

Fall 12-2018

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Recommended Citation

Joseph Saludo. "NBA 2K" *ART 108: Introduction to Games Studies* (2018).

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NBA 2K

Michael Jordan the best player to ever play basketball once said “Just play. Have fun. Enjoy the game”. I could clearly remember the first time I’ve played one of the NBA 2K games and having fun with it that it became the best video game that I ever played in my life. *NBA 2K11*, made by 2K Sports, was the first NBA 2K game in the series that I played in the NBA 2K series and I have gotten every single one that has released every year since. The realism of the game’s graphics was so good back when I first got *NBA 2K11* that I couldn’t believe that I was playing a video game. I remember playing the game with my friends so much that I was constantly on it all day just so that I could get better than them and beat them. Playing the NBA 2K series with my friends and the basketball video game community is one of the reasons I have so much fun with the game. The NBA 2K games have come a long way from an emerging basketball game to now becoming the biggest basketball game ever created. From its graphics, gameplay, community, and many more reasons why the game became so successful today, NBA 2K has evolved into the best basketball game by improving its overall structure every year-round.

The NBA 2K series has made a mark in history in the sports video game world. As the first NBA 2K was released in November 10, 1999, developed by Visual Concepts Entertainment and published by Sega Sports, it was the start of the best basketball video game series that would come alive today. Every year after NBA 2K was released the game would improve to become a more realistic way of playing basketball in a video game. It’s first console to come out on was the console called Dreamcast which was from *NBA 2K* to *NBA 2K2*. From then on Playstation, Xbox, and Gamecube released NBA 2K games starting from *NBA 2K2*, with Gamecube dropping the game at *NBA 2K3*, through many years. When *ESPN NBA 2K5* was released it was

the last time Sega Sports would ever release a NBA 2K game. Sega Sports sold its publishing rights, Visual Concepts, to Take-Two Interactive which is now a company called 2K Sports. From *NBA 2K6* to *NBA 2k19*, 2K Sports came out with the best basketball games ever beating its predecessor, EA Sports. The moment Sega Sports sold Visual Concepts Entertainment to Take-Two Interactive and became 2K sports was the moment NBA 2K games took off as one of the best, if not the best, basketball video games ever.

NBA 2K's graphics is one of the reasons 2K Sports has become one of the best basketball game franchise ever. Every year the game released a new series its graphics has gotten better substantially. From each "individual player's unique hairstyle, equipment such as goggles and armbands, and build (some stars are noticeably more muscular than others)" (Marriott 1) 2K Sports managed to recreate the players exact features in the real world into the game. In the NBA 2K games that I played I remembered that I was always impressed at the quality of the graphics that the game produced. It wasn't just the high quality of the graphics that attracted me and the rest of the world to the game, but it was also the minor details that the developers put in to the players to make sure that they were their own unique and recognizable selves. An IGN review from a person named Brandon Justice sums up my experience and what I hope the rest of the basketball video game community also feels about NBA 2K's graphics:

Now, I could tell you that it makes NBA Live 2000 look like Will Purdue trying to contain Iverson on the perimeter, but anyone with half a clue should already know that. What I will say is that this title so effortlessly eclipses all other attempts at realism in the basketball arena that even bothering to assert that anything comes close is just plain foolish. Everything is there, from cross-overs to off-balance rebounds, and it all comes at

ya at a blazing 60. I guess the best way to put it is, you can't go back. Once you've played 2K, unless you're under the influence of some sort of mind-altering substance, the mere thought of a looking at a hoops title on any other platform will be enough to make you sick. (Justice 1)

I can't explain my experience of NBA 2K's graphics better than this quote because this is exactly how I felt when I played *NBA Live 10* and then playing *NBA 2K11*. The first realistic NBA basketball game I played was *NBA Live 10* excluding *NBA Jam* and *NBA Street Vol. 2*. Before I played any NBA 2K games *NBA Live 10* was the best basketball game I have ever played. *NBA Live 10*, which was made by EA Sports, opened my interest in playing a basketball video game until *NBA 2K11* released with its amazing gameplay and very realistic graphics that I was not going to go back to playing NBA Live. The graphics were so good that at times my friend's parents and my parents would sometimes think that when we were playing the game they would think it was a real-life NBA game that was just on TV. NBA 2K Sports developers has put in so much effort in the graphics that sometimes people just admire the beauty and art of what the developers poured their hard work on. NBA 2K's graphics has improved every year that if the games' graphics were to be compared year after year it would have a significant change in quality making it more realistic every year.

A main reason why the NBA 2K series game is the best basketball game ever to come out is because of its gameplay and mechanics. Throughout the years NBA 2K's gameplay has continued to improve its overall gameplay to make it as smooth and realistic as possible. From shooting, post-ups, defense, dribbling and many more aspects of what it's like to play basketball in real life, 2K Sports has put the effort in mimicking the mechanics in real life to the video game. "You have to think about dribble drives before going for them, and knowledge of the

real-life players' skills is rewarded...There are a couple other improvements to long-term mechanical issues in NBA 2K that should be mentioned: fast breaks and rebounding” (Becotte 1). Every year 2K Sports makes the effort of making the gameplay more realistic by tweaking its mechanics that players are unsatisfied with. The gameplay of the game is what the players are continuously looking forward to and 2K Sports has responded by putting in an effort in making a more realistic gameplay every year. Many people have noticed their effort and has become a much more desired game than many other games. Looking back on playing any of the NBA 2K games there were moments that the game captured the realism of what playing basketball really was like, but there were also times where the mechanics wasn't very real that it would annoy me as a player. Even though the gameplay and mechanics were very good it still had its problems every year. “A successful move leads to a beautiful animation that seems perfectly in tune with what you would see in any NBA game, but an unsuccessful attempt often results in your player running into the defender awkwardly. I've seen instances where the AI will start a dribble move only to bump right into a defender, carrying them all the way into a backcourt violation” (Vollmer 1). The minor problems in the mechanics were noticeable for players but every NBA 2K game was so well done that some of the mechanical problems in the game were tolerated by players so that they could still enjoy playing the game. Not every game could be perfectly done with no problems or glitches in its game, but 2K Sports has done a magnificent job on fixing and improving the problems that they've encountered in the game that it shows why the gaming community purchases their products every year to a point that they have become the best basketball video gaming company today.

NBA 2K's community and 2K Sports' communication with the people are one of the key reasons that they are so successful as a game and company. 2K Sports is a very open-minded

company that they are willing to listen to their community and make changes based on what they feel the player's needs:

The company receives a ton of feedback from gamers on a daily basis. However, it's the awareness of feedback which makes it one of the best games in the business. Even though the game gets "released" once a year, 2K is willing to listen to the noise and work on addressing the feedback and patching things up. The company tries to be as transparent as possible with these changes as their notes page/blog addresses the details of what is improved/fixed with each patch. (Yeboah 1)

Looking back when I played *NBA 2K11* there was an exploit that everyone would do at least once every game called the spin dunk. The move allowed a very good dunker in the game to spin past his opponent and dunk the basketball very easily for two points. While the spin dunk gave me a lot of points throughout playing *NBA 2K11*, a lot of players hated that move and the exploit was removed in *NBA 2K12* by adding a collision animation that they didn't have in *NBA 2K11* when the move was executed. Listening to the community and responding to what players have to say is what makes NBA 2K a unique video game because many people have a lot of feedback that could make the game even better than the year before. Opinions from NBA players commenting about their 2K Rating, YouTubers giving their opinion on the game, and many other forms of feedback the community speaks out about, the workers from 2K Sports have responded and has evolved NBA 2K into a game that everyone in the basketball community loves. Ronnie Singh as known as Ronnie2K, the person that everyone in the community complains to, said "I love it. That means that we're extremely socially relevant. That meant that people care that much that they want to hit us up about ratings about what the game's looking like all of that stuff. I think that's why our audience has grown so much because people want to talk about our game,

and it allows us to extend the audience even more” (Yeboah 1). Even though feedback from the community can improve or worsen the current state of the game, 2K Sports is willing to listen to the community and make a decision that makes the game interesting for its players. Without feedback from players the game wouldn’t have grown as much as it did. NBA 2K’s community and its feedback into the game is what makes the game different from any other basketball games and it is why the game has come out on top of the rest of the basketball video games.

The NBA 2K series has become the best basketball video game throughout the years it was created. With 2K Sports developers working hard on the game every year, they managed to create a basketball video game that looks exactly like what people would see on TV. Also, by copying and understanding the mechanics of what basketball is about, gameplay in NBA 2K has lead the developers into achieving the realism of basketball into their game. Not only are the developers the reason why the NBA 2K series have become so successful, it is also because of the NBA 2K’s community letting the developers know what they wanted in the game that their journey to be the best basketball video game has succeeded. Similarly, Michael Jordan and the NBA 2K series have something in common, both are the greatest of all time and both live by the quote “Just play. Have fun. Enjoy the game.”

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