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## October videogame sales down 19%

### Biz takes tumble after September rebound

By [MARC GRASER](#)

Just when it looked as if sales for the videogames biz were starting to turn around in September, they took another tumble last month.

Overall sales were down 19% for the games industry in October, generating \$1.07 billion. It was the final month before a slew of high-profile titles hit store shelves -- titles that gamemakers hope will generate serious coin as the holiday shopping season kicks off.

Games like "Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2," which has already set opening day and week records with its bow; "New Super Mario Bros. Wii"; and "Assassin's Creed 2" will have to make up a lot of ground this month, however, given that the industry is down 13% for the year with a take of \$11.4 billion to date.

Analysts are upbeat that the industry can generate up to \$21 billion this year, which would put it just below last year's haul of \$21.3 billion, NPD Group said. November and December are typically the best months for gamemakers.

But the "continued economic turmoil and, in particular, the troubling unemployment rate, is undoubtedly impacting industry sales," NPD's Anita Frazier said. "Although consumers' general opinion about the economy is improving, their outlook on their own personal situation is worsening. If consumers' personal outlook continues to erode, they could very well be much more conservative with their holiday shopping this year."

Sony's "Uncharted 2: Among Thieves," developed by Naughty Dog and exclusive to the PlayStation 3, was the top-selling game last month, moving 537,000 units. Nintendo's "Wii Fit Plus" was second, followed by Take Two Interactive's shooter "Borderlands." The top game for the month across all platforms was Take Two's "NBA 2K10," with 575,000 units, outperforming the previous installment by 60% in its launch month.

Still, a reduction in the price of some titles put less money in gamemakers' pockets, with revenue declining 18% to \$573 million.

Even with new versions in stores, the music and dance category, long dominated by "Guitar Hero" and "Rock Band," took the biggest hit, with the genre generating \$53 million sales during the month. In October 2008, the category earned \$137 million.

And despite a slash in prices for the Xbox 360, PlayStation 3 and Nintendo Wii, hardware sales fell 17% in units in October.

Nintendo sold 507,000 Wiis, followed by the PS3 (321,000) and Xbox 360 (250,000).

"Recent price cuts helped spur a one to two-month increase in unit sales, and this month's Wii sales reflect that boost, but the other platforms have not sustained the sales momentum post price reduction," Frazier said.

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