



EA: It's in the Game

Listening Questions 1:

1. When and where was EA founded?
2. How did EA attract developers to publish their games with the company?
3. How did EA's business change in 1988?
4. What did the company begin doing in the early 90s?

Listening Questions 2:

1. Describe EA's current business.
2. In FY13, how much revenue did EA earn?
3. Name at least 3 of EA's blockbuster franchises.
4. Why were EA's working conditions criticized?

Transcript 1:

Electronic Arts (or EA) was founded in 1982 by Trip Hawkins in the Silicon Valley area of California. It went on to become one of the biggest video game companies in the world, but it was initially only a publisher of computer games.

Hawkins founded the company after he left Apple Computer and he recruited his early employees from Apple and Atari. EA attracted developers to publish with the company by offering them credit as artists and by sharing profits with them.

In 1988, EA released a skateboarding game called *Skate or Die!* It was the first game that was developed by EA, not just published and distributed by them. It marked a turning point for the company's business model. In the early 90s, EA began acquiring video game development studios that would go on to create games for EA.



Transcript 2:

Now, EA is a major video game developer, publisher, and distributor for a variety of platforms, including video game consoles, PCs, and mobile devices. It produces both digital content and physical media. In FY13, EA generated \$3.8 billion in net revenue and it had 9,000 employees around the world.

The company has numerous blockbuster franchises such as The Sims, Battlefield, Need for Speed, Mass Effect, and several annual sports games like Madden NFL and FIFA. Those games are developed by development studios that EA owns.

EA has been criticized for overworking its employees. According to a blog written by the spouse of an EA developer, employees regularly work 80-90 hours a week without any additional compensation. Long hours are not unusual in the industry, but most companies offer some form of compensation such as additional time off after a game is finished.