

Saving the unsustainable industry of video games

In the article, “The Video Game Industry Can't Go On Like This”, the author argues that video games are unsustainable due to their substantial human, economic, and environmental cost. The author examines how video game developers and artists are constantly undervalued, taken advantage of, and often suffer from PTSD. He utilizes the market's resistance towards increasing the cost of video games to explain companies aggressive microtransactions, extensive pass plans, and shift towards off-site computing data centers. He explains how video games productions high power consumption and their e-waste contributes to climate change. He concludes by stating the multiple solutions available to prevent a future catastrophic event, when one of the three factors discussed collapse.

The author examines the substantial human cost of video game development. Due to unrealistic demands and hefty investor expectations, workers in the video game industry are constantly undervalued, taken advantage of, and continuously crunched for time. Furthermore, artists who work to develop gory cinematics integrals often suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. Without compliance to increase the price of video games in order to accurately reflect the expenses of production, the industry is forced to adjust accordingly by merchandising higher-priced collector's editions, live service games that offer annual passes, microtransactions, loot boxes, and free-to-play games. The addition of loot boxes is an unstable revenue as it is similar to slot machine-style gambling and can consequently be under legal inspection. As a result of the unsustainable economy single-player games companies are relying on recurring cash from annualized franchises and are encouraging their audience to switch to the console's

ecosystem. In hopes to create a stable foundation, the industry is venturing into alternative forms of gaming such as off-site computing with data centers and server farms across the world. This change offers companies temporary stability and consequently an increased environmental cost. The rapid growth of cloud computing has forced tech companies to be more efficient. With the growing demand, they were able to create highly efficient data centers that can withstand the tremendous power consumption; although, data centers, energy consumption remains a problem. The majority of tech companies, particularly in the United States, are hostile towards renewable energy sources and revert to fossil fuels, within and outside their own borders. Furthermore, the lack of knowledge on proper recycling of e-waste along with the non renewable energy sources that power the data centers, requires an urgent change.

The three strategies the author uses are cause and effect, logos and pathos.

Cause and effect:

“There’s the human cost, which *Kotaku* has chronicled extensively. Contract workers are continually undervalued and taken advantage of... Artists who work on gory cinematics integral to games like *Mortal Kombat* suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. Unrealistic demands and lofty investor expectations lead to disastrous development cycles for video games like *Anthem*, which in turn leads to developer crunch.” (Joshua Rivera).

In the article the writer uses cause and effect to explain that artists that work on gory cinematics that are integral to certain games are known to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. Moreover, he states that the pressure from investors often leads to disastrous development cycles and developer crunch. This strategy allows readers to clearly identify the connection between the demands of video games and the effect it has on the developers.

Logos:

"Data center efficiency is measured by power usage effectiveness (PUE) rating...the platonic ideal is a PUE of 1.0: power input and output perfectly balanced. Google, then, is in pretty good shape as far as this standard goes, with the average PUE of all its data centers currently at 1.11."

The author uses the statistics about power usage effectiveness (PUE) which is used to rate the efficiency of a facility, to appeal to the logic of readers this appeal ensures they comprehend the efficiency of tech companies and the consequences of that it's high efficiency will bring. However, he expands on this by stating that their efficiency results in higher power consumption and unfortunately companies use non renewable sources in order to power their consumption of energy.

Pathos:

"Video games cannot do this forever. If any of these things were to collapse—the people who make them, the economy they're sold in, the ecosystem we're all a part of—it would be catastrophic. All of them at once? That's a disaster we need to talk about, openly. Because there are solutions to these problems."

The author is trying to provoke fear and instill urgency in his audience to highlight the importance of his topic; however, he changes the tone to hopefulness to impart the readers with a feeling of possibility rather than hopelessness.

The video game industry is an unstable foundation that is in urgent need of stabilization as problems in the industry can result in catastrophic events. In the article, he mentions the non-negotiable price point of video games which, when analyzed could explain why companies are reluctant to invest in renewable energy sources. Without the means or the public's needs

forcing the companies towards renewable options, they are essentially catalysing the climate change problem. The author is aware that there is only so much the public is able to accomplish; however, he urges his audience to pressure and question their government authorities regarding their steps towards fixing climate change and enforcing hard laws on their companies. Moreover, a change in the method and mentality of production, slowing things down, will alter the damage the industry has on humans and the economy. A carbon tax, along with unionization and more equitable practices are positive starting position to ensure a minimization in the damages the industry is currently having. Thus, as he mentions “more equitable practices can mean the relentless pace of development is slowed down, which could make for fewer, better games and a course correction in supply and demand”. Ultimately, a lack of change in the industry will result in an economic and environmental disaster.

The author is determined to shed light on the instability and unsustainability of the video game industry. He summarizes various flaws in the industry and the vast impact it has on humans, the economy and the environment. He emphasizes that there is still time for a change as long as we are pressuring authority towards that change.