



Amazon Debuts First Big-Budget Video Game, 'Crucible'

05.20.2020

As promised in 2012, Amazon has finally entered the big-budget gaming space with Wednesday's release of free-to-play shooter, Crucible.

The game-which was developed by Seattle-based Relentless Studios-offers several styles of play, including eight on eight (Harvester Command), four on four (Heart of the Hives) and groups of two battling to stay alive in a larger group of 16 (Alpha Hunters) until the group is whittle down to the last person standing. There's also a cast of ten characters from which players can choose. Each of those characters offers a different play style, although they stick to standard video-game tropes, such as tank, DPS and healer.

Amazon created Amazon Game Studios in 2012, and it bought live-streaming platform Twitch, which gamers commonly use to livestream their play, in 2014 for \$970 million. But otherwise, the retail platform's entry into the video-game universe has been slow. Crucible is its first big release in the gaming space. In August, Amazon plans to release another game- massively multiplayer online (MMO) game, New World. Amazon had planned to drop that game in May but those plans were delayed due to the pandemic.

Wedbush analyst Michael Pachter speculated to CNBC that the release of

Crucible could be an indication that Amazon would ultimately like to compete in the subscription games-streaming space, which is something Apple and Google have both recently launched with Arcade and Stadia, respectively. Facebook also is in the mix, having acquired game-focused virtual-reality studios in the past few months.

While people have been on stay-at-home orders, video games have been on the upswing. Activision's most recent Call of Duty release, Warzone, has seen more than 50 million downloads after being released in March, and Riot Games, publisher of League of Legends, will release new game Valorant later this year. Valorant is currently in active beta.

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