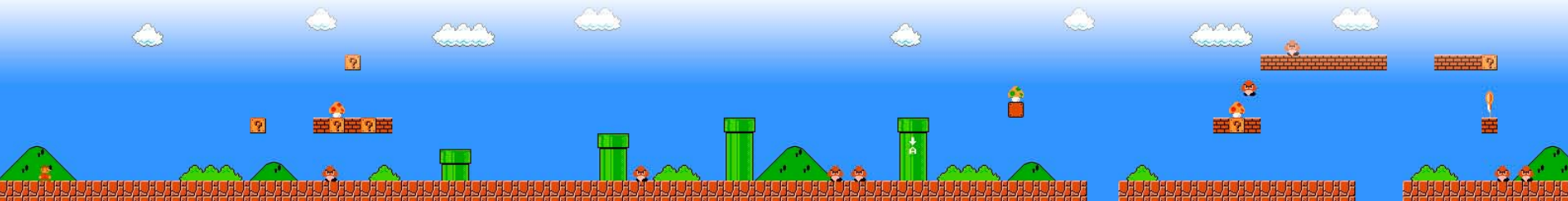


Trends in the gaming world

Manu Pärssinen

Game news editor, reviewer and collector



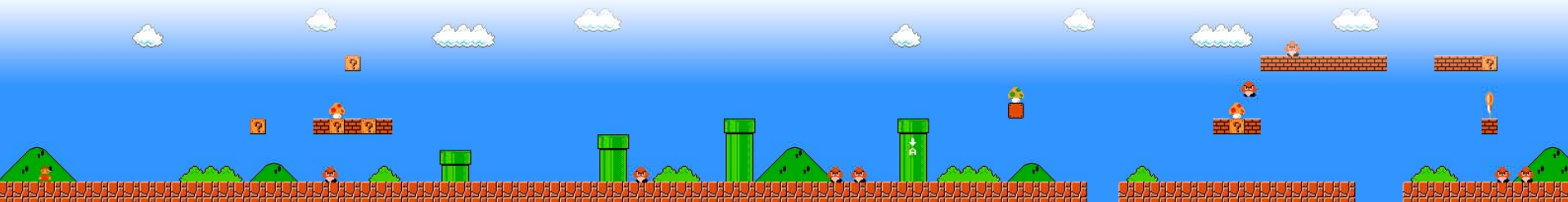
Getting as realistic as possible

- The developing technology makes more realistic graphics possible
 - CPU power
 - Graphic cards
 - HDTVs
 - New medias
 - Hd-dvd
 - Blu-ray
- Another goal is more and more realistic physics

Problems

- so called "Uncanny Valley" – when things get realistic enough, the characters 'too human like', even the smallest flaws matter
- Making games requires even more people and time

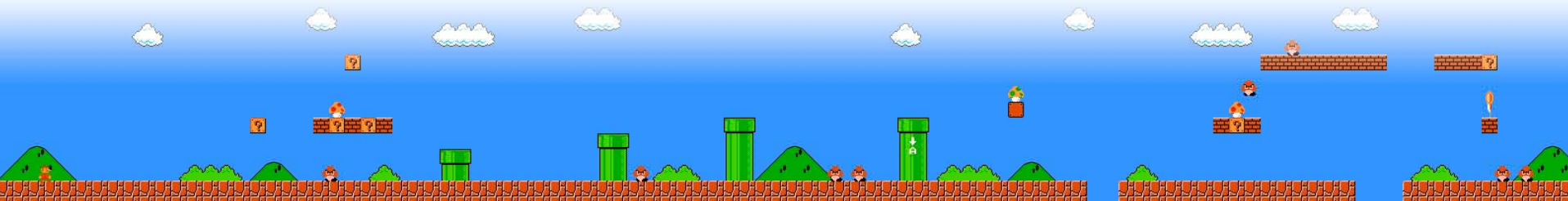
-> which leads to
growing budgets



Examples of realistic graphics and physics in games



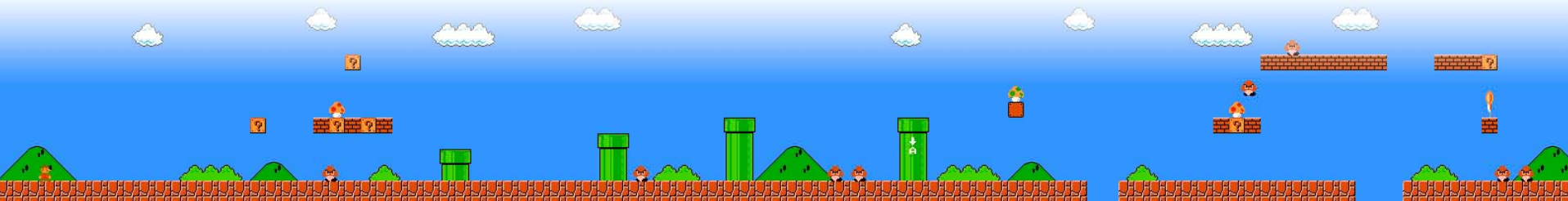
Crysis
(PC)



Examples of realistic graphics and physics in games



A Finnish game, **Alan Wake**, with realtime tornado throwing cars and rocks around (PC, Xbox 360)

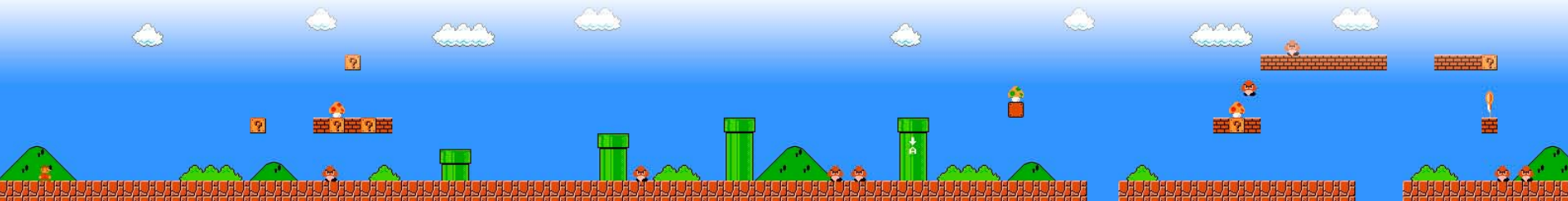


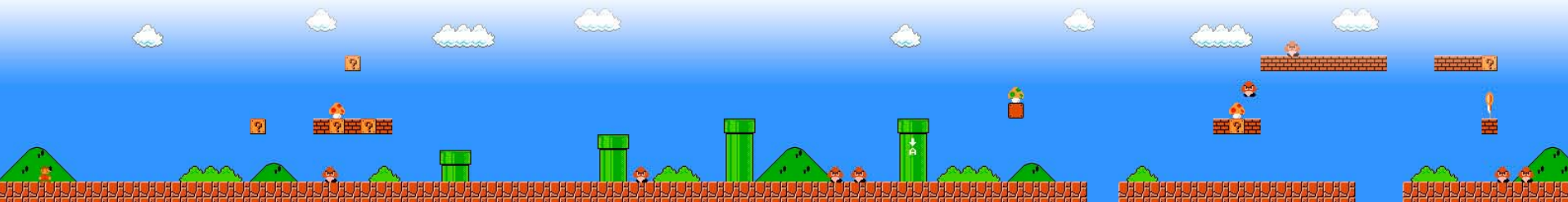
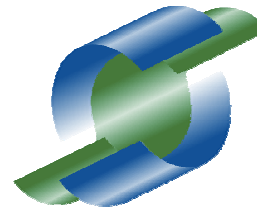
The concentration of game companies

- Bigger companies buy smaller game developers, then get rid of overlapping game studios
- Electronic Arts, Sony, Microsoft
- Smaller: Sega, Universal
- Exceptions: Ubisoft, Capcom
- Japanese mergers: Namco-Bandai, Square-Enix, Sega-Sammy

Other solutions

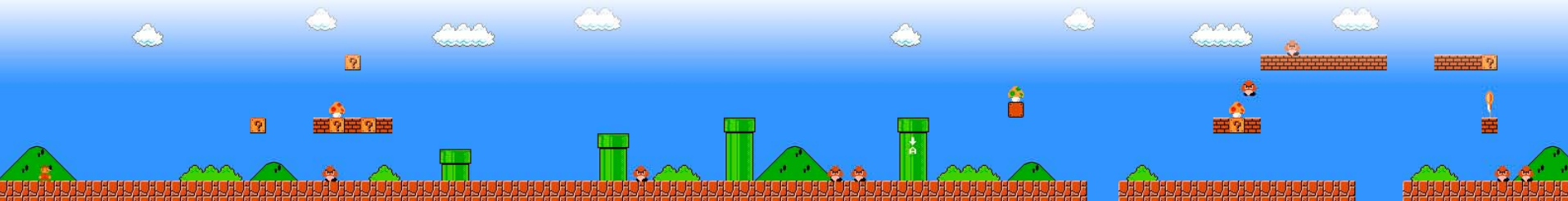
- In-game advertising
 - BF2142
- Episodic structure
 - Half-Life 2, Sam & Max
 - A growing trend
- Smaller games
 - Xbox Live Arcade etc.
- Change of strategy
 - Nintendo Wii





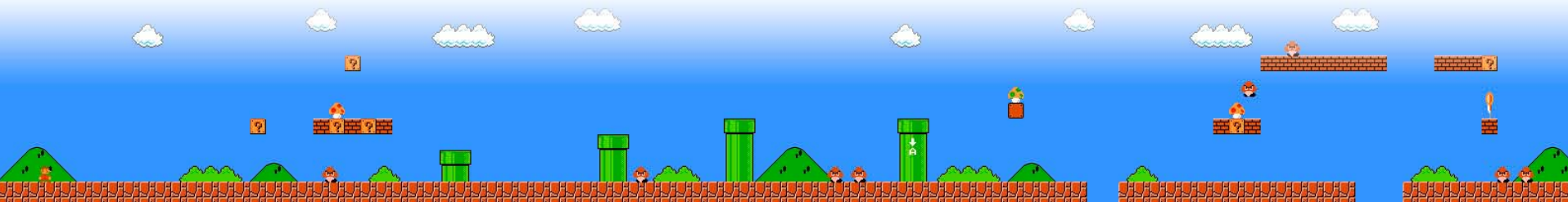
Sequels/licenced games vs. innovativity

- Especially sports games get 'updated versions' yearly – and always sell well
- Taking risks is rare
 - EA announced a campaign about innovativity this summer, then published 07-versions of their sports games
- Movie licences, the name sells
 - This summer: Cars
- Sequels
 - Most popular game series have more than 10...
- Original/Creative games
 - Usually critically acclaimed
 - Favourites among gamers
 - Get lots of media publicity
 - mass audience won't buy → they don't sell enough
- Examples from 2006
 - We love Katamari
 - Loco Roco
 - Ôkami – got some of the best reviews ever -> game studio was taken apart





Originality in graphics and gameplay go together in many cases.

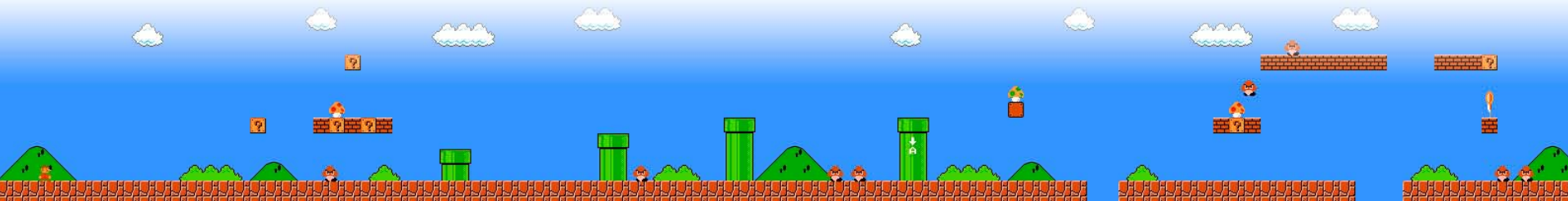


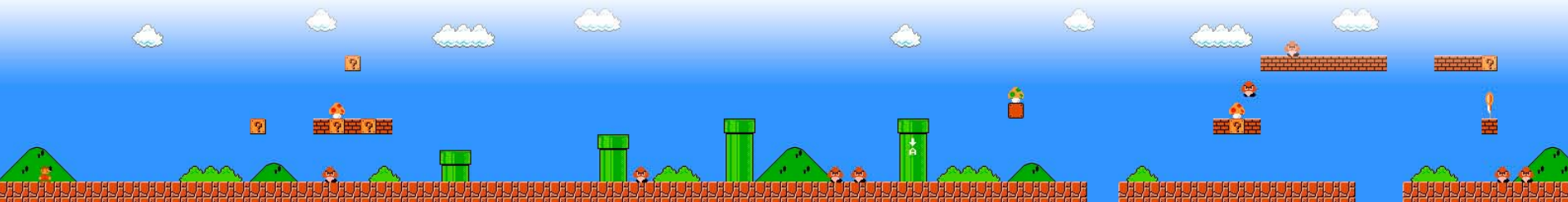
New target groups

- Targeting consumers who have never played, or the last time was in the 80s
- From complicated controllers to something easy to access
 - Racing wheels and light guns have existed over 20 years -> something new
- Game market is growing, but slowing down -> new audience is needed
- Japan is heading the way, especially Nintendo

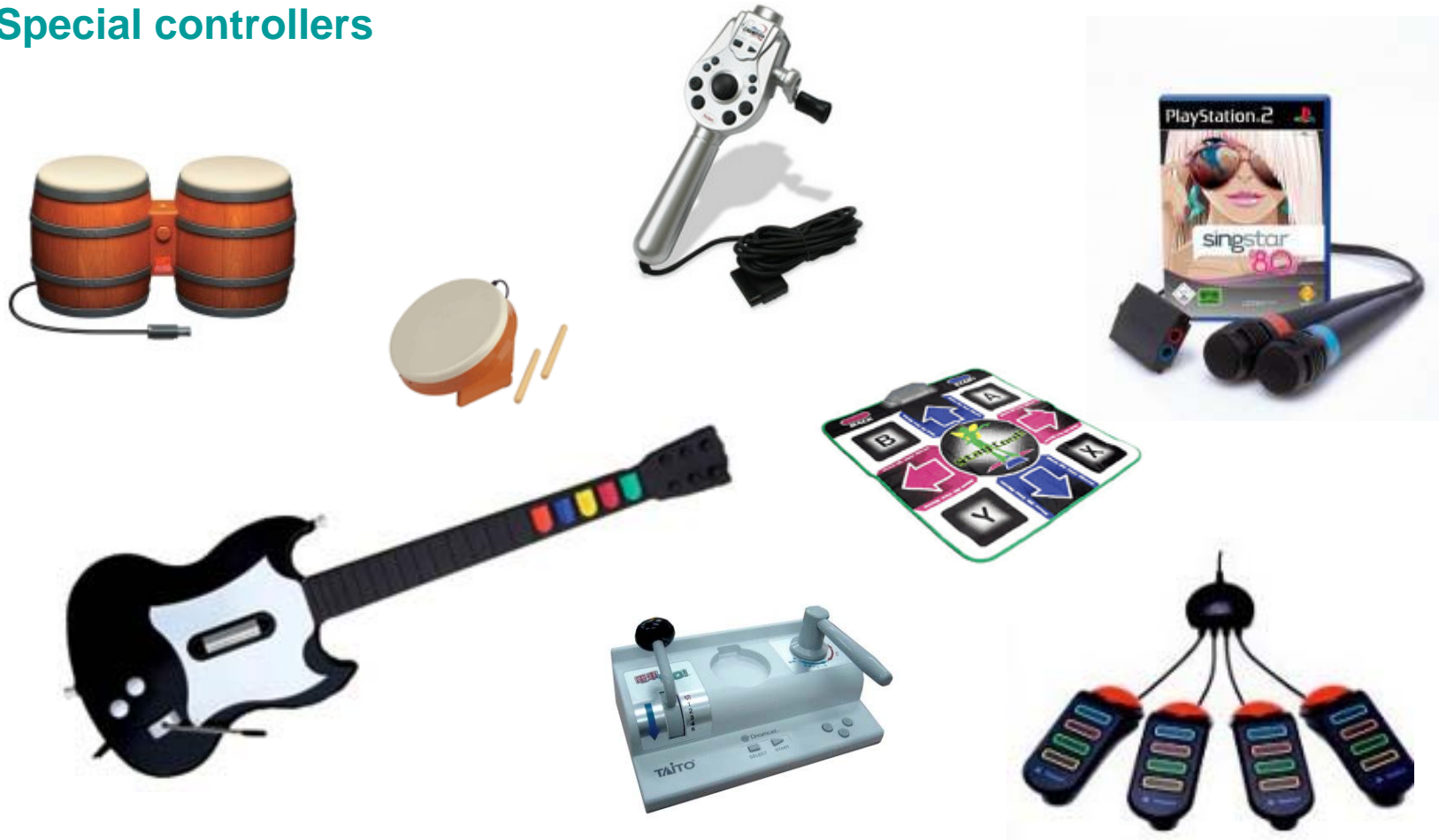
How is this achieved?

- Nintendo DS
 - Touch screen
 - Pet games
 - Nintendogs (6 mil.)
 - Brain training
 - 'teaching games' (cooking, language, writing, manners)
- Sony Playstation
 - 'party games'
 - karaoke, quiz show
 - Eye Toy, Guitar Hero





Special controllers



All special controllers in one – **Nintendo Wii**

- The popularity of special controllers, cutting game development costs and getting games 'closer to people' lead to Nintendo's new console (out December 06 in Finland)
- Motion sensitive controllers can replace almost every other special controller and remove the need for 'press button – action happens' –relation
- Sony's new console has tilt sensing controller

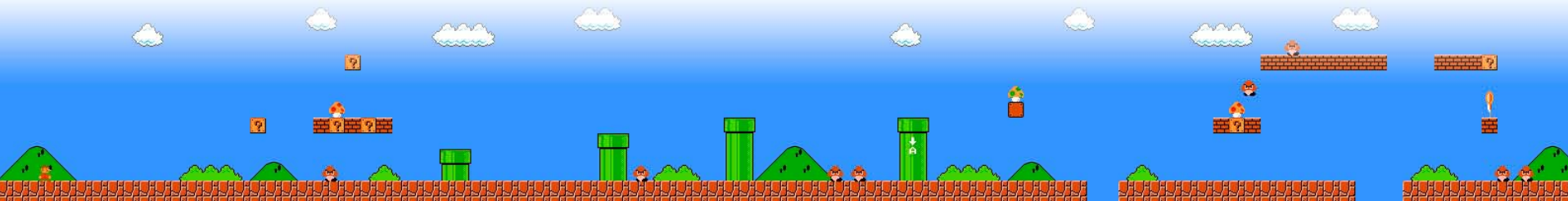


Wii™



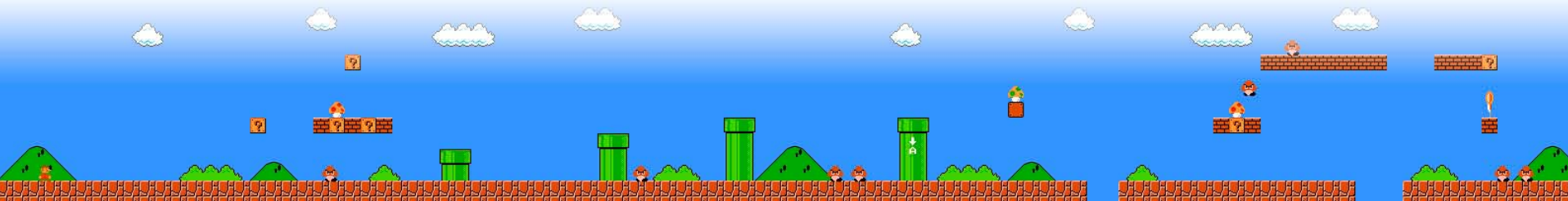
Online multiplayer games and game demos

- Playing over the net is increasingly popular
- World of Warcraft has 7 million players, Xbox Live 4 million
 - both have monthly payments
-> very good business
- All new consoles, even handheld ones, support networking out of the box
- Game demos = limited trial versions of games
 - Gamers can decide if it's worth buying
 - Developers find out what people think, if something needs to be fixed etc.
 - New trend: user feedback from gamers has actually affected, internet is a powerful community
 - Also new: game demos downloadable to consoles too

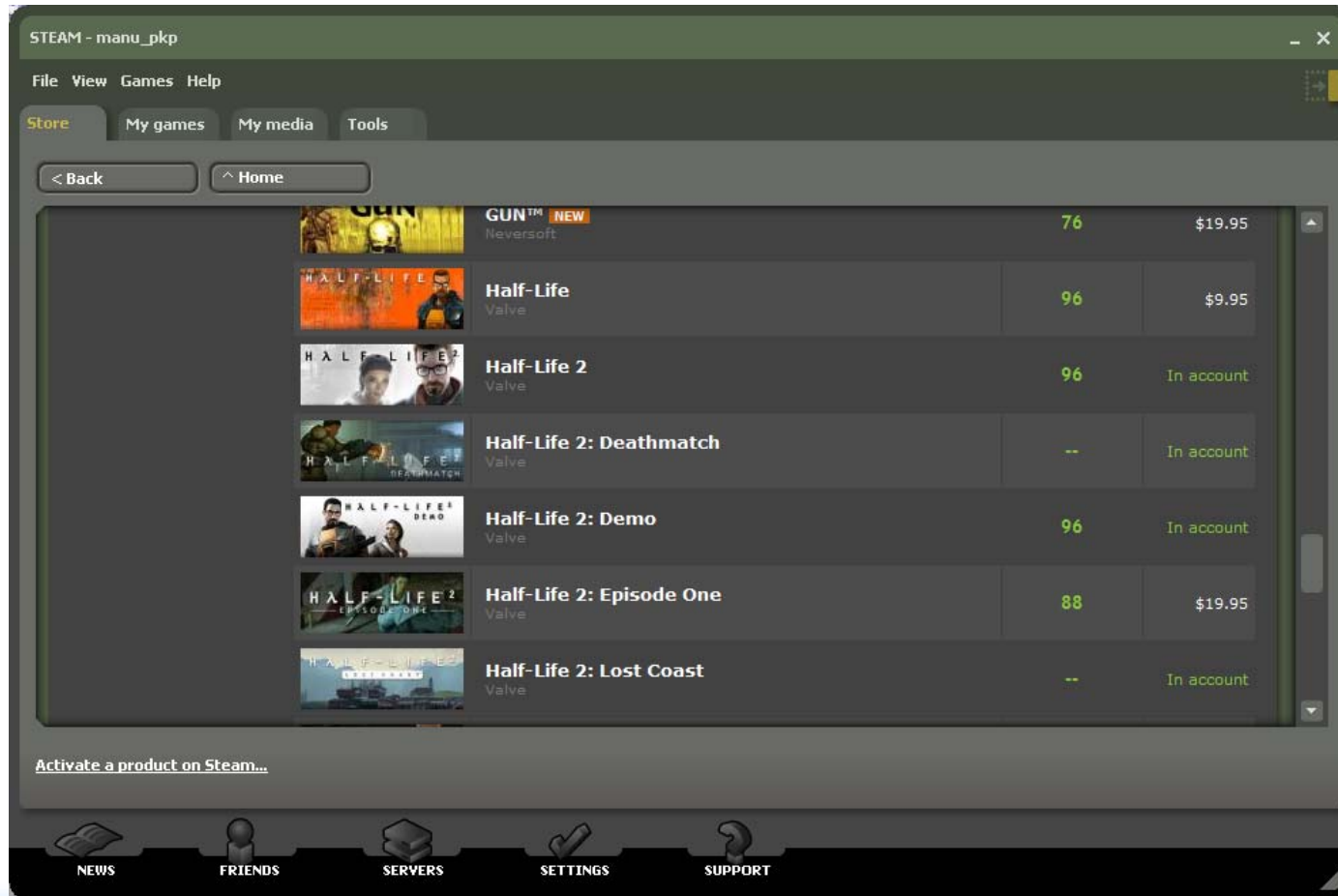


Digital distribution

- Instead of selling games on DVDs or CDs, they're sold online and the files are downloaded
- Good for small game studios
 - Sam & Max
- Some bigger, centralized services
 - Valve Steam
- Also coming to consoles
 - Sony PS3 (PS1 and PS2 games)
 - Xbox 360 (small games, addons)
 - Nintendo Wii ('Virtual Console')
- Sony's Phil Harrison: "I'd be amazed if Playstation 4 has a disc drive"
- Made possible by high speed internet connections and secure payment methods
- Goes hand in hand with episodic content, though in some cases the add-ons are also sold in stores
- Allows easy/automatic access to fixes (patches)
- Most people still want physical evidence of owning the game (CD, box, manual book)
- Fear of losing the bought data in case of computer error -> losing the money
- **Micropayments**
 - Paying for small parts of the game, like extra weapons, cars, levels etc.



Valve's 'Steam' - digital game distribution service



Trends recap

- Realism in graphics and physics
- Game companies getting bigger and fewer
- Market is dominated by sequels and licenced games
 - Critics and gamers like original games, but they don't sell well
- New target audiences are sought after
 - New types of games and controllers, easy access, party games
- Online multiplayer games more and more popular
- Games tested on the audience via game demos
- Digital distribution, episodic content

