

The latest on video game development in Cuba

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The development of video games in Cuba represents a fundamental area in the country's computerization policy, an essential issue in today's society, with entertainment and educational uses.

The majority of Cuban-produced video games are created for environmental, educational, therapeutic, mental agility, and knowledge purposes, aimed at a range of users, although the focus is on younger generations.

The priority of this industry is to create new, higher quality video games, despite the challenges associated with promotion and distribution on any of the current platforms. Progress has been made, but remains insufficient, explained Luis Enrique Cubela González, head of Computing at the Animation Studios of the Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry (ICAIC), speaking on the Mesa Redonda television program.

Various entities such as the Joven Club (Youth Computing and Electronics Club),

the University of Computer Sciences, and ICAIC have worked together to create 16 video games – not including those that are being produced this year – and have gained in production experience, he added.

Meanwhile, the Joven Club has provided a favorable space for the public to interact with these video games. Progress has been reflected in the infrastructure, distribution, and development evidenced in a network of 614 connected installations, of which 71 are through fiber-optic cables. The plans are to connect another one hundred centers this year, which will improve the speed at which users can play.

In terms of video game promotion within the country, the Ludox website plays an important role. Launched last December, as part of activities to mark the 30th anniversary of the Joven Club, this platform offers 29 nationally-produced games, of which 19 were created by the Club itself.

The rest, produced abroad, are games that are freely available online, and that were included for Cuban families to access through the .cu domain on the local network, Joven Club Program Director Danays Moreno Moreno told **Granma International**.

The site [www.ludox.cubava.cu](http://www.ludox.cubava.cu) is accessible from any device and offers the Cuban family a space for healthy recreation and entertainment, which is its objective, she stressed.

There are four main sections available to users on the site: “A jugar,” which offers the possibility of playing a range of games; “En línea,” allowing users to play the same games against other users across the country; “Descarga de juegos,” where games can be downloaded in APK or PC formats; and “Noticias,” where users can find the latest news on the international video game scene.

With the development of these products, the Joven Club has made an impact on the Cuban family, evidenced by the 47,600 visits to the Ludox platform in just six months and more than 80,900 downloads.



Events associated with the production of video games have taken place at the University of Computer Sciences. Photo: Cuban Union of Computer Scientists website **Photo:** Granma

Work is currently ongoing on the development of five new video games to be launched before the end of 2018.

Similarly, the Mochila website offers an important package of video games, as well as a computer assistance service through which instructors can take these products to users' homes for use on their own devices.

Another site related to the Cuban video game industry is La base, created by ICAIC specialists, whose objective is to provide users with the possibility of downloading products, and offer the latest news on the world of video games, both nationally and internationally.

In terms of legislation in this sector, work is ongoing to define procedures for registering video games in the country. This process must be rethought to become an important aspect of development, explained Iván Barreto Gelles, general director of the Cuban Computing and Audiovisual Media Enterprise of the Ministry of Education, on the same television program.

Progress has been made on the creation of a catalog of Cuban video games, and there is recognition of the specialization of each entity involved, whose main task is to identify the types of games that are most popular on the island to facilitate the continued creation of totally nationally-produced video games, he added.

Quality is a fundamental concern for gamers. As such, experts from the University of Computer Sciences are undertaking academic research where they have been able to use all the necessary hardware resources to ensure the quality that the Cuban public deserves.

Events held at the University, such as the Pachamama Game Jam, demonstrate the will to continue promoting the development of video games in Cuba, in this case, based on the socialization of knowledge.

## **SOME OFFERINGS**

The Cuban video game industry has grown significantly in recent years, but we shouldn't overlook some of the popular products that users can download on different websites:

### **GESTA FINAL:**

Set during the Rebel Army's era, from the arrival of the *Granma* yacht expeditionaries through the triumph of the Revolution, this video game is made entirely with three-dimensional graphics and is designed to interact in the first person. It's an example of the commitment of Cuban creators to strengthening values and the knowledge of our history among the new generations.

### **PINTACLIC:**

This new video game created by the Ludox team was launched by the Youth Computing and Electronics Clubs as one of its summer proposals. It is intended for pre-school aged children to strengthen their knowledge of geometric shapes, colors, numbers, and vowels, through the appropriate use of technology.

### **LA NEURONA:**

With content based on the TV program "La neurona intranquila," this game now

has a second version in which the changes compared to the original game are noticeable. This edition includes new challenges that provide extra points.

### **VILLA TESORO:**

Set in Havana, 1762, during the taking of the city by the British. Players use cannons to ward off the forces attempting to invade the capital. With 90 levels, the game is set in four scenarios: La Fortaleza, La Playa, La Muralla, and the Naval.

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