

Microsoft buying gaming platform for many billions

The software company Microsoft has announced plans to buy all of Activision Blizzard, a company who own many of the most popular video games like *Candy Crush* and *Call of Duty*. The Xbox brand will pay almost \$70 billion for the publisher. Xbox Game Studios' head Phil Spencer commented, "the biggest gaming platform on the planet is mobile phones". This is an area in which Microsoft don't have enough experience and want to make an entry.

But there is some worry that with the new addition Microsoft could refuse access to these popular titles on other devices, like Sony PlayStation. Another complaint was that by owning so many cloud gaming services, Microsoft could financially hurt its competitors. Some authorities believe that this might do a lot of damage to the gaming industry. They are exploring if there are any steps Microsoft would be permitted to take.

However, the firm grabbed *Minecraft* in 2014 for much less, \$2.5 billion, and didn't limit it only to Xbox. The point was repeated later in a blog post by Spencer, "We want people to have more access to games, not less". Some video games press said that the deal can be trusted, if Activision games are on both systems as Microsoft have promised.

Warm-up activities and vocabulary

Do you only play video games on a certain system? Answer the question using one of these conjunctions to explain why – *if*, *because*, *but*.

Name five things that can be associated with the number *billions*.

Draw a mind map, with either *hardware* or *software* as the centre word, and around it all the things to do with that word.

Vocabulary:

1. Scan the text and find a word or phrase that means:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| A. <i>company</i> (paragraph 1) | b... |
| B. <i>said</i> (paragraph 1) | c... |
| C. <i>start</i> (paragraph 1) | e... |
| D. <i>stop</i> (paragraph 2) | r... |
| E. <i>considering</i> (paragraph 2) | e... |
| F. <i>allowed</i> (paragraph 2) | p... |
| G. <i>business</i> (paragraph 3) | f... |
| H. <i>bought</i> (paragraph 3) | g... |
| I. <i>believed in</i> (paragraph 3) | t... |
| J. <i>agreed</i> (paragraph 3) | p... |

2. What does the italicised phrase below mean – *direction*, *arrow*, or *matter*?

the *point* was repeated later in a blog post

3. Which word below doesn't belong?

firm – publisher – brand – deal

Reading comprehension questions

1. What will Microsoft own after buying Activision Blizzard?
2. How much are Activision Blizzard being bought for?
3. How did Phil Spencer describe mobile gaming?
4. What else does Activision Blizzard have?
5. Why is the deal worrying for the gaming industry?
6. How could Microsoft hurt its competitors?
7. What are the authorities exploring?
8. How much was *Minecraft* bought for?
9. What idea did Phil Spencer repeat in a blog?
10. Do the video games press support Microsoft or Sony?

- A. Microsoft could stop some players accessing the games.
- B. Almost \$70 billion.
- C. Neither, but they trust the deal.
- D. What next steps Microsoft can take.
- E. Many popular games.
- F. That Xbox games won't be limited to Xbox.
- G. By owning too many cloud gaming services.
- H. It's the most popular gaming system in the world.
- I. Experience with mobile gaming.
- J. \$2.5 billion.

Phrases, synonyms, and antonyms match-up

Match the words on the left to their endings to make phrases from the text.

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. blog | A. experience |
| 2. software | B. popular |
| 3. announced | C. entry |
| 4. enough | D. plans |
| 5. most | E. post |
| 6. hurt its | F. platform |
| 7. make an | G. addition |
| 8. gaming | H. company |
| 9. authorities | I. believe |
| 10. new | J. competitors |

Match the words on the left from the text to their synonyms.

- | | |
|-------------|----------|
| 1. addition | A. look |
| 2. planet | B. extra |
| 3. explore | C. take |
| 4. entry | D. start |
| 5. grab | E. world |

Match the words on the left from the text to their antonyms.

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| 1. damage | A. increase |
| 2. limit | B. break |
| 3. promise | C. fix |

Grammar pairs cloze: quantifiers

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. A. several / B. all | 6. A. every / B. a lot of |
| 2. A. many / B. both | 7. A. any / B. either |
| 3. A. enough / B. no | 8. A. much / B. fewest |
| 4. A. some / B. a few | 9. A. many / B. more |
| 5. A. less / B. many | 10. A. both / B. much |

The software company Microsoft has announced plans to buy 1. _____ of Activision Blizzard, a company who own 2. _____ of the most popular video games like *Candy Crush* and *Call of Duty*. The Xbox brand will pay almost \$70 billion for the publisher. Xbox Game Studios' head Phil Spencer commented, "the biggest gaming platform on the planet is mobile phones". This is an area in which Microsoft don't have 3. _____ experience and want to make an entry.

But there is 4. _____ worry that with the new addition Microsoft could refuse access to these popular titles on other devices, like Sony PlayStation. Another complaint was that by owning so 5. _____ cloud gaming services, Microsoft could financially hurt its competitors. Some authorities believe that this might do 6. _____ damage to the gaming industry. They are exploring if there are 7. _____ steps Microsoft would be permitted to take.

However, the firm grabbed *Minecraft* in 2014 for 8. _____ less, \$2.5 billion, and didn't limit it only to Xbox. The point was repeated later in a blog post by Spencer, "We want people to have 9. _____ access to games, not less". Some video games press said that the deal can be trusted, if Activision games are on 10. _____ systems as Microsoft have promised.

Vocabulary gap-fill cloze

A. financially

F. limit

B. deal

G. addition

C. industry

H. authorities

D. publisher

I. grabbed

E. commented

J. announced

The software company Microsoft has 1._____ plans to buy all of Activision Blizzard, a company who own many of the most popular video games like *Candy Crush* and *Call of Duty*. The Xbox brand will pay almost \$70 billion for the 2._____. Xbox Game Studios' head Phil Spencer 3._____, "the biggest gaming platform on the planet is mobile phones". This is an area in which Microsoft don't have enough experience and want to make an entry.

But there is some worry that with the new 4._____ Microsoft could refuse access to these popular titles on other devices, like Sony PlayStation. Another complaint was that by owning so many cloud gaming services, Microsoft could 5._____ hurt its competitors. Some 6._____ believe that this might do a lot of damage to the gaming 7._____. They are exploring if there are any steps Microsoft would be permitted to take.

However, the firm 8._____ *Minecraft* in 2014 for much less, \$2.5 billion, and didn't 9._____ it only to Xbox. The point was repeated later in a blog post by Spencer, "We want people to have more access to games, not less". Some video games press said that the 10._____ can be trusted, if Activision games are on both systems as Microsoft have promised.

Writing cloze

- | | | |
|--------------|----------------|-------------|
| 1. awortsef | 6. ynetr | 11.ndritsyu |
| 2. neacnudno | 7. doitidna | 12.rbeabgd |
| 3. rbnda | 8. alcnpmoit | 13.mitli |
| 4. hlbrseuip | 9. tsmcropoeit | 14.csaecs |
| 5. mectoednm | 10.struitoiahe | 15.elad |

The 1._____ company Microsoft has 2._____ plans to buy all of Activision Blizzard, a company who own many of the most popular video games like *Candy Crush* and *Call of Duty*. The Xbox 3._____ will pay almost \$70 billion for the 4._____. Xbox Game Studios' head Phil Spencer 5._____, "the biggest gaming platform on the planet is mobile phones". This is an area in which Microsoft don't have enough experience and want to make an 6._____.

But there is some worry that with the new 7._____ Microsoft could refuse access to these popular titles on other devices, like Sony PlayStation. Another 8._____ was that by owning so many cloud gaming services, Microsoft could financially hurt its 9._____. Some 10._____ believe that this might do a lot of damage to the gaming 11._____. They are exploring if there are any steps Microsoft would be permitted to take.

However, the firm 12._____ *Minecraft* in 2014 for much less, \$2.5 billion, and didn't 13._____ it only to Xbox. The point was repeated later in a blog post by Spencer, "We want people to have more 14._____ to games, not less". Some video games press said that the 15._____ can be trusted, if Activision games are on both systems as Microsoft have promised.

Fill-in vowels

Fill-in the missing letters: *a e i o u*

Th_ s_ftw_r_ c_mp_ny Microsoft h_s _nn__nc_d pl_ns t_ b_y _ll
_f Activision Blizzard, _ c_mp_ny wh_ _wn m_ny _f th_ m_st
p_p_l_r v_d__ g_m_s l_k_ *Candy Crush* _nd *Call of Duty*. Th_
Xbox br_nd w_ll p_y _lm_st \$70 b_ll__n f_r th_ p_bl_sh_r. Xbox
Game Studios' h__d Phil Spencer c_mm_nt_d, "th_ b_gg_st
g_m_ng pl_tf_rm _n th_ pl_n_t _s m_b_l_ ph_n_s". Th_s _s _n
_r__ _n wh_ch Microsoft d_n't h_v_ _n__gh _xp_r__nc_ _nd w_nt
t_ m_k_ _n _ntry.

B_t th_r_ _s s_m_ w_rry th_t w_th th_ n_w _dd_t__n Microsoft
c__ld r_f_s_ _cc_ss t_ th_s_ p_p_l_r t_tl_s _n _th_r d_v_c_s,
l_k_ Sony PlayStation. _n_th_r c_mpl__nt w_s th_t by _wn_ng s_
m_ny cl__d g_m_ng s_rv_c_s, Microsoft c__ld f_n_nc__lly h_rt
_ts c_mp_t_t_rs. S_m_ __th_r_t__s b_l__v_ th_t th_s m_ght d_ _
l_t _f d_m_g_ t_ th_ g_m_ng _nd_stry. Th_y _r_ _xpl_r_ng _f
th_r_ _r_ _ny st_ps Microsoft w__ld b_ p_rm_tt_d t_ t_k_.

H_w_v_r, th_ f_rm gr_bb_d *Minecraft* _n 2014 f_r m_ch l_ss,
\$2.5 b_ll__n, _nd d_dn't l_m_t _t _nly t_ Xbox. Th_ p__nt w_s
r_p__t_d l_t_r _n _ bl_g p_st by Spencer, "W_ w_nt p__pl_ t_
h_v_ m_r_ _cc_ss t_ g_m_s, n_t l_ss". S_m_ v_d__ g_m_s
pr_ss s__d th_t th_ d__l c_n b_ tr_st_d, _f Activision g_m_s _r_
_n b_th syst_ms _s Microsoft h_v_ pr_m_s_d.

Cool-down discussion, keywords, and game

Discussion questions:

- Is it always fair when large companies buy smaller companies?
- What does the computing term *platform* mean, and what platforms do you know?
- Why are mobile phones the biggest gaming platform?
- Is *Minecraft* still popular? What would you recommend playing instead?
- If you had the money, what company would you buy and how would you improve it?

CEFR B1 10 lesson keywords:

(a = adverb / n = noun / v = verb)

addition (n), announce (v), authority (n), comment (n/v), deal (n/v), financially (a), grab (n/v), industry (n), limit (n/v), publisher (n)

Language game:

In the table below, add one word to each box that matches both the category and the beginning letter, e.g. a software title beginning with *G* is *Guitar Hero*.

	G	A	M	E
A software title				
Something expensive				
A piece of computer hardware				
A time consuming activity				
Something fun				

Answers

Page 2 Warm-up activities and vocabulary

1. A. brand, B. commented, C. entry, D. refuse, E. exploring, F. permitted, G. firm, H. grabbed, I. trusted, J. promised
2. matter
3. deal (the others describe companies)

Page 3 Reading comprehension questions

1E, 2B, 3H, 4I, 5A, 6G, 7D, 8J, 9F, 10C

Page 4 Phrases, synonyms, and antonyms match-up

Phrases 1E, 2H, 3D, 4A, 5B, 6J, 7C, 8F, 9I, 10G
Synonyms 1B, 2E, 3A, 4D, 5C
Antonyms 1C, 2A, 3B

Page 5 Grammar pairs cloze: quantifiers

1B, 2A, 3A, 4A, 5B, 6B, 7A, 8A, 9B, 10A

Page 6 Vocabulary gap-fill cloze

1J, 2D, 3E, 4G, 5A, 6H, 7C, 8I, 9F, 10B

Page 7 Writing cloze

1. software, 2. announced, 3. brand, 4. publisher, 5. commented, 6. entry, 7. addition, 8. financially, 9. competitors, 10. authorities, 11. industry, 12. grabbed, 13. limit, 14. access, 15. deal

For this lesson's interactive exercises, visit:

<https://www.everybitenglish.com/online-exercises-20220907-b1-microsoft-activision>

Thanks for using this lesson!