

Video Games: The Movie

A feature length documentary on the games industry.
Author: Brooke Geller



Documentaries can be exciting, inspiring, informative, emotional and sometimes life-changing. They can also be dull, overhyped and rife with overused clichés and tropes. For me, there's nothing worse than wasting a good hour or two of potential gaming time to a downright awful documentary that falls in to the latter category. Unfortunately, *Video Games: The Movie* is one of those documentaries.

If you thought "the first ever in depth feature length documentary about the video game industry" could be anything but dull, then I've got some sad news for you, buddy. *Video Games: The Movie* initially comes across as more of a history lesson, or long-winded Wikipedia entry. The viewer is bombarded with tired, overworked statistics on the average gamer, consumer patterns and various

other obscure economics that we've all heard a million times before.

The narrative then jumps back and forth across the timeline of video game history, focusing instead on the many unique and varied aspects of the video game medium. From eSports to the intricately-explained technical process behind the humble game, virtually every topic is covered- yes, including virtual reality (see what I did there?).

To the novice gamer or unfamiliar newcomer, the documentary does a decent job of commenting on the eye-rolling violent reputation of video games in the eyes of the media, and thoroughly defends the recognition and justification of games as an art form. This is demonstrated by tracing history back to the very beginnings of the immersive nature of what we now understand to be the very ethos of modern games, reminding

the viewer to take a moment to really appreciate the depth of narrative that we often take for granted in modern games.

It also beautifully delves in to the unique storytelling experience offered through games, and actually explains the bright sparkly future for gaming technology- including the potential to educate future and current younger generations- in a totally non-boring way. But the message could be lost on those with short attention spans

Below: The future of FPS games? I bloody hope so!



"UNFORTUNATELY, NO AMOUNT OF WILL WHEATON CAN SAVE THIS..."



Left: Who doesn't love a giant stadium filled with people to watch competitive eSports?



early on, as the film often fails to maintain the viewer's attention with its tendency to simply lay down fact after monotonous fact.

However many its pitfalls, the film does have a few redeeming features, and these lie in the quality of its interviewees. The film boasts some big names in the industry like Nolan Bushnell, Al Alcorn, Reggie Fils-Aime, Ed Fries, Hideo Kojima—the list goes on and on... and on. The ever-endearing and super wise uber nerd lord Will Wheaton shines as usual as he delivers beautiful insights on the beauty of the video game, his own cherished memories of the very early Nintendo years, and as usual sums up everything perfectly. Seriously, why didn't they get Will Wheaton to direct this thing?

Zach Braff earns his title as executive producer (explains a lot, right?) by informing us of this one time when he owned an Atari. It

had games. Like... Donkey Kong. Thanks for your input, Zach.

Unfortunately, no amount of Will Wheaton can save this confused, overexcited montage of classic arcade gameplay footage and obligatory shots of cosplayers milling about at conventions. It seems like *Video Games: The Movie* had such a beautiful message to convey, yet in all its excitement buried it under a mountain of numbers, boring tropes and Zach Braff.



RATING **5/10**