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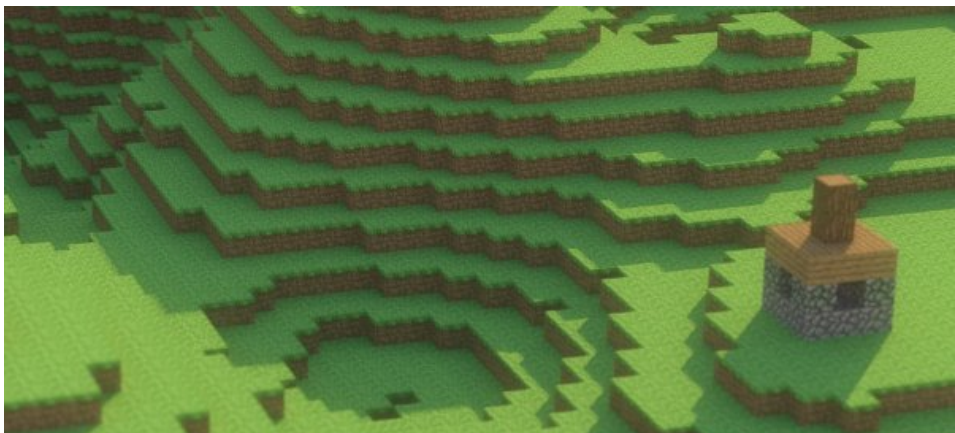
[A People's History Of The FPS, Part 3: The Postmod](#)

By [Robert Yang](#) on September 21st, 2012 at 11:00 am.

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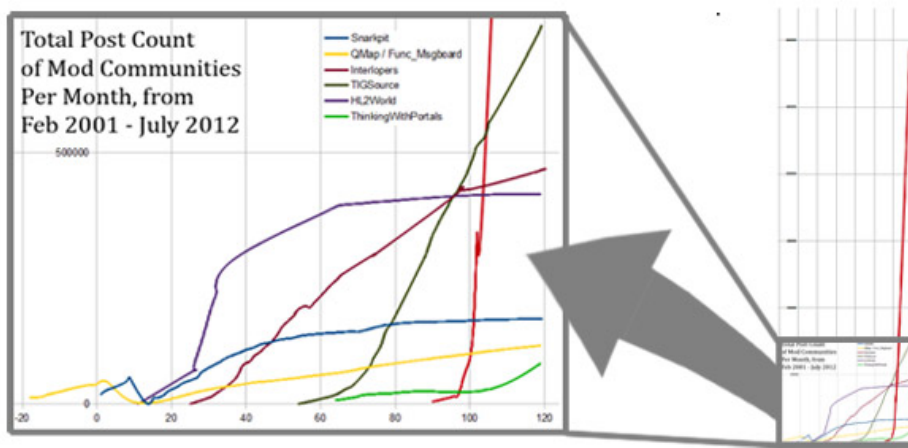
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"A People's History" is a three part essay series that argues for a long-standing but suppressed tradition of non-industry involvement in the first person genre. This is part three. [[Part one.](#) [Part two.](#)]

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The graph above shows the total post count for a number of FPS modding forums from February 2001 – July 2012 that I sampled primarily from Archive.org snapshots. Though activity doesn't always correlate with total post count, the nearly horizontal flattened lines from left to right, suggest less output and a dying community.

The tall red line is the outlier. It needed its own graph on the right because this mod community was bigger than the combined corpses of every single FPS mod community that ever came before it in the history of video games.

The tall red line is [the modding section of MinecraftForum.net](http://the.modding.section.of.MinecraftForum.net).

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(Take whatever conception you had of Minecraft's popularity, size, and culture — then multiply that inkling by a thousand, and you're close to imagining its magnitude.)



In parts one and two, I've argued that FPS modding was quickly transformed from its roots in subversive, experimental, and unregulated design practice into a domesticating tool to farm amateur developers for the AAA game industry. But as Minecraft now shows, the AAA game industry must now share this control with an emerging indie game industry / cultural phenomenon.

If you're a fresh cohort of graduates from Digipen, do you try to get a job at Bungie, or do you try to "go indie" with a first person puzzle game in UDK or something? Do you choose the normal mapped door, full of stable wages, soda, and crunch time — or the pixelated door, of relative poverty, a shot at an IGF trophy, and "creative freedom"?

As the industry and indie fight each other, the amateur profits. Or maybe both forces are fighting for custody over the amateur. Either way, the tension is beautiful and disgusting, elegant and messy. I'm going to plead uncertainty here: I don't think I can decide what is causing what, or who is good and who is a traitor to all video games.

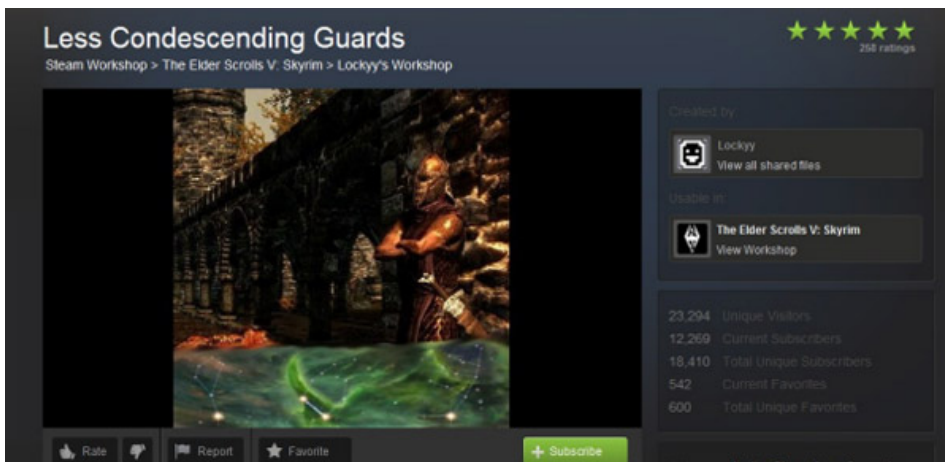
Will the AAA industry consolidate and collapse? Will indie games remain relatively niche with rare successes? Will consoles be more open or more closed, vs. Windows / OSX? Will mobile take over everything?

Until the future happens, I can't really untangle the connections, so all I can tell you is what I'm seeing as somewhat isolated fragments:

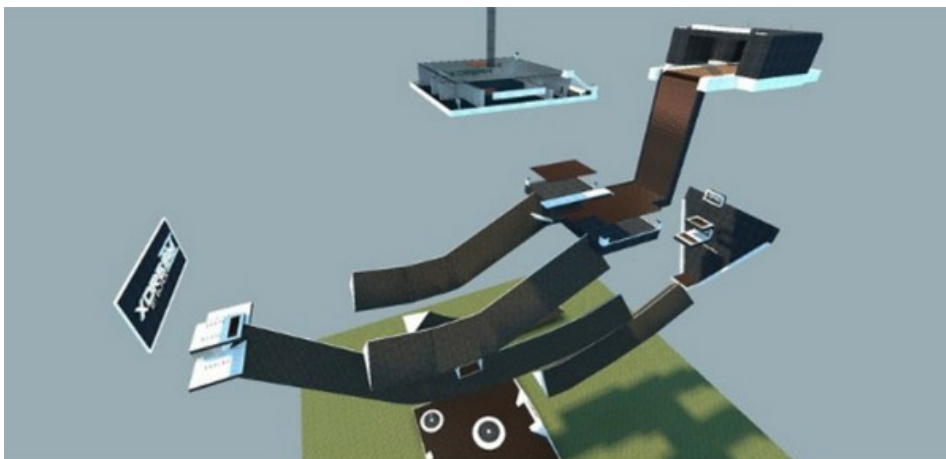


I see more **mods getting automated distribution from centralized databases**. Before, you had to wait in line to download a .ZIP from the late Fileplanet or HL2Files.biz. One of Steam Workshop's strengths has been how both uploading and downloading mods are as simple as possible... it sure beats trying to get my files seeded across mirrors for several days.

I also see more **modding becoming more modular**. Mods for the "trinity" (HL1 / Q3 / UT) were usually walled gardens that functioned as isolated games. These days, you can blindly download 200 random Skyrim mods and watch them collide; combinations of mods become new mods in themselves. The ongoing struggle to maintain compatibility requires more communication between modders, and thus a stronger community. Usually.

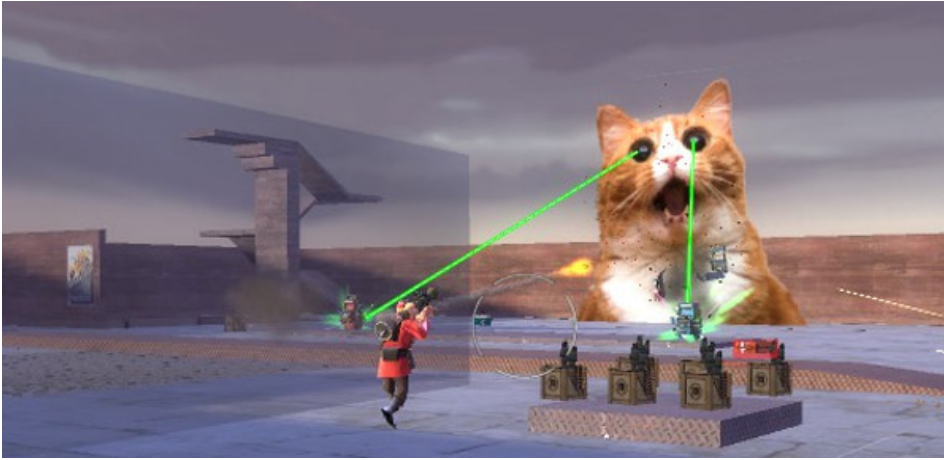


I see more **mods making critical arguments**. One of the first Doom 3 mods was [the Duct Tape mod](#), reversing id's choice to make the flashlight a separate weapon. Some of the first Skyrim mods were barely veiled design criticism: try [Less Condescending Guards](#), [Auto Unequip Arrows](#), or [Divine Punishment](#). Note that **modularity (see above) made mods as speech more sustainable** because who'd download and activate [Better Vampire](#) (which says "the original vampire stats suck") if it meant you couldn't play other mods? What if instead of writing text reviews for games, we wrote reviews in the form of rule changes, modding the game to prove that, yes, the AK-47 was too powerful? Isn't criticism just a design document for a better game?



I see **maps and servers acting as mods**. The right to host our own dedicated servers was about the right to promote conc map culture in Team Fortress Classic, low gravity servers and surf maps in Counter-Strike Source, achievement maps in Team Fortress 2... and fake achievement trap

maps in Team Fortress 2. These maps are mods because they significantly reconfigure game rules and social norms of acceptable play. Surf maps require very different skills from high-level CPL play, for example.



I see **modding as conceptual art**. You probably never played the [fake achievement Kittygeddon trap map](#) in Team Fortress 2 or [the 16-bit ALU computer world](#) made in Minecraft, but you've probably seen the video. Among late Doom modders, there's even a "[Joke WAD](#)" genre where people compete to outdo each other in making an awful, poorly designed level. Yes, it's important that these were playable and that they exist, but it's not as important for you to play them yourself. These mods were made to exist as stories and videos, and that's usually how they're consumed.



I see **mods in post-amateur/professional divide**. The team leader of Black Mesa Source, Carlos Montero, is an art lead at Cryptic Studios — which means an industry veteran has led one of the biggest, most complicated amateur projects in the history of FPS mods. He probably wasn't modding to get a job he already had. Industry status is irrelevant; we're all amateurs.



So we're at the point when history is what happened 5 seconds ago, but it takes time to realize what exactly happened. Game development history is important because it's the story we tell ourselves, why we are the way we are. This is the collective story and its values that we'll embody. It's the same reason why any history is important.

History is more than what John Carmack did on a certain day, as important as that was — history is also certain clans pioneering new strategies on `dod_caen`, or the rise of `fy_iceworld`. Did you know people have been modding Asian women into NBA games? How many stories are out there, and

how many mods?



If my mom asked me what mods were, I'd have to think about it for a while, then respond, "Well, they're maps with embedded Turing-complete logic systems that you 'subscribe to', made by professional game developers in their spare time, but most people just watch them on YouTube instead."

Well, hmm, that's not really accurate.

Maybe we could call these things "postmods" as a play off of "postmodern", these things that are complicating our understanding of mods, blurring lines and distinctions to the point that we can only reliably label them as "things."

Let me be clear in my usage: I'm not saying Steam Workshop or ModDB should roll-out a "postmod" category. In fact, it doesn't really matter what you call them, just as long as you understand that *shit is changing*.

Whatever mods or "mod culture" is or will be, it's bigger than some silly industry vs. indie battle and it's bigger than the platform wars. I'm just trying to emphasize that we're on the brink of something different and fantastic here, a place where we're thinking of games less as fixed products / spaces that "gamers" and players consume, but instead as a conversation with everyone all at once that expands if people want it to.

It's games as graffiti, games as a circus, games as a potluck dinner — games transcending art and becoming culture, generated and sustained by people.

Doesn't that sound pretty?

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1.

21/09/2012 at 11:15 [Prime](#) says:

The image of the laser-beam-eyed kitten on the TF2 map is possibly the greatest piece of art I have ever seen in my life. Encore, encore!

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o

21/09/2012 at 13:43 [cunningmunki](#) says:

Watch the video.

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■

21/09/2012 at 14:11 [Malibu Stacey](#) says:

If you want to hear someone say “this is so epic” repeatedly while using the least amount of enthusiasm in their voice as is humanly possible then go for it.

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■

21/09/2012 at 21:08 [Quarex](#) says:

Yes, that comment is definitely proof that the word “epic” is now used as a synonym for “mildly interesting,” which is a shame. Particularly since that cat, in context, actually does come close to resembling “epic.”

Another great article overall, and the idea of mods as critical response is a great one. “NO CLIFFRACERS” is the first mod I remember downloading in the post-Doom modding era, and it is for precisely the reason that everyone agreed the game was amazing ... with one significant exception.

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2.

21/09/2012 at 11:17 [Groove](#) says:

I’ve been enjoying this series more and more as it’s gone on. That is to say, I really liked this piece, the second piece was nice, and the first was a bit bumgarden.

Also, for me easy mods are really important. Apart from the zeitgiests of CS and TFC, I’ve never really installed a mod that expected more than a few seconds work to setup. I’ve done some minecraft stuff, fiddled a few files and obviously downloaded maps, but nothing beyond that. My ideal mod was playing Warcraft 3, doing a search, clicking on something fun, and having the map/mod auto-download. I think Steam workshop is great, since my view on downloading a skyrim UI fix is, if it’s more hassle to install the mod than the hassle it’ll save me in game, then why bother?

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3.

21/09/2012 at 11:25 [evilbobthebob](#) says:

Modding has certainly changed a lot. I remember when it was almost impossible to get on the front page of ModDB without making a mod for HL2. Now? Now I count the genres in the top 100. 30% FPS mods, 45% RTS mods.

I want to see a People’s History of the RTS. Sure, the genre itself has become more niche over time but the communities around RTS tend to be more open to complexity- such is the nature of the RTS genre. As a modder of a six year old RTS title, I am actually quite glad to see the decline of Source modding. The asset pipeline was always terrible for modders. The mods were often all too similar to each other. Now other games get a chance to shine, out of the spotlight of the TF2s and Skyrim’s with their own nuclei on Steam Workshop and the like.

Oh, the other bonus of RTS modding? You can keep the asset creation simple. Who needs 1000 polygon lampposts when the player only sees them as a small stick with a light on...

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21/09/2012 at 11:45 [JackShandy](#) says:

Maybe, but Minecraft and 30 Flights of Loving prove that you can keep FPS assets just as simple.

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21/09/2012 at 12:00 [evilbobthebob](#) says:

Certainly, but that is more part of the “indie style” trend (and it seems that like music we now have something of that in gaming) than “AAA style” FPS modding. In the top ten mods on ModDB right now I’d say that only The Stanley Parable is experimental in any way. Minecraft mods are as they are due to the restrictions of the engine in terms of art assets. 30 Flights of Loving’s style is a careful aesthetic choice. I would personally like to see more FPS mods in those styles, but most gamers don’t want that, it seems. They want realistic graphics and their favourite franchise.

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26/09/2012 at 19:20 [tomeoftom](#) says:

Argh! NO! I’m so sick of hearing that! Low-poly models and low-resolution pixels are a **result of** independent development, not a subset of it. Please, please can we stop making this frustrating assumption?

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21/09/2012 at 11:56 [R_Yell](#) says:

But there are Source RTS mods too! Now you should die a little inside. Jokes aside, yeah FPS were predominant.

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21/09/2012 at 11:45 [Ansob](#) says:

What if instead of writing text reviews for games, we wrote reviews in the form of rule changes, modding the game to prove that, yes, the AK-47 was too powerful? Isn’t criticism just a design document for a better game?

There is an extremely worrying trend, especially in AAA FPSes, of moving away from this understanding and towards a “the game developers are professionals and therefore the only ones who know anything; how *dare* you try to tell us that you know better than them?” view of things, spearheaded by EA and Activision’s efforts to make their flagship titles unmoddable and by the passing of the torch of mainstream gaming from the PC to the closed console environment.

I really hope the trend dies an ignoble death soon, because otherwise we’re up shit creek.

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21/09/2012 at 12:12 [Arvind](#) says:

I think this is because modding is at direct odds with the usual monetization strategy of the big titles these days. Who would pay 15 dollars for a map/weapon pack if they could play N number of custom maps/weapons available for free?

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21/09/2012 at 12:23 [Turkey](#) says:

They want their users to jump to their next instalment in their series, so there's really no incentive to build a community that'll last longer than a couple of years.

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21/09/2012 at 14:07 *Ansob* says:

From a publisher perspective, totally, those are the reasons. The real problem is that there is increasingly less push-back from consumers – these days, cries of “they’ve made modding impossible” tend to be met with either “you are an entitled gamer, shame on you” or “consoles being a closed platform is a good thing because it means you can’t ruin the game and stop us from experiencing it as the developers intended it!”

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21/09/2012 at 15:56 *zaphod42* says:

It does compete with DRM, but I think that just proves most DRM isn't high enough quality for the cost. Skyrim's tons of mods do compete with the DRM and make me care much less about Skyguard, why pay money for a short mod, when there are other mods just as big for free?

But on the other hand, the mods add tons of value and sell the base game. Skyrim is worth a lot more because there's so much mod content available. Back in the older days, before game companies had the huge monopolies and fan favor they take advantage of, they were desperate to get people to notice their game.

Half-life sold so well partially because you could tell people “Buy this game. Buy it now. Then you can play Counter-Strike and Half-Life and Natural Selection and The Specialists and everything else FOR FREE.” You wanted it even if you didn't care about half-life itself! That adds TONS of value.

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21/09/2012 at 17:06 *Beelzebud* says:

DRM = Digital Rights Management
DLC = Downloadable Content

Also: Half Life sold well because it was an amazing game. The mods came long after the game was already popular. For one there wasn't an SDK for a while after the game released. The only reason it had such a vibrant modding community was because the core game was hugely successful and popular with PC gamers.

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21/09/2012 at 22:47 *Culprit* says:

Counter Strike sold new copies of Half-Life years after its initial release. MODs do sell the base game. I had many friends that bought HL only to play CS. Many of them didn't even play HL until HL2 was announced.



21/09/2012 at 22:53 *rapchee* says:

i personally know quite a few guys who bought half life (i made most of them do it nyohoho) who never did play the single player part. or started and quit after 3 minutes of not shooting.



25/09/2012 at 07:11 *lorddon* says:

I mostly agree with this analysis, except DayZ.....

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5.

21/09/2012 at 11:46 Xari says:

Beautifully written piece! I've had this kind of vibe already in a few instances, most recent one being the 'Misery' mod for S.T.A.L.K.E.R.: Call of Pripjat (big recommendation!). I love the way how everyone who fell in love with STALKER's extremely hostile atmosphere and struggle for survival united on that to take it to a next level, experiencing a post-apocalyptic Zone of Exclusion more hardcore than ever before and share stories of their countless deaths.

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21/09/2012 at 16:27 phelix says:

That is true! I played countless hours of MISERY-fied Call of Pripjat and it is so unforgiving, beautiful, deadly and inviting at the same time. I love the emphasis on survival; whereas in vanilla CoP things like food were no longer an issue after 30 minutes of play.

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6.

21/09/2012 at 12:07 Arvind says:

A really great series of articles. I personally think the ease of availability of tools like Unity, UDK and libraries like SDL, SFML (which mean coding your stuff from scratch is easier) has resulted in the "total conversion" guys just moving to making a separate game. Even teams behind famous mods are now going the indie route (Team Dys, Team Chivalry and the insurgency guys for example), which should hopefully mean the rise of the small module mods.

With steam workshop being a great endorsement of modding by the biggest retailer in the PC market, I hope other companies like EA or MS (could something like Steam Workshop be done on consoles?) follow their lead. Interesting times ahead!

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21/09/2012 at 12:22 R_Yell says:

Interesting times except for Source mods, ironic. Great endorsement by Valve yep.

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21/09/2012 at 12:50 Arvind says:

Valve released the portal 2 mapping tool and the hat thingies in TF2, so I don't think they want to kill source modding. However, valve's tools are terrible (*hammer cough*), so that may be the reason why people moved on when better tools arrived.

(If your second line wasn't sarcasm, then please ignore the above paragraph)

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21/09/2012 at 13:26 R_Yell says:

Yeah well, those initiatives you refer just push used created content for specific games. Source mods are a different species. And not all of them are CS:S clones like some people like to say, there have been incredibly creative projects too. That side of modding have been completely neglected by Valve in recent years and the different workshops that spawned around just prove something: Valve want to push Steam as gaming platform, not mods. Don't be naive, they should have started creating a workshop for Source mods if they cared about modding at all.

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21/09/2012 at 14:08 Ansob says:

Yeah, I definitely feel that Valve don't care much for Source TCs in general, with a few exceptions (Black Mesa!). I

am hoping the latest of the aforementioned exceptions leads to Valve doing more for people who want to do Source TCs.



21/09/2012 at 12:27 [beaniepuck](#) says:

I'm surprised no one mentioned DayZ.

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21/09/2012 at 15:43 [deadly.by.design](#) says:

Somebody yesterday said that doesn't count, because the guy works at Bohemia.

But I say it counts, considering Black Mesa has team members that work in the industry, too.

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21/09/2012 at 20:00 [Jahkaivah](#) says:

“Black Mesa has team members that work in the industry, too.”

Do any of them work at Valve though? It's one thing when professionals mod games from other companies. But when professionals mod their own games, well that seems to be pretty much the same as doing their job, arguably defeating the whole definition of modding.

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21/09/2012 at 12:58 [sonofsanta](#) says:

It's games as graffiti, games as a circus, games as a potluck dinner — games transcending art and becoming culture, generated and sustained by people.

Doesn't that sound pretty?

It sounds like the fulfillment of every long quoted dream of the Internet, an electronic nirvana of democratised production and art, the lunatics running the asylum and finding out they were never mad, they were just being lied to.

Can't wait.

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21/09/2012 at 13:04 [diebroken](#) says:

DOOM mods are the ones I look forward to playing the most.

[Maybe better than the forthcoming ACM game... mostly :\)](#)

(Edit: better give some reason for the initial post)

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21/09/2012 at 13:18 [RagingLion](#) says:

This part was my favourite of the pieces. I couldn't necessarily see how all the different things being mentioned always related together in the previous ones or see a strong argument in them (2nd being better than 1st). I could see what was being got at here and these are some interesting trends. It's an astute point to make that many mods and games get consumed in different ways than directly playing them — that watching a Youtube video might be the primary way of people experiencing them but that's still having an influence. I know I vicariously enjoyed some of Quinns' stories about experiencing old mods but wouldn't seek them out myself.

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21/09/2012 at 13:47 *R_Yell* says:

And that's why the author's conclusions don't convince me. A game isn't a game anymore if it doesn't involve interaction. There should be a discussion about why some people prefer to watch other people playing something, instead movies or tv shows. That's the correct perspective for me, are we talking about games or just entertainment?

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11.



21/09/2012 at 13:24 *Dances to Podcasts* says:

“Do you choose the normal mapped door, full of stable wages, soda, and crunch time — or the pixelated door, of relative poverty, a shot at an IGF trophy, and “creative freedom”?”

Why not both? I see a lot of stories on RPS or about Kickstarter where developers are advertised as ‘worked at X’ or ‘worked on game Y’. Of course, they could’ve made the coffee, but the number of times I’m seeing it is worrying. This mentality leaves less opportunity for the ‘guy with a great idea out of nowhere’.

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12.

21/09/2012 at 13:40 *The Sombrero Kid* says:

Great series of articles, not sure where on any of the spectrums I fit in, I'm making a game from scratch, I already work in the industry but not at a AAA dev. The way I look at it is i'm making the game I want to make and I'm doing it in my own game engine because I can and don't want to be beholden to someone else when I don't have to be.

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21/09/2012 at 14:10 *Malibu Stacey* says:

Why would write your own engine from scratch when stuff like Ogre3D exists?

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21/09/2012 at 14:27 *The Sombrero Kid* says:

Ogre 3D doesn't provide anything I need. What little it does offer I implemented myself very quickly.

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13.



21/09/2012 at 14:12 *kwyjibo* says:

Found this series of articles very disappointing. Instead of addressing FPS evolution through the eyes of the mod scene, it instead addresses the history of the modders, and not the mods.

Everyone already knows that mods have become essential CV filling devices for aspiring developers. Big ass all star mod team falls down due to over-ambition, lack of planning, and everybody leaving for actual jobs? This wasn't a people's history of the FPS at all, it was one man's history of mod teams.

The promise of the first article was that it was to be a sideways glance as to the evolution of the FPS, but we never saw that at all. It was interesting to find out that Team Fortress introduced the headshot, or how the Aliens WAD nailed the creep-out no enemies introduction. Those were snapshots of FPS history that we don't often see, no this flimsy, “on one hand, this, on the other hand, that” bullshit.

It would have been interesting to see where mods had lead the way, and shaped FPS's from the outside. Take a look at what Malice introduced. Take a look at the history of commercial property misappropriation, highlighting stuff like Ravages of Apocalypse (which somehow wrangled a license) and Black Mesa.

Instead of researching and looking into all this, a corner of FPS history that is largely overlooked, you concentrated on mod teams continually

remodelling AK47s.

Stop remodelling AK47s.

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21/09/2012 at 14:50 *Dervish* says:

The graph at the top gave me hope, then I realized from the image size that I wasn't actually supposed to look closely at it. I feel this is a metaphor for the article series as a whole—general impressions instead of insight.

A retrospective that highlights lesser-known facts about modding popularity and influence and draws conclusions from that data could have been really fascinating and would have lived up to the article title. It's possible to have substance without being a dry history. Instead we got "Here's some thoughts I had about modding over the years."

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21/09/2012 at 15:02 *GunnerMcCaffrey* says:

The article you describe sounds interesting. Maybe you should write it.

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21/09/2012 at 18:09 *Joshua Northey* says:

This.

This was more a history of his perceptions of FPS modding and his experiences than any actual attempt at an interesting analysis of what was going on. FPS modding as viewed by an industry insider...

I only ever modded TBS games and paradox games (and worked on open source star Wesnoth), but I feel like I could write a more cogent and comprehensive review of the histories of FPS modding, its pitfalls and triumphs than this just from having played FPS games and used FPS mods (as well as identifying themes from the mods of other genres).

Mods were full of people making empty promises about their work ethic, and people with personalities that would prevent them from making it through an interview as much as they were some method of breaking into the industry. Bobby the wannabe dictator who would rather be in charge on an incomplete broken project his volunteers have abandoned than cede some authority to others.

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14.



21/09/2012 at 14:32 *jackelope* says:

Why yes, I have played the "fake achievement Kittygeddon trap map." It was both amazingly funny and horrifying.

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15.



21/09/2012 at 15:22 *Mman* says:

The idea sounded really interesting but this article series seemed to be lacking in some major ways for me. For instance, basically spending the entire second part treating every mod that attempts to build on the base game, rather than doing something different, as some sort of embarrassing footnote in history as a failed attempt to emulate AAA games. Which does a massive disservice to many modern (and several older ones too) "traditional" mods for older games that are refined to a point way beyond most retail games that are brought out. It seems especially odd in light of the fact you are remaking Someplace Else, which is a poster-child for this.

It also misses an interesting divergence in modding in general as time has gone on. In every semi-active old modding community I follow there's three-way split that has formed between old-school "traditional" mods that follow the gameplay and style of their base game, newer mods that generally focus more on pushing their chosen game engine as far as it will go (and sometimes beyond) with scripting, storytelling and high levels of detail, and lastly there's mods that completely ignore the base game and do something entirely different (there could also be a fourth category for mods that combine all these philosophies, but that's essentially a combo of the other three).

Since this posed itself as a kind of history of modding I was expecting more coverage of things like this, but it seems they were essentially

ignored, of course I may have misinterpreted the idea behind this article series a bit.

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21/09/2012 at 16:43 *GunnerMcCaffrey* says:

Why do people feel entitled to review this article like it's a game? If there are things in which you have some knowledge that you think deserve a similar treatment, then it's your job to write about them. You can add to all our knowledge rather than just diminish someone else's work. Think of it as modding, if that helps.

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21/09/2012 at 17:10 *Mman* says:

Or I could question seeming oversights (even if they aren't at least it opens room for some sort of explanation) rather than falling for "WHY DONT U DO BETTER???". Also being accused of "entitlement" in this context is hilarious.

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21/09/2012 at 17:16 *Dervish* says:

Critical comments DO "add to all our knowledge" if the person knows what they're talking about. Even a simple "You're wrong about X" nitpick can counter *misinformation*.

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21/09/2012 at 18:41 *GunnerMcCaffrey* says:

I'm not saying people shouldn't make critical comments, I'm saying that presenting them as "You should have written the article I would have written," as two or three people have, is... rather odd. And it's kind of ironic in a discussion about modding communities, which basically take a "See a need, fill a need" attitude, rather than the typical online attitude of "The free thing you just offered me and which I didn't even know I wanted five minutes ago is not up to my standards." If it can be done better, please show us how. If there's additional information we might all benefit from, please share. But doing it in the form of a pissy little review of someone's article on a community blog is just cynical and lazy.

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21/09/2012 at 19:26 *Mman* says:

"You should have written the article I would have written"

If you really think pointing out potential flaws in an article means someone has any want to write a similar article then you've got some major projection going on.

16.

21/09/2012 at 15:23 *Leperous* says:

Interesting read and interesting graph – that big blue dip was my doing! – but there's a lot still to be said for YouTube greatly boosting (pre- and post-) modding's popularity (c.f. the hilarity present in Minecraft and Garry's Mod) in recent years. Also the fact that it is still relatively non-monetarized is a wonderful thing.

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17.

21/09/2012 at 16:23 *vonkrieger* says:

Comment fail.

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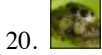
18. 21/09/2012 at 16:42 *Urthman* says:
- So from a sheer numbers standpoint (or a bird's eye view from a complete outsider), the definition of modding is:
- “Modifications made to the game Minecraft (and occasionally other games).”

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19. 21/09/2012 at 17:18 *MadTinkerer* says:
- I have something very special planned for Torchlight II when the editor is released. Watch out for it. :)

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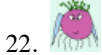
20. 21/09/2012 at 17:30 *Alevice* says:
- TIGSource a mod community? HMMM

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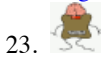
21. 21/09/2012 at 17:30 *BluElement* says:
- Speak for yourself. I spent plenty of time playing on Kittygeddon. And fun was had by all.
- But seriously, more articles like this would be awesome.

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22. 21/09/2012 at 19:30 *ffordesoon* says:
- This series should be longer. Yang nosed at a few intriguing ideas, and it was an excellent read, but taken together, the pieces feel like one of those excerpts from a forthcoming book you sometimes read in magazines, rather than the book itself.
- I suppose the brevity could be considered part of the point (“If you want more, follow the links!”), but it feels like Yang is pointlessly rushing himself offstage despite having a whole lot more to tell.

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23. 21/09/2012 at 20:28 *Baines* says:
- I'm honestly not sure the graph at the beginning really helps the point being made, other than to say that modding Minecraft is an insanely popular topic.
- Only two communities really flat-line, although one was a very popular community early on. HL2World skyrockets but then pretty much dies, looking at the graph. Snarkpit is the other flatliner, but it was already slowing when HL2World was still alive.
- QMap just chugs along. It doesn't break out, but it does continue to increase.
- ThinkingWithPortals started slow and then grew.
- TIGSource continued to climb. If it weren't for Minecraft, TIGSource would be the success story of the graph. Although, while I cannot speak for the other communities, TIGSource is a lot more than a mod community. It is a (slow) news and reviews site, and it also spends much more time talking about new games rather than mod.
- While I'd have willingly said that modding has fallen out of favor compared to the past, I just don't think the graph is much in the way of evidence.

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24.



21/09/2012 at 20:57 *Baines* says:

Something else to consider is the rise of game developing engines like Unity. If you go back to the early days of modding, modding was what many did if they wanted to make a game, because they didn't have the ability to make an entire game from scratch. Products like Unity, Gamedemaker, Construct, and the like have lowered that bar. The release of engine SDKs also helps those who are more coding-minded. Garry's Mod drew the attention of people who just wanted to fool around with assets.

Active modding sites seem more connected to specific games, perhaps, as well. If you wanted to mess with Dungeon Defenders mods, then you went to Dungeon Defenders' forum. If you wanted to mess with Torchlight mods, then the best place to go became Torchlight's forums. There were multiple web sites for Super Smash Bros Brawl modding, but they were focused on modding just Super Smash Bros Brawl. (If you compare it to an earlier era, Gamecube game modding appeared mostly centered around Gamecube cheat code sites. Super Smash Bros Melee work was done right beside Resident Evil 4 work. I can't speak for the other consoles of that period, though I know there was game modding going on for them as well. And if you think "cheat codes" weren't modding, then you didn't see some of the stuff that was being done. There was complete file replacement as well as recoding parts of the executables for some games.) Of course when the popularity of those games wane, their related sites wither.

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25.

21/09/2012 at 22:00 *elmo.dudd* says:

does a Find for Quake, finds nothing

Really? I mean yeah they call out Func_ in the graph (though why Inside3d wasn't included on that, as it is specifically for modding, not focused around mapping) but it didn't come up in the actual subject matter? The original article mentions Team Fortress, but the game has had so much in the ways of modding...

Capture the Flag

King of the Hill

Holy Wars

Zerstorer

Get Rich Quake

Future vs Fantasy

AirQuake (yes, airplane combat)

Nehahra

Dark Omen

Quake Rally

Quess

Prydon Gate (isometric third person action rpg)

Snowed (skifree clone, no really)

Ascension of Vigil (side scrolling beat 'em up with combos and magic, think Final Fight meets CV: Symphony of the Night – in Quake)

Kleshik (ultra insane coop horror)

Transloqator (puzzle gameplay a la Portal but using a variation on UT's translocator)

Defeat in Detail (RTS)

StealthQuake (plays like something between Thief and Hitman)

And oh so much more.

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26.

21/09/2012 at 22:21 *rockman29* says:

How do you people write so awesome? Thanks for the articles!

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27.

22/09/2012 at 01:30 *The13thRonin* says:

Minecraft is not a FPS...

You can't compare apples with oranges...

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28.

22/09/2012 at 09:42 Nate says:

Every single line plotted on your graph has a positive slope. Don't you think that "dying" is a poor word to describe seven growing websites? Even were the lines horizontal (they're not), that doesn't mean less output, that means equal output.

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