

What video games warn us about future

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Recently, Bethesda Softworks has just released the fifth major installment of their ace video game series---Fallout. As a hard core fan, there's no way that I'm letting this "Game of Century" slip through my fingers. But instead of spending the whole essay to convince whoever reading it to try the game out and fall head over heels for it, I'd rather dig deeper into the hidden message that the game is trying to tell us besides its entertainment purposes.

Let us begin with the timeline of the Fallout series. In the Fallout universe, the global oil reserve was getting scarce due to the exploding rate of technology development after WWII. It's much to be regretted that people still failed to realize the advanced technology was indeed a double-edged sword. Their desire to further develop technology and the fact that every single place in the world was struggling with oil supplies turned out to be the fuses that led to the Great War, in which the whole planet Earth was turned into an uncivilized wasteland by nuclear weapons within 2 hours.

But, just before we consider ourselves lucky comparing to those who live in the fictional world, why don't we take a step back first and look at the background story of "Fallout"? Doesn't the beginning part of the story seem to ring a bell? As a matter of fact, the Great War which happened inside the Fallout universe may not be as far from us as we thought. According to the estimation of

OPEC, if we keep consuming oil as we do currently, then the global oil reserve will run out in 80-100 years' time eventually. By the time when all the "liquid gold" is gone, what we see in Fallout universe will not be fictional anymore, or will it?

Well, we can finally consider ourselves showered with good fortune since we have already found ourselves a way out. Different from the "Fallout" universe, apart from non-renewable resources like fossil fuels (coal, natural gas etc.) and nuclear fuels (uranium, plutonium etc.), renewable energy (hydropower, solar energy etc.) also plays an important role in energy supply now, which may just be the saviour that keeps us from fighting against each other for energy resources and ending up with total nuclear annihilation. In fact, countries such as Brazil, Norway and Costa Rica now mainly rely on renewable energy. It takes great portion (around 60-90%) of these countries' energy supply. Not only is the renewable energy sustainable, it also provides varieties for electricity resources, which sustain stable energy supplies and prevent price fluctuation. Moreover, renewable energy means less greenhouse gases, which also relieves the greenhouse effect. It undoubtedly turns our world into a more eco-friendly place.

The "Fallout" series is just like a wake-up call for us. It's time for us to rethink whether counting on non-renewable resources is a wise choice.