CD Projekt

CD Projekt S.A. (Polish pronunciation : [?si??di ?pr?j?kt ? ??s ?a :] , formerly CD Projekt Sp. z.o.o.) is a Polish video game developer , publisher and distributor based in Warsaw , which was founded in 1994 by Marcin Iwi?ski and Micha? Kici?ski . Iwi?ski and Kici?ski were video game retailers before they founded the company . CD Projekt is best known for their The Witcher series of video games and their digital @-@ distribution service GOG.com.

The company began translating major Western video @-@ game releases into Polish , collaborating with Interplay Entertainment for two Baldur 's Gate games . CD Projekt was working on the PC version of Baldur 's Gate : Dark Alliance when Interplay experienced financial difficulties . The game was cancelled and the company decided to reuse the code for their own video game . It became The Witcher , a video game based on the works of Andrzej Sapkowski .

After the release of The Witcher , CD Projekt worked on a console port called The Witcher : White Wolf ; but development issues and increasing costs almost led the company to the brink of bankruptcy . CD Projekt later released The Witcher 2 : Assassins of Kings and The Witcher 3 : Wild Hunt which received positive critical reviews . The company 's upcoming project is Cyberpunk 2077 , an open @-@ world role @-@ playing game based on the Cyberpunk 2020 tabletop system .

A video game distribution service , GOG.com was established by CD Projekt to help players find old games . Its mission is to offer games free of digital rights management (DRM) to players and its service was expanded to cover new AAA and independent games . The company opposes DRM in video games , and hopes that free downloadable content becomes an industry standard . CD Projekt considers maintaining their independence one of their most important strategies . The company currently focuses on the international market , particularly Europe and North America , and spun off its Polish business cdp.pl in 2014 .

History

Founding

CD Projekt was founded in 1994 by Marcin Iwi?ski and Michal Kici?ski . According to Iwi?ski , although he enjoyed playing video games as a child they were scarce in Poland (which was in the Soviet Union 's sphere of influence at the time) . Polish copyright law did not exist and Iwi?ski , in high school , sold cracked copies of Western video games at a Warsaw marketplace . In high school Iwi?ski met Kici?ski , who became his business partner ; at that time , Kici?ski also sold video games .

Wanting to conduct business legitimately , Iwi?ski and Kici?ski began importing games from US retailers and were the first importers of CD @-@ ROM games . After the transition to a primarily market @-@ based economy in the early 90s , they founded their own company . Iwi?ski and Kici?ski founded CD Projekt in the second quarter of 1994 . With only $ 2 @,@ 000 , they used a friend 's flat as a rent @-@ free office .

Localization

When CD Projekt was founded , their biggest challenge was overcoming video game piracy . The company was one of the first in Poland to localize games ; according to Iwi?ski , most of their products were sold to " mom @-@ and @-@ pop shops " . CD Projekt began partial localization for developers such as Seven Stars and Leryx @-@ LongSoft in 1996 , and full @-@ scale localization a year later . To sell their games , they approached BioWare and Interplay Entertainment for the Polish localization of Baldur 's Gate . They expected the title to become popular in Poland , and no retailer would be able to translate the text from English version to Polish . To increase the title 's popularity in Poland , CD Projekt added items to the game 's packaging and hired well @-@ known Polish actors to voice its characters . Their first attempt was successful , with 18 @,@ 000 units

shipped on the game 's release day (higher than the average shipments of other games at the time) .

The company continued to work with Interplay after the release of Baldur 's Gate , collaborating on a PC port for the sequel Baldur 's Gate : Dark Alliance . To develop the port , CD Projekt hired Sebastian Zieli?ski (who had developed Mortyr 2093 @-@ 1944) and Adam Badowski , who became head of the company 's game @-@ development division CD Projekt RED . Six months after development began , Interplay experienced financial problems and cancelled the PC version . CD Projekt continued to localize other games after Dark Alliance 's cancellation , and received Business Gazelle awards in 2003 and 2004 .

= = = Game development = = =

Enthusiasm for game distribution ebbed , and CD Projekt 's founders wondered if the company should continue as a distributor or a game developer after Dark Alliance 's cancellation . With the game cancelled and its code owned by CD Projekt , the company planned to use them to develop their first original game . They intended to develop a game series based on Andrzej Sapkowski 's Wied?min books (which were popular in Poland) and the author accepted the company 's development proposal . The franchise rights had been sold to a Polish mobile game studio , but the studio had not worked on anything related to the franchise and CD Projekt acquired the rights to the Wied?min franchise . According to Iwi?ski , he and Kici?ski had no idea how to develop a video game at that time .

To develop the game , the company formed a video @-@ game development studio (CD Projekt RED , headed by Sebastian Zieli?ski) in ?ód? in 2002 . The studio made a demonstration game , which Adam Badowski called " a piece of crap " in retrospect . The demo was a role @-@ playing game with a top @-@ down perspective , similar to Dark Alliance and Diablo , and used the game engine which powered Mortyr . Iwi?ski and Kici?ski pitched the demo to a number of publishers , without success . The ?ód? office closed and the staff , except for Zieli?ski , moved to the Warsaw headquarters .

Zieli?ski left the company , and Kici?ski headed the project . Although the game 's development continued , the demo was abandoned . According to CD Projekt , the development team had different ideas for the game and lacked overall direction ; as a result , it was returned to the drawing board in 2003 . The team , unfamiliar with video @-@ game development , spent nearly two years organising production . They received assistance from BioWare , who helped promote the game at the 2004 Electronic Entertainment Expo by offering CD Projekt space in their booth next to Jade Empire . BioWare also licensed their Aurora game engine to the company .

The game 's budget exceeded expectations . The original 15 @-@ person development team expanded to about 100 , at a cost of 20 million z?oty . According to Iwi?ski , content was removed from the game for budgetary reasons but the characters ' personalities were retained ; however , there was difficulty in translating the game 's Polish text into English . Atari agreed to publish the game . After five years of development , The game would bring Wied?min to an international audience , and so the company came up with an English name : The Witcher . The Witcher was released in 2007 to generally positive reviews .

Sales were satisfactory , and the development of sequels began almost immediately after The Witcher 's release . The team began the design work for The Witcher 2 (again powered by the Aurora Engine) , and experimented with consoles to develop a new engine for The Witcher 3 . Their development was halted when the team began work on The Witcher : White Wolf , a console version of The Witcher . Although they collaborated with French studio Widescreen Games for the console port , it entered development limbo . Widescreen demanded more manpower , money and time to develop the title , complaining that they were not being paid ; according to Iwi?ski , CD Projekt paid them more than their own staff members . The team cancelled the project , suspending its development . Unhappy with the decision , Atari demanded that CD Projekt repay them for funding the console port development and Iwi?ski agreed that Atari would be the North American publisher of the sequel of The Witcher 2 . CD Projekt acquired Metropolis Software in 2008 .

The dispute over White Wolf was costly ; the company faced bankruptcy , with the financial crisis of 2007 ? 08 a contributing factor . To stay afloat , the team decided to focus on The Witcher 2 with the Witcher 3 engine . When the engine (known as REDengine) was finished , the game could be ported to other consoles . To develop The Witcher 2 , the company suspended development of Metropolis ' first @-@ person shooter They . After three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half years of development , The Witcher 2 : Assassins of Kings was released in 2011 to critical praise and sales of more than 1 @.@ 7 million copies .

After The Witcher 2 CD Projekt wanted to develop an open @-@ world game of a quality similar to their other games , and the company wanted to add features to avoid criticism that it was Witcher 2 @.@ 5 . They wanted to push the game 's graphics boundaries , releasing it only for the PC and eighth @-@ generation consoles . This triggered debate on the team , some of whom wanted to release the game for older consoles to maximise profit . The Witcher 3 : Wild Hunt took three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half years to develop and cost over $ 81 million . After multiple delays , it was released in May 2015 to critical praise . Wild Hunt was commercially successful , selling six million copies in its first six weeks and giving the studio a profit of 236 million z?oty ($ 62 @.@ 5 million) in the first half of 2015 . The team released 15 content downloads and two expansion , Hearts of Stone and Blood and Wine . CD Projekt released two other The Witcher games : The Witcher Adventure (a board game for PC , iOS and Android) and The Witcher : Battle Arena , a multiplayer online battle arena game for iOS and Android . At E3 2016 , the company announced Gwent : The Witcher Card Game , based on the popular card mini @-@ game Gwent from The Witcher 3 .

In December 2015 , CD Projekt RED won the " Developer of the Year " award at The Game Awards 2015 . In March 2016 , the company announced that they had another role @-@ playing game in development , and that the title is scheduled to be released in the period 2017 to 2021 . They also announced plans for expansion , where the RED division will expand two @-@ fold .

= = = Game distribution = = =

CD Projekt is a game distributor , and their Polish company (a digital distribution platform focusing on the Polish market) was renamed Cdp.pl in 2012 . The service , which provided technical assistance , expanded to movies , electronic books and comics . Cdp.pl was later separated , with CD Projekt holding a controlling share . CD Projekt reduced its share to 8 @.@ 29 percent , since the company wanted to aim at the global market rather than the Polish one . The companies would co @-@ operate with each other for the distribution of games .

In 2008 the company introduced Good Old Games , a distribution service with a digital rights management @-@ free strategy . The service aims to help players find " good old games " , preserving old games . To do so , the team needed to unravel licensing issues for defunct developers or negotiate with publishers for distribution rights . To recover old code for conversion to modern platforms , they had to use retail versions or second @-@ hand games . CD Projekt partnered with small developers and large publishers , including Activision , Electronic Arts and Ubisoft , to broaden the service 's portfolio of games to triple @-@ A and independent video games . Despite suspicions that it was a " doomed project " , according to managing director Guillaume Rambourg , it has expanded since its introduction . Income from GOG.com (known internally as CD Projekt Blue) accrues to CD Projekt RED .

= = = Future = = =

CD Projekt developed three Witcher titles before deciding that The Witcher 3 : Wild Hunt would be the final game in the series with Geralt . The company 's next project is Cyberpunk 2077 , an open @-@ world role @-@ playing game based on the Cyberpunk 2020 tabletop system created by Mike Pondsmith . Introduced in May 2012 with an international development team , it was described by CD Projekt as " far bigger " than The Witcher III . Another CD Projekt office in Krakow , which had assisted the development of CD Projekt 's previous games , is expected to develop their own games in the future .

Regarding the future of the Witcher series , Konrad Tomaszkiewicz , game director of The Witcher 3 , stated in May 2016 that he hoped to continue working with the series sometime in the future , but had nothing planned at the time .

= = Games developed = =

= = Company philosophy = =

They decided to focus on a few aspects and assess the value of other features . This approach , they hope , helps to maintain the quality of their games . The company focused on the development of role @-@ playing games , with the team working on established franchises with a fan base and introducing lesser @-@ known franchises to a wide audience . When the team develops an open @-@ world game , they prioritise quest design over the size of its world in the belief that having choices to make encourages players to immerse themselves in the game .

The team makes the players their priority ; according to Iwi?ski , support from players " drives " the company (which considers themselves " rebels ") . The team focuses on creative strategy over business strategy . CD Projekt RED opposes the inclusion of digital @-@ rights @-@ management technology in video games and software . The company believes that DRM is ineffective in halting software piracy , based on data from sales of The Witcher 2 : Assassins of Kings . CD Projekt RED found that their initial release (which included DRM technology) was pirated over 4 @.@ 5 million times ; their DRM @-@ free re @-@ release was pirated far less , and The Witcher 3 : Wild Hunt was released without DRM technology . The team , believing that free downloadable content should be an industry standard , published 15 free DLC releases for Wild Hunt as an example to others in the industry .

According to Adam Badowski , head of CD Projekt RED , maintaining its independence is a company priority . They avoided becoming a subsidiary of another company for financial and creative freedom and ownership of their projects . Electronic Arts was rumoured to be attempting to acquire CD Projekt . This was quickly denied by Iwi?ski , who said that maintaining the company 's independence is something he " will be fighting for " .

The company aims to follow the Rockstar Games model , where the company works on a single project with a large team , and avoids working on multiple projects at the same time .