

# Nintendo 64 claims holiday sales victory

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April 1997

# Nintendo 64 Claims Holiday Sales Victory

The numbers are in, and the winner is...**Nintendo**. At least that's what Nintendo has claimed after tallying the results of the holiday sales wars.

Between the September 29, 1996 launch and the end of the year, the **Nintendo 64** established itself as the fastest-selling video game system in history, selling more than 1.6 million units in North America in the three-month period. Those sales represent more than \$5 billion a day in hardware and software sales, a three-month total of about \$500 billion. The entire video game industry also showed a strong surge: Industry-wide holiday sales of all video game products were up by 30 percent over 1995's holiday season.

The forecast is for sales to continue to rise. Approximately 700,000 more N64s were sold from January to March, moving the N64 to the 2.3 million mark and well ahead of the Saturn in total U.S. sales. The PlayStation is still the leader in U.S. sales with more than 3.5 million units sold, while the Saturn is in third with about 1.7 million units sold.

In order to continue these hot sales, some experts are predicting that the companies will offer a new round of price cuts from \$199 to \$149 for each system. If the cuts do come, they're likely to be announced at June's Electronic Entertainment Expo, as they were last year when Sony and then Sega dramatically slashed the prices of their systems to \$199.



The wild card in 1997's system wars is Matsushita, which has owned 3DO's 64-bit CD-based M2 technology since buying it for \$100 million in late 1995. Inside sources say that several M2 games have already been finished by third-party companies, and that over a dozen other U.S. developers are working on M2 games. Despite rumors that the system will be released in Japan at the end of the year and that the M2 may end up being a DVD (digital video disc) system, Matsushita has refused to spell out its M2 plans.

## Delays Hit Major PlayStation Games

Nintendo isn't the only major company with a system plagued by delayed games. Word comes that some of the **PlayStation**'s most eagerly

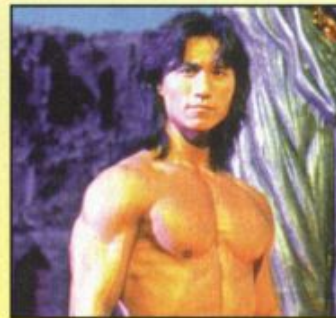
anticipated games are suffering the same kind of delays that plagued recent Nintendo 64 games like *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter* and *Mission: Impossible* (see "ProNews," March).

Last month **Capcom** confirmed that **Resident Evil 2**, the sequel to the 1996 megahit, was coming out in the fall instead of this spring. Now **Squaresoft** has announced that its long-awaited **Final Fantasy VII** won't reach the U.S. until September 7, a delay of some six months. Like the Japanese version that came out January 31, the

## Inside Scoop

• **Nintendo** continues to sign up software companies to make **Nintendo 64** games. **GT Interactive**, publisher of titles like *Quake* for the PC and *Doom* for the Saturn, will bring out three N64 games in 1997. While only the previously announced *Hexen* (a summer release) was officially named, insiders point to *Ultra Combat* and *Duke Nukem* as the company's next likely N64 titles.

Also jumping onto the N64 bandwagon is **Titus**, makers of the 16-bit Prehistorik Man and Ardy Lightfoot games. That company's inked a deal with Warner Bros. to make N64, PlayStation, Saturn, and even Game Boy versions of the Warner's *Superman* cartoon series and the upcoming animated movie, *Quest for Camelot*, which is scheduled for a Christmas release. Titus's games should start coming out next January. Finally, **Midway** is working on *Joust X* and possibly *Centipede*, N64 upgrades of the old arcade classics, for a late '97 release.



**Robin Shou back as Liu Kang!**

• The long-awaited sequel to the *Mortal Kombat* movie is in full production. Now scheduled for a late-summer release by New Line Cinema, *Mortal Kombat Annihilation* has been filming since last winter in international locations such as London, Israel, Jordan, and Thailand (none of the movie was shot in the U.S.). Christopher Lambert, who played Rayden in the first

film, is not in the sequel, but Robin Shou and Taliso Soto will reprise their roles as Liu Kang and Kitana, respectively. Look for details on the plot and the cast in an upcoming issue.

• Cries of "Yippie-ki-yay" are echoing through the halls of **Activision** as the company just signed **Bruce Willis** to do motion-capture work and voice acting for *Apocalypse*, its 3D action title for the PlayStation. *Apocalypse* is slated for an October release.