

= Obsidian Entertainment =

Obsidian Entertainment is an American video game developer whose corporate headquarters is located in Irvine , California . It was founded in 2003 by ex @-@ Black Isle employees Feargus Urquhart , Chris Avellone , Chris Parker , Darren Monahan , and Chris Jones after the closure of Black Isle Studios .

Although they have created original intellectual property , many of their games are sequels based on licensed properties . Early projects include Star Wars : Knights of the Old Republic II : The Sith Lords and Neverwinter Nights 2 , both sequels to BioWare @-@ developed games . The team then developed their first original game , Alpha Protocol , in 2010 . It was met with generally mixed reviews . Other notable works from Obsidian include Fallout : New Vegas , Dungeon Siege III , and South Park : The Stick of Truth , all also licensed properties .

Throughout the studio 's history , many projects ? including Futureblight , Dwarves , Aliens : Crucible , and a project codenamed North Carolina ? were cancelled . Due to having so many projects cancelled , the company entered a severe financial crisis in 2012 . As a result , Obsidian decided to crowdfund their next game , Pillars of Eternity , a role @-@ playing game played from an isometric perspective , which ultimately became a success and saved the studio from closure . The team 's focus then changed from developing licensed titles to creating original games based on the studio 's own intellectual property . Obsidian has developed a close relationship with another studio that was founded by ex @-@ Interplay Entertainment employees , inXile Entertainment . The company is currently working on Tyranny , a role @-@ playing game set in a world where the war between good and evil has been fought with evil coming out on top , and Armored Warfare , a massively multiplayer online game with a focus on controlling tanks .

= = History = =

= = = 2003 : Founding = = =

Obsidian Entertainment was founded by Feargus Urquhart , Chris Avellone , Chris Parker , Darren Monahan and Chris Jones . Prior to the establishment of Obsidian , they worked for Interplay Entertainment 's subsidiary Black Isle Studios . At Black Isle they created several role @-@ playing games including Icewind Dale , Planescape : Torment , and Fallout 2 , and collaborated with BioWare on Neverwinter Nights , Baldur 's Gate , and Baldur 's Gate II . Most of these games were critically and commercially successful , but Interplay 's financial situation was poor and the studio lost its license to produce Dungeons & Dragons @-@ based games . This led to the cancellation of Baldur 's Gate III : The Black Hound . Urquhart and most of the staff members were dissatisfied and frustrated with the cancellation , as the game had already been under development for a year and a half . Urquhart became convinced that staying in Black Isle was no longer a " viable option " for the team , and decided to leave the company . He was in his early thirties at the time , and thought that if he did not start a new company soon , he may become too old to do so . Urquhart officially left Interplay in 2003 with Avellone , Parker , Monahan , and Jones , and founded Obsidian Entertainment with them the same year .

At the time of the company 's establishment there were seven employees , including the company 's five founders . Parker , Urquhart , and Monahan invested \$ 100 @,@ 000 to \$ 125 @,@ 000 into their newly founded company . When choosing the name of the company , they had prepared a short list of names for them to choose . The list included " Scorched Earth " and " Three Clown Software " . The team eventually chose " Obsidian Entertainment " , which they thought was strong , memorable , and felt similar to name of their old studio , Black Isle .

Upon its establishment , the studio needed more capital in order to keep its operation running , and thus needed to gain support from publishers . They approached Electronic Arts , but it did not result in a project . The studio also contacted Ubisoft looking to make a Might & Magic game , but Ubisoft instead ended up contracting with Arkane Studios on that project , which became Dark Messiah of

Might & Magic . Obsidian pitched a game to Take @-@ Two Interactive called Futureblight , which was described as a Fallout @-@ style game powered by the Neverwinter Nights engine . Similar to the EA and Ubisoft projects , Futureblight was never made .

= = = Late 2003 ? 08 : The Sith Lords and Neverwinter Nights 2 = = =

Towards the end of 2003 the team was contacted by LucasArts president Simon Jeffrey , who requested that Obsidian make an action role @-@ playing game set in the Star Wars universe . The team suggested a game concept which featured first @-@ person lightsaber melee combat and that included established characters like R2 @-@ D2 . Their idea was rejected , and Jeffrey instead asked Obsidian to create a follow @-@ up to the BioWare @-@ developed Star Wars : Knights of the Old Republic , as the team at Obsidian was familiar with the technology that the original game used . The partnership between the two companies finalized in late 2003 , and development of the game , which became Star Wars Knights of the Old Republic II : The Sith Lords , began in October 2003 . Obsidian was given 15 months to develop The Sith Lords . Originally set for a holiday 2004 release , LucasArts gave the studio an extension into 2005 , before shifting the release date back to holiday 2004 following the Electronic Entertainment Expo . While LucasArts did dispatch members of its own staff to help get the game out on time , a number of features wound up being cut due to time constraints . Due to the moved deadline , Obsidian also did not have enough time to polish the game , and The Sith Lords suffered from crashes and other technical issues . Despite its issues , The Sith Lords was released to positive critical reception . The cut features were eventually restored by modders , who began their effort in 2009 and finished in 2012 .

From the beginning , the studio 's goal was to be able develop multiple projects simultaneously , and the decision led the company to expand very quickly . Soon after the development of The Sith Lords began the team expanded to 20 employees . As of July 2004 it had expanded to 27 , with 18 from Black Isle , and others from Blizzard Entertainment , Electronic Arts , Taldren , Totally Games , Treyarch , and Troika .

Prior to the launch of The Sith Lords , Obsidian was approached by Atari . Atari acquired the license to produce Dungeons & Dragons @-@ based games , and wanted Obsidian to create a sequel to Neverwinter Nights , which became Neverwinter Nights 2 . Development of the game began in July 2005 with team of ten people . The development of the game was headed by Monahan and Avellone . Obsidian became the game 's lead developer , while Neverwinter Nights creator BioWare provided technical assistance . While they were developing the game , the team 's size grew to about 50 people . The team were given sufficient time for the game 's development , and Atari was willing to delay the project 's targeted release window from Christmas 2005 to October 31 , 2006 . Neverwinter Nights 2 received a generally positive critical reception . Two expansions , Mask of the Betrayer and Storm of Zehir , were released in 2007 and 2008 .

During Neverwinter Nights 2 's development , the team approached other publishers to work on additional projects . Disney Interactive Studios commissioned Obsidian to develop a prequel to Snow White and the Seven Dwarves called Dwarves , which was set to be a third @-@ person action game for the PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 . The team developed a prototype and was a year into development when the CEO of Disney was replaced . The change of CEO led Disney to head in a completely different direction , which made the Snow White franchise " untouchable " and resulted in the cancellation of the project . According to Urquhart , the team loved the game and its cancellation was a " heartbreaking " experience for them .

= = = 2009 ? 11 : Alpha Protocol , Fallout : New Vegas , and Dungeon Siege III = = =

With the development of Neverwinter Nights II coming to an end , Obsidian was contacted by three different publishers . Electronic Arts wanted Obsidian to develop a role @-@ playing game to compete with The Elder Scrolls IV : Oblivion , and another publisher was also interested in having Obsidian develop a fantasy RPG . The third publisher was Sega , who wanted the studio to develop an action role @-@ playing game set within the Alien franchise . The game , titled Aliens : Crucible ,

was to feature base @-@ building , dialogue choices , and character customization . In February 2009 Obsidian sent a prototype to Sega . Sega decided to cancel the game three weeks later without inspecting the demo . The cancellation was officially confirmed in June of that year . At around the same time , Atari again approached Obsidian , this time to revive Baldur 's Gate III . Obsidian requested a large budget , which Atari could not afford , and the deal between the two companies fell apart when Atari Europe was sold to Namco Bandai Games .

Despite the cancellation of Aliens : Crucible , Sega was still interested in working with Obsidian to develop another project . Instead of developing a sequel , they were asked to develop a role @-@ playing game based on a new intellectual property . The team came up with an idea of a " spy RPG " . Sega approved the idea and decided to help with the game 's funding and serve as its publisher . The game would go on to become Alpha Protocol . The game 's development was troubled ; the team did not have a precise vision for Alpha Protocol and struggled to settle on what gameplay elements to include and what the target audience should be . As a result , it suffered from an identity crisis and featured elements from multiple genres . Sega , for its part , was also unable to make decisions quickly and the publisher cut features from the game after their completion . This resulted in numerous delays and excessively long production time ; Alpha Protocol took four years to develop . It was finally released in June 2010 .

Their first original game , Alpha Protocol received mostly mixed reviews from critics . It was also a commercial failure for Sega , which led to their decision to put any plans for a sequel on hold . After the game 's launch , Urquhart admitted that there was still room for improvements . Even though the game was a commercial failure , it was well received by the community , which has often demanded that Obsidian make a sequel . Urquhart responded by saying that the team hoped that they can develop Alpha Protocol 2 , and " do better " with it . Avellone later added that they were unable to develop a sequel because the rights to the game were owned by Sega and crowdfunding would not be a suitable option .

On February 11 , 2010 , Red Eagle Games and Obsidian announced that they would co @-@ develop one or more games based on The Wheel of Time fantasy novel series by Robert Jordan . On April 25 , 2014 , however , Urquhart told Computer & Video Games that the agreement between the companies had dissolved after Red Eagle had failed to secure the necessary funding .

At the same time that Alpha Protocol was in development , Obsidian was also working on Fallout : New Vegas . Prior to working on New Vegas , they were contacted by Bethesda Softworks about developing a Star Trek game , but the idea never gained traction . After Bethesda released Fallout 3 and began to shift its own focus back towards its Elder Scrolls series , it approached Obsidian with the idea of having the later studio develop another game in the Fallout series , as several of Obsidian 's founders had worked on the franchise while at Black Isle . In developing New Vegas , the Obsidian looked at fan requests , which led to New Vegas giving a more prominent role to the in @-@ game factions . When the concept was pitched to Bethesda , it was immediately approved . The development of New Vegas began soon after the cancellation of Aliens : Crucible , and it was released in October 2010 . It received generally positive reviews , with some critics saying that the game 's quality exceeded that of the critically acclaimed Fallout 3 .

As was the case with The Sith Lords , the development team did not thoroughly assess New Vegas for bugs and glitches before it was released . Some players were unable to play the game due to constant crashes . These problems were later patched and fixed . Obsidian considered New Vegas to be a learning experience ; it was the studio 's first AAA game , and it taught the studio how to manage quality assurance . Between The Sith Lords and New Vegas , Obsidian had built a reputation for creating games with technical problems . The team was determined to change this with future titles , and made improvements to their bug @-@ tracking system , These improvements were applied to the studio 's next project , Dungeon Siege III , a sequel to the Gas Powered Games @-@ developed Dungeon Siege , published by Square Enix . The game received mixed reviews upon release in 2011 , but it enjoyed a stable launch . Dungeon Siege III was the first game to use Obsidian 's own in @-@ house Onyx engine .

In 2011 , the company began working on a third @-@ person open world game code named " North Carolina " . It was rumored that the game was being produced for the then @-@

unannounced successor to the Xbox 360 . The title was ultimately cancelled in 2012 by its publisher , Microsoft Studios , causing Obsidian to lay off between 20 and 30 people .

= = = 2012 ? 15 : The Stick of Truth , financial troubles , and Pillars of Eternity = = =

In October 2009 , Obsidian was contacted by South Park Digital Studios to develop a game set within the South Park universe . The team originally thought the phone call from South Park Digital Studios was a prank carried out by another company located in the same building . Obsidian met with South Park 's creators , Matt Stone and Trey Parker , with the two parties agreeing that it was critical that the game share the television show 's construction paper @-@ like visual aesthetic . Funding was originally provided by Viacom , the parent company of the television channel that South Park is broadcast on . In 2011 , Viacom decided to let the video game publisher THQ take over as the game 's publisher . Shortly after THQ took over , they entered into financial crisis , eventually going bankrupt in late 2011 . With THQ unable to continue its publishing and funding roles , an auction was held for other publishers to acquire their titles . Obsidian was worried about that if the project were cancelled , they too would face severe financial difficulties . Eventually Ubisoft acquired the game , which was released as South Park : The Stick of Truth in March 2014 .

Obsidian has also maintained a friendly relationship with inXile Entertainment . Like Obsidian , inXile was founded by former employees of Interplay Entertainment . The two companies signed an agreement to share their technology with each other . Obsidian assisted in the development of inXile 's Wasteland 2 after its Kickstarter campaign raised \$ 2 @. @ 1 million , Wasteland 2 was released in late 2014 and received generally positive reviews upon release .

While the studio managed to complete South Park : The Stick of Truth , the company faced a precarious financial position . The studio received only a small " kill fee " for their work on North Carolina . They also lost their bonus for Fallout : New Vegas , as the game failed to meet Bethesda 's standard ? an aggregate review score of 85 at Metacritic ? by 1 point . The team lacked sufficient resources to keep the company 's operation running . According to Adam Brennecke , an executive producer at Obsidian , if they failed to pitch a project to a publisher in time they would have exhausted their money and gone bankrupt . At that time , the crowdfunding platform Kickstarter was growing popular and Josh Sawyer , creative director of New Vegas , proposed that the studio put their cancelled game on Kickstarter and attempt to secure funding for it there . Some team members were skeptical about the idea and feared that they may not even be able to raise \$ 100 @, @ 000 through the platform . The question of whether to pursue a Kickstarter campaign led to numerous debates between key members of the company . The debates ended when Double Fine Adventure 's campaign launched and saw huge success . Secure in the belief that Kickstarter was a viable funding option , the team decided to use it to fund the development a game they wanted to make for a very long time : a spiritual successor to Baldur 's Gate . The Kickstarter campaign for Pillars of Eternity was launched in September 2012 under the working name " Project Eternity " , with Obsidian requesting \$ 1 @. @ 1 million . The studio approached Kickstarter with the mindset that if their campaign was successful the game could eventually be turned into a franchise , while if they were unsuccessful , they would attempt to refine their ideas and try again with another campaign . Obsidian 's campaign was hugely successful , raising \$ 4 million and breaking the record set by Double Fine Adventure . Pillars of Eternity was released in March 2015 to a positive critical reception . Paradox Interactive served as the game 's publisher . Obsidian planned an expansion pack , called The White March . It was divided into two different parts , one of which was released on August 25 , 2015 , and the other on February 16 , 2016 . A board game for Pillars of Eternity titled Pillars of Eternity : Lords of the Eastern Reach was announced on May 19 , 2015 . It was developed by Zero Radius Games with input provided by Obsidian . Like the main game , it was funded through a Kickstarter campaign , and it reached its funding goal within a day .

In June 2015 , studio co @-@ founder Chris Avellone announced his departure from Obsidian . In August 2015 , Obsidian partnered with inXile and Double Fine to launch a new funding website named Fig , with Urquhart serving as a member of the company 's advising board . The new platform 's aim is to offer " equity crowdfunding " , and it will only focus exclusively on video games

@-@ related projects . Obsidian is set to use Fig as its future crowdfunding platform .

= = = 2016 : Tyranny , Armored Warfare , and Pathfinder = = =

Obsidian Entertainment is currently working on three projects ; the westernization of Skyforge , and the free @-@ to @-@ play multiplayer military shooter Armored Warfare . On August 13 , 2014 , Obsidian announced that they had licensed the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game to make electronic games , starting with a tablet adaptation of the Pathfinder Adventure Card Game , which is scheduled to be released on March 29 , 2016 for iOS and Android , with releases for other platforms to be announced . Paizo CEO Lisa Stevens also confirmed plans for an Obsidian @-@ developed computer role @-@ playing game . Urquhart had stated a desire to collaborate with BioWare again on a new Star Wars game . After the release of New Vegas , there is also a desire to work on another Fallout game .

On March 15 , 2016 , Obsidian announced their new project called Tyranny , an isometric RPG set in a world where evil has already won . The game was announced for release in 2016 on Microsoft Windows , Mac and Linux , and will be published by Paradox Interactive . In April 2016 , Leonard Boyarsky joined Obsidian , becoming the second Troika Games co @-@ founder to work for the company .

= = Games = =

= = Philosophy = =

Obsidian built its reputation making sequels in well @-@ established franchises including Star Wars : Knights of the Old Republic , Neverwinter Nights , Fallout , and Dungeon Siege . Urquhart has stated that the company is fine with developing sequels , as they are often fun to make since the studio can " get to go play in someone else 's world " and further explore and expand upon the original games ' ideas . The studio also believes that such licensed projects are easier to develop . Obsidian considered the making of these sequels as stepping stones towards eventually making original games based on their own intellectual property . The studio 's focus did later shift towards developing their own games , which allowed Obsidian to maximize their creative freedom and escape the constraints imposed by publishers . The studio has used the crowdfunding platform Kickstarter as an indicator to see whether a game or genre is popular or not .

As an independent company , Obsidian believes that they must act and react quickly to market changes and not stagnate on any certain point . While the core focus of Obsidian was still developing character @-@ driven role @-@ playing games , the team were willing to try out projects that are smaller and are in different genres . The decision to develop Armored Warfare is one result of this strategy .

A dungeon crawler game based on the story of the company 's five founders was made . The game was housed in an arcade cabinet inside Obsidian .