

Video game genre

A **video game genre** is a classification assigned to a video game based on its gameplay interaction rather than visual or narrative differences.^{[1][2]} A video game genre is defined by a set of gameplay challenges and are classified independently of their setting or game-world content, unlike other works of fiction such as films or books. For example, a shooter game is still a shooter game, regardless of where or when it takes place.^{[3][4]}

As with nearly all varieties of genre classification, the matter of any individual video game's specific genre is open to personal interpretation. Moreover, each individual game may belong to several genres at once.^[1]

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History

The first attempt to classify different genres of video games was made by Chris Crawford in his book *The Art of Computer Game Design* in 1984. In this book, Crawford primarily focused on the player's experience and activities required for gameplay.^[5] Here, he also stated that "the state of computer game design is changing quickly. We would therefore expect the taxonomy presented [in this book] to become obsolete or inadequate in a short time."^[6] Since then, among other genres, the platformer and 3D shooter genres, which hardly existed at the time, have gained a lot of popularity. As hardware capabilities have increased, new genres have become possible, with examples being increasedmemory, the move from 2D to 3D, newperipherals, online and location.

Though genres were mostly just interesting for game studies in the 1980s, the business of video games expanded in the 1990s and both smaller and independentpublishers had little chance of surviving. Because of this, games settled more into set genres that larger publishers and retailers could use formarketing.^[2]

Definition

Due to "direct and active participation" of the player, video game genres differ from literary and film genres. Though one could state that *Space Invaders* is a science-fiction video game, such a classification "ignores the differences and similarities which are to be found in the player's experience of the game."^[5] In contrast to the visual aesthetics of games, which can vary greatly, it is argued that it is interactivity characteristics that are common to all games.

Descriptive names of genres take into account the goals of the game, the protagonist and even the perspective offered to the player. For example, a first-person shooter is a game that is played from a first-person perspective and involves the practice of shooting.^[7] The term "subgenre" may be used to refer to a category within a genre to further specify the genre of the game under discussion. Whereas "shooter game" is a genre name, "first-person shooter" and "third-person shooter" are common subgenres of the shooter genre.^[8] Other examples of such prefixes are real-time, turn based, top-down and side-scrolling.



This space-themed video game is a shoot 'em up, or a "side-scrolling shooter"

The target audience, underlying theme or purpose of a game are sometimes used as a genre identifier, such as with "games for girls," "Christian game" and "Serious game" respectively. However, because these terms do not indicate anything about the gameplay of a video game, these are not considered genres.^[2]

In practice

Video game genres vary in specificity, with popular video game reviews using genre names varying from "action" to "baseball." In this practice, basic themes and more fundamental characteristics are used alongside each other^[9]

A game may combine aspects of multiple genres in such a way that it becomes hard to classify under existing genres. For example, because

Grand Theft Auto III combined shooting, driving and roleplaying in an unusual way, it was hard to classify using existing terms. Since then, the term *Grand Theft Auto clone* has been used to describe games mechanically similar to *Grand Theft Auto III*.^[7] Similarly, the term roguelike has been developed for games that share similarities with Rogue.^[10]

Elements of the role-playing genre, which focuses on storytelling and character growth, have been implemented in many different genres of video games. This is because the addition of a story and character enhancement to an action, strategy or puzzle video game does not take away from its core gameplay but adds an incentive other than survival to the experience.^[11]

Popularity

According to some analysts, the count of each broad genre in the best selling physical games worldwide is broken down as follows.^{[12][13]}

Genre	Softalk	VGC top 100					ESA
		2005	2010	2015	2016	2017	
Action	61	12	15	27	25	22	22.5
Adventure	11	7	6	2	1	0	7.8
Fighting		5	2	5	3	5	5.8
Platform		10	9	4	3	4	
Puzzle		6	1	0	0	1	
Racing		13	8	5	4	6	3.3
Role-playing	18	7	16	12	15	17	12.9
Shooter		8	14	22	24	19	27.5
Simulation		5	0	4	4	0	
Sports		17	16	12	13	15	11.7
Strategy	10	3	1	0	0	2	4.3
Misc		7	12	7	8	9	4.1

The most popular genres are currently Shooter, Action, Role-playing and Sports, with Platformer and Racing having both declined in the last decade. Puzzle games have declined when measured by sales, however, on mobile, where the majority of games are free-to-play, this genre remains the most popular worldwide.^{[14][15][16]}

See also

- [List of video game genres](#)
- [Game classification](#)

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