

Looking back at one of the most 'popular' games of our time: Microsoft Solitaire

Over the past 30 years, there is one game that has attracted more office workers than any other game even though its content has no violence or sexual elements. It's a Windows Solitaire card game.

After many difficulties, Microsoft finally completed the agreement to buy Activision Blizzard for a record price of nearly 69 billion USD. The deal gives Microsoft ownership of several hugely popular gaming franchises, including Diablo, Overwatch and of course Call of Duty. This plays an extremely important role in Microsoft's strategy to expand into the gaming industry, which has not been the company's 'forte' in recent years.

However, few people know the fact that in 1990, Microsoft 'accidentally' created one of the most famous and most played games of all time: Microsoft Solitaire. Even this game is still known by many people to this day, but with some slightly different formats.

The first version of Solitaire introduced to Windows in 1990 was Klondike, designed by Susan Kare and the person who wrote the code for the game was Wes Cherry. Before that in 1988, Wes Cherry was just an intern at Microsoft. According to Business Insider, Cherry wrote a version of the Solitaire card game for Windows 2.1 in his spare time, inspired by a similar game created for the Apple Macintosh. Once completed, the engineer uploaded Solitaire to Microsoft's servers and the game was officially included in the Windows 3.0 release in 1990.

One interesting thing is that right from the stage when Solitaire was being developed, Cherry predicted the possibility that this game would be popular with office workers, so he inserted a "boss key" code in the game so that when pressing the button, The deck will disappear and the screen will display some .C code (pretending to be working). However, Microsoft asked him to remove this feature in the version included in Windows 3.0.



Back in 1990, Windows was a relatively new concept to many people. Even simple tasks like moving a mouse can be difficult, and personal computers are still foreign to those who grew up in an environment of pencils and typewriters. The simplicity and familiarity of Solitaire help users feel comfortable using the mouse to point and click.

In a conversation with Great Big Story a few years ago, Wes Cherry also said that the official reason Microsoft Solitaire was approved for inclusion in Windows 3.0 was to help people learn how to use a mouse with the operating system. However, the real reason is that Microsoft just wants to give Windows 3.0 users something to entertain. He also said that Microsoft co-founder and then-CEO Bill Gates played the game before Windows 3.0 came out, and Gates' only complaint was that it was too difficult to win.

Overall, the release of Solitaire as part of Windows 3.0 was a huge success for Microsoft. This simple game helped revolutionize the popularity of PCs in both the home and workplace that really took off in the 1990s.

According to many experts, before the rise of social networks, Microsoft games were the biggest threat to workplace productivity. But another study by Utrecht University (Netherlands) in 2003 showed that those who were allowed to play Solitaire during hours were more effective and felt more interested in their work than those who were banned. This game is likened to a cup of coffee at break time to help employees relax.

Microsoft has even organized Solitaire tournaments for many different types of players. The first is an internal match that allows company employees to freely play during working hours and compete for points with colleagues. The second tournament is for general users.

Solitaire is so popular, but Wes Cherry said that Microsoft has not paid him any payment or remuneration since he was an intern. Cherry joked that if every Solitaire player gave him just one penny, he would also be a millionaire. Currently, Cherry is no longer working at Microsoft. He owns an apple orchard and produces cider in Washington state.

Although very successful in the 1990s and 2000s, Microsoft suddenly removed Solitaire from Windows when it launched Windows 8. In 2015, Microsoft launched Windows 10 and the Microsoft Solitaire collection was once again integrated. on the new operating system. In 2016, the game launched for iOS and Android devices. In 2019, the original Microsoft Solitaire was inducted into The Strong's World Video Game Hall of Fame list. In 2020, Microsoft celebrated Solitaire's 30th anniversary, and said the Collection version of the game still has 35 million players each month.

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