

THE HISTORY OF VIDEO GAMES AND INTERACTIVE MEDIA

VIDEO GAME VIOLENCE;

THE CD-ROM; AND 3D GAMING

JOE LIEBERMAN

- Born February 24, 1942
- Long-time political career, beginning the in 1970s. Elected to the US Senate in 1988 as a Democrat.
- Has been accused of being 'more conservative than many Republicans'.
- Co-wrote 'kill switch bill' which would grant the President emergency powers over the Internet.
- Has claimed he agrees more with Democrats on domestic policy and more with Republicans on foreign and defines policy.

BAN ON VIOLENCE

- Lieberman wanted a complete ban on violent video games.
- Introduced to violent content in video games by an aide in his office.
- Instigated a public inquiry after seeing Mortal Kombat and Night Trap.

MORTAL KOMBAT

- Arcade release in October 1992.
- Developed by Ed Boon and John Tobias of Midway.
- Intended to compete with Street Fighter II.
- Huge hit in the arcades.
- Ported to consoles in 1993.
Combination of storyline, character, and violence made it a major success.

FATALITIES

- Blood and gore were highly controversial.
- But nothing more so than the fatalities.
- Each character had a special 'finishing move' meant to reward the winner and humiliate the loser.

NIGHT TRAP

- Also released in October 1992, for Sega CD.
- Originally developed for the NEMO.
- Goal is to protect a group of girls at a slumber party from vampires.
- Gameplay involves setting traps for vampires.

CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

- Took place in late 1993.
- Nintendo, Sega, software associations, and arcade vendors associations all represented.
- Eugene Provenzo Jr. testified, based on his research.
- Sega was willing to implement an age-rating system; Nintendo wasn't interested.

DEVELOPER REACTIONS

- Boon and Tobias didn't think that the violence would bother anyone.
- Rob Fullop had a more difficult time.
 - Worried about the message video games were sending kids.
 - Believed that the 'failure' culture of video games could be damaging.
 - Created *Dogz*, which spawned the *Petz* series.

OUTCOME OF THE HEARINGS

- Closed as inconclusive.
Representatives asked to return to report on formation of a ratings board.
- Leading game companies quit the Software Publishers Association and formed the Interactive Digital Software Association (later renamed to the Entertainment Software Association).
- The Entertainment Software Ratings Board (ESRB) was announced in July 1994.
- The ESRB actually made it easier for developer and publishers to release violent content.

CD-ROM

- An evolution of LaserDisc technology.
- Compact discs had been around in one form or another since mid-70s.
- Sony developed first erasable and writable CD-ROM drive.
- Adoption in the music industry helped push the cost down; PC manufacturers start installing CD-ROM drives in new PCs.

MULTIMEDIA PC STANDARD

- The recommended configuration for a PC with a CD-ROM drive.
- Established by the Multimedia PC Marketing Council - a working group of the SPA.
- First standard, set in 1991 was:
 - 16 MHz 386SX CPU
 - 2 MB RAM
 - 30 MB hard disk
 - 266-colour, 640x480 VGA video card
 - 1x CD-ROM drive, 40% CPU for read < 1 second seek time.
 - Sound card, outputting 22KHz, 8-bit sound
 - Windows 3.0 with Multimedia Extensions.

RAND AND ROBYN MILLER

- Developed *The Manhole* when they couldn't find any interesting software for Rand's daughter.
- Interactive book that echoed *Alice and Wonderland*.
- Released by mail-order in 1988.
- Rereleased by Activision in 1989 on CD-ROM.

MYST

- Goal to build narrative into the environment.
- Goal of a completely open - set on an island to create natural boundaries.
- Desire to change the 'die and start over' paradigm.
- Gameplay puzzle based.

SUCCESS

- Biggest selling PC game of all time, until *The Sims* in 2002.
- 12 million copies sold worldwide.
- CD-ROM 'killer app', resulted in many clones.
- Highly praised by critics; evidence that video games could be an art form.

HOLLYWOOD GAMES

- Myst spawned a resurgence of interest in film-video game crossovers.
- Resulted in games like *Gabriel Knight* and *Phantasmagoria*.
- Known as 'interactive movies'.
- Eventual back-lash due to game design restrictions.