

# game producer blog

I'm baking games. Indie style.

## What Are AAA Titles?

### Question:

*What are AAA titles?*

### Short answer:

High-quality games with high budget.

### Longer answer:

There is a debate that takes into considering several aspects that AAA titles should have. Some of the most common qualities that AAA titles should have (according to some experts) are:

- High-quality
- Broad market
- High sales
- Large teams
- Big budget
- Polished audio-visual direction
- Perfect technical and artistic execution
- Playable & fully enjoyable within the first five minutes of play
- Exhaustively tested
- Bug free
- Great usability
- Continuous, balanced entertainment from beginning to end
- Great graphical user interface
- First place in the markets, and great marketing
- Hype

Some of the qualities are more arguable than others (like playability in 5 minutes). Some argue whether AAA titles should have certain budget or certain amount of sales.

In general, **AAA refers to a game of the highest quality.**

This entry was posted in Ask Game Producer, Game Development on May 26, 2006 [<http://www.gameproducer.net/2006/05/26/what-are-aaa-titles/>] by Juuso Hietalahti.

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## 25 thoughts on “What Are AAA Titles?”



Basty

Mar 7, 2013 at 3:55 pm

Just wondering... What the hell does Hype have anything to do with something being a quality product? Or big budget in that matter?

Large teams?

They have nothing to do with final product being even mildly enjoyable.

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Harabec

Jan 24, 2013 at 6:37 pm

Why people started calling “Triple A” to games that have allot of budget and are expected to sell well? Some random dude on the web calls it “Triple A” and now suddenly everyone calls them that. There isn't even a word combination to match the 3 A's.

The expression “Triple A” is yet another marketing buzzword designed to make us part with our cash.

AAA = The guy who gets the high score in all the arcade games across the country. “No one's gonna beat AAA's high score in Street Fighter.”

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A



Feb 20, 2013 at 5:51 am

ever heard of sheep, they're a flock of sheeple. We are hybrids with something else that created us. We live in a computer universe.

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McDucky

Dec 16, 2012 at 12:26 pm

In my opinion, AAA should refer to games with a high budget and a lot of people working on it. Minecraft shouldn't be considered an AAA Title, since it is an indie game with very low budget. (At least that's how it started) :)

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BoscoeVon

Oct 18, 2011 at 1:18 am

The best artist, programmers, designers = lots of money = AAA...generally not always. Sales and shelf live will tell you whether you are worthy of the AAA honor. That's when you know your game was spot on. There are lots of very bad games that the whole world know about. They never made anyone boat load of money.

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Velvet Dark

Aug 11, 2011 at 2:41 am

AAA = Against All Authorities

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tenacity7

Aug 3, 2011 at 1:27 am

What about Angry Birds? It's pretty successful, everyone knows it, but it's a low budget casual game. Is it

still a AAA title?



godzilla

Mar 18, 2011 at 7:21 pm

I think minecraft is a AAA grade game cuz everybody knows about it and it was in the IGC at GDC.



Ollie

Dec 10, 2010 at 3:35 pm

this article definitely did shed some light on the subject as i didn't have a clue what was meant by AAA. So thanks



sayedamir02

Nov 1, 2010 at 8:51 pm

as nilkn said in gamedev.net:

“So overall I suppose the term AAA just tries to capture how well the public knows about the title. Either the game gathers a lot of attention initially because of extremely high production values (like Crysis, for example), or it gains a lot of attention after release just because it's such a good game, with or without production values. Because many games acquire the title simply from having state of the art graphics—thereby gathering much pre-release press coverage and hype—the term AAA cannot be a metric concerned primarily with gameplay quality.”



Dafodil

Sep 2, 2010 at 11:48 pm

An AAA title is any game that attracts the highest percentages of the HARDCORE gaming market within its particular genre.



Dan Felder

May 8, 2010 at 6:01 pm

In truth, the term AAA game seems to mean a game not made on game maker. It's not just a marketing term, it's a term used for conversation in the industry. There needs to be a difference between someone who has worked on or shipped Zelda, Twilight Princess and the latest flash craze that shows up on addictinggames.com

AAA is that differentiation. It often means high budget simply because that's what those large projects cost... But the point is not that you have spent a lot of money, but instead that you've played with the big boys. This, of course, is very subjective – but it's a starting point for conversations to begin.

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90-Gamer

Jul 8, 2009 at 4:55 am

“AAA” games = games with high budget.

Never heard someone (user or reviewer/journalist) using “AAA” to designate a very high quality game with low/middle budget. Never.

They say it “can compete with AAA games [like CoD]“, never say “an AAA games”.

“AAA” = big fat budget.

You can still waste money in incompetent managers, pointless project with stupid deadline and over-marketing, and have a shitty game.

(or like DarkAngel said, “get canceled before they have a chance to sell” :D)

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Juuso - Game Producer

Post author

Dec 29, 2006 at 10:54 pm

There are many definitions for “AAA” games and some people think only “highest quality” should be considered AAA while some think that big budget or really fancy graphics will automatically mean “AAA” game. There really isn’t one final answer that would please everybody, but hopefully this article shed some light into this issue.



Inestical

Dec 28, 2006 at 7:49 pm

So this means simply that even if you make Oblivion as ‘indie’ game, it will not be rated as AAA product?

I think myself that AAA game is game that can compete with other AAA games in the same genre.



DarkAngel

May 31, 2006 at 5:27 am

yeah, AAA just means it cost a lot to make.

Many 'AAA' games are horribly buggy at launch, others fail to sell, others get canceled before they have a chance to sell...



Juuso - Game Producer

Post author

May 27, 2006 at 7:52 am

@cliff: maybe I should have added "**should** refer to a game of the highest quality" ;)



cliff

May 26, 2006 at 4:01 pm

Ive worked on 2 'triple A' titles. Both sold dissapointingly badly. The term is pure nonsense, its thrown around by amrketing dweebs in an attempt to use it to put down cheaper games. A triple A game certainly does not mean quality. It means they spent a lot of money on it, and had a big team, but the game can still be boring buggy and unplaybaly rubbish.

You never hear about "single A" or "double A" games. Its like the term 'blockbuster' which people use to describe a film because they cant get away with calling it "fun" or "good". The implication is that it must be a good game because we spent lots on it.

GRRRRRRRRR



Jake Birkett

May 26, 2006 at 11:54 am

lol sometimes my "testes" are pretty exhausted too :-)