**AI x Gaming**

**Week of November 18th, 2024**

# **Top 3-5 Key News Items**

**Key News Item #1:**  Itch.io forces indie devs to fess up to GenAI ([Link](https://www.gamesindustry.biz/itchio-now-requires-creators-to-declare-if-their-work-uses-generative-ai))

* [Itch.io](http://itch.io) implemented mandatory disclosure of Generative AI use with tags for AI Graphics, Sounds, Text & Dialog, and Code categories, particularly impacting its indie game developer base.
* Steam includes [AI Generated Content Disclosures](https://store.steampowered.com/app/2073850/THE_FINALS/) but no tags. Epic Games Store has no AI policies.
* Out of 1M+ games, only 233 (~0.02%) currently have the new AI content tags versus 19,453 tagged “No AI”, which means little over 1% of tagged games have used AI in some way. Undisclosed AI games will be removed from browsing after a grace period.
* The “No AI” tag has become crucial for targeting anti-AI audiences, as there is no filtering out the AI tags, while AI tags may attract curious users.
* **Why does this matter to AI x Gaming:** Transparency will be key to gaining acceptance of Generative AI in game development pipelines, especially among smaller developers. It is also interesting to note that only 1% of all tagged games use AI, which showcases how nascent AI adoption really is for game developers of browser-based titles.

**Key News Item #2:** Niantic uses AI to catch Pokémon Go players’ geospatial data ([Link](https://www.gamedeveloper.com/business/niantic-pokemon-go-ai-model))

* Pokemon Go developer Niantic announced a Large Geospatial Model (LGM) built using machine learning to "understand a scene and connect it to millions of other scenes globally."
* There was backlash for gathering the user data without permission, but Niantic has had player opt-in permission for AR scans while building the models over the last 5 years.
* The tech already powers features like PokéStop scanning, creating 3D maps from pedestrian perspectives unavailable to vehicles.
* With 10M locations scanned and 1M weekly additions, Niantic plans global expansion of the geospatial model.
* Machine learning on user data isn't new, but the spotlight on newer AI tech has increased scrutiny on privacy and opt-in policies, especially for games.
* **Why does this matter to AI x Gaming:** Recent AI advances have heightened scrutiny of game data collection practices, as games provide valuable behavioral AI training data through engaging user experiences. Despite Pokemon Go being the only truly successful location based game, Niantic will no doubt leverage this model for future products whether those be games or apps as this is a fairly exclusive data set. There could also be a data licensing business play being considered.

**Key News Item 3:** Genies pivots to GenAI Avatars and Games for brands ([Link](https://venturebeat.com/games/genies-launches-parties-for-brands-and-creators-to-launch-their-own-ai-roblox/))

* Genies, an avatar tech company, pivoted away from metaverse and blockchain to focus on UGC and AI with its Parties game platform feature for brands and creators.
* The interesting angle here is AI helping IP holders create Smart Avatars, UGC games and fashion with theoretical interoperability depending on implementation of Genies systems.
* Genies originally raised $150M back in 2022 around avatars for blockchain and metaverse trends. Despite focus pivots, there is still battling over Avatar tech as demonstrated by [Apple](https://onezero.medium.com/memoji-are-apples-greatest-invention-since-the-iphone-3ab8feb2575b) and [Meta](https://www.meta.com/avatars/).
* It's an uphill battle getting games to implement 3rd party Avatars, with [Ready Player Me](https://readyplayer.me) being a semi-successful web2.5 example. Genies does have some leverage through [access to celebrities](https://genies.com/blog/creator-genies), which Fortnite has shown can be relevant in metaverse concepts.
* **Why does this matter to AI x Gaming:** Avatar creation in games has classically been done via a series of sliders, with no cross-game applications. GenAI could allow for avatar interoperability between games that can be tailored to each game while still keeping the same root prompt for consistency.

**Key News Item 4:** NVIDIA promptly speeds up editable 3D scene creation ([Link](https://x.com/EHuanglu/status/1860718399611113835))

* [Edify 3D](https://research.nvidia.com/labs/dir/edify-3d/) from NVIDIA (no release date) generates detailed “production-ready” 3D models and whole scenes from text descriptions or 2D images in just two minutes versus the days it would take with an experienced modeler.
* This tool further democratizes 3D game creation for indies while raising asset store quality standards.
* Higher budget projects will still want modelers and texture creators to improve and optimize, but even AAA games could use the tool for rapid prototyping and next steps after basic level white-boxing.
* Integration with Unity or Unreal Engine could streamline early development without requiring external tools, but impact asset store revenues.
* **Why does this matter to AI x Gaming:** Improving pre-production and prototyping phases of game development helps de-risk an inherently risky business by testing and allowing for pivots much sooner.

# **Other News Items**

* **Play Ventures raises $140m in third gaming fund** ([Link](https://www.gamesindustry.biz/play-ventures-raises-140m-in-third-gaming-fund)): Despite a tighter funding environment, Play Ventures managed to raise a good amount to put into mobile F2P along with AI-enhanced gaming tools, a definite synergy.
* **Nvidia claims a new AI audio generator can make sounds never heard before** ([Link](https://www.theverge.com/2024/11/25/24305584/nvidia-fugatto-ai-audio-generator-music)): Nvidia continues exploring ways AI tech can get creative with multimedia, but it's unclear how useful this will be yet.
* **All the news from Microsoft’s Ignore 2024 pro event** ([Link](https://www.theverge.com/2024/11/19/24300001/microsoft-ignite-2024-news-ai-announcements-copilot-windows-azure-office)): Microsoft is leaning hard into AI and leveraging all the different platforms and products it could be integrating into.

# **Content Worth Consuming**

1. **How AI is Redefining the Future of Gaming** ([Link](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=APG93iZFmhk)): A panel discussion on the AI x Gaming topic at the India Game Developer’s Conference 2024.
2. **The Bitter Religion: AI's Holy War Over Scaling Laws** ([Link](https://www.generalist.com/briefing/the-bitter-religion)): As major improvements to GenAI become more difficult there’s a philosophic and strategic debate over the future of scaling.
3. **Why LLMs Within Software Development May Be a Dead End** ([Link](https://thenewstack.io/why-llms-within-software-development-may-be-a-dead-end/)): Using GenAI for coding is still in its infancy and needs some constant introspection to make sure it helps build a good foundation for the future of software development.
4. **AI eats the world: Benedict Evans’s 2025 presentation** ([Link](https://www.ben-evans.com/presentations)): A wide ranging annual presentation created by Benedict Evans to maintain a good high level frame of mind on AI in 2025.
5. **AI can now create a replica of your personality** ([Link](https://www.technologyreview.com/2024/11/20/1107100/ai-can-now-create-a-replica-of-your-personality/)): A study demonstrated the ability to simulate the way people might respond to surveys so that we can better create AI that models human thinking and social simulations.