

Five Years Back, Anthem Served as a Cautionary Tale

Description

In January 2019, I was filled with optimism as I travelled to BioWare's headquarters in Austin, Texas. I had the rare opportunity to test Anthem, the studio's twist on the live-service looter-shooter game, before its public release. I was immediately captivated by the game's polished demo; it was exhilarating to navigate levels in my Javelin suit, emulating Iron Man, and blasting bugs with elemental guns. At that point, I fervently believed that Anthem would be a revolutionary game that the future AAA games would strive to replicate. It turns out, many did, even though, retrospectively speaking, they probably shouldn't have.

BioWare, best known for creating RPG masterpieces like the Mass Effect trilogy, Knights of the Old Republic, and Dragon Age Origins, is a renowned player in the gaming industry. Admittedly, Mass Effect Andromeda, released in 2017, had its share of critics and a fraught development cycle spanning five years. Nonetheless, I held onto the hope that the team at BioWare had drawn lessons from past mistakes.

However, when the demo rolled out to the public weeks later, my high hopes plummeted. Perennial issues such as drawn-out loading screens and glitch-prone flying were prevalent. Furthermore, the game play in Anthem tended to lose its lustre rather quickly, presenting an added challenge to retain players.

Looking back, the game's technical limitations and lacklustre gameplay were clear indicators of a tumultuous five-year development process, characterized by frequent changes in direction, staff attrition, and several overhauls of the concept. Even with patches released by EA and BioWare in attempts to rectify game-breaking bugs and audio glitches, Anthem remained largely grounded.

Despite Casey Hudson, BioWare's General Manager, announcing plans for a "substantial reinvention" of Anthem in a 2020 blog post, it was a case of too little, too late. This revelation was followed by an announcement by Christian Dailey, BioWare's studio director, confirming that the development of Anthem was coming to a permanent halt.

Fast forward to today, Anthem has largely fallen into oblivion, referred to predominantly in humorous references about its once-prospective role as a competitor to Destiny. Although Anthem's servers remain operational, player statistics remain a mystery.

There's been a surge in the development of expensive live-service games that, unfortunately, fail to engage a dedicated audience. Every successful game like Fortnite or League of Legends is trailed by innumerable missteps like Space Punks, Crossfire X, and Paragon. Looking back, Anthem appears to be an early indication of the predicament we face now.

Regrettably, such development trends often outpace the lifespan of gaming trends, leading to damaging consequences. This phenomenon was evidenced by the substantial layoffs within the gaming industry in 2024. If one thing's clear, it's that the lessons of Anthem have gone largely unnoticed, much to our detriment.

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Vocabulary List:

1. **Optimism** // (noun): Positive attitude or outlook.
2. **Captivated** // (adjective): Fascinated or enthralled.
3. **Exhilarating** // (adjective): Making one feel very happy animated or elated.
4. **Retrospectively** // (adverb): Looking back or dealing with past events or situations.
5. **Attrition** // (noun): The action or process of gradually reducing the strength or effectiveness of someone or something.
6. **Predominantly** // (adverb): Mainly for the most part.

Vocabulary quizzes

Multiple Choice (Select the Correct answer for each question.)

1. What is the meaning of the word "Honcho"?



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- Option: A. Leader or boss
Option: B. Secret agent
Option: C. Medicinal herb
Option: D. Musical instrument
2. What is a "Cyborg"?
- Option: A. Mythical creature
Option: B. Half-human half-machine being
Option: C. Exotic fruit
Option: D. Type of dance
3. What does "Affinity" mean?
- Option: A. Strong dislike
Option: B. Natural skill
Option: C. Close connection or attraction
Option: D. Weather forecast
4. What is the opposite of "Optimism"?
- Option: A. Pessimism
Option: B. Realism
Option: C. Nostalgia
Option: D. Euphoria
5. Which word best describes an organism that can adjust to new conditions?
- Option: A. Static
Option: B. Adaptive
Option: C. Realistic
Option: D. Fantastic
6. What does "Streamlining" refer to in business?
- Option: A. Increasing complexity
Option: B. Reducing inefficiencies or redundancies
Option: C. Ignoring problems
Option: D. Expanding operations
7. What does "Quintessence" mean?
- Option: A. Ordinary or average
Option: B. Fifth element or perfect example
Option: C. Ruler or monarch
Option: D. Fine line or distinction
8. Which word best describes an experience that is invigorating and exciting?
- Option: A. Dull



- Option: B. Exhilarating
Option: C. Serene
Option: D. Tragic

9. What is the meaning of "Ingeniously"?

- Option: A. Foolishly
Option: B. Cleverly or inventively
Option: C. Slowly
Option: D. Deliberately

10. Which word best describes something that covers a large area or has a wide range?

- Option: A. Limited
Option: B. Extensive
Option: C. Warm
Option: D. Fragile

Gap-Fill (Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

11. The company decided to _____ its operations to improve efficiency.
12. Before you _____ a project make sure to plan carefully.
13. Employees who were laid off were given a _____ package.
14. Managing work _____ along with personal responsibilities can be challenging.
15. The new marketing campaign aims at _____ interest in the product.
16. The company experienced high _____ rates due to economic downturn.
17. The team is made up of individuals from various backgrounds but it is _____ male.
18. The success of the project will _____ on securing adequate funding.
19. The artist made a _____ into abstract painting before returning to realism.
20. The glass windows are _____ allowing natural light to fill the room.

Matching Sentences (Match each definition to the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

21. The ancient king rode into battle in a magnificent chariot with golden wheels.



22. The detective carefully reviewed the suspect's dossier collecting evidence for the case.
23. The celebration was filled with joy and laughter the atmosphere effervescingly festive.
24. During the conflict the loyalist soldiers remained faithful to their leader.
25. Retrospectively we realized that the decision was not the best course of action.
26. The safety features are an integral part of the new car design.
27. The chef presented his pièce de résistance a decadent chocolate soufflé as the final course.
28. The artist created an intricate mosaic using tiny pieces of colored glass.
29. The audience was captivated by the magician's illusions and tricks.
30. Wildlife in harsh environments must be adaptive to survive changing conditions.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. A. Leader or boss 2. B. Half-human half-machine being 3. C. Close connection or attraction 4. A. Pessimism 5. B. Adaptive 6. B. Reducing inefficiencies or redundancies 7. B. Fifth element or perfect example 8. B. Exhilarating 9. B. Cleverly or inventively 10. B. Extensive

Gap-Fill: 11. restructure 12. undertake 13. severance 14. commitments 15. kick-starting 16. attrition 17. predominantly 18. hinge 19. foray 20. see-through

Matching sentence: 1. Chariot 2. Dossier 3. Effervescingly 4. loyalist 5. Retrospectively 6. integral 7. Pièce de résistance 8. Intricate 9. Captivated 10. Adaptive

CATEGORY

1. Sci/Tech - LEVEL4

Date Created

2024/03/01

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