Appendix A Game Genre Taxonomies

Game Theorists

Chapter 3 A Taxonomy of Computer Games

SKILL-AND-ACTION GAMES

- Combat Games  
- Maze Games  
- Sports Games  
- Paddle Games  
- Race Games  
- Miscellaneous Games

STRATEGY GAMES

- Adventures  
- D&D Games  
- Wargames  
- Games of Chance  
- Educational and Children’s Games  
- Interpersonal Games

Mark J. P. Wolf *The Medium of the Video Game* (2001, pp. 113-134)  
Chapter 6 Genre and the Video Game

- Abstract  
- Adaptation  
- Adventure  
- Artificial Life  
- Board Games  
- Capturing  
- Card Games  
- Catching  
- Chase  
- Collecting  
- Combat  
- Demo  
- Diagnostic  
- Dodging  
- Driving  
- Educational  
- Escape  
- Fighting  
- Flying  
- Gambling  
- Interactive Movie  
- Management Simulation  
- Maze  
- Obstacle Course  
- Pencil-and-Paper Games  
- Pinball  
- Platform
Appendix A

- Programming Games
- Puzzle
- Quiz
- Racing
- Rhythm and Dance
- Role-Playing
- Shoot 'Em Up
- Simulation
- Sports
- Strategy
- Table-Top Games
- Target
- Text Adventure
- Training Simulation
- Utility

Chapter 2 The Origin of Species

- Fighting games
- God games
- Platform games
- Puzzle games
- Racing games
- Real-time strategy games
- Role-playing games
- Shoot-'em-up
- Sports games

Chapter 3 What is a Game – The Issue of Genre

- Action games
- Adventure games
- Strategy games
- Process-oriented games

Popular

MobyGames [www.mobygames.com](http://www.mobygames.com)

- Action
- Adventure
- Educational
- Racing / Driving
- Role-Playing (RPG)
- Simulation
- Sports
- Strategy
• Action / Adventure
• Driving
• Fighting
• Platformer
• Puzzle
• Rhythm/Music
• Role-playing
• Shooter
• Sports
• Strategy


Entertainment
• Action
• Action adventure
• Adventure
• Board game
• Construction and Management Simulation
• Life Simulation
• Music
• Party
• Puzzle
• Role-playing
• Shooter
• Sports
• Strategy
• Vehicle Simulation

By Purpose
• Adult
• Advergames
• Art
• Casual
• Christian
• Educational
• Electronic sports
• Exergame
• Serious
Appendix A

Statistics


- Action Adventure
- Children’s
- Classic
- First Person Shooters
- MMOG
- Music (inc. singing, dancing)
- Puzzle/Board Games/Quizzes
- Racing
- Role-Playing Games
- Simulations
- Strategy
- Sports


Note category names have been translated from Dutch to English

- Adventure/Strategy
- Braintraining
- Casino/winning money
- Fitness
- Multi-player/RPG
- Music
- Puzzle
- Racing
- Shooting/Fighting
- Simulation
- Sports

Entertainment Software Association (ESA) *2010 Essential Facts about the Computer and Video Game Industry* (ESA, 2010)

Action

- Adventure
- Arcade
- Children’s entertainment
- Family entertainment
- Fighting
- Flight
- Racing
- Role-playing
- Shooter
- Sport Games
- Strategy
Appendix B Ubisoft’s ASSASSIN’S CREED franchise

ASSASSIN’S CREED

November 2007. First of three main games for the PS3, XBox360 and (later) PC.

The first instalment of what would become the ASSASSIN’S CREED franchise was the game ASSASSIN’S CREED. The game introduces us to Desmond Miles, a 25-year-old barkeeper who has been kidnapped by a company called Abstergo Industries. Abstergo has developed a machine called the Animus which enables them to ‘read’ the genetic memory of a person, so that this person can relive (part of) an ancestor’s life, in Desmond’s case that of his ancestor Altaïr Ibn-La’Ahad, an assassin at the time of the Third Crusade in 1191. In the main part of the game Altaïr has to assassinate nine men, either Templar knights or local dignitaries that work for/with them. With each assassination, he begins to question his master Al Mualim’s motives more, especially when he learns that the artefact he retrieved at the very beginning of the game, called the Piece of Eden, gives its owner the power to subjugate everyone to their will. In the end, Altaïr can withstand the powers of the artefact. As it opens, it reveals the location of six similar artefacts scattered all over the world. One interesting aspect of Altaïr’s depiction is that his character remains enigmatic throughout the game. We know almost

1 Abstergo is Latin for ‘cleanse’ or ‘wipe out’
2 The name Altaïr means ‘the flying one’ sometimes also translated as ‘the eagle’. His surname Ibn-La’Ahad means ‘son of no-one’.
3 Arabic for ‘teacher’ or ‘master’
thing about him, as neither his history nor his background is revealed. Visually he also remains ‘hidden’; his face, for example, is never shown, but always concealed by a hood. Of course, this is in keeping with the part he plays, that of a stealth assassin. However, another reason he stays an enigma is to make it easier for the gamer to identify with him. In the course of the game, it becomes clear that Desmond is more than just a barkeeper, but how he fits in with the modern day assassins is not apparent. What is clear, however, is that Abstergo is a front for a group of modern day Templars who are trying to find the Pieces of Eden to gain world domination. When the game ends, Desmond is left behind in the Abstergo building. Because of a genetic anomaly (called the bleeding effect), he discovers that he has obtained some of Altaïr’s powers, most notably his eagle vision. Using this eagle vision Desmond sees that the walls and floors of his cell and the Abstergo offices are covered with cryptic symbols and writings, left by another Abstergo victim (subject 16 – Desmond is subject 17). In these writings, the date 2012 is repeated several times.

ASSASSIN’S CREED (mobile game)

November 2007. Adapted version of the first game for the iPhone and iPod.

The mobile game only uses Altaïr’s story from the main game, albeit with some alterations, such as reducing the number of locations to Acre, Masyaf, and Jerusalem. The assassin’s fortress, Masyaf, originally located on a mountain peak in present-day Syria, now is a crusader’s ice fortress high in the mountains. This adds an extra gameplay element as Altaïr can now also freeze to death. Altaïr has to kill seven high-ranked Templars (instead of nine). Afterwards he returns to his master (who is now called Sinan), only to discover that he is also a Templar who used Altaïr to eliminate his rivals. The game
ends with Altaïr killing Sinan, which unlocks the Piece of Eden Altaïr stole earlier from Robert the Sable.

Assassin’s Creed: Graphic Novel


This short graphic novel was included in the limited edition of Assassin’s Creed. The story alternates between Desmond and Altaïr. It starts with Desmond in 2012 at the Abstergo premises. He introduces himself as a prisoner. On his way to the Animus, he uses the building’s vents to remain undetected. Having arrived in the Animus room, he touches the apparatus and a bright light appears. The story then skips to Altaïr, in 1191. He is on an assassination mission and sees himself as a hunter. On his way to his prey, he kills some guards. The story switches back to Desmond who has been detected and is now pursued by Abstergo board members. Back to Altaïr, who kills his target with the hidden blade. The story ends with Altaïr retracting his hidden blade, while Desmond is cornered by the board members. They now both reintroduce themselves as assassins.

4 In the original game Altaïr has to fight Al Mualin for the Apple (the Piece of Eden).
The narrative of this game centres on Altaïr and is set one year before his adventures in the first game, in 1190\(^5\). Altaïr has just returned from a long and arduous journey and is ordered by his master Al Mualim to find The Chalice (the Holy Grail), as it is believed that whoever owns it will be able to unite one of the two factions (the Saracens or the Crusaders) and end the war. In Damascus Altaïr learns that the Chalice is kept in the Temple of Sands, which he will only be able to enter with three special keys. To obtain them, Altaïr travels to different cities, killing Templars and aiding those in need. When he finally gains access to the Temple, all he finds is an empty casket. From his main antagonist, Basilisk, he learns that the Chalice is not an object but a woman [sic]. Altaïr follows Basilisk to Tyre and spares his life in return for information that the woman is in Jerusalem. He goes there, frees her, and finds that she is Adha, a woman he knew and had feelings for before the events of the game. He also learns that Harash, the second-in-command of the Assassins Order, has betrayed the assassins and holds their stronghold Alep (Masyaf in the main game). After killing Harash, Altaïr finds that Adha has been abducted by Basilisk, but even though he manages to find and kill Basilisk, Adha, who was taken away to an unknown destination on a Templar ship, remains beyond his reach. In ASSASSIN’S CREED II, the Codex pages (Altaïr’s diary) reveal that he did go after her, but that she had died (been killed) before he eventually found her.

\(^5\) I.e. at the time of the Third Crusade (1189 – 1192), when the Crusaders were led by Richard I and the Saracens by Saladin.
ASSASSIN'S CREED: E3 CINEMATIC TRAILER

The game trailer for the second main game of the franchise, ASSASSIN'S CREED II, was shown in June 2009 at E3. It was not a regular game trailer (i.e. gameplay footage and cutscenes), but a cinematic interpretation combining life actors and props with CGI surroundings taken from the game, a first for computer game trailers. Some of the Venice footage looked so real that one could not help but wonder if the designers had not mixed in live action images/footage as well. However, it was revealed that all the scenery was taken from the game world. As most of the characters depicted, with the exception of Ezio, were also virtual, the trailer left the viewer wondering what the real game would look like. Note that in the trailer Ezio is hooded and concealed, just as Altaïr was.

ASSASSIN'S CREED TWITTER ASSASSINATION EXPERIENCE

Twitter game, released 23 July 2009.

Completely new to the world of gaming was the ASSASSIN’S CREED TWITTER ASSASSINATION EXPERIENCE. Using Twitter (or in Agro Mode the Ubisoft website) the gamer could assassinate other players in the experience, through random assignments received in Tweet-mode. Likewise, she could be marked as a
Appendix B

target. In the role of assassin, the gamer can attack using various weapons. The target can either run or fight back (counter attack). Through experience points new skills and weapons can be obtained.

ASSASSIN’S CREED: LINEAGE

Short film prequel to the second main game, October-November 2009.

Before the release of ASSASSIN’S CREED II, Ubisoft released the short film ASSASSIN'S CREED: LINEAGE. The first episode was released on 26 October 2009 on YouTube, episodes two and three on 12 November 2009 on Spike TV and later on YouTube as well. LINEAGE is the prequel to ASSASSIN’S CREED II. The protagonist is Giovanni Auditore da Firenze, the father of Ezio Auditore (ACII’s main game character). The story starts in 1476 and introduces Giovanni and a young Ezio (who is around 16-17 at the time), their family and background. We get to see part of the setting of the game and Giovanni’s enemies, who will become Ezio’s enemies as well. The short film also introduces Giovanni’s employer and benefactor Lorenzo de’ Medici, who (up to a point) will become Ezio’s benefactor as well and his employer in side missions. In the ASSASSIN’S CREED LINEAGE: MAKING OFF video (Hybride, 2009) Patrice Desilet (ACII creative director) and Corey May (ACII script writer) explain that they made the short film first of all to introduce Ezio’s family, in order for the gamer to become more involved in Eio’s personal life and in his loss at the beginning of the second game. Secondly, they wanted to introduce the gamer to the Templar conspiracy, thus connecting scenes in the short film with episodes in the game. Because of this, only a gamer who had seen the film would fully comprehend what is happening in the game (thus we are dealing with transmedia storytelling on a
higher level). From a narrative, comparative and transmedia storytelling point of view, Corey May's comments on the short film project are very interesting:

Since our story does focus a great deal on the concept of vengeance, it became apparent to us very early on that for this to work, you know, the player much like Ezio has to grow attached to his family. And I think that is when the idea of doing something like the films became very appealing to us, with another way to further expand Ezio’s back-story, you know, in a different medium, in a way where we didn't have to concern ourselves as much with gameplay, we could focus entirely on character and story and universe building. (ASSASSIN’S CREED LINEAGE: MAKING OFF, 2009)

Like the E3-trailer, the film is a blend of real footage and CGI, although all the main characters are now actors (as the emphasis is on filmic storytelling). Although development of the second game was already well on the way, Ubisoft used the actors’ appearance (face and costume) for the game, to make the tie between the two even stronger. The notable exception is Ezio. The short film was made by the same studio that created 300 and SIN CITY, Hybride, acquired by Ubisoft in 2008. The film is perhaps an introduction of things to come, as it shows that the storylines, imagery, and even the trademark assassin's moves of the games can be adapted to the film screen. As it is obvious that Ubisoft wants to expand the ASSASSIN’S CREED experience in different media, both cinematic releases of the main games, as well as more transmedia stories filling in the gaps between the games, are creditable options for future release.

Assassin’s Creed: 1 Desmond

Graphic Novel, French only, 17 November 2009.
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The story in the graphic novels (until now only released in French) centres on Desmond and what happens/happened in between the main games. This novel starts with the previous Abstergo victim (subject 16) escaping from a psychiatric hospital. Then it skips to a Desmond Animus memory of a Roman ancestor called Aquilus, who is mortally wounded. The story returns to Desmond and an argument between Abstergo board members about his value as a means to find the artefacts. Some want him dead, while others stress that it took them ten years to find him after subject 16 became schizophrenic from prolonged exposure to the Animus. Lab assistant Lucy persuades them to keep Desmond alive and to move on to a different ancestor: Altaïr. In between memories, Desmond remembers serving drinks to Lucy in his bar and then going home with her, where she drugged him. Lucy tells him that she is not the real enemy, but that she is also not able to reveal more now. Meanwhile, the board members are pleased because Altaïr’s memories reveal the locations of the artefacts. Outside the Animus, Desmond discovers the cryptic messages left by subject 16 (which are different from those in the game). The graphic novel then turns to the events depicted at the beginning of the second game (Desmond and Lucy escaping from Abstergo). However, when Lucy and Desmond arrive at the hideout, they are not met by Shaun and Rebecca (as in the second game), but by a man called Tom. While the group discusses strategy a leather-clad man arrives, subject 16, whom Lucy addresses as Michael. Michael insists on being put in the Animus and when Tom and Lucy refuse, he forces their hand by attacking Desmond. Lucy knocks Michael out and instructs Tom to take him somewhere where he cannot harm anyone, including himself. The graphic novel ends with Desmond entering the Animus to start reliving Ezio’s memories.

Aquila is Latin for eagle.
ASSASSIN’S CREED II

November 2009. Second main game for the PS3, XBox360 and (later) PC.

Image B.9 Screenshot from ASSASSIN’S CREED II. Ezio Auditore da Firenze has arrived at the family villa in Monteriggioni. (Ubisoft Montreal, 2009)

The second game starts with Desmond and Lucy escaping from Abstergo. When they arrive at the hideout, they are greeted by Shaun, the team’s historian, and Rebecca, the technician. Rebecca has built a better version of the Animus, version 2.0, which Desmond will use to live Ezio’s life\(^7\). In the Animus, Desmond witnesses Ezio’s\(^8\) birth in 1459. The game then skips to 1476, where the LINEAGE film ended. Starting at the very beginning and then skipping to the 16-17 year-old Ezio means that the gamer becomes more emotionally involved with her game character. Moreover, in Ezio’s case there is also a ‘physical’ gameplay tie. Through Ezio’s growth the gamer acquires new kinaesthetic gameplay skills, starting with the simple one-button controller-commands to move baby Ezio’s arms and legs, through joystick and button-combinations that make him climb buildings and race across rooftops\(^9\), to the complex controller-combinations she has to use when Ezio confronts his nemesis Rodrigo Borgia in the final battle.

At first Ezio is just a typical Renaissance youth from a privileged Italian family. He loves to get into fights and is very much interested in the opposite sex. When he returns home after spending the night with his girlfriend Cristina, he finds that his father and his two brothers have been taken prisoner. When Ezio manages to talk to his imprisoned

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\(^7\) And acquire more assassins’ skills through the bleeding effect.

\(^8\) His full name is Ezio Auditore da Firenze. His first name derives from the Greek word ‘Aetos’, which means ‘Eagle’ (cf. Altair). The surname Auditore is fictitious.

\(^9\) Allegedly, a well documented pastime of Italian Renaissance youths.
father, Giovanni informs him of papers that will exonerate the Auditore. Ezio has to give
the papers to Uberto Borgia. Despite Ezio doing this, his father and brothers are hanged
in front of his eyes. Ezio assassinates Uberto, but discovers that the man was not solely
responsible for his family’s deaths. However, Ezio’s first priority is to bring his mother
and sister to the safety of the Auditore villa in Monteriggioni. There his uncle Mario tells
him of his father’s secret life as an assassin and Ezio is persuaded to follow his example.
He finds and kills the Templars responsible, confronting Rodrigo Borgia (who is now the
Pope) at the end of the game in the Vatican. The Templars are again on the hunt for
Pieces of Eden and Ezio is helped by various people, most notably Leonardo da Vinci and
Niccolò Machiavelli, to prevent them from doing so. Ezio also finds pages from Altaïr’s
diary (the Codex) that tell him more about Altaïr, his Piece of Eden (the Apple), and the
Templars. The Codex pages also contain diagrams for futuristic weapons Altaïr designed
with the help of the Apple, which Leonardo makes for Ezio.

Contrary to Altaïr, Ezio no longer is an enigma. In fact, his face is shown repeatedly
and in the forty years of his life that the gamer ‘literally’ lives through, his face and his
physique, as well as his demeanour, change as he grows older. Ezio’s assassinations are
also personal, while Altaïr’s were always contracts. In addition, Ezio did not start off as an
assassin: he is coerced into the role. The character the gamer has to identify with is thus
no longer a blank canvas, but a reluctant hero-to-be-king character with a personal
history. Because Ezio is personally involved, the gamer is personally involved. This may
well be why ACII was more successful than the first game. The game ends with Abstergo
compromising the modern day assassins’ hideout. The assassins flee in a van, taking the
Animus with them. In the van Lucy tells Desmond, referring to Ezio’s last memories, that
the Earth’s magnetic field could soon be penetrated by a major solar flair, causing a global
disaster. This of course refers back to the symbols with their 2012 doomsday prediction
that Desmond found at the end of the first game.
**Assassin's Creed Renaissance**

Book by Oliver Bowden, released on 26 November 2009.

The book tells the same story as the game (only Ezio's story). There is one mission, beating up Cristina's future husband, which is not included in the game\(^\text{10}\). The other two, which are in the book but were not in the original game, the Battle of Forli and the Bonfire of the Vanities, were later made available as downloadable content. In the book, the reader is given a bit more information about Cristina's fate - but that is it, Ezio's story is the same as in the game. The fact that Bowden often uses the exact dialogue as the game suggests that he used the original game script to write the book.

\(^{10}\text{It was turned into one of the Cristina missions in AC BROTHERHOOD.}\)

**ASSASSIN’S CREED II MOBILE GAME**

November 2009. Adapted version of the second game for the iPhone and iPod

Released at the same time as the second main game, this version for the iPhone and iPod is a reasonably accurate adaptation of the console game. The game spans nine levels, located in the cities of Florence, Venice and Forli. Although Ezio's main targets are...
the same, where he assassinates them differs from the original game. The other Renaissance assassins who helped Ezio in ACII, like Machiavelli, are left out of the mobile game. Therefore, Leonardo da Vinci is the only person who helps him. This mobile game is more versatile than the first one. Ezio can now assassinate from a hanging position, use the trademark leaps of faith of the main games and use courtesans to distract guards, as in the main game. However, before his final fight with Rodrigo Borgia he has to fight a nameless courtesan-like woman, a fight that is not in the main game.

ASSASSIN’S CREED II DISCOVERY
November 2009. Secondary game revealing information about Ezio (Nintendo DS and iPhone).

This game takes place in 1491, between the Battle of Forli and the Bonfire of the Vanities. At a meeting with Antonio, the leader of Venice's thieves' guild, Ezio is introduced to the Spaniard Luis Santangel, whose associate Christoffa Corombo (Columbus) has been kidnapped by the Borgias. After rescuing Corombo, Ezio travels to Spain to rescue fellow assassins from the Inquisition. There he finds out that the Templars, in pursuit of the Pieces of Eden, plan to sail to the new World (as hinted at by the revelations in ACII). One of the Templars who Ezio has to assassinate is Tomas Torquemada, the first Inquisitor General of Spain. He also saves the Isabella I of Castille from a planned Templar assassination.
November 2009. Secondary game revealing information about Altaïr (PSP and iPhone).

Although there is an Altaïr sequence\textsuperscript{11} in \textit{ASSASSIN’S CREED II}, as well as his diary, Altaïr’s adventures after the end of the first game are revealed in \textit{BLOODLINES}. The game was released on 17 November 2009. It takes place several months after the end of the first game. Altaïr follows the knights Templar to Cyprus, where he first frees/captures a reluctant Maria. The main enemy in this game is Armand Bouchart, who has become the new Templar Grand Master. However, to get to him Altaïr has to kill several other Templar commanders as well. Throughout the game Altaïr learns more about himself and the Apple of Eden. At the end of the game Altaïr and Maria help each other to escape the archive in the Templar stronghold Limassol Castle. As both do not want to go back to their former lives, they resolve to travel east. Altaïr will spend the rest of his life studying the Apple. The game also contains six so-called Codex scenes, in which we see Altaïr writing the passages in his diary that relate to the codex pages found in \textit{ACII}.

\textsuperscript{11} Because of the bleeding effect, Desmond has a vision (outside the Animus) of Altaïr in which he sees Altaïr pursuing a robed figure. When Altaïr (the gamer) catches up, the robed figure turns out to be Maria, the female Templar who posed for Robert de Sable in the first game. A love scene follows.
ASSASSIN’S CREED II: MULTIPLAYER

March 2010. Multiplayer game based on ACII for the iPod and iPhone.

Played from a top-down perspective the game allows up to four gamers to battle each other in a death match. Gamers are matched online and given assassination targets (other live gamers). Following this, the gamer wanders around until she finds the others and battle commences. The game, amongst other things, includes different power-ups, an online leader board, and a friends system. Although visually completely different, the game hints at what is to come in the multiplayer mode of AC BROTHERHOOD.

ASSASSIN’S CREED BROTHERHOOD E3 TRAILER

As with the AC II E3 TRAILER, ASSASSIN’S CREED BROTHERHOOD was introduced with a mixed media trailer made by Hybride. Although this was no longer new, the trailer did show that in the course of a year the technique of combining life actors with CGI had improved considerably, making it even harder to distinguish between actors, set pieces, and in-game
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CGI. The trailer introduces Ezio’s new nemesis Cesare Borgia. It also shows Ezio’s new master assassin’s accomplishment, i.e. leading his own band of assassins. Thus the trailer introduces both the multiplayer mode, as well as the new single player element of training and managing new recruits.

ASSASSIN’S CREED PROJECT LEGACY

Facebook game released 30 September 2010.

In PROJECT LEGACY, the gamer becomes one of the recruits at Abstergo. Through a machine called the Data Dump Scanner (DDS), she is given access to past memories of all kinds of people linked to historical events. Her task is to scan the data (presumably taken from previously recorded Animus sessions) to find out the truth about the assassins and the Templars. The Facebook game is linked to the BROTHERHOOD game through Ubisoft’s Uplay system. Achievements in the Facebook game are rewarded with money, property, and
items in the *BROTHERHOOD* game. Although the game, in essence, is a strategy game, because the data processing involves characters and events that are also in, or precede, the main game, the gamer learns quite a lot through playing this game. For instance, she learns that one of the other Artefacts was hidden in the Auditore villa in Monteriggione and that it is probably not the Ankh referred to in the French graphic novel, but the Shroud, mentioned by subject 16 in *AC BROTHERHOOD*. The mysterious Erudito also ‘helps’ the gamer with classified information in both games. Interestingly, in the Monteriggione hideout in *AC BROTHERHOOD* one of Lucy’s computer screens shows the *PROJECT LEGACY* interface.

**Assassin’s Creed The Fall**

Series of three *ASSASSIN’S CREED* comic books. The first issue was released on 10 November 2010.

Contrary to the other stories in the *ASSASSIN’S CREED* franchise, *The Fall* is not about Desmond Miles or one of his ancestors, but about another modern-day assassin named Daniel Cross, who is troubled by visions of what may be a past life. They are, however, memories of the life of his 19th century Russian ancestor Nikolai Orellov. Orellov tries to secure an immensely powerful artefact (another Piece of Eden) which is in the hands of the Templars. Orellov’s story is set against the early stages of the Russian revolution and includes encounters with the Bolsheviks as well as with Tsar Alexander III. Daniel in the meantime has to find the elusive Mentor of the Assassins. The series not only reveals information about other past and present assassins and Templars, but also about the Tunguska Event. The series is written and illustrated by Karl Kerschl and Cameron Stewart, and published by Wildstorm (DC Comics). The first issue was released on 10 November 2010, just before the launch of the *BROTHERHOOD* game. Issue two followed on 1 December 2010 and issue three on 9 February 2011.
Assassin's Creed: 2 Aquilus

Graphic Novel, French only, 12 November 2010.

The second French graphic novel starts with Desmond dreaming about a hunting trip in the desert with his father. His father tells him that “Les aigles ne craignent pas les vautours, mais ils doivent apprendre à s’en méfier”\textsuperscript{12}. When he wakes up, Lucy tells him about them fleeing from the hideout and about Tom having to leave. In his stead, Shaun and Rebecca have joined them, as well as a chauffeur and a scientist called Geier. They are now heading through the Alps to the Auditore villa in Monteriggione. In the truck, Desmond gets back into the Animus to discover what happened to Aquilus. He finds out that he did not die, but was rescued by an ally called Accipiter. After recovering from his wounds, Aquilus returns to his father’s villa in Lyon. He has brought his father one of the Pieces of Eden, an Ankh. While Aquilus is out exacting revenge on the person who betrayed him, his father is killed by an old friend of the family Caius Vulture, who steals the Ankh. The servant who witnessed the event and who tried to defend his father dies after telling Aquilus that “Les aigles ne craignent pas les vautours ... mais ils devront désormais apprendre à s’en méfier”. In the meantime in 2012 the truck is waylaid by Abstergo agents, who Desmond fights successfully using his newly acquired assassins’ skills. It becomes clear that someone has betrayed their location, and with the help of his dream and Aquilus’s memories Desmond can flush out the culprit. The novel ends with Desmond going out to explore the villa. In the final image we see the Ankh, suggesting that it is somewhere in the villa.

\textsuperscript{12} The eagle does not fear the vulture, but he should learn to mistrust him.
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ASSASSIN’S CREED ASCENDANCE

Animated short prequel to AC BROTHERHOOD, released 16 November 2010.

Interestingly, the prequel to AC BROTHERHOOD is not a Hybrid cinematic film, but a short animated feature. It starts with a scene that will reappear in the game, although somewhat different from the one in the animated film. Then it shows Ezio questioning his friend Leonardo da Vinci, who is now working for the Borgias, on his new enemy Cesare Borgia. Ezio, and the viewer, learn that Cesare is brutal and will stop at nothing to get what he wants. In the MAKING OF video, it becomes clear that the animated film again uses imagery directly taken from the game, which was then post-edited to give it an artistic feel, in 3D, as the makers wanted it to look like a painting from the Renaissance. The MAKING OF video also reveals that Ubisoft developed special software to extract imagery directly from the games. Thus, they can export it to any medium they want, stressing the cross-media element of the franchise. According to the MAKING OF video, Ubisoft wants everyone to be involved in the ASSASSIN’S CREED experience in whatever medium they are comfortable with, although for the full picture it is necessary to read/view/play all the parts, especially as the stories in the different media become more and more entwined. However, the transmedia experience of the short animated feature is not as strong as that of the LINEAGE film. Viewing the feature before the release of the game was also difficult outside the USA and Canada, as it had to be bought through i-Tunes or the XBox or PS3.
network, which all have regional restrictions. Furthermore, the artistic imagery is not as accessible as the life actors of the LINEAGE film were.

ASSASSIN’S CREED BROTHERHOOD

Continuation of the second main game for the PS3, XBox360.

The latest game in the ASSASSIN’S CREED franchise, ASSASSIN’S CREED BROTHERHOOD, was released on 16 November 2010 in the USA and on 18 November in Europe. While the idea was that only the main games of the series would be published for the main platforms, Ubisoft, instead of launching more downloadable content for ASSASSIN’S CREED II, decided to continue Ezio’s story in another main game. This is remarkable as they also announced another DS game, which, like the other secondary games, would give the gamer more Ezio adventures. One of the reasons Ubisoft gave for launching another game set in Renaissance Italy was to introduce a multiplayer version of the game. As they already had the basics of the game world (although now set in Rome, the largest map to date), they would only have to concentrate on finding interesting multiplayer game modes. However, ASSASSIN’S CREED BROTHERHOOD is not only a multiplayer game; there is also a complete single player game, which furthers Desmond’s story and that of Ezio. The single player game starts were the second main game left off. Desmond and Lucy flee to the Assassins Sanctuary in the Auditore villa in 2012 Monteriggione. Meanwhile in Rome, Ezio, still in the Vatican, is bemused by Minerva’s words. When he leaves the room, he finds out that Rodrigo Borgia is not dead. Ezio tries to take the staff (another Piece of Eden) but it sinks into the ground. With the help of his uncle Mario, Ezio is able to leave the premises. At the
Tiber River (in a scene reminiscent of the Elrond-Isildur Mount Doom scene in THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING (Jackson P., 2002)) Mario asks Ezio to destroy the Apple of Eden, but Ezio refuses to do so. Therefore Mario takes the Apple into his keeping. Both return to Monteriggione, but the villa is attacked and destroyed by Cesare Borgia, Ezio’s new antagonist. Mario is murdered and Cesare seizes the Apple. Ezio follows him to Rome. He is now a master assassin and can recruit new assassins, which he has to train and send out on missions so that they become skilled themselves and can help him in his quest to counter the Templars, fight Cesare, and regain the Apple. Ezio is again helped by Leonardo da Vinci and Machiavelli. After Cesare’s death, the game returns to 2012, where Shaun discovers that Ezio has hidden his (originally Altaïr’s) Apple in the temple of Juno underneath the Colosseum. Desmond finds it and activates it but is then compelled by the Apple to stab Lucy. As the credits roll, Desmond passes out and is placed in the Animus by two (yet) unidentified men. Although some have already declared it better than ACII, the story in AC BROTHERHOOD is not as strong as that of the second game, perhaps because it only spans a few years and, although Mario is killed, both Ezio and the gamer are not as strongly involved with the game’s events. From a story point of view the not obligatory Cristina missions are the most engaging as they show that despite her marriage Ezio’s feelings for Cristina did not subside. In the first mission, we see how Ezio became involved with Cristina. In the second mission, he turns to her for help after his father and brothers have been hanged so that he can retrieve the corpses and give them a proper burial. But Ezio is now a wanted man and he has to flee Florence. In the third mission Ezio learns that Cristina is betrothed but that her husband-to-be is about to pay for his gambling debts. Ezio rescues him but warns him to mend his ways and be a good husband to Cristina (this scene was already in the Assassin’s Creed Renaissance book). In the next mission, Ezio steals a kiss from Cristina at the Venezia Carnivale and learns that she did not want to marry her husband but still loved Ezio. In the final mission, Cristina is abducted. Ezio sets out to rescue her but comes too late and ‘the love of his life’ dies in his arms.

Like other present-day sandbox games, AC BROTHERHOOD has many (partially obligatory) side quests. Some of them are even integrated in the main story. These are destroying Borgia towers, recruiting assassins, collecting Romulus keys in secret underground labyrinths and destroying Leonardo’s War Machines. Of these, the Borgia towers are the most important because otherwise new areas will not become available. The other three only have to be fulfilled partially for the game to continue (you have to recruit at least four assassins, destroy one War Machine and find one Romulus Key). The rest of Ezio’s side quests are optional. These are rebuilding Rome, Cristina missions, shop
quests, assassination missions, courtesan missions, thieves’ missions, intercepting Borgia messengers, catching the pickpocket, collecting treasure, collecting feathers and collecting Borgia flags. Apart from the Cristina missions, most of these side quests are designed to hone gameplay skills and/or are a means to improve armour and weaponry thus increasing health status. As I explained above, the Cristina missions are special because they resolve what happened between Ezio and Christina in ACII.

**Assassin’s Creed Brotherhood**

Book by Oliver Bowden, published 25 November 2010.

![Image B.21 Assassin’s Creed Brotherhood, front cover](Bowden, 2010)

Just as in the first book, this book only tells Ezio’s part of the story. And just as in the first book, the events depicted are the same as in the game. Again two episodes from the book are missing in the game (both involving Cesare Borgia escaping), which will undoubtedly become downloadable content for the game. As the book only covers the years that pass in the game, what happened to Cristina is not in the book. The book does, however, emphasize Ezio’s involvement with Caterina Sforza (their love scene in Monteriggione is also in the game). When she departs for Forli, Ezio feels a keen loss and he keeps thinking of her until the last pages of the book. The book puts more emphasis on the relationship between Ezio and Machiavelli than the game. However, in the game it is also becomes clear that Machiavelli (allegedly) based his book *Il Principe* on Ezio. An episode not (yet) depicted in the game is Ezio and Machiavelli being chased by a young female assassin working for the Borgias. She is a woman both men are intrigued by.
ASSASSIN’S CREED: LOST LEGACY

Secondary game revealing information about Ezio, Nintendo 3DS.

This game was announced at the E3 2010 conference when Nintendo demonstrated a first version of their 3DS handheld system. In the game Ezio will travel to Masyaf, the former assassins’ stronghold, where part of Altair’s story took place. In LOST LEGACY Ezio will find out more about the origins of the Order and possibly get further information about Altaïr. Probably the gamer will also finally find out with whom Ezio will continue the assassin’s bloodline. LOST LEGACY will be the first 3D ASSASSIN’S CREED game and is scheduled for release in 2011.

Sources:


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Appendix B

http://assassinscreed.uk.ubi.com/assassins-creed-1
http://assassinscreed.uk.ubi.com/assassins-creed-2
http://assassinscreed.uk.ubi.com/brotherhood/

Assassin’s Creed Wiki: http://assassinscreed.wikia.com
Assassin’s Creed YouTube Channel: http://www.youtube.com/AssassinscreedUK
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Appendix C Articles and talks

List of the original articles and talks on which this dissertation is based:


http://dare.ubvu.vu.nl/bitstream/1871/11014/2/HereBeDragonsbw.pdf


