Have we finally found the CoD killer? Activision…

By: Digi_Tron

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Call of Duty has always had it's share of people saying that it won't last and much like the series it helped end, Medal of Honor, the franchise would silently end with the next big first-person shooter coming in to take its place. But Call of Duty has been releasing a new game each year since 2003, with each year becoming more and more loathed then the last. While Call of Duty has had some great successes such as World at War, Modern Warfare 1 & 2, and Black Ops 1 & 2 the last several entries have been slowing angering fans with both the settings, movement system and over all feel of the games. When Call of Duty started to shift from the traditional boots on the ground game play many players had come to expect and enjoy to the more advanced movement system adding in wall running, climbing, boost jumps the series started to suffer. While we had seen the future setting appear in a previous Call of Duty entry (Black Ops 2) the concept was taken even further with the next several entries in Advanced Warfare, Infinite Warfare, and Black Ops 3. Each game tried to add something new to the series but ultimately each game just felt like it was either taking to much form other series or just slightly improved the mechanics of another entry.

I don't think that every idea that they tried to implement into the games were bad, but when they attempted to add other ideas from other games, that it is when Call of Duty stopped being one of the move inventive and forward thinking first person shoot's to trying to play catch up with other games being release. While I know that every game has some degree of wanting to add the "flavor of the month" feel to their game, it always felt like Call of Duty didn't make those new features feel true to the game. Some of the more noted idea's that I have seen added and, in my opinion, felt poorly added were the advanced movement system seen in Titan Fall (Infinite/Advanced warfare), The specialist abilities from Destiny (Black Ops 3), Destructible and interactive environments from Battlefield (Ghosts), a large social area for players to interact from Destiny (WW2). Activision, the publisher behind the series tried to bring the fan base back with a promise to return to the roots of Call of Duty and back to 'a boots' on the ground system with the release of Call of Duty: WWII, developed by Sledgehammer games. While many were excited for the release of the game, the hype was building and ultimately is was unable to deliver. The game was not bad, but it had many flaws that could not be over looked. A create a class system that lacked the depth and freedom of the pick 10 system (or other similar systems), Score streaks that felt underpowered and an over all experience that while it was passable, was not what the series needed to bring people back into the game. Sledgehammer has done a lot to correct the game and in recent updates has tried to improve the game, but that has left many wondering what will the next entry be like? And will it be enough to bring people back?

Black Ops 4, being developed by one of the most popular and trusted developers for Call of Duty, Treyarch Studios hopes to bring the series back to its former glory. But, may fans and critics have been less the excited about the newest game since it was officially announced

on May 17th. With E3 and San Diego Comic Con giving them a forum to speak on the upcoming game, each announcement seemed to disappoint the fan base. We have learned the game will be set before the events of Black Ops 3, with 10 Specialists being playable at launch. Six of which will be returning from Black Ops 3 (Ruin, Prophet, Battery, Seraph, Nomad and Firebreak) and introduce 4 new characters (Recon, Ajax, Torque, Crash.). The game will ship with several maps with 5 being remakes of previous maps we have seen in the Black Ops series (Jungle, Slums, Summit, Firing Range and Nuketown). The game is also changing how it multiplayer works and feels, by focusing on a more tactical and teamwork gameplay. The team count in a typical match has been dropped from 6v6 to 5v5 and will also now limit which characters are able to be picked, meaning if there is a character you enjoy playing and someone else in the lobby has chosen that character then you will not be able to choose that character. The game will also not ship with a traditional campaign mode, instead adding in a new "Black Out" mode that will be a battle royal system, which has been made popular but games like Fortnite and PUBG. While not much has been seen or known about the battle royal made, what has been confirmed is the game mode will feature the largest map in call of duty history, a vehicle system for the players to use, and playable characters from the entire Black Ops series.

The biggest complaints being lodged are the choices in regards to the games Season Pass, the game feeling like a reskinned version of the previous entry Black Ops 3 and the removal of core items such as the campaign. While I think many of the choices Activision has made with the Call of Duty series has been bad for the series, they refuse to learn from their mistakes. It was announced that a season pass would be returning to the game, meaning people would need to first by the base game ($60) and also purchase the season pass ($50) to enjoy and have access to the post launch content. While in past games this has been normal, the shift by such publishes as EA to give the DLC and updates away for free for Battlefield 5 and other games promising free DLC it shows a shift in publishes thinking, especially in a micro-transaction heavy world that games are used to now. The choice to still charge the community will in my opinion be what helps bring down Black Ops 4, by splitting the community in 3 parts. Those who have the pass, those who choose not to have it, and those who play CoD for the Zombie's experience. With an already dwindling player base and the choices of Activision to rely on an outdated DLC model, I think this may be what helps end Call of Duty as we know it.

Activison has constantly proven that in the end, the care about profit or player concerns, and I get it, they are a company that needs to make money. But, with each game, they seem to make a little bit more of the player base angry. Some of those ideas are:

- Re-releasing Call of Duty, which many people loved was a great idea…but bundling it with Infinite Warfare and only being able to play the game that way was a bad idea that angered many who only wanted to play the remastered Modern Warfare (eventually they did release this as a standalone game)
- Charging for the map packs for the remastered addition- Instead of giving away the map packs for free they were charging fore them, in some cases more then what they originally cost.
- Lootbox weapon dominance- With loot boxes introduced in Advanced Warfare, many of the best weapons were hidden away as a random loot drop in these boxes leaving many players at a huge disadvantage when they could not or would not purchase a loot crate.

In the end, I think Call of Duty will live or Die by the choices made in the next two games. If Black Ops 4 is met with a large disapproval and backlash for the choices Activision has put in place and don't correct it in the next title, it very well may be time to end the series as there are other offerings out there for players to try and spend their money on. Call of Duty is no longer the king of first person shooters it once was and with Activision still acting like it is, this can only spell disaster for the series. With an upcoming Beta and a release date of October 12th we will soon see if the game can change the minds of a large player base and bring people back to the once dominate series or will this help send the series to its final days. We may have to press "X" to pay our respect's soon to the game series…