Future of “Call of Duty”

**Introduction**

Call of Duty is a popular series of online first person shooters published by Activision. With a yearly release schedule the games have little time to innovate as much as other games on the market. Despite that I see great potential for change with new technologies and shifting public attitudes.

**Historical Reference**

The series began in 2003 with the initial title “Call of Duty”. According to Prima Games writer Robert Workman the original game was a simple attempt to compete with EA’s “Medal of Honor”. The series came into it’s own with the second release which defined the the modern military shooter genre (Workman). Since then the core of the games has remained primarily unchanged. Though the graphical presentation improved as expected alongside advances in hardware. The company has shown interest in innovation with a single player VR demo mission last year (Cooper).

**Technological Impact on Game Play**

With the rise of virtual and augmented reality Activision would be wise to experiment further with new technology. While I don’t see augmented reality working well in an online competitive environment, virtual reality would make a perfect match. Virtual reality would greatly improve the immersive properties of the games. This would allow the games to make a shift from the now oversaturated arcade shooter to a more realistic one. Changes to game flow and presentation would be vital in transitioning to VR. The hud would need to be less cluttered, important information such as ammo, health, and ability charge would need to be represented on your physical self. This could be achieved with counters on your guns or player characters suit when looking down. The core gameplay would also have to be slowed down drastically. The current speed and mobility present in the games would be sickening and hard to keep track of in a VR headset.

Of course shifting the entire game to a new platform and greatly altering the classic formula would upset the current primary demographic. The audience of kids looking for fast paced adrenaline and low prices would lose interest while teens and young adults with access to VR headsets would be attracted to a slower experience. This shift may lose people overall, but the people it attracts will have to spend more on platforms to play it on. It would be critical to target the current big VR platforms of Vive, PS VR, and Oculus while staying open to the potential of portable VR. With great differences in power between portable and home VR systems the graphical quality and complexity of the games would have to be on the lower end to accommodate different hardware.

**Marketing and Deployment**

According to statista the more realistic Call of Duty games tend to sell better (Statista). Focusing the marketing on the immersion of the VR headset and slower pace would appeal to the audience that’s buying the realistic games. It would also be wise to market towards PC and Playstation over Xbox considering Xbox does not have a VR option. In terms of selling the game it would be wise to cut out extra in game purchases to lessen people's concerns over costs considering they already had to buy a VR headset.

**Summary**

Call of duty has a bad history of failing to innovate. Virtual reality is Activisions chance to step up and make a change before the formula gets saturated and stale. They already proved they have the capability with the VR demo they just have to build it into their multiplayer.

Works Cited

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