The Increasing Emphasis on sales is Ruining the Games Industry

## Description-

In this talk I will show examples and explain why the amount of money that games make is decreasing the overall quality. Not only of the games themselves, but of the entire industry. Lootboxes, DLC bloat, incomplete products, lack of content, licensing issues, all of these have become far more prevalent in recent years. Consumers have noticed and begun to point out these problems, which all stem from the larger emphasis on sales and continued income. Companies have stopped caring about shipping a good, fun, finished product and care far more about shipping a safe, marketable, fast product.

## Takeaway-

The purpose of this talk is to convince the audience that something needs to be done about the direction of the games industry. Whether that means joining these companies and trying to change them internally or creating their own studios and proving that games without financial goals are better.

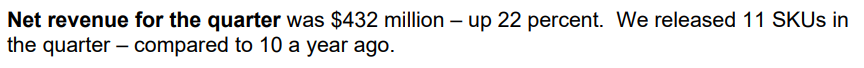
## Intended Audience-

This talk is meant for all current and future game developers who will have a say in the design and development of games. It is also meant for players who can choose what games to support and play. A third but unlikely audience is higher ups at game companies who have real influence over these decisions.

## Annotated Outline-

* Introduction: What’s Happening?
  + The games industry used to be one that was known for bringing together passionate people to create wonderful pieces of entertainment. Now it is known as just another profit-minded, toxic industry which will do anything to make a buck.
    - Crunch culture has long been criticized and yet is still a common part of developer’s lives.
      * The only reason crunch culture exists is because it allows companies to essentially steal time and money from their employees,
    - Game companies have put profit before all else, using morally questionable practices to increase their revenue is not below them.
    - It is clear that it is time for a change to occur in the industry, profit must no longer be king.
* Body
  + Crunch has become an extremely prevalent part of the game industry.
    - “According to a 2019 of [survey](https://s3-us-east-2.amazonaws.com/igda-website/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/29093706/IGDA-DSS-2019_Summary-Report_Nov-20-2019.pdf) from the International Game Developers Association, 40 percent of game developers reported working crunch time at least once over the course of the previous year. For the majority of these developers, crunch wasn’t just a few extra hours or a long weekend, but at least 20 extra hours on top of their standard 40-hour workweek. Just 8 percent said they received extra pay for those hours.” (Michael Thomsen)
      * Crunch time in this case is when a developer has to work overtime to reach a deadline. These overtime hours are often extreme and unpaid.
      * This represents a prevailing emphasis on money over employees. It is easier to force workers to work more than it is to push deadlines or downscale.
    - “At both the federal and state level, computer professionals who earn above a set annual salary — the exact figure varies from state to state — are considered exempt from overtime laws that would otherwise require studios to pay them extra for extra hours in the office. This has ensured that whenever problems arise during game development, the easiest and cheapest solution is to have developers stay late and come in on the weekends.” (Michael Thomsen)
      * This is a systemic issue which has set rules in place allowing companies to do this.
      * Companies will choose this option every time as it affects their bottom line the least and keeps the publishers happy.
  + The industry has decided to make money in any way possible.
    - “Even if a game’s loot boxes did have no impact on the gameplay itself, which isn’t true, the existence of such a currency system still represents a problem for the industry at large. The more forgiving we are of loot boxes, the further publishers will push to test the limits of how much money they can make from it.”(Alex Avard)
      * Loot boxes are an increasingly common and increasingly hated way for games to make money.
      * This method allows what is arguably gambling to be conducted at very young ages
      * This makes companies economically rich but, frankly, morally bankrupt
    - **See pictures below (Taken from EA’s website)**
      * This image is EA’s earning reports from the 1st quarter of 2005, as well as their projected earnings for the 1st quarter of 2023.
      * EA is a company that is notorious for things like lootboxes, microtransactions, and lazy or incomplete games.
      * The issue is that all of these things are clearly working for them as, even adjusted for inflation, they’ve increased their quarterly revenue by 255%
    - “Sports games are a huge example of games that are cash cows. According to VGChartz, *Madden NFL 19*,*Fifa 19*, and*NBA 2K19*were the top twenty-three best selling games of 2018. These games sold well and have been rated around the 80 out of 100 range on Metacritic. However, they were also reviewed poorly with none of the games receiving anything higher than a 2.5 out of 10 from user ratings.” (Eric Tran)
      * Again talking about EA, they are known for releasing what most consider to be the same game every year.
      * The issue is that, despite the fact that the games are unpopular, this is extremely profitable for them.
* Conclusion: What should we do?
  + Crunch culture is disgustingly common in the games industry and comes from many companies’ desires for profit above all else.
  + Companies have thrown away morals and passion to earn as much money as they possibly can.
  + The reason this is important is that things just keep getting worse, more and more companies are pulling these stunts. If we as game players and developers don’t do something then the problem will not go away.

## References-

1. “Even if a game’s loot boxes*did* have no impact on the gameplay itself, which isn’t true, the existence of such a currency system still represents a problem for the industry at large. The more forgiving we are of loot boxes, the further publishers will push to test the limits of how much money they can make from it.” (Avard, Alex. “Video Games Have a Loot Box Fetish, and It’s Starting to Harm the Way We Play.” *Gamesradar*, 10 Oct. 2017, [www.gamesradar.com/loot-boxes-shadow-of-war](http://www.gamesradar.com/loot-boxes-shadow-of-war).)
2. “According to a 2019 of [survey](https://s3-us-east-2.amazonaws.com/igda-website/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/29093706/IGDA-DSS-2019_Summary-Report_Nov-20-2019.pdf) from the International Game Developers Association, 40 percent of game developers reported working crunch time at least once over the course of the previous year. For the majority of these developers, crunch wasn’t just a few extra hours or a long weekend, but at least 20 extra hours on top of their standard 40-hour workweek. Just 8 percent said they received extra pay for those hours.” (Thomsen, Michael. “Why Is the Games Industry so Burdened With Crunch? It Starts With Labor Laws.” *Washington Post*, 24 Mar. 2021, [www.washingtonpost.com/video-games/2021/03/24/crunch-laws](http://www.washingtonpost.com/video-games/2021/03/24/crunch-laws).)
3. “At both the federal and state level, computer professionals who earn above a set annual salary — the exact figure varies from state to state — are considered exempt from overtime laws that would otherwise require studios to pay them extra for extra hours in the office. This has ensured that whenever problems arise during game development, the easiest and cheapest solution is to have developers stay late and come in on the weekends.” (Thomsen, Michael. “Why Is the Games Industry so Burdened With Crunch? It Starts With Labor Laws.” Washington Post, 24 Mar. 2021, [www.washingtonpost.com/video-games/2021/03/24/crunch-laws](http://www.washingtonpost.com/video-games/2021/03/24/crunch-laws).)
4. *Application

   Description automatically generated with low confidence (Electronic Arts Inc. - Financial Information - Quarterly Results*. ir.ea.com/financial-information/quarterly-results/default.aspx. Accessed 7 Oct. 2022.)
5. “Sports games are a huge example of games that are cash cows. According to VGChartz, *Madden NFL 19*,*Fifa 19*, and*NBA 2K19*were the top twenty-three best selling games of 2018. These games sold well and have been rated around the 80 out of 100 range on Metacritic. However, they were also reviewed poorly with none of the games receiving anything higher than a 2.5 out of 10 from user ratings.” (Tran, Eric. “Why Unfinished Games Are Released at Launch.” *The Point*, fitchburgpoint.com/11815/entertainment/why-unfinished-games-are-released-at-launch. Accessed 7 Oct. 2022.)