

## Why I Love the Top 50



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This year marks Game Informer's 20th anniversary, and even though I was there, I don't remember what month specifically it all started. Our first issue was simply labeled "Fall 1991."

We had a slow start back then, going from quarterly to bi-monthly issues before making the big jump to monthly, but as we grew we knew one thing was certain: We would do what is expected of all media outlets and give out annual awards. For the 11 years that followed we did just that. We picked the best, put them in an order, and proclaimed one game greater than the other.

The process, while important, has always bugged me. In 2003, I couldn't take it anymore. I hated picking one game as better than the other. On a cold winter day we decided to pick the 50 best games of the year and organize them by date rather than argue over ranking placement.

Our inspiration for the change came from music publications, as their lists often forgo rankings because, like games, they feature a wide variety of disparate genres. Is that jazz record really worse than that metal one? It all really depends on your point of view, and if you hate one style over another you will never truly agree.

This is why I love the Top 50. It manages to do what I want it to, which is celebrate the year and help gamers find golden gems that they may have missed. We didn't have to waste time arbitrarily ranking games that offer completely different experiences – it's just 50 kick-butt games.

Over the last couple of years we added back the classic genre and console awards, which handles the part of the award season decision-making I personally hate to make, but love to argue over. After all, arguing about which game is better with your friends, your magazine, and even your enemies is ultimately what makes these lists fun.

While we could agree on that, we almost never agree on which games make the cut for the Top 50, or for that matter, which game should win our Game of the Year award. Personally, this year was tough. I could easily give GOTY to God of War III, Red Read Redemption, or Mass Effect 2 and feel great. In fact, I could give it to all three and feel even better, but that doesn't follow the spirit of awards organizing our pop culture into neat stacks of good, better, best.

Enjoy the Top 50, the awards, and an issue packed with some of the amazing games we will be arguing about in next year's Top 50.

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## The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim

A lot has changed in the 200 years since the Septim line was severed in closing the Oblivion gates. The dragons have returned to Tamriel, and you must take on a brand new adventure as one of the dragonborn in the next RPG from Bethesda Softworks.

by Matt Miller

