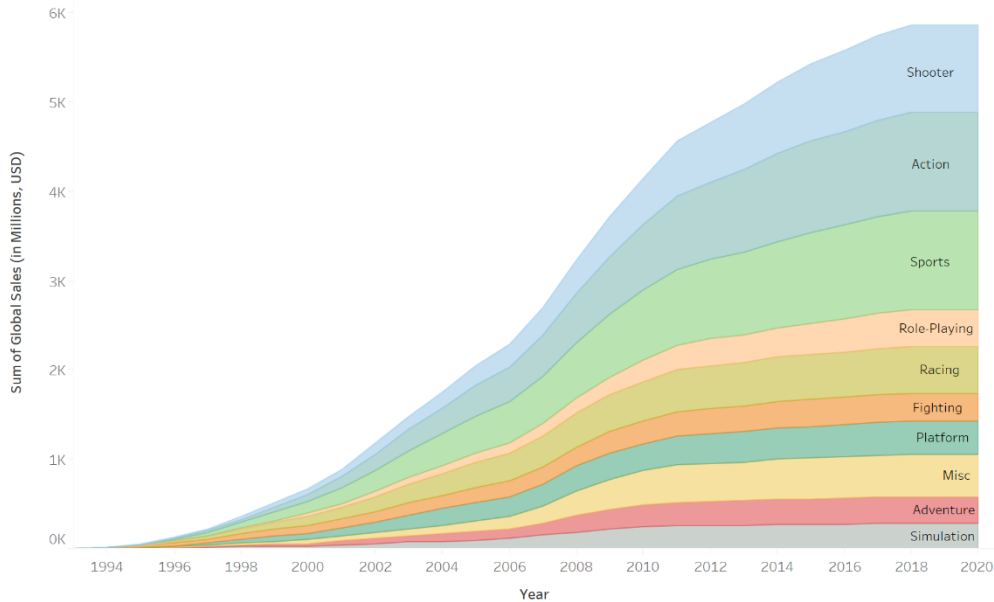


The Great Creativity Drought

The Video Game industry is lacking diversity and running out of new ideas.

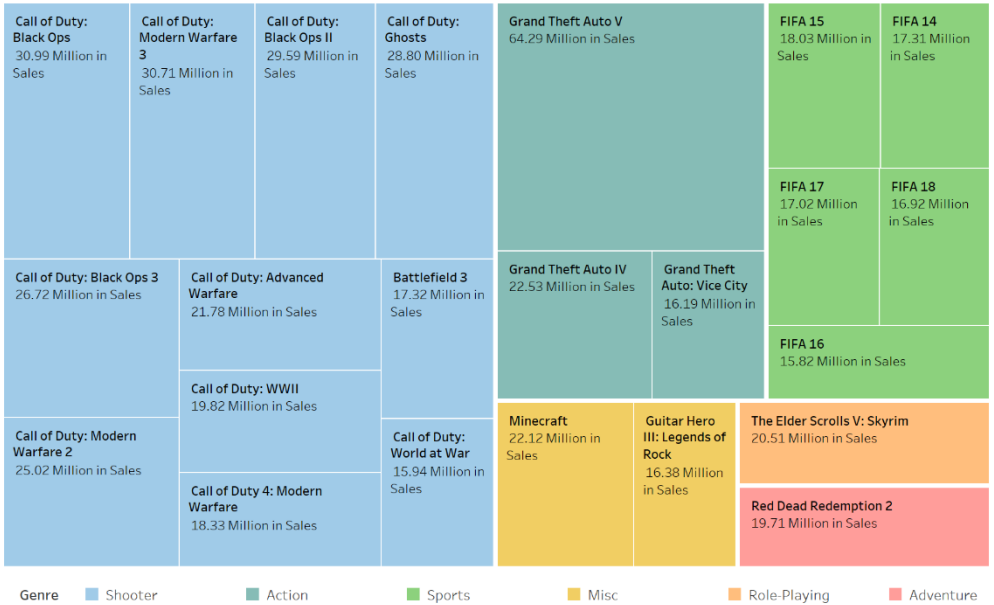
Industry Genre Breakdown

Action, shooter and sports genres account for almost half of the entire video game industry.



Top Selling Titles in the Past Decade

Most players are buying sequels to popular titles, making it harder for new titles to break the status quo.



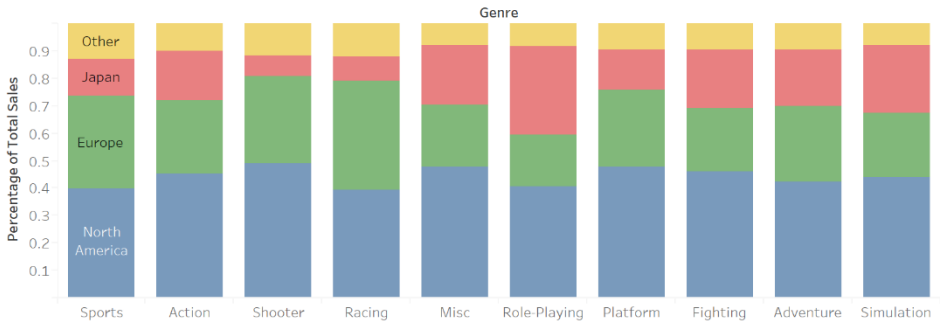
Critic & User Scores Across Genres

Large discrepancies between critic and user scores indicate that players are content with subpar refreshes to titles.



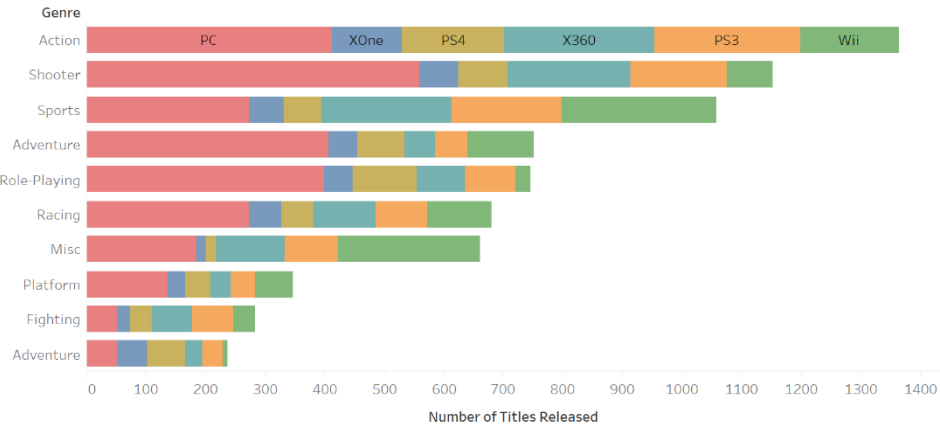
Genre Breakdown by Region

Highly biased sales percentages across genres suggest that most games are designed to cater to western audiences.



Number of Titles Released by Genre and Platform

Platform availability greatly varies across genres, often forcing players to buy platforms based what they want to play.



Inspiration, Data & Design Discussion

Inspiration:

Video games have always been a huge passion of mine. Thus, I took this opportunity to explore and visualize statistics of a video games industry dataset off Kaggle. The dataset contains 55,792 entries of video game titles, along with statistics on their ratings, global& regional sales, reception, genre, publisher, platform, number shipped, and much more. Using this dataset, I wanted to see if any industry-wide trends are affecting what games are being made.

Chart Discussion:

To start, I decided to visualize the game genres and their proportions within the industry. I created a simple area chart to visualize this and was immediately surprised by the fact that three genres take up almost half of the entire industry. Then, I wanted to see what games within the top industries are hogging all the sales, so I made a treemap of the top 20 games by sales. Again, I was surprised to see that refreshes of popular games took up the majority of the top spots. I recalled that many of the sequels were critiqued for being bland and repeats, so I created a dumbbell chart of the top 10 genres by sales to see their ratings. The low average critic scores were somewhat expected, but I was again surprised by the high average user scores. In conjunction with the high volume of sequels in the treemap, the scores indicate that the sequels are not great games, but people like playing them regardless. Taking a step back, it intuitively makes sense, as people always want the latest iteration, no matter if it is a phone, car, or game. I then wanted to see if the genres sold differently in different regions and were surprised to find that Europe and North America took up the majority of all categories across the board. This reminded me of the news article I read a while back, where a game critic denounced publishers for purposely designing their games to cater to western audiences as they typically spend more on games. Lastly, I wanted to see if the number of games released across genres differed by platform, so I made a stacked bar chart to visualize this. It was fascinating to see how little some genres had when it comes to platform diversity, while other platforms were saturated with very similar games. The graphs together indicate that the industry is shifting from what was once a calling of creativity to cash-grabbing refreshes of old games in popular genres that are exclusive to specific platforms and cater to only the wealthiest audiences. A sad sight to behold.

General aesthetic/artistic choices:

Clean and concise is the name of the game, and precisely what I prioritized for my graphs. I removed as much chart junk as possible while still keeping the graphs legible. Simple descriptions were included underneath titles to implore the reader to think, while legends are built into the graphs wherever possible to minimize ink. As most of my data is nominal and not ordinal, interval, or ratio, I decided to use different distinct colors instead of gradient color pallet to visually emphasize the differences. The colors were all chosen to be neutral and familiar, and intensity was turned down to make them easier on the reader's eye. The background is kept a pure white, as I was told in my feedback from HW1 that light blue may distract the reader from the content of the chart. The only place where I had a legend was the treemap, as I decided that it was cleaner to keep it outside rather than having labels for every category. Texts are either dark black or a soft grey to ensure contrast, legibility, and ease of reading. Both graphs have a "hook" title to draw the reader in, while the subtitle underneath describes the message that the graph is trying to convey. A final check was made to make sure that I removed all "chart junk" (e.g., unnecessary tick marks, axis lines, titles, axis labels) as I went through the class slides and tweaked my chart as needed (e.g., on principles of perception).

Dataset link: <https://www.kaggle.com/ashaheedq/video-games-sales-2019>