

Biography of an Influential Software Engineer

I am writing about a man who I consider to be one of the most influential members of the video game community; Hideo Kojima.



Hideo Kojima has always played a huge impact on my life. From a young age, the one game series I have religiously followed was Metal Gear. Metal Gear is an action-adventure game which is solely based around stealth, and learning how to interact with your environment in order to make it through the missions in the best way possible. To me, it is much more than just a video game. The games have a very special way of completely engulfing the player into the life of the protagonist, Solid Snake. It does this very impressively by incredible storytelling, mesmerising music, and enough cutscenes to create full-length films (Which have actually been put together by fans of the game series. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLTqIXZ1jQQ>).

Kojima did not always have a vision of becoming a Video Game Developer. He originally wished to be an artist filmmaker, or illustrator, but he felt like he needed to pursue a “normal, stable, salaried job over creative pursuits”. The death of Kojima’s father at an early age also swayed him away from his creative pursuits, as this left his entire family poorer. As a young adult he began studying economics, but during his studies he found himself playing video games. In particular, he owes his inspiration to pursue a video game career to Super Mario Bros and The Portopia Serial Murder Case. In his fourth year of his studies, he decided to announce his intentions of joining the video game industry.

In my eyes, Hideo Kojima's works on the Metal Gear games could be considered some of the most influential works in Video Game History. The games pioneered the stealth genre and features a lot of characteristics which make it completely unique from other video games. The work he put into his storylines cannot really be matched by any other game series. His storylines explore the nature of politics, warfare science, and a lot of social, cultural, and philosophical such as free will and artificial intelligence. The genre of the overall story can be described as "Magic Realism", meaning that it features unrealistic and supernatural elements (Like ghosts, or characters that have powers not known to humans) in a setting which is otherwise very true to reality. The game series completely engulfs you in its own world, and you almost find yourself forgetting what reality is like when you're hours into the story of one of the games. The series also features great amounts of background information on actual science and technology, despite the latter being a lot more advanced than what is considered state of the art in this day and age. Real political events are also referenced and intertwined with the games' storylines.

Kojima famously worked with Konami since 1986, but in 2015, a long and messy breakup happened. Kojima worked for the company for three decades, created top selling merchandise, and became one of the most famous game developers in the history of video games. The first sign of this breakup happening was when Konami banned Kojima from making an appearance at E3, they sneakily removed all the tiles of A Hideo Kojima Game and logos representing the Kojima Productions team behind the development of the final Metal Gear game, Metal Gear



Solid V: The Phantom Pain. This quite obviously upset Kojima, as Konami were quite literally taking credit for a franchise that he personally came up with, and had worked so hard to develop over the many years. On December 15th 2015, Kojima officially left Konami. He then reformed his company, Kojima Productions, and turned them into an independent studio. Kojima productions are now working on producing Death Stranding, which will be the first game developed by Kojima Productions that has no affiliation with Konami.

Aside from his works on the Metal Gear games, Kojima has been involved with numerous other projects. Not only did he create the Metal Gear Games, but he also acted in a few of the games. He had many voice overs in his early games, but actually made appearances in 3 of the games in the series.

He has been involved in voice acting for many other games too, and even in films such as Versus, Azumi, and Ultraman Orb: I'm Borrowing the Power of Your Bonds!

For Kojima's most recent production with Kojima Productions, Death Stranding, the team will be using Guerrilla Games' Decima Engine as the foundation. This will be his first game since the high-profile split from Konami mentioned above. The game engine also powers Horizon Zero Dawn, and Killzone Shadow Fall. The engine has artificial intelligence, game physics, and logics tools, featuring resources for creating entire worlds. It is compatible with 4K resolution and high-high-dynamic-range imaging. Aside from the technical side, it was Guerrilla's company culture that sealed the deal for Kojima, why praised the studio's selfless approach to game and tech development. "Making games is like going into space," explained Kojima. "We try to aim high, but the people at Guerrilla aim even higher. We told them let's aim for the Moon, for Mars, and they said well let's go to Jupiter together." "When we first met Guerrilla, they gave me the source code of their engine. You know, before we signed any contracts or anything, they just gave me this. It's the treasure of Guerrilla, and them handing that to me made me feel very special." Thankfully, Kojima has found himself settled working with a new company, which will hopefully lead to him developing a truly incredible game. This should hopefully help him to forget about his soured past with Konami.

All in all, Hideo Kojima would not be considered a straight "Software Engineer," but I would argue that he is one of the most influential people

in the industry. He has brought forward the development of a lot of important games, that have been sold over 50,000,000 times to date. If his heavy and important works in the video game industry don't count him as a Software Engineer, then there are a lot of names in the industry that should not be considered at all. Hideo Kojima has been in charge of groundbreaking things, and developments in the world of video games. He deserves a place amongst the world of Software Engineers, as he has engineered what he personally described as "The Best Game in the World," to which I would agree with him.