

## WILL WRIGHT

Creator of *The Sims* & *Spore*



Twenty years ago, a video game that you could neither win nor lose was inconceivable-unless you were Will Wright. With five years of college under his belt and no degree, twenty-something year old Will had the idea of creating a game based on designing and building cities. In achieving that goal, Will created a new genre in gaming and within it, one of the best-loved game franchises in history establishing Will Wright as a visionary within the world of video game design.

The idea for SimCity struck as will was designing his first game, *Raid on Bungeling Bay* (1984) a game in which helicopters attacked islands. Realizing he preferred building islands to piloting attack 'copters, Will partnered with "idea guy" Jeff Braun to create a company known as Maxis and they released *SimCity* in 1989. With *SimCity* the mass market got its first real taste of a simulation game, and they were hooked! The word-of-mouth acclaim swirling around *SimCity* ultimately attracted the attention of *Newsweek*, and a full page story on the game cemented *SimCity's* place in entertainment history. An entirely new kind of video game genre, focused around open-ended,

non-violent gameplay was born!

Maxis followed up the surprising success of *SimCity* with a string of popular simulation games throughout the 1990s. Titles such as *SimEarth: The Living Planet* (1990), *SimAnt: The Electronic Ant Colony* (1991), *SimCity 2000* (1993), *SimCopter* (1996), and *SimCity 3000* (1999) introduced simulation games to hundreds of thousands of new fans, demonstrating the genre's true potential.

Still nobody was prepared for the phenomenal success of *The Sims*. Will, who studied architecture in college, originally conceived of the game as an architectural design simulator. To "score" the quality of the design, he added tiny people who would inhabit the buildings. These simulated people quickly stole the spotlight, and Will realized that watching the lives of the Sims unfold was the real entertainment. Again, his instincts were right. Released in 2000, *The Sims* was the best-selling PC game of 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003, until it was dethroned by its own sequel *The Sims 2*, which quickly established itself as the best selling PC game of 2004. Popular console, handheld and mobile phone versions of the game have contributed to the huge success of the franchise, which has sold more than 58M games, life-to-date.

*The Sims* and its expansion packs and sequels have become a cultural phenomenon and solidified Will's position as a gaming-industry legend. His honors and accolades include making *Entertainment Weekly's* "It List" of "the 100 most creative people in entertainment" and *Time Digital's* "Digital 50" in 1999, receiving a "Lifetime Achievement Award" at the Game Developers Choice Awards in 2001, being named #35 on *Entertainment Weekly's* Power List in 2002, becoming the fifth person to be inducted into the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences' Hall of Fame that same year, receiving the *PC Magazine* Lifetime Achievement Award, and in 2008 was honored with the first-ever Spike TV Video Game Awards' Gamer God Award .

*Spore*<sup>™</sup>, Will's latest achievement in video games, has been the recipient of numerous awards and honors such as *Popular Science's* " Best of What's New Award," *Popular Mechanics'* "Breakthrough Award," *PC Magazine's* "Technical Excellence Award," and *TIME Magazine's* "50 Best Inventions of 2008."

