Double Fine Productions is Microsoft's latest Xbox acquisition



Enlarge / Tim Schafer introduces himself as part of Microsoft for the first time.

reader comments

31 with 24 posters participating

Share this story

LOS ANGELES—"For the last 19 years, we've been independent. Then Microsoft came to us and said, 'What if we gave you a bunch of money.' And I said 'OK, yeah.'"

That was the half-kidding way Double Fine Productions (*Psychonauts*, *Brutal Legend*, *Broken Age*) founder and President Tim Schafer introduced the company's newly announced

acquisition by Microsoft Game Studios. Schafer appeared on stage at Microsoft's pre-show conference, ready to joke about the new partnership with Head of Microsoft Studios Matt Booty.

"I am a team player," Schafer said on stage. "Whatever you need from Double Fine we'll make for you. *Halo* stuff, *Forza* stuff, Excel stuff. Whatever you want, we are there."

"Tim, we just want you to make great games," Booty responded.

In a slightly more serious video posted on Twitter, Schafer clarified that the company's "existing commitments" will still be fulfilled post-acquisition. That includes providing versions of *Psychonauts 2* to crowdfunders on the platform they originally chose. Going forward, though, the company will focus on "Xbox, Game Pass, and PC," Schafer said.

[embedded content]
Tim Schafer introduces Double Fine as part of the Microsoft family.
Schafer was also clear in his commitment that being a Microsoft subsidiary wouldn't change the types of games Double Fine makes, or alter the "unique spirit" the company has gained.

"Microsoft wants us for who we are and the type of games we're already making," he said. "The thought of being able to develop [those ideas] without dragging them all over the world, pitching them to every publisher that exists, is really nice to think about." That statement resonates all the more when you consider Schafer's own experience struggling to find funding for the original *Psychonauts* after a publishing deal with Microsoft fell through in 2004 and Schafer's long search for *Psychonauts 2* funding after that.

The news comes one year after Microsoft purchased Undead Labs (*State of Decay*), Playground Games (*Forza Horizon*), Ninja Theory (*Hellblade*) and Compulsion Games (*We Happy Few*) for its first-party lineup. Microsoft now boasts 14 distinct Xbox Game

Studios and unveiled 14 different exclusive games from those developers at this year’s pre-E3 conference.

While the news was accompanied by a brand-new trailer for *Psychonauts 2*, today’s announcement did not mention *RAD*, the roguelite action game that Double Fine has been working on as part of a publishing deal with Bandai Namco Games.

[embedded content]
https://arstechnica.com/?p=1519177