

Battlefield biggest Swedish export hit since ABBA

Written by Johan Nylander

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Battlefield, Minecraft and Just Cause are three of the world's most popular computer games. But few players know that their favourite games have been developed by a number of high-tech firms in Stockholm, all within walking distance from one another.

Södermalm, a district in the central part of the Swedish capital, has become one of the world's most important hubs for computer game development, attracting talent from across the globe.

Per Strömbäck, a spokesperson for the trade organisation Sweden Games Industry, said that the country is one of maybe ten nations in the world producing games for a global audience.

"Battlefield is the biggest Swedish export success since ABBA", he told The Swedish Wire.

Swedish export of games amounted to 1,5 billion kronor (225 million dollars) last year. Almost two-thirds of that derives from the gaming cluster at Södermalm, according to the organisation.

"In total, over 100 million people have played these titles", Per Strömbäck said, adding that most players are from Europe and North America, with South America and the Middle East on the rise.

Everything points to continued success for the Swedish games industry, the organisation points out.

Swedish developers have proven to be at the forefront with regards to adapting their game experiences to different platforms. In addition to the successful big name titles, there are a new wave of games being developed for mobile phones, Facebook and download.

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For two decades it had been predicted that digital distribution would overtake traditional boxed sales and now it look like that shift is happening. Online sales of Swedish games increased 30 - 40 percent last year, according to Sweden Games Industry.

Three top games and developers from Stockholm:

- **Battlefield.** Developed by EA Digital Illusions CE. ☐ Over 50 million units sold in various editions since 2003. Largest Swedish cultural export since ABBA in dollars and cents. Classic multiplayer war action.
- **Minecraft.** Developed by Markus "Notch" Persson and his company Mojang. ☐ A global gaming phenomenon with millions of players. Revenues of half a billion kronor. Creative and innovative; a kind of virtual Lego that let users create fantastic worlds.
- **Just Cause.** Developed by Avalanche Studios.☐ Comic book action. The player is an American agent making a coup in a banana republic. Exaggerated effects combined with subtle social criticism. Renowned for its huge maps, the largest in the gaming world, which the player can freely explore.

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