**AI x Gaming**

**Week of December 2nd, 2024**

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

**Key News Item #1:** A playable game from just a single image ([Link](https://deepmind.google/discover/blog/genie-2-a-large-scale-foundation-world-model/))

* Google DeepMind's Genie 2 showcased converting a text prompt into a 2D image using Imagen 3 that then becomes a 3D interactive game with physics and playable characters.
* Genie 2 includes keyboard driven character movement and NPCs, but can only maintain a consistent world for on average 10-20 seconds (and always less than 1 min) so far and is mostly bland imitation like most GPT writing. It does however work for both first and 3rd person including both bipedal people/robots and vehicles.
* While the movement aspects are not exactly novel, the ability for it to also handle some object affordances like popping balloons, exploding barrels, buttons to open doors and even NPC interactions is a bit more interesting in terms of imitating small bits of game play.
* At this stage this system is very far from generating games, it does offer some potential for rapid prototyping once it’s able to play for longer and offer enough novelty to beat simple Unity Store assets. This also makes it similar to GPT in its utility far more for rough drafts than finished products.
* **Why does this matter to AI x Gaming:** Any practical demonstrations of AI speeding up game development, especially those that seem magical, will increase at least experimental adoption among game developers.

**Key News Item #2:** Sony of two minds about AI for Playstation ([Link](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4gpz291z59o))

* Speaking to the BBC for the 30th anniversary of the Playstation launch, Hermen Hulst and co-CEO Hideaki Nishino briefly touched on the topic of AI in game development, saying "I suspect there will be a dual demand in gaming: one for AI-driven innovative experiences and another for handcrafted, thoughtful content.” and "Striking the right balance between leveraging AI and preserving the human touch will be crucial.”
* Sony, like many others is currently struggling with financial issues in its live services game development projects that have led to a large amount of layoffs, most notably 220 people from Bungie due to Destiny 2 issues, and the entire 170 person Firewalk Studios team as a result of Concord’s swift failure ($400M lost).
* The cautious acknowledgement of the benefits of AI in game development implies that it at least will explore usages that make sense, while still trying to maintain the human element where needed.
* Given the 8-year development cycle of Concord and the difficulty in keeping pace with live service development, it’s likely Sony could look to AI uses in pre-production, prototype testing and support in live service development with humans handling the main development and polish.
* **Why does this matter to AI x Gaming:** The public statement is both an assurance of some future for human developers, but also a tacit acknowledgement that Sony will explore generative AI where it makes sense.

**Key News Item 3:** Black Ops 6 Called out on Gen AI usage ([Link](https://80.lv/articles/steam-doesn-t-want-to-disclose-call-of-duty-black-ops-6-s-ai-usage/))

* Activision is being called out by players for potentially using undisclosed generative AI for Call of Duty Black Ops 6 in violation of [Steam’s disclosure policy](https://steamcommunity.com/groups/steamworks/announcements/detail/3862463747997849619). The [image in question](https://cdn.80.lv/api/upload/content/67/675409f8db630.jpg) is a Zombie Santa Claus loading screen that has some of the typical GenAI issues such as a six-fingered hand among other quirks.
* It’s unlikely for the game’s developer, Treyarch, to come forward unless pressured to do so by Valve, however back in April it was discovered that the company had a job opening for a 2D Artist/Animator with a description mentioning skills in using generative AI tools.
* Given the typical “internet detective” mentality of gamers, it’s plausible that other art may be called into question. Even if denied by Treyarch, this will lead to ongoing scrutiny and skepticism, along with further review bombing (currently a [mixed rating with 2,628 reviews](https://store.steampowered.com/app/2933620/Call_of_Duty_Black_Ops_6/) in the last 30 days).
* This type of anti-GenAI witch hunt has started to become a staple of Steam games from indie to AAA despite the disclosure policy. The sticking point here for players is whether or not Valve is giving favorable treatment to a large and profitable publisher, which is probably not true given Valve’s general straightforwardness.
* **Why does this matter to AI x Gaming:** A large portion of backlash against GenAI in games is a lack of transparency where it’s being used, but the other portion is the belief that it’s costing jobs. In this case it seems like it could have been part of a hire and not cost jobs, just a live-ops time saver, but transparency is needed here.

# **Other News Items**

* **GDC Joins AI Summit NY to Further NYC Game Dev and Understanding of Generative AI** ([Link](https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20241203844240/en/Game-Developers-Conference-Joins-The-AI-Summit-New-York-to-Further-NYC-Game-Development-and-Understanding-of-Generative-AI)): GDC will bring some game specific focus to an important NYC AI conference.
* **Future Publishing signs content partnership with OpenAI** ([Link](https://www.gamedeveloper.com/business/future-publishing-signs-content-partnership-with-openai)): Future Publishing, owner of Retro Gamer, PC Gamer, GamesRadar, and Edge will provide content access to ChatGPT.
* **AI Powered brand protection service takes down itch.io temporarily** ([Link](https://www.theverge.com/2024/12/9/24316882/itch-io-offline-domain-registration-funko-report)): Brand Shield’s AI Powered brand protection software created a “bogus phishing report” on behalf of Funko on Itch.io.

# **Content Worth Consuming**

1. **AI And Gaming: How Virtual Worlds Are Shaping Our Future Solutions** ([Link](https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbestechcouncil/2024/12/05/ai-and-gaming-how-virtual-worlds-are-shaping-our-future-solutions/)): AI creates a learning bridge between simulation and gaming, it’s all real to AI.
2. **How are game studios using AI in game development in 2024?** ([Link](https://mobidictum.com/ai-in-game-development-in-2024/)): A good set of examples of how AI is being used specifically in games.
3. **Web3 Gaming and AI** ([Link](https://www.coingecko.com/learn/ai-and-web3-gaming)): An overview of some of the AI centric web3 games and those dabbling in AI either for fundraising reasons or simply to experiment on the cutting edge.