

= Halo (series) =

Halo is a military science fiction first @-@ person shooter video game franchise created by Bungie and now managed and developed by 343 Industries , a subsidiary of Microsoft Studios . The series centers on an interstellar war between humanity and a theocratic alliance of aliens known as the Covenant . The Covenant , led by their religious leaders called the Prophets , worship an ancient civilization known as the Forerunners , who perished in combat with the parasitic Flood . The central focus of the franchise builds off the experiences of Master Chief John @-@ 117 , one of a group of supersoldiers codenamed Spartans , and his artificial intelligence (AI) companion , Cortana . Other characters , such as Noble Six from Halo : Reach , are also introduced in the series . The term " Halo " refers to the Halo rings : large , habitable superweapons that were created to destroy the parasitic Flood . They are similar to the Orbitals in Iain M. Banks ' Culture novels , and to author Larry Niven 's Ringworld concept .

The games in the series have been praised as being among the best first @-@ person shooters on a video game console , and are considered the Xbox 's " killer app " . This led to the term " Halo killer " being used to describe console games that aspire , or are considered , to be better than Halo . Fueled by the success of Halo : Combat Evolved , and by immense marketing campaigns from publisher Microsoft , its sequels went on to record @-@ breaking sales . The games have sold over 65 million copies worldwide , with the games alone grossing almost \$ 3 @.@ 4 billion .

Strong sales of the games led to the franchise 's expansion to other media ; there are multiple best @-@ selling novels , graphic novels , and other licensed products . Halo Wars took the franchise into new video game genre territory , as a real @-@ time strategy game , while the rest of the games in the series are first @-@ person shooters . Beyond the original trilogy , Bungie developed the expansion Halo 3 : ODST , and a prequel , Halo : Reach , their last project for the franchise . A high @-@ definition remake of the first game , entitled Halo : Combat Evolved Anniversary , was released on November 15 , 2011 , exactly ten years after the release of the original . A new installment in a second series of games , Halo 4 , was released on November 6 , 2012 . Halo : The Master Chief Collection , a remastered compilation of the four primary Halo titles , was released for the Xbox One on November 11 , 2014 .

The collective group of fans of the series is referred to as the " Halo Nation " .

= = Setting and plot = =

In the distant past , a powerful race called the Forerunners fought an alien parasite known as the Flood . The Flood , which spread through infestation of sentient life , overran much of the Milky Way Galaxy . One of the races affected was humanity , who came into conflict with the Forerunners as a result . Exhausted by their war and after having explored all other options , the Forerunners conceived a weapon of last resort to combat the Flood , called the Halo Array . Using an installation known as the Ark , they built large ring @-@ shaped megastructures known as Halos . The Halo Array , when activated , would destroy all sentient life in the galaxy ? depriving the Flood of their food , after which samples of the lost lifeforms would be reseeded . Delaying as long as they could , the Forerunners activated the rings and disappeared . Tens of thousands of years later , in the 26th century , humanity ? under the auspices of the United Nations Space Command , or UNSC ? colonize many worlds thanks to the development of faster @-@ than @-@ light " slipspace " travel . Tensions escalate between the older and more stable " Inner Colonies " and the remote " Outer Colonies " , leading to civil war . The UNSC sponsors the Spartan @-@ II program to create an elite group of enhanced supersoldiers , whose purpose is to suppress the rebellion covertly . In the year 2525 , human worlds come under attack by a theocratic alliance of alien races known as the Covenant . The Covenant leadership declares humanity heretics and an affront to their gods ? the Forerunners ? and begins a holy war of genocide . The Covenant 's superior technology and numbers prove decisive advantages ; though effective , the Spartans are too few in number to turn the tide of battle in humanity 's favor .

In 2552 , the Covenant arrive at the UNSC 's last major stronghold beyond Earth ? the planet

Reach , in orbit of Epsilon Eridani ? and launch an invasion of the planet . The last Spartans and UNSC military are unable to stop the Covenant from bombarding the planet . The UNSC Navy suffers devastating losses , and every Spartan but their leader , player character Master Chief John @-@ 117 , is believed lost in action . Following directives to avoid leading the Covenant to Earth , Cortana , the AI aboard the fleeing UNSC ship Pillar of Autumn , selects random coordinates that lead the ship to a Halo installation . These events form the backdrop to the first game in the series , Halo : Combat Evolved .

Over the course of the game , the Covenant pursue , damaging the Autumn and leading its crew to wage a guerrilla war on the ring 's surface . The Covenant accidentally release Flood imprisoned on the ring ; to nullify the threat , the ring 's AI caretaker , 343 Guilty Spark , enlists the help of the Master Chief in activating Halo . Cortana reveals that Halo 's activation would mean their own destruction . Master Chief and Cortana instead detonate Autumn 's engines , destroying Halo and preventing the escape of the Flood .

Between the events of the first game and Halo 2 , the Chief and a few other survivors return to Earth , warning of an impending Covenant attack ; this attack forms the first mission of the game . Meanwhile , the Covenant , unaware of the destructive nature of the rings , attempt to fire another ring , Installation 05 , to fulfill their religious prophecy and to do so launch an attack on Earth . Helping the Chief to defend the Earth are Sergeant Avery Johnson and Commander Miranda Keyes . One race in the Covenant , the Elites , learn the truth about the rings and are led by a former Elite commander named the Arbiter (also a player character) to join forces with humanity to stop the firing of the ring . Though they are successful , the unexpected shutdown of the installation triggers a fail @-@ safe protocol , priming all the rings for firing from the Ark .

Halo 3 picks up immediately after , with the Covenant 's leader , the High Prophet of Truth , and the remaining loyalist Covenant uncovering a portal to the Ark on Earth . A battle rages on Earth between human forces , the Covenant , and a Flood @-@ infected army . Eventually , the Covenant is repulsed and flees through a slipspace portal , and the Flood is purged from Earth , though much of Africa has been devastated in the battle .

Chief , Arbiter , Elites , Johnson , Keyes , and U.N.S.C. troops follow Truth through the portal , joined by 343 Guilty Spark , who aids the Chief as he has no function to fulfill after the destruction of his ringworld . During the ensuing battle between humans , Covenant , and the Flood on the Ark , Johnson is captured by Truth to activate the Halo rings . Keyes tries to intervene , but is killed . Master Chief and the Arbiter , aided by the Flood , kill the Covenant " prophet " of Truth and rescue Johnson . After finding out that the Ark is constructing a replacement for Guilty Spark 's Halo installation , Master Chief decides to fire the unstable Halo , destroying both the Flood and the Ark . After finding out about their plan , Guilty Spark kills Johnson and tries to kill Master Chief , but Master Chief destroys Guilty Spark and activates the Halo . Master Chief and the Arbiter escape on the UNSC frigate Forward Unto Dawn , but the slipspace portal closes with Master Chief 's half trapped in space . After a memorial service on Earth for the victims of the Human @-@ Covenant war , the Arbiter and his Elite brethren depart for their home planet . The rear half of Forward Unto Dawn floats in deep space . Cortana activates a distress beacon and the Chief goes into hibernation .

Four years later , the Chief and Cortana awake to find they are being attacked by a Covenant splinter group (Halo 4) . Caught in an artificial gravity well , they are pulled into the artificial Forerunner planet of Requiem , along with the UNSC ship Infinity . Master Chief , fighting Covenant and AI soldiers called Prometheans , unwittingly releases a hostile Forerunner warrior called the Didact . While seeking a way to combat the Didact , Cortana reveals that she is becoming rampant , a state in AIs when their knowledge base becomes too large and they gradually go insane . Master Chief is eventually contacted by a Forerunner consciousness called the Librarian (The Didact 's Wife) , who tells him about the Didact : during the crisis with the Flood , the Didact tried to use a device called the Composer to transform humanity into creatures like the Prometheans . He did this because he needed extra soldiers in the war . His own race then imprisoned him along with Forerunner soldiers and humans he had already converted . The Composer was hidden . After the Didact leaves Requiem and retrieves the Composer , Master Chief pursues him to Earth , with

Master Chief and Cortana working together to destroy the Composer . Master Chief succeeds , but Cortana sacrifices herself to save him from the resultant explosion . Master Chief is later found floating among the rubble , and taken back to Infinity .

Halo 5 : Guardians begins eight months later . Blue Team ? consisting of four of the five remaining Spartans (Master Chief , Fred @-@ 104 , Kelly @-@ 87 and Linda @-@ 58) , receives signals from Cortana indicating that she has survived her death by taking advantage of Forerunner AI technology . The Chief , disobeying direct orders , travels to the planet Genesis to reunite with her . A team of Spartans from a competing program , Fireteam Osiris , are dispatched to apprehend him . This journey takes them to several places around the galaxy , including the Elite homeworld of Sanghelios , where the Arbiter leads an offensive against the final remnants of the loyalist Covenant . As they travel , Osiris discover that Cortana is activating ancient Forerunner constructs ? the eponymous Guardians ? with which she plans to impose permanent galactic peace on pain of death . She holds the Master Chief 's team captive , and while Fireteam Osiris are able to rescue them , they are not able to stop Cortana from executing her plan , disabling most contemporary technology and bringing all remaining sentient species under her aegis . As the game ends , Blue Team , Fireteam Osiris and the Arbiter regroup to plan their resistance .

= = Game series = =

= = = Original trilogy = = =

The games of the main Halo trilogy were developed by Bungie , and are first @-@ person shooters in which the player experiences most action from the protagonist 's perspective . The first title in the series is the Xbox version of Halo : Combat Evolved , released on November 15 , 2001 . The game was initially intended to be released for Windows and Mac OS , until Microsoft 's purchase of Bungie in 2000 led to the game becoming an Xbox launch title and platform exclusive . Halo : Combat Evolved introduced many gameplay and plot themes common to the whole trilogy . Players battle various aliens on foot and in vehicles to complete objectives , while attempting to uncover the secrets of the eponymous Halo . One concept introduced in Halo : Combat Evolved , is limiting the number of weapons players could carry to two , forcing them to carefully select their preferred armament . Players fight with ranged and melee attacks , as well as a limited number of grenades . Bungie refers to the " weapons @-@ grenades @-@ melee " format as the " Golden Triangle of Halo " , which has remained fundamentally unchanged throughout the trilogy . In Halo : Combat Evolved , the player 's health is measured in both hit points and a continually recharging energy shield ; the sequels forgo the hit point system , although it returns in spin @-@ offs . A Windows and Mac OS X port was later developed by Gearbox Software , and released on September 30 and November 11 , 2003 , respectively . A stand @-@ alone expansion , entitled Halo : Custom Edition , was released as a Windows exclusive , and allowed players to create custom content for the game .

Its sequel , Halo 2 was released on the Xbox on November 9 , 2004 , and later for Windows Vista on May 17 , 2007 . For the first time , the game was released in two different editions : a standard edition with just the game disc and traditional Xbox packaging ; and the Collector 's Edition with a specially designed aluminum case , along with an additional bonus DVD , extra booklet , and slightly different user manual . Halo 2 introduced new gameplay elements , chief among them the ability to hold and fire two weapons simultaneously , known as " dual wielding " . Unlike its predecessor , Halo 2 fully supported online multiplayer via Xbox Live . The game uses " matchmaking " to facilitate joining online matches by grouping players looking for certain types of games . This was a change from the more traditional " server list " approach , which was used to find matches in online games at this time . Upon release , Halo 2 became the game played by the most people on the Xbox Live service that week ; it retained this title for over two years ? the longest streak any game has held the spot .

Halo 3 is the final game in the main Halo trilogy , ending the story arc begun in Halo : Combat Evolved . The game was released on the Xbox 360 on September 25 , 2007 . It adds to the series

new vehicles , new weapons , and a class of items called equipment . The game also includes a limited map @-@ editing tool , known as the Forge , which allows players to insert game objects , such as weapons and crates , into existing multiplayer map geometry . Players can also save a recording of their gameplay sessions , and view them as video , from any angle .

At E3 2014 , Microsoft and 343 Industries announced Halo : The Master Chief Collection , released on November 11 , 2014 , for the Xbox One . The game includes the full campaign and multiplayer modes of Halo : Combat Evolved , Halo 2 , Halo 3 , and Halo 4 . The campaign of Halo 3 : ODST was later released as DLC , and was free for those who bought The Master Chief Collection during late 2014 .

== Reclaimer saga ==

Following Bungie 's split from Microsoft , 343 Industries ? a studio established by Microsoft in 2009 ? took the helm of the Halo franchise . 343 had already co @-@ developed the Halo Legends animated series and had overseen production of Halo : Reach and Halo : Combat Evolved Anniversary . The next game in the series , Halo 4 , was announced at E3 2011 as the first entry in what would be a new series of Halo games , also known as the " Reclaimer Trilogy " . The game included many staples of previous games , such as new or redesigned weapon types , an improved map @-@ editing tool and expanded multiplayer options and maps . Halo 4 was released worldwide on November 6 , 2012 , achieving record sales for the franchise . In a new addition to the series , a story @-@ driven multiplayer campaign entitled Spartan Ops was released over the weeks following Halo 4 's release , telling what happened after the end of the main game .

Halo 5 : Guardians , the sequel to Halo 4 , was released for the Xbox One on October 27 , 2015 . The game takes place on many different worlds , mainly the Covenant 's , and will revolve around Spartan Locke attempting to hunt down Master Chief . This will be the first game in the Halo series where players switch between two teams in Campaign at certain times : Master Chief 's team , consisting of the Spartans in the Blue team , and Spartan Locke 's team called Fireteam Osiris , consisting of fellow Spartans such as Buck from Halo 3 : ODST .

== Spin @-@ offs ==

The success of the main Halo trilogy spurred the creation of spin @-@ off games . Halo Wars is a real @-@ time strategy game developed by Ensemble Studios for the Xbox 360 . Set in the year 2531 , the game takes place 21 years prior to the events of Halo : Combat Evolved . Much effort was spent on developing a control scheme that was simple and intuitive , unlike other console strategy games . The game was announced at X06 , and released in February and March 2009 .

In a July 2008 interview with MTV , Microsoft 's head of Xbox business , Don Mattrick , stated that Bungie was working on a new Halo game for Microsoft , independent of other Halo projects . An announcement of the new Halo project was expected at the 2008 E3 game exposition , which Bungie stated " has been building for several months " , but was delayed by their publisher Microsoft . The Halo announcement was to be part of Microsoft 's 150 @-@ minute E3 presentation , and was cut to trim the presentation down to 90 minutes ; Microsoft stated it wanted to give the game its own dedicated event . After the release of an ambiguous teaser trailer on September 25 , the project was revealed as Halo 3 : Recon , later changed to Halo 3 : ODST . Set between the events of Halo 2 and Halo 3 , players take control of elite human soldiers called Orbital Drop Shock Troopers (ODST) . The game was released on September 22 , 2009 .

Announced at E3 2009 , Halo : Reach is a prequel to the main trilogy and Bungie 's last Halo game . Players control Noble Six , a " Hyper Lethal Vector " who is one of the members of the Spartan squad " Noble Team " as they defend Reach against the Covenant . The ending of the game leads directly into the events of Combat Evolved . The game was released on September 14 , 2010 .

== Cancelled and related projects ==

Alternate reality games were used to promote the release of the games in the main trilogy . The Cortana Letters , a series of cryptic email messages , were circulated by Bungie prior to Halo : Combat Evolved 's release . I Love Bees was used to promote the release of Halo 2 . The game revolved around a website created by 42 Entertainment , commissioned by Microsoft and endorsed by Bungie . Over the course of the game , audio clips were released that eventually formed a complete five @-@ hour story set on Earth between Halo and Halo 2 . Similarly , Iris was used as a viral marketing campaign for the release of Halo 3 . It featured five web servers containing various media files related to the Halo universe .

Spin @-@ off titles were planned for release on handheld systems , but did not progress far in development . Rumors of a handheld Halo title for the Game Boy Advance surfaced in 2004 . Bungie denied the rumors and commented that such a project between Microsoft and Nintendo would be " very unlikely " . At a Las Vegas consumer technology convention in January 2005 , rumors spread about a version of Halo for the handheld Gizmondo system . Bungie denied the rumors stating they were not making a game for the system . A former Gizmondo employee later revealed development only extended to basic story and game structure concepts to obtain funding from investors . In 2006 , a concept video for Microsoft 's portable Ultra @-@ Mobile PC featured footage of Halo and caused speculation for a handheld title . Microsoft later stated the footage was for demonstration purposes only ; Halo was included because it was a Microsoft @-@ owned property . In January 2007 , IGN editor @-@ in @-@ chief Matt Casamassina claimed he played a version of Halo for the Nintendo DS . He later demonstrated on @-@ camera , in @-@ game footage of an early @-@ development style version of Halo DS . The demonstrated work featured dual @-@ wielding and a version of the Halo 2 map Zanzibar . On October 5 , 2007 , Bungie employee Brian Jarrard explained the Halo DS demo was in fact an unsolicited pitch that was never taken on .

In 2006 , Microsoft announced an episodic video game to be developed by film director Peter Jackson 's Wingnut Interactive . The game , dubbed Halo : Chronicles , was confirmed to be in development in 2007 , and by 2008 was still hiring for positions on the development team . Jackson told game blog Joystiq in July 2009 that the project was no longer in development . Jackson 's manager Ken Kamins explained that the project was cancelled as part of budget cuts tied to job layoffs in January 2009 .

Before the company was shuttered after producing Halo Wars , Ensemble Studios had been working on a Halo @-@ themed massively multiplayer online game , often referred to as Titan Project , or just Titan . The project was cancelled internally in 2007 ? 2008 , without a formal announcement from Microsoft .

Elements from the Halo universe have also appeared in other games . A Halo @-@ based character , SPARTAN Nicole @-@ 458 , appeared in Dead or Alive 4 , a product of the collaboration between Tecmo 's Team Ninja and Microsoft 's Bungie Studios . The Halo theme tune was also available as downloadable content for Guitar Hero III : Legends of Rock .

An Arbiter appears as a playable character in Killer Instinct : Season Three .

= = = Future = = =

In December 2014 , 343 Industries general manager Bonnie Ross expressed Microsoft 's aim for the Halo series to last at least 30 more years . On March 25 , 2015 , 343 Industries announced Halo Online , a free @-@ to @-@ play Halo multiplayer game for Windows . A closed beta test limited to Russia is scheduled to launch in the second quarter of 2015 . The title is being developed with Saber Interactive and published by Innova Systems ; it is powered by a modified version of the Halo 3 engine . Furthermore , at Gamescom 2015 Microsoft announced a sequel to Ensemble 's Halo Wars , Halo Wars 2 , slated to launch in February 2017 . The game is being developed by 343 Industries and Creative Assembly .

= = Development = =

== = Bungie == =

Bungie (formerly Bungie Software Products Corporation) is a game development company started in 1991 by Alex Seropian . Seropian partnered with programmer Jason Jones to market and release Jones ' game Minotaur : The Labyrinths of Crete . Focusing on the Macintosh game market because it was smaller and easier to compete , Bungie became the biggest Mac developer with games including the shooters Pathways into Darkness and Marathon . What became Halo was originally code @-@ named Monkey Nuts and Blam ! , and took place on a hollowed @-@ out world called Solipsis . The planet eventually became a ringworld , and an artist suggested the name " Halo " , which became the game 's title .

The first Halo game was announced on July 21 , 1999 , during the Macworld Conference & Expo . It was originally planned to be a real @-@ time strategy game for the Mac and Windows operating systems , but later changed into a third @-@ person action game . On June 19 , 2000 , Microsoft acquired Bungie Studios and Halo : Combat Evolved became a launch title for the Xbox video game console . After receiving Xbox development kits , Bungie Studios rewrote the game 's engine , heavily altered its presentation , and turned it into a first @-@ person shooter . Though the first Halo was meant to include an online multiplayer mode , it was excluded because Xbox Live was not yet available .

Halo was not intended to be the Xbox 's flagship game due to internal concerns and gaming press criticism , but Microsoft VP of game publishing Ed Fries did not act on these concerns . The Xbox 's marketing heavily featured Halo , whose green color palette meshed with the console 's design scheme .

The success of the game led to a sequel , Halo 2 , which was announced on August 8 , 2002 , at Microsoft 's New York X02 press event . It featured improved graphics , new weapons , and a multiplayer mode on Xbox Live . Halo 3 was announced at the 2006 Electronic Entertainment Expo . The initial conception for the third game was done before Halo 2 was released in 2004 . It utilized a proprietary , in @-@ house graphics engine , and employed advanced graphics technologies .

They created two more Halo games before becoming independent as part of their deal with Microsoft : a side story Halo 3 : ODST and a prequel Halo : Reach in 2009 and 2010 respectively .

== = 343 Industries == =

Following the release of Halo 3 , Bungie announced it was splitting off from Microsoft and becoming an independent limited liability company . While Bungie remained involved in the Halo series by developing games such as ODST and Reach , the rights to Halo remain with Microsoft . To oversee everything Halo , Microsoft created an internal division , 343 Industries , serving as " stewards " for the franchise . Frank O 'Connor , formerly a Bungie employee , now serves as 343 's creative director .

In announcing the formation of 343 Industries , Microsoft also announced that Xbox Live would be home to a central hub for Halo content called Halo Waypoint . Waypoint is accessed from the Xbox 360 Dashboard and offers players access to multimedia content in addition to tracking their Halo game " career " . O 'Connor described Waypoint as intended to be the prime destination for Halo .

The company 's first new game , Halo 4 , was released on November 6 , 2012 , to generally positive reviews .

== = Cultural influences == =

In 2006 , in acknowledgment of the " wealth of influences adopted by the Bungie team " , a list of Bungie employees ' favorite science fiction material was published on the company 's website . The developers acknowledged that the Halo series ' use of ring @-@ shaped megastructures followed on from concepts featured in Larry Niven 's Ringworld and Iain M. Banks ' Culture series (of which Consider Phlebas and Excession were said to be particularly influential) . In a retrospective article

in Edge , Bungie 's Jaime Griesemer commented , " The influence of something like Ringworld isn 't necessarily in the design ? it 's in that feeling of being somewhere else . That sense of scale and an epic story going on out there . " Griesemer also explained , " One of the main sources of inspiration was Armor [by John Steakley] , in which a soldier has to constantly re @-@ live the same war over and over again . That sense of hopelessness , a relentless battle , was influential . " The Flood were influenced by the assimilating alien species in Christopher Rowley 's The Vang ; it has also been speculated that the Master Chief 's name " John 117 " may have been a reference to a character named Jon 6725416 in Rowley 's Starhammer , or to the John Spartan character of Demolition Man . An IGN article exploring the literary influences present in the Halo franchise commented on similarities between Halo and Orson Scott Card 's Ender 's Game : aspects of the SPARTAN Project and the design of the Covenant Drones are perceived as reminiscent of the super soldier program and Buggers found in the novel . Bungie has also acknowledged James Cameron 's film Aliens as a strong cinematic influence .

A report written by Roger Travis and published by The Escapist compares Halo with the Latin epic Aeneid , written by classical Roman poet Virgil . Travis posits similarities between the plots of both works and compares the characters present in them , with the Flood and Covenant taking the role performed by the Carthaginians , and the Master Chief 's role in the series to that of Aeneas .

= = Music = =

Seven Halo soundtracks have been released . The Halo Original Soundtrack contains most of Combat Evolved 's music . Due to the varying nature of gameplay , the music present was designed to use the game 's dynamic audio playback engine . The engine allows for the mood , theme , and duration of music played to change according to gameplay . To afford a more enjoyable listening experience , O 'Donnell rearranged portions of the music of Halo into standalone suites , which follow the narrative course of the game . The soundtrack also contains music not used in the game , including a variation on the Halo theme that was first played at Halo 's debut at Macworld 1999 .

For Halo 2 's soundtrack , producer Nile Rodgers and O 'Donnell decided to split the music into two separate volumes . The first , Volume One , was released on November 9 , 2004 and contained all the themes as well as the " inspired @-@ by " music present in the game (featuring Steve Vai , Incubus , Hoobastank , and Breaking Benjamin) . The second release , Volume 2 , contained the rest of the music , much of which was incomplete or not included in the first soundtrack , as the first soundtrack was shipped before the game was released . Halo 2 , unlike its predecessor , was mixed to take full advantage of Dolby 5 @.@ 1 Digital Surround Sound .

The soundtrack for Halo 3 was released on November 20 , 2007 . O 'Donnell noted he wanted to bring back the themes from the original game to help tie together the end of the trilogy . The tracks are presented , similarly to the previous soundtrack for Halo 2 , in a suite form . Unlike previous soundtracks , where much of the music had been synthesized on computer , the soundtrack for Halo 3 was recorded using a 60 @-@ piece orchestra , along with a 24 @-@ voice chorus . The final soundtrack was recorded by the Northwest Sinfonia at Studio X in Seattle , Washington . The soundtracks were bundled and released as a box set in December 2008 . A soundtrack for Halo 3 : ODST was released alongside the game and included many of the tracks from the game .

For Halo Wars , the task of creating the game 's music fell to Stephen Rippy . Rippy listened to O 'Donnell 's soundtracks for inspiration and incorporated the Halo theme into parts of his arrangements . In addition to synthesized and orchestral components , the composer focused on the choir and piano as essential elements , feeling these were important in creating the " Halo sound " . Rather than use the Northwest Sinfonia , Rippy traveled to Prague and recorded with the FILMharmonic Orchestra before returning to the United States to complete the music . A standalone compact disc and digital download retail version of the soundtrack was announced in January 2009 for release on February 17 .

The music of Halo 4 was composed by Neil Davidge . The Halo 4 Original Soundtrack was released on October 22 , 2012 , followed by a two @-@ disc Special Edition on November 6 .

= = Adaptations = =

The Halo franchise includes various types of merchandise and adaptations outside of the video games . This includes bestselling novels , graphic novels , and other licensed products , from action figures to a packaging tie @-@ in with Mountain Dew . Numerous action figures and vehicles based on Halo have been produced . Joyride Studios created Halo and Halo 2 action figures , while Halo 3 poseable and collectible action figures , aimed at collectors , were produced by McFarlane Toys and became some of the top @-@ selling action figures of 2007 and 2008 . MEGA Blocks partnered with Microsoft to produce Halo Wars @-@ themed toys .

= = = Books = = =

Numerous printed adaptations based on the Halo video games canon have been published . Larry Niven (author of Ringworld) was originally approached to write a Halo novelization , but declined due to unfamiliarity with the subject matter . The first novel was Halo : The Fall of Reach , a prequel to Halo : Combat Evolved . It was written by Eric Nylund in seven weeks , and published in October 2001 . William C. Dietz wrote an adaptation of Halo : Combat Evolved called Halo : The Flood , which was released in 2003 . Eric Nylund returned to write the third novel , Halo : First Strike , which takes place between Halo : Combat Evolved and Halo 2 , and was published in December 2003 . Nylund also wrote the fourth adaptation , Halo : Ghosts of Onyx , which was published on October 31 , 2006 . Bungie employee Joseph Staten wrote the fifth book , Halo : Contact Harvest , which was released on October 30 , 2007 , while Tobias S. Buckell produced the sixth , Halo : The Cole Protocol , published in November 2008 . Bungie considers the Halo novels as additions to the Halo canon .

A collection of Halo short stories , Halo : Evolutions , was simultaneously released in print and audiobook formats in November 2009 . Evolutions includes original material by Nylund , Buckell , Karen Traviss and contributions from Bungie . Tor re @-@ released the first three Halo novels with new content and cover art . Science fiction author Greg Bear wrote a trilogy of books focusing on the Forerunners , called The Forerunner Saga . The first book , entitled Halo : Cryptum , was released in January 2011 , followed by Primordium in January 2012 and Silentium on March 19 , 2013 . Karen Traviss wrote the Kilo @-@ Five trilogy , which takes place after the events of Halo 3 and Halo : Ghosts of Onyx . The first book , Halo : Glasslands , came out October 2011 , followed by Halo : The Thursday War on October 2 , 2012 , and Halo : Mortal Dictata on January 21 , 2014 . The fourteenth Halo book (the thirteenth novel) was released in November 2014 : Halo : Broken Circle by John Shirley , the author of novels based on BioShock , Borderlands , and other games .

= = = Comics = = =

The Halo universe was first adapted into the graphic novel format in 2006 , with the release of The Halo Graphic Novel , a collection of four short stories . It was written and illustrated by graphic novelists Lee Hammock , Jay Faerber , Tsutomu Nihei , Brett Lewis , Simon Bisley , Ed Lee and Jean Giraud . At the 2007 New York Comic Con , Marvel Comics announced they would be working on an ongoing Halo series with Brian Michael Bendis and Alex Maleev . The limited series , titled Halo : Uprising , bridges the gap between the events of Halo 2 and Halo 3 ; initially planned to conclude shortly before the release of Halo 3 , the constant delays led to the final issue being published April 2009 .

Marvel announced at the 2009 Comic Con that two new comics , a five @-@ part series written by Peter David and a second series written by Fred Van Lente , would appear the coming summer and winter . David 's series , Halo : Helljumper , is set prior to Halo : Combat Evolved and focuses on the elite Orbital Drop Shock Troopers . The five @-@ part series was published between July and November 2009 . Lente 's series , originally titled Spartan Black , revolves around a black ops team of Spartan supersoldiers assigned to the UNSC Office of Naval Intelligence . The rebranded comic , Halo : Blood Line , debuted in December 2009 . A comic @-@ retelling of the novel Halo : The Fall

of Reach was the most recent comic series entitled : Halo : Fall of Reach . Fall of Reach was split into three mini @-@ stories : Boot Camp , Covenant , and Invasion . Two new series were announced in 2013 . A three @-@ part series , Halo : Initiation was released August 2013 with Brian Reed returning as writer . Also announced was Halo : Escalation , an ongoing comic series covering the period directly after Halo 4 .

= = = Live action = = =

= = = = Unproduced feature (2005 ? 07) = = = =

In 2005 , Columbia Pictures president Peter Schlessel began working outside the studio system to produce a Halo film adaptation . Alex Garland wrote the first script , which was then pitched to studios by couriers dressed as Master Chief . Microsoft 's terms required \$ 10 million against 15 percent of gross ; most studios passed , citing the lack of risk for Microsoft compared to their large share of potential profits . 20th Century Fox and Universal Studios decided to partner to produce the film , paying Microsoft \$ 5 million to option the film and 10 percent of grosses . Peter Jackson was slated to be the executive producer , with Neill Blomkamp as director . Before Blomkamp signed on , Guillermo del Toro was in negotiations to direct .

D. B. Weiss and Josh Olson rewrote Garland 's script during 2006 . The crew stopped and resumed preproduction of the film several times . Later that year , 20th Century Fox threatened to pull out of the project , leading Universal to issue an ultimatum to Jackson and Schlessel : either cut their large " first @-@ dollar " deals , or the project was ended . Both refused , and the project stalled .

Blomkamp declared the project dead in late 2007 , but Jackson replied that the film would still be made . Blomkamp and Jackson collaborated on District 9 , but the director told / Film that he was no longer considering working on a Halo film if the opportunity arose , saying that after working on the film for five months before the project 's collapse it would be difficult to return . The rights for the film have since reverted to Microsoft .

= = = = Forward Unto Dawn (2012) = = = =

Halo 4 : Forward Unto Dawn is a live @-@ action film and miniseries set in the Halo universe . Although shot as a feature @-@ length film , Forward Unto Dawn was originally released as a webseries consisting of five roughly 15 @-@ minute episodes , the first of which was released on October 5 , 2012 , with the last episode released on November 2 , 2012 . The series ' plot , occurring in the early days of the Human @-@ Covenant War circa 2526 , revolves around Thomas Lasky , a young cadet at Corbulo Academy of Military Science , and how John @-@ 117 inspired him to eventually become a leader . Lasky is also a prominent character in Halo 4 as a commander on the UNSC Infinity . The name of the series , aside from being a reference to the UNSC frigate Forward Unto Dawn , is given new significance in the series as part a running motif based on a poem . The film cut was released on Blu @-@ ray and DVD on December 4 , 2012 .

= = = = Nightfall (2014) = = = =

On April 3 , 2014 , it was announced that Ridley Scott and his production company , Scott Free Productions , were working on a Halo digital feature alongside 343 Industries and Xbox Entertainment Studios ; Scott would be the executive producer , with David W. Zucker and Sergio Mimica @-@ Gezzan as the directors . The feature was expected to follow the same format as Machinima 's Halo 4 : Forward Unto Dawn . On June 9 , 2014 , it was announced at E3 2014 that the feature , titled Halo : Nightfall , would be included with Halo : The Master Chief Collection at its November 2014 launch . The feature introduces a new character to the franchise , Agent Jameson Locke , played by actor Mike Colter ; Nightfall is considered to be his origin story . Locke is one of the Spartans portrayed on the cover art of Halo 5 : Guardians , and is set to play a large role in the

series . On July 24 , 2014 , 343 Industries released the first trailer for the feature . Halo : Nightfall is available to watch through Halo Channel , an application for the Xbox One , Windows 8 @. @ 1 and Windows Phone . On March 16 , 2015 , the series became available to stream , download , and buy on physical disc .

== = = = Untitled Showtime television series == = = =

On May 21 , 2013 , 343 Industries announced that a live @-@ action television series of Halo would be produced with Steven Spielberg serving as executive producer . Neill Blomkamp is rumored to direct the pilot for the series . The series will premiere on the American premium cable network Showtime . The project remains in active development as of July , 2016 .

== = = = Anime == = = =

Microsoft announced at Comic @-@ Con 2009 that it was overseeing production of a series of seven short anime films , together called Halo Legends . Financed by 343 Industries , the animation was created by five Japanese production houses : Bones , Casio Entertainment , Production I.G. , Studio 4 ° C , and Toei Animation . Shinji Aramaki , creator and director of Appleseed and Appleseed Ex Machina , served as the project 's creative director . Warner Bros. distributed Legends on DVD and Blu @-@ ray in February 2010 . Six of the stories are officially part of the Halo canon , with the seventh , made by Toei , intended to be a parody of the universe . In mid @-@ July 2015 , 343 Industries announced that a new animated series of Halo will be included in the Halo 5 : Guardians Limited Edition and Collector 's Edition called Halo : The Fall of Reach , and will be based on the book Halo : The Fall of Reach by Eric Nylund .

== = Reception and critical response == =

The Halo franchise has been highly successful commercially and critically . During the two months following Halo : Combat Evolved 's release , it sold alongside more than fifty percent of Xbox consoles and sold a million units by April 2002 . Halo 2 's sales generated US \$ 125 million on its premiere day , making it the fastest selling United States media product in history up to that time . Combined with Halo 's sales , the two games sold 14 @. @ 8 million units before Halo 3 's release .

GameSpot reported 4 @. @ 2 million units of Halo 3 were in retail outlets on September 24 , 2007 , a day before official release ? a world record volume . Halo 3 broke the previous record for the highest grossing opening day in entertainment history , making US \$ 170 million in its first twenty @-@ four hours . Worldwide , sales exceeded US \$ 300 million the first week , helping to more than double the sales of the Xbox 360 when compared with the weekly average before the Halo 3 launch . At the end of 2007 , Halo 2 and Halo : Combat Evolved were the number one and two best @-@ selling Xbox titles , respectively , and Halo 3 was the best @-@ selling Xbox 360 title . Halo Wars was the best @-@ selling RTS console game , selling more than one million units . The Halo series went on to sell more than 27 million copies by August 2009 , and more than 34 million copies by May 2010 . Tor Books reported that sales of all franchise materials are greater than \$ 1 @. @ 7 billion , and Bungie 's games before Reach accounted for \$ 1 @. @ 5 billion in sales . The soundtracks to Halo 2 , Halo 3 , ODST and Reach all appeared on the Billboard 200 charts for at least one week . By May 2011 , total gross of Halo merchandise was \$ 2 billion , with 40 million copies of the games sold . The total amount climbed to \$ 2 @. @ 3 billion in July 2011 , and \$ 2 @. @ 8 billion in January 2012 . Total franchise grosses exceeded \$ 4 @. @ 6 billion by October 2015 , with 25 % of the figure from non @-@ game @-@ related merchandise .

The Halo adaptations have been successful as well . Many of the novels have appeared on Publisher Weekly 's bestseller charts and the Halo Graphic Novel sold more than 100 @, @ 000 copies , a " rare hit " for the games @-@ to @-@ comics genre . Ghosts of Onyx , Contact Harvest , The Cole Protocol and the first volume of Cryptum appeared on The New York Times bestseller lists , and The Cole Protocol also opened 50th overall on USA Today 's bestsellers list . Tor 's first three

novels sold more than one million copies by April 2009 .

Overall , the Halo series has been very well received by critics . Halo : Combat Evolved has received numerous Game of the Year awards . In March 2007 , IGN listed it as the top Xbox game of all time , while readers ranked it the fourteenth best game ever on " IGN Readers ' Choice 2006 ? The Top 100 Games Ever " . Conversely , GameSpy ranked Halo : Combat Evolved tenth on its list of " Top 25 Most Overrated Games of All Time " , citing repetitive level design and the lack of an online multiplayer mode . Halo 2 also received numerous awards , with IGN listing it as the number two top Xbox game of all time in March 2007 . From its initial release on the Xbox in November 2004 until the launch of Gears of War on the Xbox 360 in November 2006 ? two years later ? Halo 2 was the most popular video game on Xbox Live . Halo 3 was nominated for and won multiple awards ; it won Time magazine 's " Game of the Year " and IGN chose it as the Best Xbox 360 Online Multiplayer Game and Innovative Design of 2007 . Most publications called the multiplayer aspect one of the best features ; IGN said the multiplayer map lineup was the strongest of the series , and GameSpy added that the multiplayer offering will greatly please " Halo veterans " . Complaints focused on the game 's plot . The New York Times said the game had a " throwaway " plot and Total Video Games judged the single @-@ player aspect ultimately disappointing . The series ' music and audio has received enthusiastic response from game reviewers .

= = Cultural impact = =

The main trilogy , particularly its protagonist , has been declared iconic and a symbol of today 's videogames ; a wax replica of the Master Chief was made by Madame Tussauds in Las Vegas , where Pete Wentz compared the character to notable characters from previous generations like Spider @-@ Man , Frodo , and Luke Skywalker . The Escapist author Roger Travis compared Halo 's story to Virgil 's Aeneid , saying the religious and political struggle described in the games relates to the modern epic tradition . GamesTM stated Halo : Combat Evolved " changed videogame combat forever " , and Halo 2 showcased Xbox Live as a tool for communities . GameDaily noted Halo 2 's launch was " easily comparable to the biggest in other sectors of the entertainment industry " , marking the first time a video game launch has become a major cultural event in America . Time magazine included the franchise in the " 2005 Time 100 " , highlighting that in the first ten weeks after the release of Halo 2 , players spent 91 million combined hours playing the game online . A The New York Times report noted the success of Halo 3 was critical for Microsoft , persuading consumers to buy the Xbox 360 console which was experiencing waning sales compared with the Nintendo Wii , as well as helping restore the console 's image . On September 25 , 2007 , the release date for Halo 3 , Microsoft 's shares rose 1 @.@ 7 % based on sales expectations for the game . Halo has been described as a series that " has reinvented a genre that didn 't know it needed to be reinvented " , with aspects of the main trilogy being duplicated in other FPS games multiple times .

Variety called Halo " the equivalent of Star Wars " .

= = = Machinima = = =

As a highly popular video game series with a large and active fan base , the Halo trilogy has given rise to an array of video productions in an emerging entertainment medium , machinima . Virtually all machinima footage based around the Halo games is taken from the multiplayer modes of the main trilogy games . Most productions are set outside Halo canon , while others are based on fan fiction closely relating to the official story . Halo 3 includes a saved film function that allows camera angles not possible in previous games , and other features that simplify production . The game has become one of the most popular tools for generating machinima , and Microsoft updated its user license agreement to allow noncommercial distribution of such films .

A notable machinima production is the comedy series Red vs. Blue created by Rooster Teeth Productions . It has achieved an unparalleled level of success in Halo machinima in specific , and machinima in general ; it is credited with bringing attention to the genre . Red vs. Blue generated

annual revenues of US \$ 200 @, @ 000 , and special promotional episodes were commissioned by Bungie . The first series , The Blood Gulch Chronicles , ended on June 28 , 2007 , after 100 regular episodes and numerous promotional videos . Subsequent series include the The Recollection , the second series which contains more dramatic elements than its comedic predecessor , Project Freelancer , and The Chorus Trilogy , the most recent series . Other machinima series include Fire Team Charlie , The Codex , and the in @-@ game interview show This Spartan Life .

= = Sales history = =