OPEN WORLD GAMES; SEGA/NINTENDO RIVALRY

WILL WRIGHT

- Born January 20th, 1960. Raised in Atlanta and Baton Rouge.

- Obsessed with model making and robots.

- Interested in artificial intelligence and simulation due to interest in writing simulations for home-brew robots.

RAID ON BUNGELING BAY

- Released on C64 in 1984.

- Goal was to use advanced features on C64 not available on Apple II.

- Rampant piracy on C64 - only 20K to 30K sold, although played widely.

- One of first games licensed to Nintendo, sold about one million units in Japan.

WORLD-BUILDING

- Wright began playing around with *Raid on Bungeling Bay* level editor and found that it was fun just to build cities.

- At first it was a toy; soon became more elaborate as Wright researched urban planning, etc.

- Discovered Jay Forrester, first person to simulate a city on a computer.

- Combined Forrester's ideas with living system of Conway's Life to bring world-building tool to life.

LIFE

- Created by mathematician John Conway in 1970.

- Complexity from simple rules:
  - User sets initial state;
  - Live cells with 2 or 3 neighbours survive;
  - Live cells with fewer than 2 neighbours die, as do those with 4 or more neighbours;
  - 'dead' cells with 3 live neighbours come to life.

INSPIRATIONS

- Conway's Life

- Jay Forrester's system dynamics.

- Montessori school:
  - Inspire, rather than educate;
  - Self-directed learning is powerful.

- MacPaint - tools and canvas and no limitations.

IS IT FUN?

- Wright thought *Raid on Bungeling Bay* level-editor/toy could be a game - but one that would appeal only to specialists.

- A caricature of how a city works.

- No defined goals; Wright wanted it to be a toy.

- Formed Maxis with Jeff Braun.

- SimCity published by Broderbund in 1989 - five years after Wright first began experimenting with RoBB's editor.

YES!

- Following a Time magazine review sales for Sim City soared.

- Appealed to many game fans who were not interested by NES, action/violence, or arcades.

- Sold better and better, year after year.

- Some claimed bias in the system - Wright claims this is the most valuable piece of Sim City as it fostered discussion about the inherent assumptions.

LEGACY

- Spawned a series of SimCity games on multiple platforms. Complexity increased over time.

- Other sim-type game released include: SimCopter, SimAnt, SimTower, etc. Many were commercial failures.

- EA acquired Maxis in 1997. At the time Maxis was in a creative slump.

- The Sims was released in 2000. Best selling computer games of all time. Revitalized Will Wright's and Maxis' reputation.

- Spore, released in 2008, sold well but was criticized mainly for being too ambitious.

- Will Wright left to form Stupid Fun Club, an entertainment 'think tank', in 2009.

- SimCity 'MMO' released in 2013. Poor launch management, forced multiplayer, online only, and DRM hampered its success. Desipte this the game has still solf over 2 million copies,

SPORE

- A toy based on Drake's equation.

- Released in 2008 after over seven years of development.

- Reviewed well, but was criticized for it's lack of gameplay depth.

- Admired by some scientists for encouraging players to think about evolution, etc..

- However, much of the science is incorrect, and possibly harmfully misleading.

PETER MOLYNEUX

- Born May 5th, 1959, in Guildford, England.

- Goal was to become a successful businessman.

- First entered the games industry with *The Entrepreneur,* a business sim in 1980.

- Many early ventures ended in failure.

BULLFROG

- Through a case of mistaken identity, Molyneux's company Taurus ended up with free Amigas shipped from Commodore.

- Decided to move to video game development and changed company name to Bullfrog.

- First original game was *Fusion* published by EA in 1988.

- Sold poorly but advance from EA was sufficient to fund Bullfrog's next project.

POPULOUS

- Started out as an isometric pictograph developed by programmer Glenn Corpes.

- Molyneux tried adding people with pathfinding; not a programmer and failed miserably.

- Decided instead to allow the player to pick the people up with the mouse cursor.

- EA published *Populous* for Xmas 1989.

SUCCESS

- *Populous* reviewed extremely well in game mags of the time.

- Surpassed all expectations and was a multi-million seller across the world.

- Hugely popular in Japan.

- Molyneux was suddenly a well-known and respected game designer, credited with creating the 'god game' genre.

LEGACY

- A small number of *Populous* sequels developed over the 90s.

- Molyneux became a VP and consultant to EA in 1994; EA acquired Bullfrog in 1995.

- Molyneux left EA to form Lionhead in 1996. Developed both the *Black & White* and *Fable* series'.

- Lionhead acquired by EA in 2006.

- Molyneux left Lionhead to form 22Cans with 21 other former Lionhead staffers in 2012.

- Currently working on the god game *Godus,* billed as a spiritual successor to *Populous,* currently available on Steam early access as a beta release.

SID MEIER

- Born February 24th, 1954, in Sarnia, Ontario.

- Founded MicroProse in 1982; built a name developing military-themed simulations.

- Interest in history led Meier to develop *Pirates!* in 1987.

- After discovering *SimCity* and *Populous* Meier decided to develop a game about a civilization's journey through history.

CIVILIZATION

- Turn-based strategy game.

- Bring a small tribe from nothing to a great world power, and beyond.

- Had a narrative quality, more so than *SimCity* and *Populous*.

- Mechanics - especially tech trees - were a significant influence in many subsequent games.

LEGACY

- Eight further *Civilization* games, plus numerous expansions, as well as board and card games.

- The best-known and most influential in the 4x (eXplore, eXpand, eXploit, eXterminate) game genre.

- Firaxis games, founded by Meier in 1996, developed most *Civilization* games.

- Firaxis acquired by Take-Two Interactive in 2005.

OPEN-ENDED PLAY

- Together, *SimCity, Populous,* and *Civilization* helped define the new genre of open-ended play.

- Most popular games to that time had been very action-oriented.

- Heavily influenced a new generation of designers.

- Brought the concept of the design-auteur to the fore.

SEGA

- Roots traced back to Service Games, founded in Honolulu in 1940.

- Eventually moved company to Tokyo in 1951.

- Developed coin-op jukeboxes, games and slot machines and imported to military bases throughout Japan.

- Merged with Rosen Enterprises (chain of over 200 arcades) in 1965. New name derived from **SE**rvice **GA**mes.

- Sega sold to Viacom in 1969, and Sega went public as a subsidiary in 1972.

EARLY SUCCESS

- Sega had success in the early coin-op market.
  - Frogger (Konami)
  - Star Trek
  - Zaxxon

- SubRoc3D - first true 3D game - release just prior to crash.

- Sega Master System found success in the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and Brazil.

MEGADRIVE

- Superior hardware compared to NES.

- Met with apathy when launched in Japan in 1988.

- Launched in NA in 1989 as the Sega Genesis.

- Sega relied on a library of existing coin-op games to port to the Genesis.

MARKETING

- Sege decided to take a more aggressive marketing stance in an effort to beat Nintendo.

- Positioned Genesis as a console for teenage boys who had 'graduated' from Nintendo.

CHARACTER LICENCES

- Sega decided to go for character licenses to give Genesis more marketing clout.

- 5 year deal worth $1.7 million for Joe Montana's name.

- Hired Mediagenic (Activision) to develop it.

- Flagship Xmas game for 1989.

- Activision couldn't deliver - Sega was on the hook.

EA TO THE RESCUE

- EA founder Trip Hawkins' goal was to develop 'authentic sports simulations'.

- *John Madden Football* flopped on Apple II.

- EA agreed to use some existing assets to release a version of *Joe Montana Football*, for Sega.

- Released in January 1990.

JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL

- Sega deal allowed EA to reboot *John Madden Football.*

- Moved towards realistic arcade action, and away from simulation.

- Madden involved closely in design; one-on-one confrontations a central tenet.

- Seminal sports game released in 1990.

- Biggest selling sports game franchise of all time; nearly 100 million in lifetime sales.

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

- Result of internal competition to develop a mascot to match Mario.

- Yuji Naka was dissatisfied by missing skill component to *SMB*.

- Speed over-riding theme of Sonic.

- Released in June 1991, ahead of Super NES launch.

- Rocketed Sega into lead ahead of Nintendo.

POST-NES ERA

- Many developers scared off by Nintendo's license model went to Sega.

- Sega developed a strong brand and strong sports line.

- Super NES sold 4 million consoles within one year of November 1990 launch.

- By 1992 Sega owned 55% of market, and Nintendo 45%

THE BATTLE FOR EXCLUSIVES

- 'Exclusives' became the determining factor in purchasing a new console.

- Super NES:
  - The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past
  - Super Metroid
  - Super Mario World
  - Street Fighter II

- Sega:
  - Ecco the Dolphin
  - Gunstar Heroes
  - McDonald's Global Gladiators
  - Earthworm Jim

- New 16-bit consoles meant more power, and thus more assets, and thus larger teams and bigger budgets.