

YAHOO! GAMES

Video game sales down \$2 billion in 2011

By [Chris Morris](#) | [Plugged In](#) – Thu, Jan 12, 2012 7:03 PM EST

Video game retailers didn't have a lot to celebrate in 2011.

According to figures announced Thursday by The NPD Group, overall sales for the industry came in between \$16.3 and \$16.6 billion for 2011. That's down from \$18.6 billion a year ago.

Physical retail sales, which make up the majority of software sold, were down 8 percent to \$9.3 billion.

On the upside, though, hardware sales continued to show plenty of strength, climbing 9 percent, mostly on the strength of the Xbox 360, which led the industry for most of the year.



Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3 (Activision)

"Overall industry results are not entirely surprising given that we are on the back end of the current console lifecycle, combined with the continued digital evolution of gaming," said Anita Frazier, industry analyst, The NPD Group. "Core gamers continue to be engaged and spend on established franchises across both the digital and physical format using multiple devices for different gaming occasions."

The number is a preliminary estimate from the research company and could adjust slightly in the months to come. NPD will release the final 2011 figures in March.

As for the holidays, they were anything but happy for the industry. Software sales were down 5 percent from a year ago, while hardware and accessory sales both dropped 11 percent.

"December was very rough for new physical sales of video games hardware, software and accessories," said Frazier.

"Because of the great slate of content that came to market during the fourth quarter, I had expected December sales to represent a larger portion of total year sales than what occurred. This year, December accounted for just 23 percent of annual sales, while the average for the past ten years has been 28."

The big sellers were big enough to claim the top spots for the year, though. Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3 was the month's (and the year's) best-selling game, while Ubisoft's Just Dance 3 claimed the runner-up spot. Older version of both franchises -- Call of Duty: Black Ops and Just Dance 2 -- made 2011's top 10 as well.

The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim was the third best-selling title in both December and all of 2011.

The year's top 10 selling games are below.

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Publisher</u>
1	Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	Activision Blizzard
2	Just Dance 3	Ubisoft
3	Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	Bethesda Softworks

4	Battlefield 3	Electronic Arts
5	Madden NFL 12	Electronic Arts
6	Call of Duty: Black Ops	Activision Blizzard
7	Batman: Arkham City	Warner Bros. Interactive
8	Gears of War 3	Microsoft
9	Just Dance 2	Ubisoft
10	Assassin's Creed: Revelations	Ubisoft

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