

# Ubisoft launches long-awaited 'Skull and Bones' video game

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Ubisoft chief executive Yves Guillemot calls 'Skull and Bones' pirate video game 'full and complete' as it gets into the hands of players.

After years of production headwinds, Ubisoft's oft-delayed pirate video game "Skull and Bones" is set to launch on Friday.

The [launch](#), one of the most talked about this year, is a gamble.

Despite swashbuckling seafarers being popular in film and other media, pirates have not been a common theme in video games.

In one rare example, Rare/Microsoft's "Sea of Thieves" released in 2018 took to the [high seas](#) and invited players to "be more pirate."

But a few years after the success in 2013 of its pirate-themed "Black Flag" installment of the blockbuster franchise "Assassin's Creed", French video game powerhouse Ubisoft dove in with what it hopes will be a standalone franchise.

## Stormy seas

Development of the game, however, proved more odyssey than Caribbean cruise given delays, [employee turnover](#), strategy changes and pressure to deliver in the high-cost world of big title video game creation.

By the finish, an array of Ubisoft-owned studios worked together to keep the game afloat.

Seven years after the first images of the game were released in 2017, "Skull and Bones" is ready.

"Skull and Bones" is set in an open virtual world where players can sail alone or "create a gang of pirates with your friends and, together, terrorize the trade routes of the Indian Ocean," said Ubisoft creative director Justin Farren.

Players take on the role of a shipwrecked pirate who, starting with nothing, strives to become the greatest pirate of the Indian Ocean

through plunder and barter.

At the virtual helm, a player must navigate currents and weather; keep the ship and crew in fighting shape; gather resources and fight battles.

"It's a very big game," Ubisoft chief executive Yves Guillemot said during a recent earnings call.

"People will see how vast and complete that game is."

## **High expectations**

Ubisoft now needs to convince gamers that "Skull and Bones" was worth the wait and deserving of the expected \$70 price tag.

The more a game is delayed, the lower the expectations for sales and the more players expect in terms of how good it is, according to Wedbush equities research vice president Nick McKay.

"Gamers have a tendency to have very high expectations," McKay said.

Players who got early access to the game were already taking shots in dedicated Reddit forums, some complaining about not having the option to get off ships and visit land.

"Did anyone think it could be anything other than disappointing?", one Reddit forum member asked.

Some in the forums worried the game would suffer from the push to finally get it done, and then be packed with revenue-seeking pitches to buy outfits, banners, or other digital items.

McKay cautioned to take complaints "with a grain of salt," since critics

are typically more inclined to speak out than those who are happy with something.

Regardless of the game's reception, Ubisoft is already planning more content, such as new ships, adversaries, and other options.

Establishing a devoted sea of fans could enable Ubisoft to keep the game alive and profitable, indefinitely, with new content, features and events.

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