

E3: why the world's biggest video game event just closed for good—and what's next for the industry

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The Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3), an annual trade event for the video game industry, has been permanently cancelled by its organizers,

who cited the [COVID pandemic and changes in company marketing techniques](#) as the reason for the closure.

Stanley Pierre-Louis, CEO of the Entertainment Software Association who organized the expo [told the Washington Post](#): "We know the entire industry, players and creators alike have a lot of passion for E3. We share that passion ... We know it's difficult to say goodbye to such a beloved event, but it's the right thing to do given the new opportunities our industry has to reach fans and partners."

The expo has historically been regarded as the largest and most prominent event in the [video game business](#). Since its inception in 1995, E3 has been a yearly ritual, where developers and publishers gathered to reveal new games and technology. The expo fostered a sense of community in the gaming world as industry people, fans and the media all came together under one roof.

The event's competitive nature pushed game makers to be more innovative and speed up their [research and development](#) to impress the audience, accelerating progress in the industry.

While disappointing for fans who looked forward to E3 celebrations each year, its death seems to symbolize the [game industry's increasing transformation](#) in reaction to digitilisation. Many see the closure as a signal that the industry [needs to adapt to meet the demands of a new era](#).

This is being demonstrated by the move of game producers to deliver streaming sessions en masse, such as Nintendo Directs, Sony State of Plays, Xbox Showcases and The Game Awards among others.

The hybrid gaming era

The cancellation of E3 highlights how in-person presentations are losing

significance [to virtual events and live streams](#). These online formats offer instant global reach, generating more revenue and attracting a broader audience.

As virtual worlds like the metaverse grow, it's likely that fewer people will attend physical gaming events. Instead, fans may prefer to meet up and play games in immersive spaces, using headsets.

And gaming brands are interested. Microsoft's major partnership deal with Meta which was [announced in 2022](#), for example, signals their interest in this new way for people to connect and interact.

Several big game producers, including [PlayStation](#), [Xbox](#) and [Nintendo](#), have concentrated efforts in recent years on building their own showcases for game launches, such as [State of Play](#), outside of E3.

Streaming platforms like YouTube, Twitch and TikTok have become the main places for sharing and promoting video game content, meaning the importance of a big gaming convention like E3 has decreased.

This shift away from physical gatherings, however, risks losing the unique thrill that E3's yearly event inspired. E3 played a crucial role as an anchor and focus point for large developers to catch attention and generate engagement, from unexpected revelations of [legendary franchises like](#) Metal Gear Solid, Final Fantasy and Halo, or to announce big budget product launches like the Nintendo DS.

E3's [extinction event](#) begs the question of how smaller independent studios can maintain widespread recognition without depending only on streaming networks. While internet events like BlizzCon eliminate geographical limits and decrease physical obstacles to entry, they run the danger of diluting promotional efforts for non-AAA titles (AAA titles are video games made by big or medium-sized companies with large

marketing budgets).

The road ahead

In essence, the conclusion of E3 cements the gaming industry's inevitable transition towards [direct, online, creator-to-consumer](#) connection, a pattern mirrored in [most, if not all entertainment industries](#).

A good example of that is [the Fortnite Creative experience](#), where five top gaming influencers are collaborating to create Project V, a custom Fortnite game. They are aiming to make it the leading experience in the platform.

This project leverages their combined 120 million followers and draws inspiration from successful Roblox games, a platform where people [mix work and fun](#) by making and selling digital experiences, learning about trade and investment in a social, creative community and hosting their own events to promote their own games. The project is supported by Epic Games' new [creator revenue-sharing model](#).

While the gap that was created by E3 puts an end to an iconic gaming conference, it does pave the way for future growth in community interaction and [game](#) marketing which is suitable for an increasingly virtual age. Businesses should leverage internet platforms to innovate event and announcement experiences, ensuring they are engaging and accessible to all.

There are several ways businesses could adapt to these changing trends. One approach could be to hold digital conventions over several weeks instead of short, packed events.

This would give more time for individual games to get noticed. Another

strategy could be expanding networks of influencers and content creators, which could aid in the discovery of new games. Additionally, pursuing integration with the metaverse could create virtual social experiences, even when participants are in different locations.

The end of E3 heralds a seismic shift for the gaming industry and players alike. As players migrate away from physical gaming events and seek more online interactions, there will be an increasing need to move away from 2D displays and presentations and towards more immersive, 3D, or mixed-reality experiences.

As the industry navigates this new terrain, it must strike a balance between the thrill of conventional events and the inclusion of online and immersive platforms—all while ensuring diverse voices flourish in an increasingly virtual, but fragmented, gaming world.

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