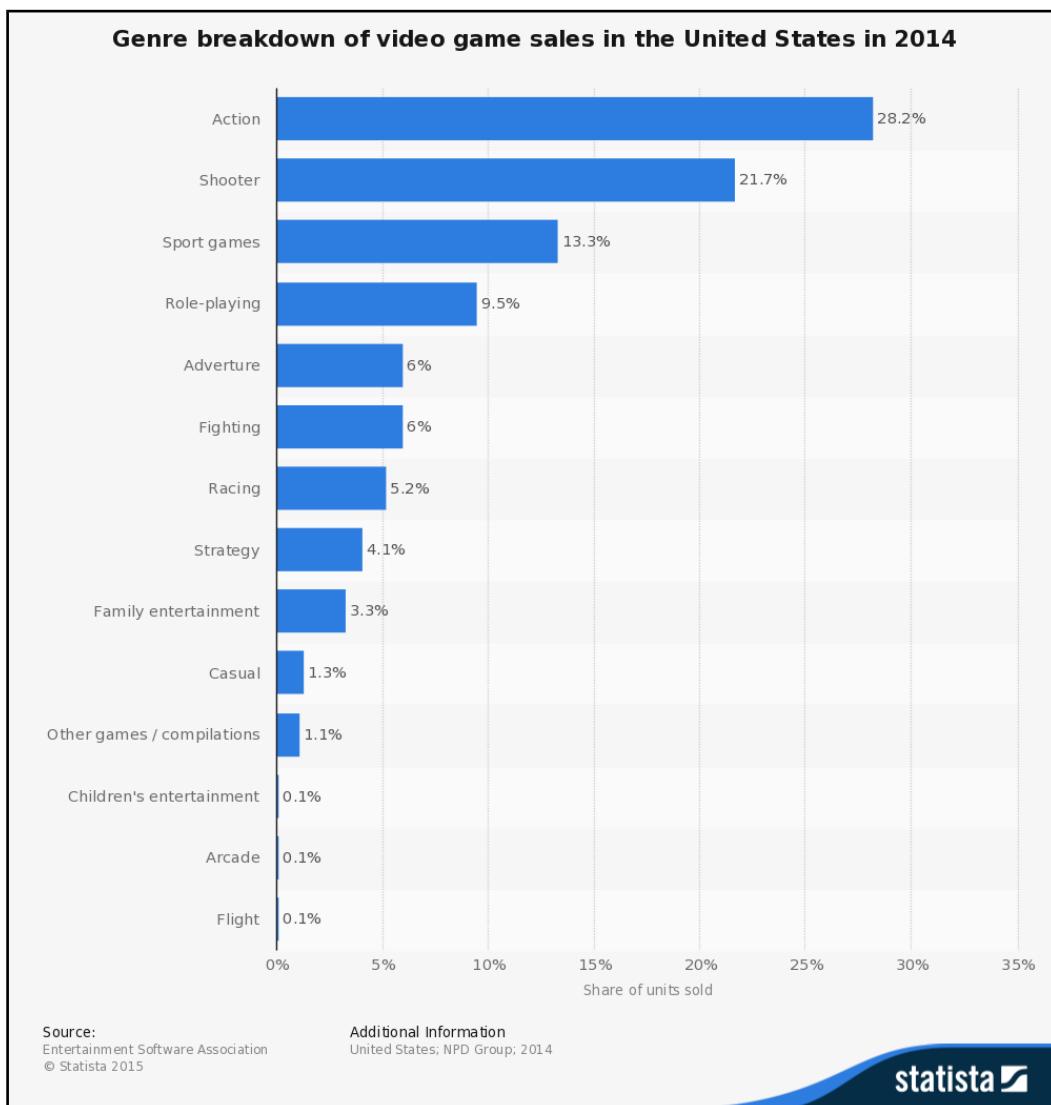


A Report on Gaming Genres

Introduction

With the ever increasing popularity of video gaming, several different types of games have been developed. Games can be loosely classified into genres or types, just as with motion pictures or literature. The number of genre categories has also grown as the gaming industry itself has grown. In addition, some of the genres can be further classified into sub-genre types, increasing the total number of categories. This report will examine some the more popular classifications in use, to examine the defining properties that classify games in each category. Within each category, representative games are summarized to provide insight into the current state of the genre.



Popular Gaming Genres

As mentioned previously, there are several genres of video games on the market. According to a report by the Entertainment Software Association, the most popular types of games, in order, are: action, shooter, sports, role-playing, and adventure games. Together, these game types account for over 75% of total game sales in the United States for the year 2014. Each of these genres is described below using the author's own experience with hundreds of games.

Action

Action games encompass a very broad category of games, which makes it easy to understand why they account for the majority of game sales. The main focus of these games is action. This usually involves skill-based play, concentrating on player movement and reaction. However, when trying to break the action category down into more specific terms, new subcategories of the action genre are formed.

For example, the platforming genre is typified by the player moving a character around the screen, jumping around platforms and collecting things like coins, stars, or points, and using simple mechanics like punching and jumping to defeat enemies. The game usually consists of a series of short levels which the player must pass to get to an end “boss” character, which is usually much harder to defeat than the regular enemies that are encountered. Additionally, these games often have cute or quirky main characters and the exist in a rich fantasy world.



Rayman Legends (platformer)

- **Created by:** Michel Ancel at Ubisoft (Ubisoft, n.d.)
- **Release date:** August 29, 2013 (Ubisoft, n.d.)
- **Target audience:** Everyone, including previous fans of the series (Ubisoft, n.d.)
- **URL:** <http://rayman.ubi.com/legends/en-gb/home/>
- **Main features:** Cooperative gameplay, musical rhythmic gameplay, 3D boss battles, excellent artistic style (Ubisoft, n.d.)
- **Technology:** Utilizes Ubisoft's proprietary UbiArt game engine to display 3D game elements with improved lighting and graphics (Ubisoft, n.d.)

Another action sub-category are the so-called open world games. Usually, these games create a vast environment for the player to explore. The player can treat like a virtual sandbox, exploring different areas or completing different objectives in any order they choose. Open world games usually focus on a main character that can freely explore the environment, battling enemies with various weapon types, and taking on missions to complete a story, all the while exploring the nooks and crannies of the environment to complete side quests and find collectible items.



Grand Theft Auto V (open world):

- **Created by:** Rockstar Games
- **Release date:** September 17, 2013 (Giant Bomb, n.d.)
- **Target audience:** Mature gamers, previous fans of the series action and crime movie fans (Giant Bomb, n.d.)
- **URL:** <http://www.rockstargames.com/V/>
- **Main features:** 3 main characters to control and tell the story, switch between characters at any time, extremely large open world to explore, dynamic missions, large variety of weapons, and cars, online multiplayer (Giant Bomb, n.d.)
- **Technology:** Uses the Rockstar Advanced Game Engine (RAGE), designed for a variety of platforms, used to optimize all types of game factors including lighting, animation, weather effects, draw distance, etc. (Langley, 2013)

Shooter

Another broad category of games is the shooter category. As implied by the name, this genre involves shooting on screen enemies with some sort of projectile weapon. Games usually rely on having a lot of enemies and using skill to complete levels. Again, like the action category, further refinement of the genre description, often leads to new sub-genre definitions.

For example, the first-person shooter (FPS) type of game involves setting the player view to the first person perspective of a character, shooting enemies on screen in front of the character. Games of this type often involve a variety of gun types for the player to choose from, as well as options for secondary weapons like grenades or other explosives.



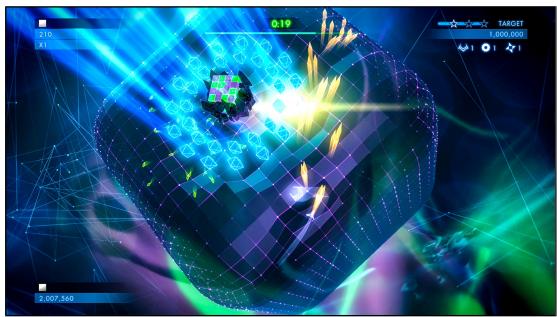
Call of Duty (FPS)

- **Created by:** Sledgehammer Games
- **Release date:** November 3, 2014 (Activision Publishing, n.d.)
- **Target audience:** Everyone, including previous fans of the series, fans of military and shooting action (Activision Publishing, n.d.)
- **URL:**

<https://www.callofduty.com/ca/en/advancedwarfare>

- **Main features:** Futuristic weapons and environments, vertical game mechanics like boosts and grappling, high profile voice acting, intense shooting action, addictive online multiplayer with a variety of maps and modes of play (Activision Publishing, n.d.)
- **Technologies:** New proprietary game engine to enhance animation, rendering physics and audio (Keshav, 2014), utilizes a version of *Avatar 2*'s facial animation system for realistic animation effects (Makuch, 2014)

Another sub-category of the shooter genre is the dual-stick shooter. This game type involves the player controlling the movement of an on-screen vehicle with one joystick, and the direction of shooting with a second joystick. As the player moves around the level, they encounter enemies which try to shoot them, so the player must carefully control both movement and shooting at the same time to successfully destroy enemies and advance levels. The action in these games can often get quite hectic, with many bullets and enemies appearing on the screen at once.



Geometry Wars (dual-stick shooter)

- **Created by:** Lucid Games
- **Release date:** November 25, 2014 (Sierra, n.d.)
- **Target audience:** Everyone, including previous fans of the series (Sierra, n.d.)
- **URL:** <http://www.sierra.com/geometrywars>
- **Main features:** Full 3D game environment, bright colourful graphics, intense shooting action, large number of levels, variety of game types, online and cooperative play (Sierra, n.d.)
- **Technologies:** 3D modeling software, unknown game engine

Sports

Sports games are one of the easiest categories of video games to explain. This genre is simply a representation of the familiar sports we play around the world, such as football, soccer, basketball, tennis and hockey. Some games in this category try to accurately simulate the real conditions of the sport. They offer the chance to play as real-life players on real-life teams, which are simulated through the use of various statistics in relevant categories.

On the other end of the spectrum, some sports games try to focus on the action present in sports and make the games more fun by modifying the way the game plays to be more exciting. In a baseball game for example, pitchers might pitch very fast or be able to throw the ball with movement that does not exist in reality. The batter might hit home runs much more often than real players do, and sometimes even crazier effects or rules are added that are not present in the actual sport.



Madden NFL 15 (football simulation)

- **Created by:** Electronic Arts (EA)
- **Release date:** August 26, 2014 (Giant Bomb, n.d.)
- **Target audience:** Football fans and fans of previous series installments Giant Bomb, n.d.)
- **URL:** <https://www.easports.com/madden-nfl> (now displaying the upcoming Madden NFL 16)
- **Main features:** Realistic football action, many plays to choose from, stylish presentation, improved AI for realistic player actions, updated graphics and rosters, several play modes Giant Bomb, n.d.)
- **Technologies:** Utilizes EA's proprietary Ignite game engine for dynamic AI and environments, player appearance and animation (Electronic Arts, n.d.)

Role-Playing

Role-playing games (RPGs) are given this name because the player takes on the role of a character in the game, and can customize that character to their liking. These customizations can involve the physical characteristics of the player, such as build, skin color, facial structure, etc., but the most important customizations usually affect how the character plays within the game. For example, in a fantasy game, a player can choose to increase the magical traits of the character to allow them to use spells like fireballs or ice storms. Alternatively, the player could choose to focus on weapon-handling traits, allowing them to battle enemies with swords, or axes instead of magic. However, there are often many more traits than these available for the player to choose from, and it is up to them to decide how they want to balance these characteristics to fit how they want to play the game.

To further enhance the experience of having the player be in the role of the main character, the game world is usually very rich and diverse, with many types of tasks for the player to search for and complete. These worlds are often populated by several non-player characters (NPCs) that the main character can interact with, usually through dialogue. In modern RPGs, the player often has the option to even choose the type of dialogue their character will say to any other NPCs. This level of immersion and customization is now being applied to other game types, which leads to games being categorized as having RPG elements.



The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim

- **Created by:** Bethesda Softworks
- **Release date:** November 11, 2011 (Bethesda Softworks, n.d.)
- **Target audience:** Everyone, including previous fans of the series, fans of fantasy and magical worlds (Bethesda Softworks, n.d.)
- **URL:** <http://www.elderscrolls.com/skyrim>
- **Main features:** Extremely customizable character, hundreds of weapons and spells to use, vast, living, open world with many locations, new graphics engine to display game world in astonishing detail, battle dragons and use their powers (Bethesda Softworks, n.d.)
- **Technologies:** Uses proprietary Creation Engine focusing on lighting and draw distances, includes Radiant AI technology to simulate realistic NPC behaviour, uses Havok Behavior for realistic animation and movement, utilizes Radiant Story to manage side quests (Bertz, 2011)

Adventure

Yet another basic genre of games is the adventure game type. The basics of the adventure game usually focus on taking a player on a journey through the game world. The player is often presented with exciting locations to explore and interesting characters to interact with. This is similar to the role-playing genre described above, but the player usually has much less control over the customization aspects of the main character. The adventure game is most analogous to an interactive movie, with a compelling story, characters and game world. Early types of these games involved the so called “point-and-click” adventures, where the primary mouse input was used to navigate and interact with the world. More modern adventure games borrow from other genres such as action and RPG to offer more action and interaction within the game.



The Walking Dead: Season Two

- **Created by:** Telltale Games
- **Release date:** December 17, 2013 (Telltale Games, n.d.)
- **Target audience:** Everyone, fans of *The Walking Dead* television show and comic book, adventure game fans (Telltale Games, n.d.)
- **URL:** <https://www.telltalegames.com/walkingdead/>

- **Main features:** Story driven by in-game choices, episodic content based on the comic book, ability to import save from first game (Telltale Games, n.d.)
- **Technologies:** Telltale Tools proprietary game engine allows dialogue to link to story events with minimal programming, can chg character animations and camera angles on the fly while playing (Morganti, 2005).

Conclusion

With the vast array of video games on the market, they can now be classified into several genre types, and even further classified into sub-genres, creating a hierarchy of game types. Action games are the broadest category, but also the most popular in terms of sales. Each category of game type now has many representative gems, such as The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim role-playing game. As both the market and the technology have grown, the types of video games on offer have also grown. And now, with the global market of video games market worth over 63 billion US dollars as of 2012 (Statista, 2015), it is no wonder that so many companies are developing video games of varying genres.

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