

MARKLE FORUM on CHILDREN and MEDIA

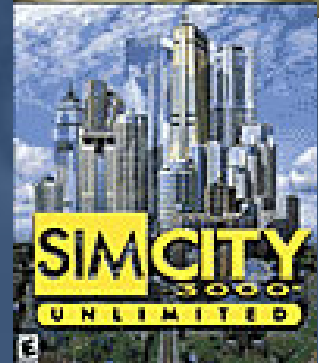
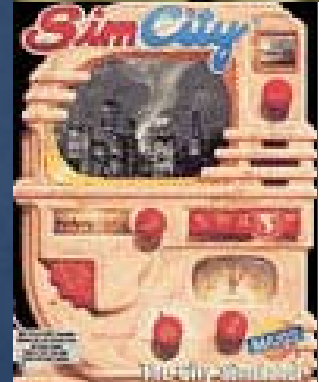
SIMCITY Maxis

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Why SimCity?

- SimCity is a game
- SimCity has been used in classrooms as an educational tool
- SimCity has a uniquely broad audience since its original version
- How has its educational appeal aided in the success of SimCity?
- How have the above factors affected both iterations of SimCity as well as other Maxis games?

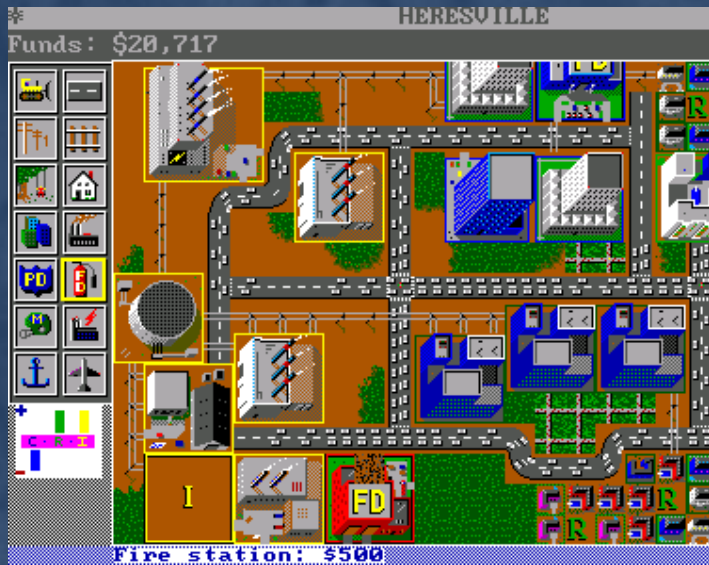
SimCity Case Presentation

- The SimCity Franchise
 - Creative and development approach
 - The role of research
- The PC Entertainment Market
- The SimCity Audience
- Market & Response

The SimCity Franchise

- SimCity is a thirteen year phenomenon
 - SimCity Original, 1989
 - SimCity 2000, 1993
 - SimCity 3000 & Unlimited, 1999 & 2000
- Lifetime sales of over 9M units
- Grown from \$20M to \$122M per title franchise since its first release
- ❖ Note: this excludes license and compilation units/revenue

The Evolution of SimCity



Origins of the Idea

- Will Wright was inspired about building cities, organically, when making another game, *Raid on Bungling Bay*
- A lifetime interest in emergent complex behavior from simple systems
- Topical Research – specific inspiration came from Jay Forrester's work in modeling cities on computers for social science study purposes

SimCity Description

- SimCity gives you the power to build the ultimate urban empire; your city, your way.
 - The first of a new type of entertainment software now known as “God” games.
 - A system simulation that provides the player with a set of rules and tools to create and control an urban environment
 - A software toy, a sandbox

Development – Creative Goals

- Innovate – Create engaging systems for familiar or not so familiar topics; cities, people, ants
- SIM brand values
 - Open Ended/Blank Canvas
 - Creative/Thinking
 - Challenging/Building
- Ease of Entry
- Open Model – customization
 - www.simcity.com

SimCity inspired titles

- SimEarth – 1990
- SimAnt – 1991
- A Train – 1992
- SimHealth – 1993 (with Markle Foundation)
- SimFarm – 1994
- SimTown – 1994
- Widget Workshop – 1994
- SimTower – 1995
- SimIsle – 1995
- SimPark – 1996
- SimTunes – 1996
- SimCopter – 1996
- SimGolf – 1996
- Street of SimCity – 1997
- SimSafari - 1998

Development: Research

- The various phases of development have different research goals
 - Concept Phase
 - Test concept appeal
 - Design research
 - Graduate study program collaborations
 - Development Phase
 - Playability/Usability
 - Market Analysis
 - Positioning
 - Post Release Phase
 - Customer Profile Analysis
 - Game Data Mining

Research Techniques

- Design
 - Books, personal contacts, internet
 - Local and National data resources for tuning
 - Game Data Mining
- Usability/Positioning/Concept
 - Kleenex Testing
 - Focus Groups
 - Market Analysis
- Informal community involvement
- Participation in conferences, open dialog with Universities

References

- City Development
 - The Making of Urban America: A History of City Planning in the United States, John W. Reps
 - Barclay Mapworks, Street Guide to Santa Clara County
 - A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings and Construction, Christopher Alexander
 - City Life, Witold Wichenski
- Graphic Inspiration
 - Over the city, aerial photography books
 - A Field Guide to American Houses, Virginia and Lee McAlester
 - A History of Building Types, Nikolaus Pevsner
- General Data and influence
 - GIS: Geographic Information Systems
 - EBMUD
 - PG&E
 - Internet city sites

PC Entertainment Market

- North America
 - PC Data 2001
 - \$1.6B total revenue
 - 73,109,487 total units
 - Highly competitive – increasing gap between top ten titles and all others in terms of units and revenue
- Europe
 - UK and Germany dominate the market
 - Localization of text, audio and sometime graphics
 - Simultaneous ship dates
 - About 1/3 of lifetime total for SimCity
- Asia/Japan
 - Growing PC markets
 - Online gaming rooms
 - Wireless adoption rate – texting
 - Localization, Social and Piracy Issues

N.A. PC Data PC Titles 2001

	Title	Publisher	Ship Date	Yr-01	\$\$Yr-01	Units
1	The Sims	Electronic Arts	2/1/2000	\$60,499,079	1,482,182	
2	Diablo 2 Expansion Set: Lord of Destruction	Vivendi Universal I	6/1/2000	\$29,275,598	859,743	
3	Harry Potter & The Sorcerer's Stone	Electronic Arts	11/1/2000	\$24,697,925	867,481	
4	The Sims: House Party Expansion Pack	Electronic Arts	2/1/2000	\$23,579,970	843,752	
5	The Sims: Livin Large Expansion Pack	Electronic Arts	12/1/1999	\$22,999,144	818,600	
6	MP Roller Coaster Tycoon	Infogrames Entertainment	2/1/1999	\$21,926,773	953,953	
7	The Sims: Hot Date Expansion Pack	Electronic Arts	11/1/2000	\$21,313,604	804,254	
8	MS Age Of Empires 2: Age of Kings	Microsoft	8/1/1999	\$19,432,055	478,557	
9	Diablo 2	Vivendi Universal I	3/1/1999	\$19,394,075	517,037	
10	Black & White	Electronic Arts	9/1/2000	\$19,304,905	464,325	
11	Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2	Electronic Arts	10/1/2000	\$15,096,182	388,893	
12	Max Payne	Gathering of Developers	6/1/2000	\$13,890,593	300,782	
13	MP Civilization 3	Infogrames Entertainment	10/1/2000	\$13,521,884	294,789	
14	MS Combat Flight Simulator 2.0	Microsoft	11/1/1999	\$13,123,798	285,728	
15	Return To Castle Wolfenstein	Activision	11/1/2000	\$13,121,355	253,852	
16	Sierra Sports: NASCAR Racing 4	Vivendi Universal I	2/1/2000	\$11,963,579	288,543	
17	Myst 3 Exile	Ubisoft	5/1/2000	\$11,733,968	284,555	
18	Sim City 3000 Unlimited	Electronic Arts	1/1/2000	\$11,098,325	338,617	
19	MP Roller Coaster Tycoon Loopy Landscape	Infogrames Entertainment	8/1/2000	\$10,795,379	450,856	
20	Sim Theme Park	Electronic Arts	11/1/1999	\$9,927,441	514,288	
21	Tribes 2	Vivendi Universal I	3/1/2001	\$9,703,379	245,069	
22	Baldur's Gate 2: Shadows Of Amn	Vivendi Universal I	1/1/2000	\$9,639,579	225,763	
23	MS Flight Simulator 2002 Pro	Microsoft	8/1/2001	\$9,003,166	130,954	
24	MS Train Simulator 1.0	Microsoft	5/1/2001	\$8,708,105	191,952	

Business Goals

- Top five PC entertainment product
 - 1.5M units WW first year of release
 - \$60M net revenue first year
- Expand the franchise in meaningful, high quality manner
- Grow first year franchise results by minimally 50%
- Sustain the franchise through internet, gameplay additions and community

Development Considerations

- PC Entertainment Market Considerations
 - PC entertainment market highly competitive
 - Production values increasing as well as marketing dollars
- Technology Advancements
 - From DOS/286 with bi-annual advances
 - Now, Windows/1.5GHz Pentium, wide ranging graphics capability with 6 month advances but 2-3 year home PC turnover
- Product Quality and Cost
 - SimCity Original (1989) - \$600K - \$1M approx
 - SimCity 2000 (1993) - \$3.5M
 - SimCity 3000 (1999) - \$7M approx
 - Current generation PC Games – approx \$8M - 12M

SimCity Target Audience

- Market Target
 - Primary:
 - Previous SimCity players
 - Males ages 18 to 35 – Early adopters
 - Secondary: Computer owners 9 to 40
- SimCity Current Demographics
 - Based on electronic registration
 - 75% Male
 - Predominantly 14 to 25
 - 25% Female
 - Unique in PC entertainment

SimCity's Educational Audience

- SimCity in the Classroom
 - Teacher's Guides for SimCity
 - Site Licenses for schools with Scholastic
 - Series of Sim kids' products
- Special Events
 - Future Cities Competition with National Engineers Week
 - www.futurecity.org
- GIS Conferences
- Collaboration with North Western University on several fronts

SimCity's Success

- A game about city planning?
 - Initial positioning as a software toy
 - Open model garnered hard core appeal
- Attributes of success
 - Launched on Mac
 - Press and word of mouth played a key role
 - Open model garnered hard core appeal
 - Developed educational distribution and value added skus
 - Innovative and Unique
 - Socially Redeeming – the feel good game
- Great Execution = Brand Value

Market Strategy

- Current Strategy
 - Leverage brand and studio recognition
 - Primary target: SimCity fans, hard core gamers (early adopters)
 - 1st week sales momentum is critical
 - Print, Internet, Press and TV
 - Embrace community – build awareness, participation and excitement
 - Sustained marketing and promotional efforts
 - Word of mouth continues to be a key factor

Audience Response

- Over 9 million units of SimCity
- 75% of Sims players owned a version of SimCity
- Inspiration for 1000's of fan websites
 - www.sc3000.com
- Inspiration for category of derivative games known as God games or Real Time Strategy
 - Sid Meier's Civilization
 - Tycoon games
 - Age of Empires
 - Cesar

Marketplace History

- SimCity Original – 1989 – 1.2M units
 - #1 selling PC game
- SimCity 2000 – 1993 – 3.4M units (console incl.),
 - Top selling PC game of 1994
- SimCity 3000 – 1999 – 4.6M units
 - Top grossing PC game of 1999
- Maxis had 5 titles in top 20 PC Data N.A. in 2001
- Maxis has had the #1 PC game three years running, PC Data

What's next...

- Technical Advancements
 - Graphic Performance – 3D cards, video memory
 - Higher performance CPUs
- Not more complex
- More engaging and better feedback
- Internet a key feature
- And now for the suspense....