

US video game industry sees record April sales: survey

May 22 2020



Games like Nintendo's Animal Crossing gained ground during the virus lockdowns, helping to fuel record sales in the sector in the United States, according a market trackers

Spending on video games in the US jumped to a new April record as locked-down consumers sought refuge in play, industry figures released Friday showed.

A total of \$1.5 billion was spent on video game hardware, software, accessories and game cards, eclipsing a previous April high of \$1.2 billion spent in the US in 2008, according to NPD analyst Mat Piscatella.

April was the first full month of tight restrictions on people's movements in the US to prevent the spread of the deadly novel coronavirus.

Sales of video game software alone climbed 55 percent to \$662 million, a new record high for the month, according to NPD.

"Final Fantasy VII: Remake" was the top-selling game during the month, setting a new sales record for the blockbuster vide game franchise, Piscatella's analysis showed.

"Call of Duty: Modern Warfare" continued to be a hot seller, being the second most purchased title during April, followed by "Animal Crossing: New Horizons."

Animal Crossing has been the best-selling game for Nintendo Switch consoles during the past year, according to NPD.

In a sign that people stuck at home want to move a bit while sheltering-in-place, the latest edition of "Just Dance" from Ubisoft boogied its way onto the NPD list of top selling games.

US spending on video game hardware more than doubled to \$420 million, the highest April total since 2008 and despite the fact that new PlayStation and Xbox consoles are due for release later this year.

Nintendo Switch was the most popular console among buyers.

"Year-to-date dollar sales of Nintendo Switch are the highest of any hardware platform in US history," Piscatella said in his analysis.

Meanwhile, sales of Xbox One and PlayStation 4 were each up 160 percent from the same month last year, according to NPD.

The news comes with several big tech firms moving deeper into gaming.

Google recently launched its streaming game service Stadia, and the new Apple Arcade platform offers titles for iOS-powered devices.

Facebook last month launched a stand-alone app allowing users to create and watch livestreams of games.

Amazon this week released its first big-budget gam Crucible from its Amazon Game Studios.

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Citation: US video game industry sees record April sales: survey (2020, May 22) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2020-05-video-game-industry-april-sales.html>

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