer reticule, which can be moved around (like a Scan Visor...) to discover additional information about the enemies and environment. Holding the L trigger arms your Batarang, which is a useful stun weapon that also triggers some environmental effects.



My limited time with Arkham Origins Blackgate proved that the popular game mechanics and presentation from Batman's console games can be transferred to 3DS, even with the loss of half a dimension. What excites me most, and remains mysterious, is whether these stewards of the genre can also evoke Batman's new Metroid tendencies to a handheld platform that desperately needs such a game. Though others have tried and failed, I think Armature has the chops to pull it off. We'll know soon, as the game launches in October.

Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney - Dual Destinies

Impressions

Original Publication: June 23, 2013

By Andrew Brown

Court is back in session!



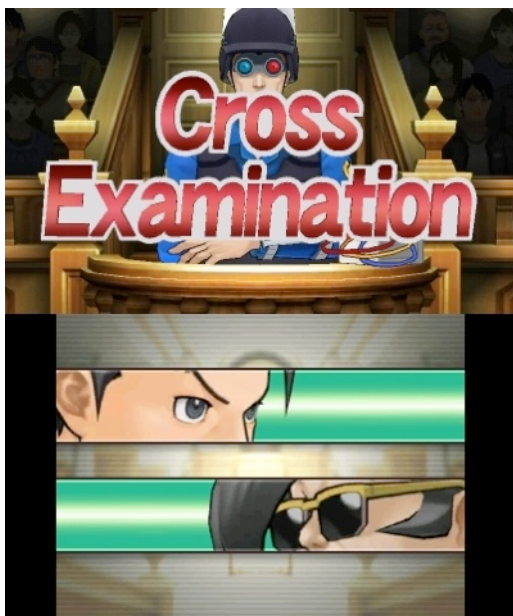
It's been quite some time since we last saw defense lawyer Phoenix Wright in the courtroom, but rest assured his skills certainly haven't faded in the slightest. The 3DS' new series offering, Phoenix Wright Ace Attorney: Dual Destinies, takes place after Nick has reclaimed his badge following the events of Apollo Justice. In the opening case presented in the demo, we see a police

bomb expert muttering to himself about triggering an explosion in the courtroom and pinning it on "that girl".

Fast forward to the corresponding trial, and said girl is Juniper Woods, Phoenix's first client since returning to work. Phoenix now has a new assistant by the name of Athena Cykes. She's an analytical psychologist who can read the emotional state of the witnesses to determine inconsistencies in testimonies.

The trial plays out much like you would expect in the series, with plenty of the humorous banter and fourth-wall-breaking between the Judge and the lawyers. The prosecutor present in this trial is Gaspen Payne, brother of a certain

obnoxious opponent from the previous titles in the series. At the beginning Athena confidently boasts that Nick will win the trial within ten minutes, to which the judge admits would be about the right amount of time for a demo version. Classic Phoenix silliness!



Artistically, the game looks stunning. Even though the locations and characters are modeled in 3D, they look exactly like their 2D counterparts. Most of Nick's previous animation cycles are carried over, and if you don't have the 3D slider turned on it would be hard to tell the game isn't animated in 2D. The cel-shading and polygon outlines outdo anything I've seen on the 3DS so far, and the 3D makes it feel like you're actually in the iconic courtroom with the cast.



Much of the classic music, sound effects, and style are carried over into this new entry, which makes the game transition smoothly for fans who have followed the story since the start.

The overhead

courtroom scenes now feature a wide sweeping camera angle with more of a surround effect of the jury's background babbling, it's a simple change but it's nice and portrays the whole scenario in a more grandiose light.

One thing I missed from previous entries was the ability to hold down a mic button and verbally shout "OBJECTION" to present your evidence. At least in the first trial, you can't rotate the evidence and search it for clues, either. Whether these features will be in later trials in the game or present in the final build is up in the air at this point.

All in all the game is amazing. If you played the earlier games it's totally worth checking out, and newcomers have just enough tutorial and backstory to follow along without getting lost along the way.

Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag

By Jonathan Metts

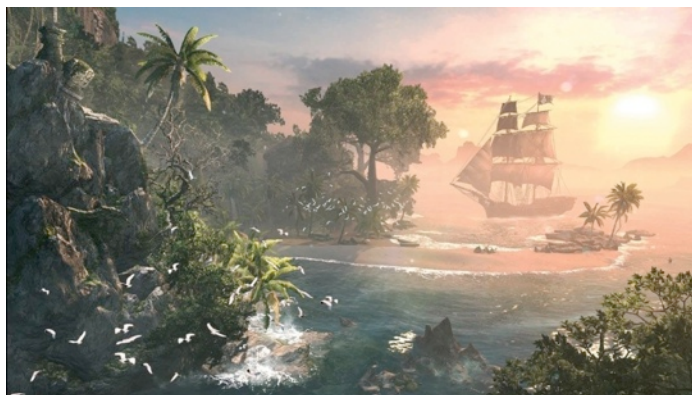
Original Publication: June 27, 2013

Rule the Caribbean as Edward Kenway, the Pirate Assassin.

While reviews were mixed for the last Assassin's Creed, there is near-universal praise for the game's naval missions, which sent protagonist Connor Kenway all over the eastern seaboard during the American Revolution. The sequel actually rolls back time by several decades, as you take control of Edward Kenway (Connor's grandfather, also an Assassin) and freely explore the Caribbean Sea. The emphasis and expansion upon naval gameplay is immediately evident in Assassin's Creed 4, and the subtitle, "Black Flag", says plenty about the pirate-inspired missions.

During the guided E3 demo (running on Playstation 4 hardware), a developer from Ubisoft Montreal told NWR that about 40% of the game takes place on your ship. It is now the primary mode of transportation, and unlike the preset routes of AC3, you can now sail anywhere in the Caribbean Sea, which includes several large islands and dozens of smaller ones. There's no need to find developed ports, because Edward can set anchor anywhere and simply jump into the water, swimming to any nearby shore. Any bad memories of prolonged sailing in Wind Waker should be forestalled by the Animus Travel feature, which propels the ship to unnatural speeds at the touch of a button.

Naval battles are also getting a big upgrade. Main cannons now have an arc of elevation, so you have direct control over how far the shots will travel. Edward can walk up to a swivel



cannon to aim it directly at a ship's weak point, or even to take out an assassination target. There's even an ability (probably optional) to have your crew automatically select the best ammunition for a given enemy ship. Some of the ship upgrades are unlocked by finding blueprints, locked up as buried treasure that you'll only find by discovering a dead pirate's treasure map and following it to the X.

You'll find it much easier to track down that buried treasure with the off-TV features. On every platform, including Wii U, the game supports a separate smartphone/tablet/PC application that communicates with the game console over WiFi. As you run around and sail the ocean with your controller, the application displays a large map that updates in real-time to show your path, track your progress, and provide clues about nearby locations. It can also display

treasure maps and other useful information while you play. All of this data is also available within the game itself (through menus), but having the app on a separate device is more convenient. A subset of this feature can be shown on the

Wii U GamePad, but the developers told us it may be less detailed since that display has to be generated by the same hardware that's also running the game itself.

This being an Assassin's Creed game, there are still plenty of stealth-action missions taking place on various islands around the Caribbean. You can probably count on some off-Animus scenes as well, though we didn't see any of it at E3. Still, for a series that has been annualized for the past several years, the improvements and fresh locale of Assassin's Creed IV are quite welcome. The Wii U version may not land on exactly the same day as PS3 and Xbox 360, but it will very likely arrive before the PS4 and Xbox One versions later this fall.



Batman: Arkham Origins

By Michael "TYP" Cole

Original Publication: June 12, 2013

NWR investigates the PS3 version of Batman's upcoming multiplatform prequel.

Batman: Arkham Origins was Warner Bros. Interactive's biggest title at E3 this year. Unfortunately, only the PS3 version of the console game was on display, so NWR was not able to experience the Wii U version of this title. Nonetheless, the developers' presentation and our hands-on time with the PS3 version of this multiplatform game certainly are of interest to Wii U owners.



The game takes place roughly two years into Batman's crime-fighting career on a snowy Christmas Eve, and is being described as his first true challenge against super-criminals. A bounty of \$50 million has been put on Batman's head by crime lord Black Mask, and Batman must avoid and thwart various assassins out to claim their reward. Meanwhile, other villains are plotting their own schemes in the vicinity that the Dark Knight must deal with, including Anarky and the Joker.

The prequel strongly resembles Arkham City in pretty much every way. The player explores a sprawling metropolis landscape riddled with crime, chasing down primary objectives as well as optional side missions. Combat consists of the same



weighty brawl-and-counter mechanics found in the first two Arkham titles, and familiar gadgets such as the batarang, cryptographic decoder, and grappling hook were available and necessary to progress through the demo. WB highlighted a few new additions to the formula at E3, such as the addition of a new martial artist enemy type and the Remote Claw gadget. The latter is attached to two objects (or enemies) and then retracts, drawing movable objects together (e.g., an explosive barrel toward an enemy) or creating a tightrope between two stationary objects.

Perhaps the most interesting new addition to the Arkham series is the enhanced detective mode, in which Batman scans for clues with his computer in order to reconstruct a crime scene. Reconstructions are shown in augmented reality, laid over the normal detective vision graphics. In the demo, Batman traced clues to reconstruct the sequence of events that led up to a helicopter crash, and the player could fast forward and rewind a simulation of the crash in order to trace the trajectory of shrapnel and determine the angle from which the helicopter was shot down.

Origins is most certainly a conservative sequel, but the demo on display was still compelling. The degree to which the Wii U version leverages the system's unique features remains to be seen, but NWR will have more information on the Wii U version as

it becomes available.

Watch_Dogs

By Kimberly Keller

Original Publication: June 13, 2013



Hacking know-how becomes a superpower and it is awesome.

Ubisoft came to impress with Watch_Dogs this year. Although the Wii U version wasn't available at E3, we were shown a presentation that utilized the PlayStation 4 and a lot of gameplay.

The demo took place in a highly accurate version of Chicago, complete with citizens, traffic, and an open world environment that allowed ample side-questing. The amount of detail that has gone into the environment was amazing. Every citizen has a basic biography assigned to them which you can view through a facial recognition feature. You can listen to conversations, read emails, and even hack into their phones and steal their money.

In this world, everything is connected and hacking equals power. At the start of the demo some people had a red X over their head, which meant we couldn't hack them yet. We had to upload our software to the district's CTOS, which is part of the city system that controls everything. In order to take it over though, we first had to break into a government facility to find

the boss with the access codes.

The developers really wanted to allow people to play in whatever

style they wanted to. You can build up either your hacking or shooting skills, buying new weapons and accessories with your earnings. Our representative started out stealthily, distracting a guard by hacking a forklift and causing it to move. While the guard looked away, a takedown maneuver could be performed. While using the facility's security cameras to look around, guards were overheard talking and revealed to us where the boss was.

With a clear path in mind, now was the time to switch strategies and get the job done. Our character shot a guard, alerting others to our presence, and continued to run in, guns blazing.

Once the CTOS was in our control, criminal activity could be monitored. The city utilizes a system that analyzes movement and facial patterns to predict crime and alert authorities. This gives players the opportunity to help citizens, but could also lead to ramifications later. However, if a criminal is stopped successfully, and without being killed, your reputation increases. Having a good reputation means citizens are more likely to turn a blind eye when you perform criminal actions, like stealing a car, instead of calling the cops.

Speaking of alerting the cops, word travels fast in the game and your character can even show up on the news. During the demo, a gun shop owner recognized us from the news playing on a nearby television and pressed a panic button. The police could use a scanner to track us and we had to escape quickly. All actions can lead to realistic reactions from citizens, so be careful where you pull out a gun.

By far the best feature of the game is the use of multiplayer. At any time, a friend can covertly enter your game. No alert appears and nothing seems to change until your friend attempts to hack information from your system. You must then attempt to find and stop them before a time limit runs out, leading to car chases, gun battles, anything you choose. Friends can explore your game as long as they want before hacking, either blending in or causing endless havoc.

The seamless connection between systems was perfect, and the possibilities are exciting. We promptly retaliated by connecting to our friend's game and hiding in a car while hacking their system. This unfortunately ended in us getting killed in a gun battle and sent back to our own game.

Watch_Dogs' open world environment promises an immense amount of gameplay options, creating custom game experience for every player. The use of internet connectivity is brilliant and really pushed the game further than we could've imagined.

Zumba Fitness: World Party

By Alex Culafi

Original Publication: June 15, 2013



ZumbU.

Zumba Fitness World Party is a new entry in the Zumba series coming in October to, among other platforms, the Wii U for the first time. For those out of the loop, the franchise carries a focus on fitness through dancing. While Xbox One and 360 offer camera options, the Wii and Wii U versions of the game are played via a belt with a Wii Remote attached to it that reads your movement.

The game gauges how successful the player is dancing by attempting to determine how accurate the players movements are and giving a star ranking. And as the player is more successful in their dancing, the environments (of which there are eight -- I saw a tropical one) become more interesting. The Wii versions appears to be practically flawless at registering movement, which makes sense

given the number of opportunities Zumba has had to improve over the last several years. That said, the Wii and Wii U version appear to be identical, but offering the GamePad as an alternative screen to view the game from.

Featuring 41 dance routines, 30 dance styles, and 45 classes (in increments of 20, 40, or 60 minutes), Zumba Fitness World Party could be an appealing game to some when it releases later this year.

By Carmine Red, James Dawson and staff

Original Publication: June 17, 2013

A picture is a worth a thousand words in this week's Staff Sez.

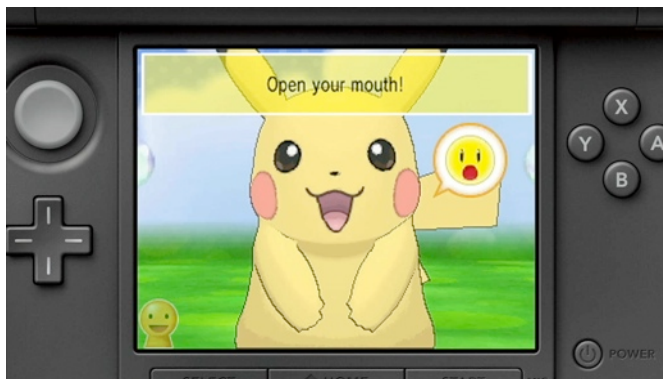
Staff Sez starts with a single question posed to each of the NWR staffers, who are then challenged to snap back a simple, short response. This time the staff were challenged with coming up with a caption for an image of their choice from this year's E3.

Zack "Boy Wonder" Kaplan



Kirby will never lose weight...

James "No Zaku" Dawson



I can't think of anything G-rated to say...

Josh "Maximum Velocity" Max



*On my mark,
we release the
hype.*

Nicholas "Crocomire" Bray



Where is Samus you damn dirty ape!

James "Obscure Reference" Jones



Winner Mega Tran

Carmine "Burgundy" Red



Sonic Sez: sugary foods can taste good sometimes, but eating too much will give you cavities, make you tired, and even get you sick! That's no good!

Becky "Hollaback!" Hollada



This is clearly the face they meant when they said everyone was afraid of the Vikings.

My First E3

By Alex Culafi

Original Publication: June 20, 2013

A lengthy tale in which one staffer recalls the journey of conquest, joy, and hardship that was E3 2013.



Ever since reading about the event in Nintendo Power in the sixth grade, E3 had always seemed to be an unreachable dream, let alone goal to me. It's the event where Nintendo shows off the great games that a few people get to play before everyone else, and it's the event where Nintendo holds press conferences with a presentation style that rivals the announcements themselves. Ironically, both of these exciting ideals stopped existing the very year I came to the convention with Nintendo World Report, but despite this, and despite the five years of amateur media criticism it took to find my way into the expo legitimately, I found my opportunity this year and took it.

Being my second full year on NWR, my youth and lack of money to pay for a week(ish)-long trip from Massachusetts to California made going to E3 impractical in 2012 (I went to PAX East instead that year). Though neither of those roadblocks have changed, being a legal adult for the first time this year and a surplus of mostly-unused graduation money gave me the minuscule, irresponsible chance I needed to say goodbye to money I didn't have and experience this potentially misguided childhood dream.

So I did it with the (sort-of) full support of my parents (as much as you could expect, at least). I took out the money needed for the week, dropped the needed cash on a hotel room and a round-trip flight, went through the substantial NWR E3 planning process alongside everyone else, and made myself ready for Sunday, June 9: the beginning of my E3 experience.

Sunday: Day -1 of E3 brings Animal Crossing and irresponsible decisions.



After two-and-a-half hours of sleep, I got ready for a 7:15 Boston to LA flight on Virgin America that had my name on it. Though getting from Boston's airport security to our site E3 hotel wasn't necessarily

so painful (it was really just a matter of having the right piece of paper at the right time, and my nervousness left me overprepared), it was the first time I've been on a flight by myself, the first time I've left the Eastern Time zone, the first time I've needed to get across a city via public transport, the first time I've checked into a hotel on my own, and the first time I've been over 100 miles from home without immediate family support. Luckily, everything went extremely smooth, and by noon Pacific Time, I was in my room with no immediate journalistic duties and an entire day open to me.

As such, there was some extremely important business I needed to take care of.

Though E3 obviously takes precedence in any hypothetical bucket list of mine, playing Animal Crossing: New Leaf and getting In-N-Out burgers weren't far down that list. New Leaf is the new sequel to one of my favorite franchises ever, and I needed a physical copy of it; In-N-Out is a near-legendary fast-food chain that I have always wanted to eat but couldn't because of it being an extremely regional franchise.

So instead of sleeping or hanging out with the people I was going to be spending the next week with, I took a literal sprint to the nearby Target to get one of the final



remaining copies and took what turned out to be a \$60 cab (I really should not have taken a cab) to finish my quest for In-N-Out by ordering fifteen dollars of fast food, and finally go back to the hotel. At least the cab driver made the most of the trip and ordered himself a plain hamburger and salt-free French fries when we went through drive-through, so I'm happy someone benefited from my ordeal other than me. That said, the Double-Double Animal burgers, two orders of french fries, and vanilla shake were delicious enough to justify the trip (and New Leaf is pretty wonderful too, as you can see in my personal screenshot above).

The rest of the day was great but not nearly as eventful. I did meet Justin, Andrew, and Kim for the first time, which was pleasant (I knew Jonny, Gui, Neal, and Jared before that, and TYP/Aaron I met over the following two days), and we also went to the always-amicable Chipotle that night. It ultimately concluded with bouts of hanging out, New Leaf (so much New Leaf), and a late night meeting going over the week's events by the conductor (and in my case, roommate) himself, Neal, who had only arrived to the hotel moments before.

Monday: Day zero brings Alex's first live press conference and an empty wallet.

Ubisoft, Microsoft, Sony, and EA were the big sources of news today, which means that Nintendo was (mostly) not. The bad news was that the Wii U and 3DS stuff was still a day away, but the good news was that I could enjoy four press conferences without a massive workload (or, any, if I recall correctly). While not getting into Microsoft or Ubisoft's press conference, I did get into the EA one, which ended up being superior to both in my opinion when all was said and done.



Although I love big, modern video games as much as I enjoy any other type of game, Microsoft did nothing to quell any of the things that made me uncomfortable about the Xbox One, and made a purchase impossible to justify with the \$499 they tossed out at the end. Even worse, rumors of the \$99 Xbox 360 ended up being false, so it looks like Microsoft's consoles may never end up in my home. Ubisoft was not bad, but it was more or less a conference filled with nothing.

While one would be justified in shrugging off the EA press conference, it was exciting to me because it was an E3 press conference that I got to see live. And frankly, I thought it was pretty good. Regardless of what you thought of the games themselves, EA presented them smoothly and professionally, with a few small bombs like Battlefront and Mirror's Edge 2 to boot (which is more than we can say about some other press conferences).

Of course, the experience and the surround-sound made everything exciting to me, including that new Plants vs. Zombies game. It might be the opposite of Nintendo to some of you reading this, but the fact that I got to see a press conference of any kind made all the difference.

Following EA (which I saw with Gui and Jonny), I got to eat Fatburger, another regional burger chain, which was about as delicious as Sunday's mythical In-N-Out. Ubisoft was after that, and following Ubisoft was a conference only second to my hype for the Nintendo Direct, the Sony press conference, which featured almost everyone in Gui and Jared's hotel room except for Aaron, if I remember correctly. Needless to say, you all can figure how that went. It started in disappointment, shifted into mild anger, shifted into mild interest with the Square Enix segment, and ended with a series of atomic bombs so huge that Sony won E3 before Nintendo even took the stage (in my eyes, anyways). Yes, I've pre-ordered a PlayStation 4.

The night ended with a late dinner paid for by the extremely kind and generous E3 home team captain Carmine Red,

praise for PS4, and insurmountable hype for the Nintendo Direct expected to happen in but a few short hours.

Tuesday: Alex talks about dealing with Nintendo bombshells on the first real day of E3.



Waking up bright and early, all of the attending staffers (sans Aaron in this case too due to arrival times)



once again congregated in Guillaume and Jared's room to boldly attempt to watch the North American Nintendo stream. As I am sure you're aware of, watching was effectively impossible thanks to traffic, and we got our news from an occasionally barely-functional Nintendo stream and the chunk of staff who uses Twitter. Thankfully, we did get to see most of the Smash trailer live (Villager > Mega Man, sorry guys) and most of the Pokémon reveal, which was fun (though any Serebii-going fan worth his or her salt could have predicted Fairy type from a mile away).

The Nintendo Direct was fine, but there were so few surprises and so many sequels that being overly excited for another 3D Land and the follow-up to a game I just re-played on 3DS in May (Tropical Freeze is a wonderful name, though) made any substantial hype impossible. Of course, Smash Bros. still looks great and X is going to be wonderful, but those games are not coming out this year, and the list of games that are coming out in 2013 is literally the bare minimum Nintendo can offer and not have their schedule rightfully defined as anemic. There are a few games, but 3 launch window games, a full-priced HD remake, and two sequels birthed from games fresh in our memory is nothing worthy of praise to me. Of course, I am going to buy all of these games the day they come out, because that is the kind of person I am.



More importantly, this is when the real E3 began. This is when I got my backpack and Dr. Scholl's-prepped sneakers ready for action and wore the media badge I obtained the day before with a genuine pride and purpose. But before the show floor opened and the marathon that was E3 could really begin, we had to arrive at the convention center early (a fifteen minute walk from the hotel) for the Wii U Software Showcase, in which journalists could become part of the media-gathering replacement to a press conference.

Mostly, it was just us playing games before everyone else did, but it was kind of cool because we did get to see people like Reggie (he is a giant) and Sakurai in the flesh, and we also got to be there when the Wii Fit Trainer was revealed for Smash, alongside getting to see a live match in Super Smash Bros. for Wii U. It wasn't quite the 2006 Solid Snake trailer, but at least there was a part of Super Smash Bros. that I got to see announced live with an audience, no matter how small.

During the event, the lines were so big that I really only had the chance to play Mario Kart 8 and Mario & Luigi before the show floor opened, but they were both great fun.

When the show floor did open and we were still in Nintendo's booth, I made a bolt to play Yoshi's New Island for impressions (and for me!). I got lucky enough that when I did play Yoshi's Island, I ended up being in the first group to play a roulette wheel that gave away Nintendo swag depending on where you were sitting (of course, the 3DS lines became impossible after that). Prizes included a Luigi hat, a Bayonetta 2 shirt, a Super Mario 3D World shirt, some Mario Kart flags, and a grand prize of a red 3DS XL that was given out once per hour.

The demo was interesting because every single group to play demos got to be part of the prize giveaway, so even though I finished my demo 8 minutes in, they didn't kick me out



when I sat around doing nothing for the final two minutes until the prizes were distributed. Oh yeah, and I won that 3DS (and proudly stated "Nintendo World Report" when a soon-to-be-confused booth babe asked me where I was from).

Delighted, I wrote my impressions, played 3D World and Donkey Kong, and went to the Capcom appointment with Gui and Andrew where I got to play Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney – Dual Destinies. That game is extremely beautiful, and stands near the top of my list of E3 games that really need to come out. The appointment took place behind the regular area where attendees could play the game, and had an area where complementary drinks were served and games could be played sans-lines. This is also the first of several "New Leaf breaks" I took during the day. Not out of addiction to the game, mind you, but playing 15-20 minutes of the game really allowed me to relax and decompress a bit during an otherwise extremely stressful (if fun) day.

Also with Andrew and Gui, we checked out Atlus. Andrew tried out the new Etrian Odyssey game, I got to play Daylight (a crazy-cool survival-horror game for PS4 and PC), and everyone got to try Shin Megami Tensei IV. For the sake of being surprised, I only tried it out briefly, but I certainly feel like the gang made a good choice in making it one of the games of E3.



By this point, there were about two hours left until I had to go to the Pokémon X and Y Developer Roundtable, and this time was filled up with Sonic Wii U (it's okay), Tearaway on Vita

(slow demo that picks up towards the end, game might be really great), exploring the show floor a bit, and watching a guided demo for Infamous: Second Son (game looks cool). But then the roundtable actually happened.

After waiting in line and going in to the event, it was really great to see the game finally played in action, and for them to explain in detail what the game is about. It was in a small theater with some cameras in the back and a mostly-full audience, and big guys like Miyamoto and Sakurai were in the right towards the front. The game is going to be amazing when it comes out on October 12, and it looks to offer the biggest changes in the series to date, with the drastically improved multiplayer capabilities, new battle types, full 3D graphics (Stadium, eat your heart out!), and even a new type to balance out the overpowered dragons.

During the Q&A, some highlights include Justin asking Pokémon Director Junichi Masuda about Mewtwo's new form making Smash (and the director folding his arms in defeat), and a personal highlight where I asked about why the games are grid-based (makes tracking Pokémon encounters easier, though movement will be more free) led to him complementing me on watching the game closely. I even got a picture with him after the event!

After a successful, somewhat tiring day (you can expect to walk thousands of steps and standing for minutes at a time as part of the E3 experience), the gang got curry (the non-Indian kind) and recorded a pretty cozy podcast where we all talked about what we played. It was very nice.

Wednesday: Alex participates in a Kamiya interview and plays more video games on Day 2 of E3.

As it was the second day of E3 and the brunt of the Nintendo work was over, the work was less intensive as it had been previously. After Jonny and I headed over

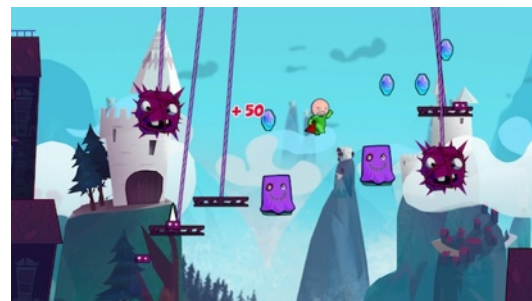


following the rest of the group, I spent my morning wandering aimlessly in Nintendo's booth looking to play things that didn't have lines. The new Mario & Sonic game plays like a Mario & Sonic game (not functionally sound as a video game but strangely compelling), Bayonetta 2 is just as extreme and fun as the original, New Super Luigi U is a game I could care less about, Wii Party U looks way more competent than I thought it would be, and I stopped by the nearby Sony booth to play Gran Turismo 6 (which looks quite a bit like Gran Turismo 5).

By the time the afternoon came along, Justin and I had an appointment with European eShop developer Joindots to check out a game that prides itself on being controlled entirely by the 3DS gyroscope. Because we had free time and my inability to say no, we ended up at that single appointment playing through the entire title and chatting to them about developing on the eShop for an hour. Apparently, getting Miis and online play into your game is not challenging at all, and Nintendo provides tremendous support to eShop developers who need it. Furthermore, we also learned that E3 can also be an extremely valuable time for smaller developers because it allows them to meet with potential business partners.

After this appointment was when I started to feel the "marathon" of E3 everyone warned me about. I had walked several miles, stood much more than sat, and played so many games by this point that I was fatigued and frustrated nearly

to the point of tears. Thankfully, staying hydrated and playing a bit of Animal Crossing once again came to my rescue for the next half hour or so.



This took me to about 3:00, where I met with Neal, Jared, and others to have an appointment in Nintendo's upper area of their booth, where we could play games free from most lines. Here, I played Mario Kart 8 again (which is 7 and Wii essentially combined, as some of you know), Cloudberry Kingdom (an extremely cool game that isn't for me), Super Mario 3D World, and Disney Infinity (I'm interested if not insanely skeptical).

After this at 4:00, it was time to go to Nintendo's secondary, private booth upstairs where I had the opportunity to sit in a room where Neal got to interview Hideki Kamiya of The Wonderful 101 and Bayonetta fame. The interview took place in a cozy room with rugs and leather couches. Kamiya himself was garbed in an entirely casual outfit but phenomenally fancy boots. The entire set-up was pretty cool for a booth that was set up in a short amount of time, but the room was shaking so constantly that it was hard to feel entirely safe for the 40-or-so minutes the interview took. Following the interview's conclusion, I got my first opportunity to try the Zelda 3DS game at the stations they had set-up (the aforementioned prize wheel made actually playing a 3DS game an impossibility). I sure like 2D Zelda, and that game plays a lot like a 2D Zelda.



5:00 meant one more hour of the show, and it was spent briefly hanging out with Kim and Aaron in the Nintendo booth (some

dude from craft services snuck me an amazing brownie) before Kim and I headed to Sony's booth to finally play a PS4 game (Warframe, in this case. It's a bit like Metal Gear Rising but free-to-play and with more of a focus on gunplay). The controller is a huge step up from the Dualshock 3, which you can especially feel in the concave analog sticks and general ergonomics. The last game I played that day was Killzone on PlayStation Vita, which is not anything special except for the fact that it looks markedly close to a lower-end PS3 game.

The day concluded with a fantastic group photo, Andrew and Kim going to the Zelda orchestra, the rest of the group going to eat, most of us hashing out the “Best of E3” awards, and a session of Brawl involving Neal, Justin, and I as I would proceed to call Justin a filthy casual as he consistently pulled first place and put me in last place. That said, I did pull a Hail Mary and won the last match as Donkey Kong (which is, of course, all that matters).

Thursday: The final day of E3 is a really intense one.

The time it took to read from my experience landing in Los Angeles to now might have taken what, fifteen or twenty minutes? To be honest, that’s about how quick the week actually felt by this point. Between all of the good times with nine other people, all of the games played and seen (my final count comes to about 39 or 40 E3 games between all platforms), and all of the writing and exercise done, the week had become something of a blur.



Even more than that, all of the constant stress I was putting my body under was starting to get to me. By Thursday night and Friday morning, my legs were crumbled to the point where I was in a continuous half-limp. This didn’t fully happen until the end of the day, but my Thursday was much slower because of it.

The day started with a breakfast of barbecue pork, fried rice, scrambled eggs, and white toast at the breakfast place in the hotel, which was obviously a bit more ethnic than I’m used to but still capable of giving me the energy I need for the final home stretch. For the first and last time, I headed to the convention center by myself, which was unusual for me as someone who spent his entire life living in rural Massachusetts and got by for the whole week by following the experience and literal footsteps of weathered E3 veterans. It was not a

difficult walk at all, but knowing that I could easily make that walk by myself had a small and perhaps somewhat pitiful sense of pride to it.



Though I did have an appointment that day, I spent most of the early part of my day piggybacking onto two other appointments. After buying a commemorative E3 shirt, I went to an early Square Enix appointment with Justin and Jonny to see if they needed help (and to play the insanely fun Saint’s Row IV and promising Deus Ex: The Fall for iPad).

After that, I used my down time and darted for the Microsoft booth to try a real Xbox One game. I did try some golf game they had there, but the Forza 5 line was appealing enough to justify waiting 10 minutes for a single race. The controller more or less feels like a better Xbox 360 controller, but as someone who considers himself anything but pro-Microsoft, the rumble in the triggers felt pretty great, and made the game feel more immersive than it had any right to.

My journey in this booth ended when I was looking at the console itself placed under glass like a museum exhibit. I said hi to someone there who looked a whole lot like NWR Publisher Billy Berghammer, who I had met on Tuesday. My memory failed me, and the person I did say hello to was actually a retail representative for EA. Turning lemons into lemonade, I used this opportunity to talk to this guy about the Xbox One and what he thinks about it’s consumer-unfriendly policies. It was a fine conversation, and at a certain point, I jokingly asked him “Are you responsible for this?”. He smiled, and said that there is absolutely no way EA could have gotten its hands dirty in the production of a console. If anything, he hazards a guess that it was almost assuredly a gross miscalculation of trying to appease publishers on Microsoft’s part than anything else.

Completing my next-gen experience, I decided to bite the bullet and head to the nearby PlayStation booth to get a swag bag (which included a shoulder bag, trial codes, and a branded water bottle) and wait in line for 30 minutes to play Knack, the character platforming game launching alongside PS4. Neal was less impressed, but the game played to me like Crash Bandicoot and a child-friendly God of War combined into one, with a healthy serving of Katamari Damacy. It’s pretty great. After the demo, a man from MBC Dubai named Raffi stopped me for a camera interview about my thoughts on Knack and PlayStation 4. It was weird.



I had nothing to do by this point, so I once again (politely) crashed a Ubisoft appointment to see if Kim, Jonny, and TYP needed any help with what I assumed were a plethora of games. They had it covered as well as you would expect from NWR (above and beyond), so I used the appointment to see a 20-minute demo of Watch_Dogs, which looks really fantastic (despite the game over-exposing everyone for the past year).

Following this, I left, went to the SEGA booth to ask about the Yakuza series (they are extremely aware of how many people want Yakuza 5 and the franchise in general in the west, and it definitely isn't dead, but they couldn't give me anything else useful), and re-played things at Nintendo's booth until my Majesco appointment in the mid-afternoon. During that appointment, I played Phineas and Ferb for Wii U and watched a game tester (who was also a professional dancer) play Zumba. Need I say more?



It was 3:00 P.M. by this point, with two hours until the show floor closes for good. I went back to the media room to write about Zumba, and spent 45 minutes replaying the Tearaway demo (it's so much better the second time) and the two levels of the

Donkey Kong demo I never got to play through the first time.

And before I knew it, it was 4:00, the final hour of E3 (the day ends at 5:00 instead of 6:00 like on other days). It was a sad reality, but also a struggle and a scramble to play “the right games” and make “the right memories” before it closed down. I went to the SEGA and Natsume booths to try Sonic 3DS and Hometown Story (they're both fine, though Sonic 3DS is oddly much more fun than the Wii U version to me), headed to Ubisoft to try to see the South Park game (but they had shut down the guided demo already), and walked around a bit noticing that everything was either closing down, had no interest to me, or had lines too long to justify waiting in.

So I went from one show floor to the other, first-party centric one a little disappointed with nothing to play, only to have the amazing experience of running into Wombat from the CAGcast, one of my favorite podcasts (and podcasters) of all time and meeting him as someone listening to the show since I was thirteen years old. It would have been nothing to some people, but it made that final hour pretty special to me. More importantly, he's an extremely cool and nice guy.

The day closed with the Pikmin 3 demo and the disappointing experience of waiting in line for Mario 3D

World five minutes before the show floor closes only to be turned away and see the guy standing behind me playing that same demo as I walked away.

To follow such an awesome experience with such a dud really bummed out the cynic in me, and E3 ended with me watching people file out and waiting outside Nintendo's booth with the rest of the gang as the massive adventure was coming to a terrifying and conclusive end. Until Charles Martinet came into the picture, that is.

Whether it be some deity pitying my weird combination of genuine disappointment and vague entitlement for a “memorable conclusion” or something else entirely, our day on the show floor got a very pleasant bookend when Kim, Andrew, and I took a great photo with Mr. Mario himself, Charles Martinet, coincidentally standing right where we were re-grouping.



I'd like to say the day ended in fireworks, but after our final great dinner in the hotel Indian restaurant (this time it was Indian curry!), the entire trip ended with rounds of Brawl, Cards Against Humanity, a series of goodbyes, a midnight showing of Man of Steel where the most fun came from insulting it after-the-fact, and an extremely real conversation with a certain someone about the human ego. It was a very special day all-around, but calling it anything but melancholy as our numbers dwindled would be a total lie.

Friday: An ending to an E3 as bittersweet as any.

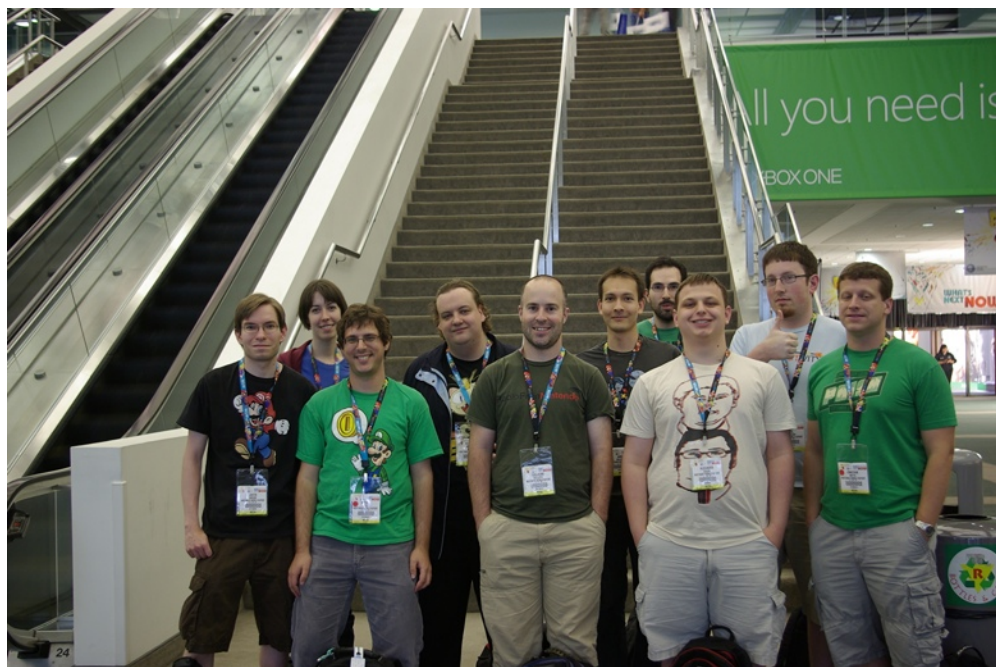
Early the next day, Neal, Justin, and I found ourselves in a shuttle to LAX, done with E3 and ready to stagger home. As Neal and I were dropped off at a different terminal and as Neal's flight left five minutes before mine, you wouldn't need to be a genius to see how aware I was that what was once a group of ten was now (from my perspective) a group of one with memories of being with a group of ten. On my flight home and for about a day or two after (not so long ago), the wistful feelings of loneliness I had were real. I learned so many things, met so many great people, and spent time in a sea of human beings just like me, and now, gone like nothing. At the risk of transparency, I was a bummer and, honestly, a dick to be around during that time.

Of course, as anyone reading this could have figured out, I was wrong to think like that.

It was only when I was finishing up my previews and started organizing the outline that would become this mammoth of an article that I realized I was looking at it as something that was gone and not something amazing that happened. I spent time with nine other people who effectively blurred the lines of online friends, real-life friends, and family; I got to be there at the E3 when PS4 and Xbox One were both playable for the first time – and got to play both; I won a 3DS XL and proclaimed the website I worked for as my location of origin; I got to be in a room filled with professional journalists when the Wii Fit Trainer was revealed as a playable Smash Bros. character. I lived my dream. If anything, this event only made me realize that video game journalism is something in my blood that I could never fully give up (no matter how hard I try).

So, obviously, I regret nothing. As I type this conclusion, the only thing I feel right now is elated that I get to tell a ton of people about one of the finest weeks I have ever had in my entire life.

And, of course, there's always next year.





By Nat Silva



Interview with Platinum Games' Hideki Kamiya

By Alex Culafi and Neal Ronaghan

Original Publication: June 18, 2013

We spoke with The Wonderful 101 (and Viewtiful Joe/Bayonetta) Director about game design, Twitter, and Star Fox.

When you have the chance to interview such an outspoken Twitter personality as The Wonderful 101 Director Hideki Kamiya (also known for Resident Evil 2, Devil May Cry, Viewtiful Joe, Okami, and Bayonetta), you take it. So, when we had the chance at E3 2013, we made sure to take it.

Kamiya, along with his boss at Platinum Games, Atsushi Inaba, answered our questions about The Wonderful 101's themes and inspirations, game length, and even Kamiya's burgeoning social media personality.



Nintendo World Report (NWR):

To start off, what is the inspiration for the Wonderful 101?

Hideki Kamiya (HK): Initially we started off with an idea of a particular theme, and what that theme was me wanting to get together a lot of popular characters to put together in a game in some fashion. But how to do that was a separate question. How do you please the fans of all those characters? You have precedent of things like Smash Bros. where you have lots of popular characters and you have them fight together, or you have RPGs featuring lots of popular characters but you only encounter those characters for a short time and it's over.

So how do you put together a lot of interesting characters in a way where you can select the ones that you grow to like or you have affinity to? And so from there I started developing this idea of having, for example, 100 characters together in a group that you can control and you can select which character you take control of, and then guiding those characters together and proceeding through the game.

And then when I started thinking about what kind of game, well I took inspiration from a picture book that I read when I was young where there were these monsters, "kaijibo," where monsters that were put together could create bigger monsters, and there was also this other story when I was younger called Suimii where there were little characters that had different colors and they were threatened by these bigger fish. For example, there was this main character, Suimii, who would get all the characters together to form a giant fish and Suimii would be the one to form the eye of the fish and there would be this sort of heroic moment where they chased off whatever threat was threatening them and it was very heroic. So that inspired this idea of getting large groups together so you could have a situation where a lot of characters could make a fist to be able to have some sort of physical punching action, getting together to make a sword or gun. And I thought this would make a great action game, and so from there that's where we sort of ended up with the final idea for the game where it is today.

NWR: I know that with Bayonetta there was kind of this theme of "sexiness." If there was a specific one word or one sentence theme for Wonderful 101 what would it be and why?

HK: So one theme we definitely capture is the concept of hero and the other is combining forces. So, individually you have all these smaller characters but when they combine to form something greater they can overcome obstacles or enemies. But I would say the number one theme is probably the concept of hero. This is something that sort of carried on spiritually from Viewtiful Joe which I was involved in before, and the idea of donning a heroic costume and standing up against threats.

NWR: And more specifically for the controls and gameplay of Wonderful 101, do you prefer using the GamePad for drawing the unite

attacks or do you prefer the right stick? And if there is kind of a preference how does that factor into the multiplayer with one person being on the GamePad and everyone else being on the Pro Controller.

HK: Personally I don't think one is better than the other, both have advantages. For instance, it might be a little bit faster or a little more intuitive to be able to draw them on the GamePad screen where on the other hand the stick has a little more convenience factor but also maybe a little bit more difficulty to draw the forms faster. So it just comes down to a matter of personal preference, but I don't think there's anything there that says clearly "I am better."

NWR: And then as far Wonderful 101 I think at some point there was some

mention of it being on the shorter side. As far as game length comes into game design is it something that you are kind of cognizant about throughout the entire development process or is it something that you make the game and then you kind of see "Oh it's four or five hours."

HK: Basically, with action games, like Bayonetta or Devil May Cry, something that we really strive for is replayability. These are types of games that you get out of what you put into them, the play quality is really important. So we estimate with some of these past games you get around maybe 10 hours of play, but it's also the type of experience that you put in a lot of effort in designing so that you may get 10 hours of play but its the

kind of experience that you can play over and over. Like, you come home from school and once you get really good at it

you can start getting through the game a little bit quicker and, you know, there's this constant sport of effort to outdo your last play sessions.

NWR: I did that with Viewtiful Joe, a whole lot!

HK: Yeah with Viewtiful Joe the very best could beat it within an hour.

NWR: Yeah, I could never do that, but I would strive for it.

HK: So, we do pay attention to the length. It's something that I try to put in a lot of volume into it, but also

reward players who are able to play it quicker and better, and so the experience of course in that case ends up shorter. But the focus on replayability has been something really strong, especially in Bayonetta and Wonderful 101, and even Resident Evil 2 so you could get it down to a two-hour play session.

In The case of Wonderful 101, we really try to pack a lot of different ideas into it, and it got a lot bigger than I thought. And in fact we estimate that a normal play session would be 20 hours. Personally I think that I kept piling stuff on and I realized "Wow, this is going to be a pretty big game." But that notwithstanding, replayability is a really important factor, it has to be sort of easy to play in the sense that you don't get tired of playing it, and you would be able to ultimately play it in a day.

NWR: In an ideal world [would] everyone would play [a game] on the normal difficult level as opposed to the easy mode? That being that the easy mode would be something that maybe you wouldn't want in the game but you have it in there to go to a wider audience.

HK: As a gamer myself I think I'm, as far as skill, among the better type of gamers, probably higher than average. You know I grew up as a gamer in the '80s where there was a lot of

technique, a lot of skill, required to beat games. So in my mind, I have sort of a certain vision for how the difficulty should be in games, that's something that will appeal to other players

who like action games, it's something they will appreciate.



Now, going back to what you mentioned about "sexy" being a theme of Bayonetta, there might be players that aren't necessarily that interested in action games or good at action games that want to play the game because of the style presented by that. In the same sense, there might be players who just want to experience playing as these heroes or using these unite morphs that don't necessarily have the technical ability to play, so even though I have a vision that I want to show for how I think the game should be played it should be available to people who don't have the technical abilities as well.

So one thing that's important to note is that when we put an easy mode into a game it's not just that we make it easier to progress by making the enemies weaker or by making it easier to progress in that sense, but the gamers that maybe need a lower bar of entry also want to be able to enjoy the sort of exhilarating combos and a lot of the action. So in that sense, giving them the same experience in an easier level by sort of automating a lot of the combos and making it easy to perform those, but by still delivering the same experience.

NWR: How do you feel your social media presence affects people's view of your games and, I guess, you?



神谷英樹 Hideki Kamiya
@PG_kamiya

Hmm...Iwata is cuter. RT @Virginia_XL:
Do you think Miyamoto is cute?

Reply Retweet Favorite More

Atsushi

Inaba (AI): Mr. Kamiya expresses opinions on social media, and those are his opinions. So you do get a true sense of what kind of person he is and that's sort of something that can't be helped, but it's also true to who he is.

HK: I feel sorry for the people who are working on the game that I caused this trouble for them.

NWR: With Platinum games working on The Wonderful 101 and Bayonetta 2, working closely with Nintendo, in the future if you were to keep working with Nintendo would you want to keep on doing original games like The wonderful 101 or work with a Nintendo franchise? If it could be the perfect dream what would be the Nintendo franchise that you could work on?

HK: Of course I'd like to work together with Nintendo to make original games going forward. But as far as Nintendo franchises, the reality is that these are big franchises that have lots of fans and lots of history and it'd be really hard in my position to say "Oh, let me make one of these games." So for instance, Star Fox, it would be hard for me to get up the courage to go and ask "let me make a Star Fox game," because there would be a lot of responsibility behind that, I'd be in big trouble if it didn't turn out very well. So considering the history and size of those games I'm not sure that I have the courage to go and ask to do that. But tomorrow, if suddenly somebody came to me and said "We want you to make Star Fox," of course I would be pleased.

So Star Fox is one, another series, Murasame Jo, but there's a lot of great content and that would be really amazing. I grew up on Nintendo games so there's a whole lot of respect for those.

NWR: So on the show floor today I just happened to play the Wonderful 101 and Pikmin 3 right after one another. And although Wonderful 101 is obviously a very original game, I happened to notice a lot of similarities between things like the way you manage your units and even the way you attack in some cases. Is there any inspiration taken from the Pikmin franchise, and, if so, what is it, or is it just somewhat coincidental?

HK: I'd say that's coincidental. I know of Pikmin but I haven't actually played Pikmin. I can understand where some things might seem coincidental but it's definitely not something that I had in mind or was focusing on.

While they may look quite similar, the gameplay itself is totally different. In 101 you got changing powers and whatnot. You obviously have a lot of games that end up on the surface looking the same, but the gameplay is entirely different.

NWR: I would ask something about Bayonetta being on Smash Bros., but you probably wouldn't want to hear that. [Laughs]



HK: So it's not something that I could comment on. In fact, you could probably ask Mr. Sakurai! If Mr. Sakurai wanted to put her in the game it probably would happen and I'd be more than happy to!

Thanks to Nintendo and Platinum Games for providing the interview opportunity and translation!



Interview with Harvest Moon Creator Yasuhiro Wada

By Andrew Brown and Neal Ronaghan

Original Publication: June 19, 2013

Find out about Wada's new game - Hometown Story - and how it differs from Harvest Moon.

Alongside his new game Hometown Story at E3 2013, Toybox President Yasuhiro Wada told us all about why he is diverging from his Harvest Moon roots and more, including touching on his love for The Legend of Zelda series.

After creating Harvest Moon close to 20 years ago, Wada is using his years of experience to create Hometown Story, a game in which players must run a shop and interact with villagers (all in their hometown!). This 3DS game, set for release this fall, is a joint venture from Wada's new Toybox studio, Harvest Moon publisher Natsume, and Rising Star Games.

Nintendo World Report (NWR): How did Hometown Story come out of your work on Harvest Moon? How does it differ?

Yasuhiro Wada (YW): In Harvest Moon, there are three key elements. There are crops; there are animals; there are people. As the series moved

on, there was so much focus on marriage. It was almost like getting married in the game was the goal of the game.

But I wanted that focus to go back to where it started. The human relationship is not just about marriage. It's about man and man, father and son, etc. I wanted to have so many varieties of human relationship in Hometown Story instead of just getting married.

Although you can get married, it is just one part of the game.

NWR: With marriage in the game, how is it de-emphasized compared to Harvest Moon?

YW: In Harvest Moon, there were many marriageable characters,

with more than 30 in modern Harvest Moons. In Hometown Story, there are only three for each gender.

In Harvest Moon, you had to give items to raise their affection or friendship level. I always felt strange about giving someone some item that would make them increase their friendship level. It's almost like bribing people with your goods. So, we wanted to move away from that.

In Hometown Story, you don't even have to talk to certain people or give them anything at all in order to marry them.

In addition to the three marriageable characters for each gender, there are also more than 30 characters with deep stories that you can interact with, just not romantically.

NWR: Have you ever actually had any experience running a farm or a small shop like in the games you make?



YW: I have never actually worked in a shop or worked on a farm, but I have visited farmers and shop owners to talk to them about what it's like for the purposes of the games.

NWR: Has there ever been any consideration for a multiplayer co-op mode that would allow them to work together on a farm, and even possibly marry each other?



YW: It's not in the works at this moment, but in the future, we'd like to think about the possibility.

NWR: With the character designer being someone who worked Pokémon, are there any kind of references to the series outside of the Pokémon-esque character Pochica?

YW: Nothing more than coincidence because if we had more, we might have trouble with Nintendo.

NWR: Are there games other than Harvest Moon that inspired Hometown Story?

YW: I try not to get inspired by other games because even if there is another game I am inspired by, it is tough to make a game better than that inspiration. I usually get my inspiration from other media, like movies, music, and TV.

NWR: What kind of media inspired Hometown Story then?

YW: For Hometown Story, I didn't really have a specific media that inspired me, but for Harvest Moon, I took some references from the Disk System Zelda, Sim City, and Derby Stallion.

NWR: If you could have the chance to work on any Nintendo franchise, what would it be and why?

YW: That's a very difficult question. It would be Zelda, maybe, but I think I'd rather just enjoy that as a player.

NWR: What would be your favorite Zelda game?

YW: I liked the first Zelda, as it did inspire Harvest Moon. My three favorites are Link to the Past, Ocarina of Time, and Wind Waker.

The first half of Wind Waker is like 200% right. It's like better than 100%, but the second half is more like 50% right.

NWR: Are you excited for the Wind Waker HD game coming to Wii U?

YW: Yes, and I heard the balance was tweaked for the better, so I'm hoping it will be closer to 300%.

NWR: Lastly, what's your favorite Harvest Moon animal?

YW: The horse!

Thanks to Natsume and Toybox for the interview opportunity!





Interview with Sonic Team's Takashi Iizuka

By Guillaume Veillette, Jared Rosenberg, and Michael "TYP" Cole

Original Publication: June 24, 2013

We spoke with the producer of Sonic Lost World about level design, pancakes, and Smash Bros.

During E3 2013 Nintendo World Report had the

opportunity to sit down with Takashi Iizuka to discuss Sonic Lost World for both Wii U and Nintendo 3DS. Mr. Iizuka was Senior Game Designer on Sonic the Hedgehog 3 & Knuckles for Genesis, and has played a leading role in many subsequent console Sonic games, including Director of Sonic Adventure and Sonic Adventure 2 and Producer of more recent games such as Sonic Colors and Sonic Generations. He has also been heavily involved in the Nights series, serving as both Director and Producer of Nights: Journey of Dreams on Wii.

Nintendo World Report (NWR): Hello, we're here with Takashi Iizuka. Can you please tell us what your title is?

Takashi Iizuka (TI): I am producer of Sonic Lost World.

NWR: For both versions?

TI: Yes, both versions.

NWR: So as producer what is your role in leading development?

TI: A broad range of duties from being heavily involved in the early concept phase to basically managing the development and production process of titles going forward.

NWR: The demo for Wii U on display had three very different types of levels. Could you please explain the level design philosophy and how you are approaching the different levels?

TI: A couple of things. One of the important goals of the development team when they were concepting the game early was they wanted to give the player more choice. There's always trade-offs in development and one of the trade-offs in past Sonic games for the 3D forward view sections was there's more of a linear path. You can go to the left or right, but you can't go too far to the left or right. The idea that the team had to try to address that and give the player more choice is to



put Sonic on geometric shapes like a tube. Windy Hill is the first stage you can see in the build on the show floor and that is a great representative stage of the game because that's kind of the first geometric shape that they thought of. Of course there's going to be a lot more geometric shapes and types of levels in the game, but that was kind of their starting point to change things up and give the player more choice.

Another important point for the philosophy behind the level design and another important goal in development was to have a lot more variety both in the aesthetics and visuals of the stages and also in the gameplay of the stages. In previous games you would go to World 1 Stage 1, World 1 Stage 2, and the aesthetics would look similar, maybe a little bit different, but kind of similar and the gameplay you also could expect what you were going to get to a certain degree.

This time they wanted to surprise players and create a lot more variety visually and in the gameplay sections, so [hence] the two stages in Desert Ruins. You can even see by the name, the two stages don't look like the desert. They are kind of candy stages. One is their take on more traditional side-view Sonic, which is very dynamic in the ways the camera is moving. The camera is moving all around and you are bouncing left and right and upwards. Also, in Desert Ruins 2, which is a forward view, it's kind of a auto-run forward view and uses these hex geometrical patterns to create this very cool type of challenge that you've never seen before in a Sonic game.

NWR: You mentioned the level made of candy. Many of the levels have this more surreal look that we haven't really seen in past Sonic games so was one of the desires to surprise the players? Let's put pancakes in there. (laughs) They're not going to expect that! Or is there a theme that governs the worlds?

TI: The candy stage sticks out as a little more unusual, even more than the other stages actually, but it still comes from what we were saying. You're in the Desert Ruins world now. Even though you might get tired of the desert after two stages you're going to be in the desert for six stages now. Players might get tired of that. So that's coming from the idea that we want to try something different. More variety, especially in the worlds that people might get more tired of.

You may have also noticed that there's been a general simplification of the

graphic design. That's coming from a few different angles. Number one, in the past few games they've been using global illumination, baked-in HD backgrounds and they're very beautiful, but they're always trade-offs in development and one of the problems is that enemies and rings kind of bleed into the background and it can be harder to see them at times so this time they wanted to try something different and come up with more iconic and simplified graphics that make things pop so the enemies pop more, the rings pop more. Also the simplification of the graphics let us reach an important development goal that we've had for a long time which is 60 frames per second. Things definitely feel a lot more fluid at sixty frames per second which we weren't able to hit in past games with the HD backgrounds. And finally the development team members have wanted to kind of accentuate the connection to the past Genesis games.

Interpreter: Iizuka-san has said in the past that the two main inspirations for this game are the modern Sonic games like Generations and Colors, but also the Genesis games so those are kind of the parents of this title.

NWR: We've talked about the Wii U game. I noticed that in the 3DS game, the sidescrolling levels have a bit more of a puzzle element with switches and the like. Can you talk a little about the difference in level design between the Wii U and 3DS games?

TI: The 3DS is actually a interesting title because it's the first time we've been able to do a 3D forward-looking Sonic game on a Nintendo handheld platform and it matches very nicely with the 3D

features. And as you can probably see since you've played it, that a lot of the controls pretty much map directly over from the Wii U version. With that said, the level design is completely different so while there is the same story between the Wii U and the 3DS game and the general themes of the levels and the themes of the game are the same, the level design is completely different. There's not a single level in the Wii U and the 3DS that overlap and appear in both games.

NWR: The 3DS game seemed to have a greater emphasis on wall jumping. Is that something unique to the 3DS or is that just not showcased in the Wii U version on the show floor?



TI: It really depends on the stage so it's not that 3DS is putting more emphasis on the wall jumping. It's just that the stages we've selected for E3 happen to put more emphasis on that and the Wii U version will have stages that require wall jumping to proceed as well so they're probably about the same in the emphasis of wall jumping.

NWR: Which level on display at E3 is your favorite?



TI: Probably I would have to say it is Windy Hill because we've spent so much time prototyping that level, different versions of the level, over and over. Tearing it apart and putting it back together, and trying to find the fun and great experience there for the gameplay we are trying to accomplish in this game. And also in the 3DS version, Windy Hill was also a test of the technology to see if we could build something on 3DS, [something] that was similar to what we're trying to do on Wii U. Putting in lots of ideas in unique ways to do things on the 3DS.

NWR: The demos on the floor are all single player. Can you discuss the co-op and versus multiplayer?



TI: We'll have different multiplayer modes on both Wii U and 3DS. On the Wii U, there's both cooperative and versus multiplayer. In cooperative play, Sonic will be using the Wii U GamePad and someone can be supporting Sonic in co-op with the Wii Remote. In versus mode, one player will be playing on the TV screen and the other player will be racing using the GamePad so you don't have to have split screen. You both have your own screen and can race each other. The Wii U multiplayer is not on the Internet. It's basically everyone sitting on the same couch. The 3DS for the first time we're having 4-player versus racing over Wi-Fi and the Internet.

NWR: You've worked on many Sonic games over the years. What have you found makes for a good Sonic game in terms of level design and overall pacing of the game?

TI: I think two really important aspects of Sonic are obviously speed, but also the platforming experience. I think if you go too far in one direction



of supporting one or the other then that can harm the gameplay and make for a game that's not as good. One thing I'm very proud of with Sonic Lost World is that we've been able to create what I feel is a better balance between the speed and

platforming than what we've had in our past games.

NWR: When you look back at the original Sonic the Hedgehog, it featured one button gameplay, run and you jump. Over time, more moves have been introduced, and maybe a little more complexity. How do you balance the additional movesets with trying to keep the game accessible and easy to understand?

TI: It's always a challenge. It's something we're thinking about it in development all the time. How to add complexity for the advanced user, but keep things simple and easy on the other hand. Especially when Sonic is moving fast you don't want to have a lot of buttons you have to push. As much as possible you want to limit your button pushes while your running to one thing or maybe two things at the most. Something that people can always push intuitively, immediately without thinking about it. An example where we were

thinking about this in the new game is the homing attack and the double jump. In the past, we've always had the homing attack on the same button

as the jump and you know that's great for simplicity, but there are development trade-offs. Sometimes you want to double jump and you push 'A' 'A' but the game doesn't read it contextually, it's hard to read exactly what the player wants to do. Sometimes the player even with enemies there, they want to double jump, but it does a homing attack so we decided to address that this time by having both the 'A' and 'B' button do a jump, but one of the buttons always does a jump with the homing attack and one always does a double jump. That way you can still push one to do a quick jump, but then you can separate your intentions by using one or the other.

NWR: Do you find that the context sensitive controls sometimes confuse players? For example, there's a kick move in this game, but you can only do it when you're near an enemy. I know when I was playing I had difficulty understanding how that move worked because I could only do it when I was near an enemy, I couldn't practice. When you're play testing a Sonic game, how do you iron out those types of challenges?



TI: A couple things there. Yea, probably on the show floor, it's a little bit not clear when and how to use kick, but that's just because it's not a part of the full game. In the full game, there will be more of a contextual tutorial that will say, "hey you can use kick on these enemies" without getting in the way. And [there will be] other ways that will let the player know about that ability. Kind of the challenge there in development is, yes, when you're moving fast you definitely want players to just think of one thing and quickly attack enemies, but on the other side of the coin is that if you only have one attack that kills all enemies in the game then that can also lead to things getting a little bit boring. So that's why they decided to add the kick move to mix up the combat a little bit and we're trying to make it obvious that the kick needs to be used against enemies that have a hard shell so you can kind of read when you need to use the kick.

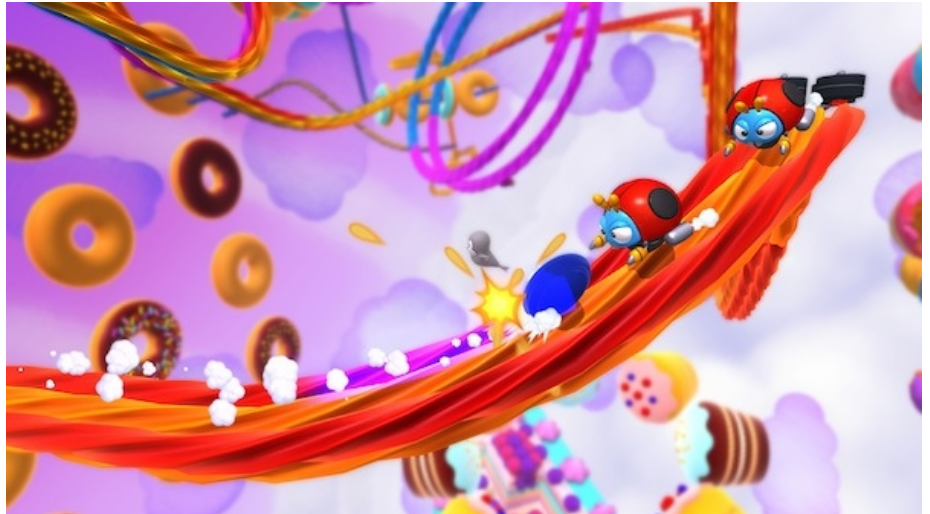
NWR: One more question here. Sonic was very popular in Smash Bros. for Wii. Is there any possibility of him making a return appearance in the next Smash Bros.?

TI: All we can say is that we also think it would be awesome if he was in the next Smash Bros. So yea, but that's more of a question for Nintendo than us.

NWR: Thank you very much for your time.

TI: Thank you.

Thanks to Mr. Iizuka, his interpreter, and Sega for this interview opportunity and their time.





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The original RFN shirt design features "character art" of Jonny, Greg, James, and Lindy, all provided by listener David Ochart. The overall graphic design is by Amanda Albert. The front features all four beloved RFN personalities arranged in the style of the classic "black box" NES packaging; the back says "NintendoWorldReport.com" and "Est. 1999".



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GAME GEAR

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