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## Tech News on G4

**X'10 Canada thrills gamers**  
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By John Powell - G4 Canada

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Christmas came early for Toronto media outlets.

At X'10 Canada, held at the Fifth Social and Supper Club in downtown Toronto, Microsoft Canada previewed its diverse catalogue of holiday releases.

G4TV was there to take in all the sights and sounds.

Here are some of the highlights...

Vanquish

Publisher: Sega

Developer: PlatinumGames

Release Date: Oct 19, 2010



Just when you think the cover-based third person shooter genre has run its course, along comes a game like 'Vanquish', and all bets are once again off.

'Vanquish' is Gears of War with the fast forward button held down. In it, you play as the not-so-tough-sounding Sam, a soldier who along with his comrades, is tasked with defending a near-future United States from Russian annihilation.

With the demo starting right at the beginning of a large-scale battle on a giant space station, plot was the last thing on our mind. See, Sam is all gussied up in a high-tech battle suit that allows him to do all sorts of fun things.

We mention the Gears of War influence, which is apparent in the ability to stick to most environmental objects, but instead of a Gears-like 'roadie run', Sam is able to slide all over the place without ever missing a beat. It's a lot faster than the roadie run, matching the game's overall frenetic pace, and it's also a lot easier to control. It's a lot like the ground throughout the entire demo is covered with ice, and you have the skating abilities of Wayne Gretzky.



So what are you sliding and jumping away from? Enemies. Lots and lots of gun-toting enemies that enjoy ignoring all of your AI-controlled squadmates and focusing on you. No matter. The gun combat is solid and easy to pick up if you've played any shooter in the last half decade or so. There's also melee combat, and though we were told that you'll be able to string together more devastating close quarter attacks depending on your button presses and what weapon you're holding, we were too busy mashing the B-button and moving on to the next attacker.

Once most of the baddies were cleared, out comes a gigantic spider-like robot. You already probably know the drill - shoot the legs, knock it down, take out the central power node. It's not quite so easy. In Vanquish, enemies are not shy about using ammo and the spider boss is no exception. It may be focused on soldiers on the other side of the level, but almost the moment you start shooting at it, it will quickly turn its attention to you and unload dozens of rockets directly at you. This is where the sliding really proves its worth, as the rockets quickly take out all the cover you had (that's right - destructible environments!).

And once you do get the energy of that power node down to zero, the spider transforms into something even more fierce. Defeat this behemoth and it's the end of the demo.

On paper a lot of it doesn't sound like anything terribly new, but put together in one complete package and the controls instantly feel tight and, more importantly, it's quite simply a helluva lot of fun. We're eager to see how long a game like this can keep up this kind of action (which is obviously its bread and butter) before becoming mind numbing. More importantly though, we're eager to get our hands on a controller and play some more!

This is quickly one of our most anticipated games of the holiday season.

Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions

Publisher: Activision

Developer: Beenox

Release Date: Sep 7, 2010

Courtesy of the folks at Activision, Aunt May's pride and joy returns...in many different realities. Of the four dimensions in the game, three were on display at the show. We tried our hand at two of them: Noir and 2099.

When the "Tablet of Order and Chaos" is shattered, Madame Web summons four different Spider-Men from multiple Marvel Universe realities to set things right.

In the 'Noir Universe', everything is like 'Splinter Cell'. It is dark, shadowy and kinda old like. The Great Depression Spider-Man, wearing goggles and a black leather jacket, pulls a Sam Fisher and sneaks around like the true spider that he is. In a warehouse area, we set about rescuing hostages locked up in train cars. With spider sense at our disposal, we were able to pin-point our targets through walls and other solid objects. Spidey's stealth kills used his webbing to yank the targets backwards so they could be disarmed, have their faces driven into concrete and webbed up nice and tight.

The '2099' dimension is like 'Blade Runner' with hover cars and platforms, minus the fog and rain. We took on the future version of the Hobgoblin, who with giant mechanical wings and no Goblin Glider, looked more like a techno demon complete with red horns than anything Roderick Kingsley was. Gobby dropped pumpkin bombs on us while his thugs tried to gun us down.

The diverse gameplay on display certainly raises one's curiosity.

007: Bloodstone  
Publisher: Activision  
Developer: Bizarre Creations  
Release Date: Nov 2, 2010

While it looks like 007 fans may be waiting quite some time for another Bond film to hit the big screen, Activision is thankfully putting out a brand new adventure on the Xbox 360 this November.

With Bond author and screenplay writer Bruce Feirstein at the helm, '007: Bloodstone' has Daniel Craig on a mission to retrieve a weapon of mass destruction stolen from the U.K. Singer and actress Joss Stone not only supplies the theme song for the game (with Dave Stewart of the Eurythmics) but is also a Bond girl in 'Blood Stone' itself.

For our part, we shot up some baddies using a bulls-eye, headshot system much like the last 'Splinter Cell' game in a firefight and then went on a merry speed boat chase. As we pursued our target, an enemy helicopter buzzed the area blowing up other boats and an entire lighthouse in an attempt to stop us in our tracks. Wicked. Winding between ocean liners, jumping over sandbars and dodging the helicopter made for a fantastic action sequence.

Based on the cut scenes, the title sequence and the overall action, this might top 'Goldeneye' and 'Quantum of Solace' as the best true-to-film Bond game ever.

Kinect Adventures  
Publisher: Microsoft  
Developer: Good Science Studio  
Release: Nov 4, 2010

First of all, this was our first big test of the Kinect system and, gosh darn it, the gizmo works exactly as advertised. We were impressed with how the system captures and translates natural body motions without any burps or hiccups.

Kinect Adventures will be bundled with the Kinect system. The party game style title features a number of games, we tried a couple.

In River Rush, you race through a raging river filled with twists, turns, canyons and waterfalls collecting icons. Your body motions guide the raft you are in and jumping...well...makes the raft, jump, silly.

Rally Ball will definitely give you a solid workout. Like a gigantic game of handball, you use your entire body, punching and kicking balls back and forth.

Very cool first impressions but one wonders what the system is truly capable of.

Mortal Kombat  
Publisher: Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment  
Developer: NetherRealm  
Release: TBA

It's been a while since we've truly dug into the MK series - and we're betting we're not the only ones - but if it's one game to get the faithful back into the world of Scorpion, Johnny Cage, Sub Zero, et al, this is very likely it.

Mortal Kombat, as its non-subtitled name suggests, harkens back to the style that made the first few games in the series so wildly popular. Gone are the full 3D fighting arenas; in this version, players fight on a two-dimensional plane, though 3D graphic elements are in place to make everything look snazzy.

The demo we tried had 10 playable characters, and we opted to stick to a couple of masked combatants that we were familiar with from past MK games - Scorpion and Sub Zero.

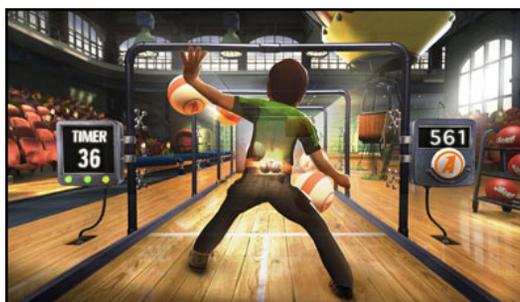
Keep in mind, we didn't have to use these two characters in separate matches. There is now a tag team mode, where you can swap characters back and forth at will.

The fighting itself is pure Mortal Kombat. There are all kinds of basic moves with light and heavy punches and kicks, blocks and throws. Then there are the special moves that include things throwing projectiles (or in Reptile's case, spitting projectiles). Pulling these moves off will help a special meter increase. Filling this up will allow you to pull off truly devastating attacks.

These attacks, which are triggered by holding down the right bumper and right trigger at specific moments, will result in a close-up of the other character being pummelled. You'll see skulls crack, ribs snap and jaws get dislocated. It had us cringing, but in the good way. We were worried that these slow-motion moments would take away from the fluidity of the matches but they aren't something that can be done constantly, as the meter does take some time to fill up completely.

Another great change with this MK title is that combos are no longer a series of seven or eight button presses that must be memorized. In Mortal Kombat, no single combo consists of more than three buttons. The key here is the link several different combos together for maximum damage. There are a lot of moves available (and easily accessible in the pause menu) but they're all easy to pull off. That being said, the Xbox 360 d-pad is still horrible for fighting games so if you can afford it, you may want to consider a full joystick.

There are some really neat touches to the game, showing off the obvious love put into it. Pay attention to the close-ups, and you'll notice things like Reptile's skull that looks less like human's and more like, well, a reptile's. Even things like the way characters exit matches when tagged out is really cool (Sub-Zero freezes and leaps away, while Reptile turns invisible).



We also saw a couple of fatalities, and while they're of course over the top, they're not nearly as silly as some recent ones. Our favourite one was watching Reptile walk up to an unfortunate loser and regurgitate acid into his mouth. While the poor guy was writhing in agony, Reptile finishes the job by tearing an organ right out of his midsection - we're thinking it was his stomach, but hey, it could just as easily been a spleen or kidney.

Regardless, we had a lot of fun with this new Mortal Kombat despite taking quite a while to get the kinks out.



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