

Online video game showcases a remedy for coronavirus-caused summertime blues without E3 trade show

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Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, video games remain a hobby that can be enjoyed at home.

If the shortage of Nintendo Switch consoles is any indication, people nationwide made stay-at-home orders easier by jumping into virtual worlds.

Another sign that gamers are turning to their controllers: Consumer spending on [video game](#) software, hardware, accessories and other related goods in May rose 52% to \$977 million, the highest amount for the month in 12 years, according to research firm The NPD Group.

Summer is also the time when video [game](#) devotees learn what is in the pipeline. But most of the industry's quintessential summer showcases—The Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles, in particular—have been canceled due to the threat of the virus, leaving gamers to get industry news from primarily online sources.

"June has always been a really big month in the [gaming industry](#)," Tina Amini, editor in chief of gaming for IGN, told U.S. TODAY. IGN has a "Summer of Gaming" event this month to track all the news. This is, she said, "kind of the unofficial time of year where everyone decides, 'This is where we're going big'."

With the cancellation of the E3 Expo, [game makers](#) and media outlets alike have created their own events this summer to unveil all the upcoming developments.

EA Play Live 2020

In its live online event Thursday (June 18), which starts at 4 p.m. PT/ 7 p.m. ET on ea.com, Electronic Arts promises looks at new games such as "Star Wars: Squadrons" and the new FIFA, as well as updates on what's

coming for games such as "Apex Legends."

"EA Play Live 2020 is about connecting players around the world and bringing them closer to the game franchises they love," EA said on its website. "During this year's digital event, we'll showcase our games through a live broadcast, community content, and more."

IGN hosts Summer of Gaming

Gaming website IGN's Summer of Gaming has been going on since early June and runs to June 25. The event has featured reveals, charity live streams in support of the World Health Organization's COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund and gameplay demos, and there's still more for the days ahead. In all, IGN brought together more than 60 exhibitors for its event.

"I think there's a level of excitement where everyone gets to see what everyone else is working on," she said. "From a personal level, I think everyone was excited that there's this big beat bringing us all together, even if it's not in one week, just in the summertime in general. It's nice to maintain that feeling."

Before the event got started, IGN's Amini said the coronavirus complicated matters, but added there was a sense of excitement from the developers, publishers and the website's readers.

"In general, I think entertainment right now is something that people find really valuable because it's a form of distraction," she said. "It's a reminder of normal life as it was. Having something to hold onto that kind of recites that normalcy has been exciting for us."

Summer Game Fest brings months of gaming

Longtime journalist and The Game Awards creator Geoff Keighley has teamed with YouTube Gaming, which has broadcast The Game Awards since 2014, to offer live, online video game coverage through the Summer Game Fest into August.

Already, he has conducted live pre-shows and post-show coverage of Sony's PS5 event (you can still watch it on YouTube) and the reveal of "Star Wars: Squadrons" (also on YouTube).

The Summer Game Fest also plans coverage of EA Play on Thursday and other events including Google's Stadia Connect in July.

"For the past five years, we've always had these big E3 shows in the summer and, of course, this summer is very different for all of us for a number of reasons," Keighley said during his coverage of the Sony PS5 event. "I still think it so important for the community around the world to come together to celebrate games."

GameSpot launches Play For All

GameSpot's summer digital event features more than 30 publishers in a weeks-long event that got started on June 1. In addition to live events, interviews and on-demand content, the event will also raise funds for the nonprofit Direct Relief and for Black Lives Matter.

"Play For All was built on bringing the gaming community together and leveraging our passion and solidarity to benefit those in need," GameSpot senior editor Tamoor Hussain wrote in a post announcing the event.

"It feels right that we should extend our fundraising efforts to include those fighting against the systemic injustices faced by black people in America, along with supporting Direct Relief's COVID-19 efforts aiding

front-line medical workers," he said.

Ubisoft Forward

Ubisoft hasn't unveiled much about what its calling an "E3-style showcase with plenty of exclusive game news, exciting reveals, and much more," but it's coming in mid-July. Ubisoft's digital event will be on screens July 12.

4th annual Play NYC goes digital

Play NYC's seven-day event runs from Aug. 10 through Aug. 16. For the first time, the game convention features the backing of the New York City mayor's office via an advertising campaign, according to a statement. It'll also feature the annual Graffiti Games installations, with an initiative that will "amplify the work of Black game developers."

"New York has been on pause," Playcrafting CEO and founder Dan Butchko said in a statement announcing the event.

"Our community has struggled through this pandemic. Yet despite trying times and ongoing tensions, we've seen so much hope in how folks have risen up to face the challenges of our reality. This is the greatest city in the world with the strongest people in the world. And games have the power to unite, inspire, educate, and heal. Especially now."

Sony: PS5 Unveiled

Sony officially unveiled its next-gen console on June 11, along with a host of games for the sleek new machine. The PS5 still doesn't have a price point or a confirmed release date, but the list of games—including a new "Ratchet and Clank" and a new Miles Morales-themed "Spider-

Man" game—was enough to start the hype train for Sony.

Microsoft: Digital show coming in July

The successor to the Xbox One, the Xbox Series X, made its debut last fall and Microsoft recently posted a lengthy entry on its website outlining all of the details so far on the console, due to be released this holiday season.

The next digital show for the company will take place in July, Aaron Greenberg, general manager for Xbox Games Marketing at Microsoft, confirmed on Twitter.

"Players are at the center of our vision for gaming," Jason Ronald, director of program management for Xbox Series X, wrote in a post. "Every day we think about giving you and your friends more value from your games and gaming experiences on Xbox. We believe gaming has the power to unify the world through games—but only if it's accessible and inclusive of everyone."

Nintendo: New 'Paper Mario' incoming

Nintendo typically brings its news to gamers via its "Nintendo Direct" events. There was one in March and at the time, the company added release dates and other info unveiled in the presentation were subject to change do to COVID-19.

So, for now, attention turns to the next game in the quirky and popular "Paper Mario" series. "Paper Mario: The Origami King" releases July 17 for the Nintendo Switch, which has been notably scare during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

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