

ACTIVISION INC /NY
Form 10-K
June 14, 2007

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 10-K

(Mark one)

ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

For the fiscal year ended March 31, 2007

OR

TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

For the transition period from _____ to _____

Commission File Number 0-12699

ACTIVISION, INC.

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Delaware

95-4803544

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(State or other jurisdiction of incorporation or organization)

(I.R.S. Employer Identification No.)

3100 Ocean Park Blvd., Santa Monica, CA
(Address of principal executive offices)

90405
(Zip Code)

Registrant's telephone number, including area code: **(310) 255-2000**

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:

Title of Class	Name of Each Exchange on Which Registered
Preferred Stock Purchase Rights	The NASDAQ Global Select Market
Common Stock, par value \$.000001 per share	

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act:

None

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act. Yes No

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15 (d) of the Act. Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days. Yes No

Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K is not contained herein, and will not be contained, to the best of the registrant's knowledge, in definitive proxy or information statements incorporated by reference in Part III of this Form 10-K or any amendment to this Form 10-K.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, or a non-accelerated filer. See definition of accelerated filer and large accelerated filer in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act. (Check one):

Large Accelerated Filer

Accelerated Filer

Non-accelerated filer

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Act). Yes No

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The aggregate market value of the Common Stock of the registrant held by non-affiliates of the registrant on September 30, 2006 was \$3,404,053,450.

The number of shares of the registrant's Common Stock outstanding as of June 7, 2007 was 283,310,734.

Documents Incorporated by Reference

Portions of the registrant's definitive Proxy Statement, to be filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission within 120 days after the end of the fiscal year covered by this Form 10-K, with respect to the 2007 Annual Meeting of Shareholders, are incorporated by reference into Part III of this Annual Report.

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CERTIFICATION

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PART I

This Annual Report on Form 10-K contains, or incorporates by reference, certain forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Such statements include, but are not limited to, (1) projections of revenues, expenses, income or loss, earnings or loss per share, cash flow projections or other financial items; (2) statements of our plans and objectives, including those relating to product releases; (3) statements of future economic performance; and (4) statements of assumptions underlying such statements. We generally use words such as anticipate, believe, could, estimate, expect, forecast, future, intend, may, plan, positioned, potential, subject to, upcoming and other similar expressions to help identify forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements are subject to business and economic risk, reflect management's current expectations, estimates and projections about our business, and are inherently uncertain and difficult to predict. Our actual results could differ materially. The forward-looking statements contained herein speak only as of the date on which they were made, and we disclaim any obligation to update any forward-looking statements to reflect events or circumstances after the date of this Annual Report. Risks and uncertainties that may affect our future results include, but are not limited to, those discussed under the heading Risk Factors, included in Part I, Item 1A. All references to we, us, our, Activision or the Company in the following discussion and analysis are to Activision, Inc. and its subsidiaries.

Item 1. BUSINESS

(a) General

Activision, Inc. (Activision, the Company, or we) is a leading international publisher of interactive entertainment software and peripheral products. We have built a company with a diverse portfolio of products that spans a wide range of categories and target markets and that is used on a variety of game hardware platforms and operating systems. We have created, licensed, and acquired a group of highly recognizable brands, which we market to a variety of consumer demographics. Our fiscal 2007 product portfolio included such best-selling products as *Call of Duty 3*, *Guitar Hero II*, *Tony Hawk's Project 8*, *Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam*, *Marvel: Ultimate Alliance*, *Over the Hedge*, and *X-Men: The Official Game*.

Our products cover diverse game categories including action/adventure, action sports, racing, role-playing, simulation, first-person action, music-based gaming, and strategy. Our target customer base ranges from casual players to game enthusiasts, children to adults, and mass-market consumers to value buyers. We currently offer our products primarily in versions that operate on the Sony PlayStation 2 (PS2), Sony PlayStation 3 (PS3), Nintendo Wii (Wii), and Microsoft Xbox 360 (Xbox360) console systems, Nintendo Game Boy Advance (GBA), Sony PlayStation Portable (PSP), and Nintendo Dual Screen (NDS) hand-held devices, and the personal computer (PC). The installed base for the current generation of hardware platforms is significant and the fiscal 2006 release of the Xbox360 and the fiscal 2007 releases of the PS3 and the Wii will further expand the software market. We had a successful and significant presence at the launches of the PS3 and the Wii with three launch titles for the PS3, *Call of Duty 3*, *Marvel: Ultimate Alliance*, and *Tony Hawk's Project 8*, and five launch titles for the Wii, *Call of Duty 3*, *Marvel: Ultimate Alliance*, *World Series of Poker: Tournament of Champions*, *Rapala Tournament Fishing*, and *Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam*. Our plan is to continue to build on our significant launch presence on the PS3, Wii, and Xbox360 (the next-generation platforms) by continuing to expand the number of titles released on the next generation platforms while continuing to market to current-generation platforms as long as economically attractive given their large installed base.

Our publishing business involves the development, marketing, and sale of products directly, by license, or through our affiliate label program with certain third-party publishers. Our distribution business consists of operations in Europe that provide logistical and sales services to third-party publishers of interactive entertainment software, our own publishing operations, and manufacturers of interactive entertainment hardware.

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We were originally incorporated in California in 1979. In December 1992, we reincorporated in Delaware. In June 2000, we reorganized into the current holding company organizational structure.

In April 2003, the Board of Directors approved a three-for-two split of our outstanding common shares effected in the form of a 50% stock dividend. The split was paid on June 6, 2003 to shareholders of record as of May 16, 2003. In February 2004, the Board of Directors approved a three-for-two split of our outstanding common shares effected in the form of a 50% stock dividend. The split was paid on March 15, 2004 to shareholders of record as of February 23, 2004. In February 2005, the Board of Directors approved a four-for-three split of our outstanding common shares effected in the form of a 33-1/3% stock dividend. The split was paid March 22, 2005 to shareholders

of record as of March 7, 2005. In September 2005, the Board of Directors approved a four-for-three split of our outstanding common shares effected in the form of a 33-1/3% stock dividend. The split was paid October 24, 2005 to shareholders of record as of October 10, 2005. The par value of our common stock was maintained at the pre-split amount of \$.000001. All share and per share data have been restated as if the stock splits had occurred as of the earliest period presented.

(b) **Business Combinations**

We have completed a number of acquisitions of both software development companies and interactive entertainment product distribution companies. In fiscal 2007, we acquired video game publisher RedOctane Inc., the publisher of the popular Guitar Hero franchise. See Note 3 to the Consolidated Financial Statements included in Item 8 of this Annual Report on Form 10-K for additional information regarding the accounting treatment of these and prior acquisitions.

(c) **Financial Information About Industry Segments**

We have two reportable segments: publishing and distribution. Publishing relates to the development (both internally and externally), marketing and sale of DVD, CD, UMD, online, and cartridge-based interactive entertainment software and peripheral products owned or controlled by us directly, by license, or through our affiliate label program with certain third-party publishers. Distribution primarily refers to logistical and sales services provided by our European distribution subsidiaries to third-party publishers of interactive entertainment software, our own publishing operations and manufacturers of interactive entertainment hardware. See Note 10 to the Consolidated Financial Statements included in Item 8 of this Annual Report on Form 10-K for certain financial information regarding reporting segment and geographic areas required by Item 1.

(d) **Narrative Description of Business**

Our objective is to be a worldwide leader in the development, publishing, and distribution of quality interactive entertainment software and peripheral products that deliver a highly satisfying consumer entertainment experience. Our business strategy, the key components of our business operations, and the risk factors that could impact our business are detailed below.

Strategy

Create, Acquire, and Maintain Strong Brands. We focus development and publishing activities principally on products that are, or have the potential to become, franchise properties with sustainable consumer appeal and brand recognition. It is our experience that these products can then serve as the basis for sequels, prequels, and related new products that can be released over an extended period of time. We believe that the publishing and distribution of products based in large part on franchise properties enhances predictability of revenues and the probability of high unit volume sales and operating profits. We have entered into a series of strategic relationships with the owners of intellectual property pursuant to which we have acquired the rights to publish products based on franchises such as Marvel Characters, Inc.

properties, including Spider-Man and X-Men. We have a multi-year, multi-property, publishing agreement with DreamWorks Animation LLC that grants us the exclusive rights to publish video games based on DreamWorks Animation SKG's theatrical release Shrek 2, which was released in the first quarter of fiscal 2005, Shark Tale, which was released in the second quarter of fiscal 2005, Madagascar, which was released in the first quarter of fiscal 2006,

Over the Hedge, which was released in the first quarter of fiscal 2007, and all of their respective forthcoming sequels, including Shrek the Third, which was released in May 2007, and Madagascar 2. As part of our agreement with DreamWorks Animation, we have the exclusive video game rights to potential future films in the Shrek franchise beyond Shrek the Third, upcoming movies, including Bee Movie and Kung Fu Panda, as well as other films currently in development, including Creature Feature and How to Train Your Dragon. We have a strategic alliance with Harrah's Entertainment, Inc. that grants us the exclusive, worldwide interactive rights to develop and publish World Series of Poker video games based on the popular World Series of Poker Tournament. We also have a strategic relationship with professional skateboarder Tony Hawk through an exclusive multi-year agreement to develop video games using his name and likeness. Through fiscal 2007, we have released eight successful titles in the Tony Hawk franchise. We also have created a number of successful internally developed intellectual properties such as the True Crime and Call of Duty franchise properties, and GUN. We also have agreements with MGM Interactive and EON Productions Ltd. to develop and publish video games based on the James Bond license and with Hasbro Properties Group (Hasbro) to develop and publish video games based on the Transformers brand. We plan on releasing our first title under the Hasbro license, *Transformers the Game*,

concurrently with the DreamWorks Pictures and Paramount Pictures Corporation motion picture release, *Transformers*, in July 2007.

Execute Disciplined Product Selection and Development Processes. The success of our publishing business depends, in significant part, on our ability to develop high quality games that will generate high unit volume sales. Our publishing units have implemented a formal control process for the selection, development, production, and quality assurance of our products. We apply this process, which we refer to as the *Greenlight Process*, to all of our products, whether externally or internally developed. The *Greenlight Process* includes in-depth reviews of each project at four important stages of development by a team that includes many of our highest-ranking operating managers and coordination between our sales and marketing personnel and development staff at each step in the process.

We develop our products using a combination of our internal development resources and external development resources acting under contract with us. We typically select our external developers based on their track record and expertise in producing products in the same category. One developer will often produce the same game for multiple platforms and will produce sequels to the original game. We believe that selecting and using development resources in this manner allows us to leverage the particular expertise of our internal and external development resources, which we believe adds to the quality of our products.

Create and Maintain Diversity in Product Mix, Platforms, and Markets. We believe that maintaining a diversified mix of products can reduce our operating risks and enhance profitability. Therefore, we develop and publish products spanning a wide range of product categories, including action/adventure, action sports, racing, role-playing, simulation, first-person action, music-based gaming, and strategy. We also develop products designed for target audiences ranging from casual players to game enthusiasts, children to adults, and mass-market consumers to value buyers. Presently, we concentrate on developing, publishing, and distributing products that operate on PS2, PS3, Xbox360, and Wii console systems, GBA, PSP, and NDS hand-held devices, and the PC. We typically offer our products for use on multiple platforms in order to reduce the risks associated with any single platform, leverage our costs over a larger installed hardware base, and increase unit sales.

Continue to Improve Profitability. We continually strive to manage risk and increase our operating leverage and efficiency with the goal of increased profitability. We believe the key factor affecting our future profitability will be the success rate of our product releases. Therefore, our product selection and development process includes, as a significant component, periodic evaluations of the expected commercial success of products under development. Through this process, for titles that we determine to be less promising, corrections are made in the development process or, if necessary, they are discontinued before we incur additional development costs. In addition, we believe our focus on cross platform releases and branded products will contribute to improved profitability.

We continue to focus on increasing our margins. We have, for example, acquired certain experienced and specialized developers in instances where we can enhance profitability through the elimination of royalty obligations. Additionally, we often rely on independent third-party interactive entertainment software developers to develop some of our software products, thereby taking advantage of specialized independent developers without incurring the fixed overhead obligations associated with increased internally employed staff.

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Our sales and marketing staff work with our studio resources to increase the visibility of new product launches and to coordinate the timing and promotion of product releases. Our finance and sales and marketing personnel work together to improve inventory management and receivables collections. We have instituted broad, objective-based reward programs that provide incentives to management and staff throughout the organization to produce results that meet our financial objectives.

Grow Through Continued Strategic Acquisitions and Alliances. The interactive entertainment industry has been consolidating, and we believe that success in this industry will be driven in part by the ability to take advantage of scale. Specifically, smaller companies are more capital constrained, enjoy less predictability of revenues and cash flow, lack product diversity and must spread fixed costs over a smaller revenue base. Several industry leaders are emerging that combine the entrepreneurial and creative spirit of the industry with professional management, the ability to access the capital markets, and the ability to maintain favorable relationships with developers, intellectual property owners, and retailers. Through numerous completed acquisitions since 1997, we believe that we have successfully diversified our operations, our channels of distribution, our development talent pool, and our library of titles, and have emerged as one of the industry's leaders. We intend to continue to evaluate the expansion of our resources through acquisitions, strategic relationships, and key license transactions. We intend to continue expanding

our intellectual property library through key license transactions and strategic relationships with intellectual property owners and to continue to evaluate opportunities to increase our development capacity through the acquisition of or investment in selected experienced software development firms.

Products

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Historically, we have been best known for our action/adventure, strategy, and simulation products. We have been successful in the superheroes and skateboarding categories with our release of titles based on the Spider-Man and X-Men properties, as well as the Tony Hawk franchise. We have also been successful in the first person action categories through the Call of Duty original intellectual property, which we plan on continuing as a successful long-term franchise. In fiscal 2007 we successfully entered the music-based gaming genre with the acquisition of the Guitar Hero franchise. This franchise combines interactive software with a hardware peripheral in the form of a guitar and provides us with an early leadership position and long-term growth opportunity. We have established ourselves as a leader in the value software publishing business with products under our Cabela's, Rapala, World Series of Poker, and Greg Hastings' Paintball licenses, as well as with products distributed on behalf of our value affiliate label partners. Products published by us in this category are generally developed by third parties, often under contract with us, and are marketed under the Activision Value Publishing name. Value software is typically less sophisticated and less complex, both in terms of the development process and consumer gameplay.

Hardware Licenses. Our products currently are being developed or published primarily for PS2, PS3, Wii, and Xbox360 console systems; PSP and NDS hand-held devices; and PCs. In order to maintain general access to the console systems and hand-held devices marketplace, we have maintained licenses for PS2, PS3, Wii, and Xbox360 console systems and GBA, PSP, and NDS hand-held devices with the owners of each such platform. Each license allows us to create multiple products for the applicable platform, subject to certain approval rights which are reserved by each licensor. Each license also requires that we pay the licensor a per unit royalty for each unit manufactured. In contrast, we are not required to obtain any license for the development and production of products for PCs.

Intellectual Property Rights. Many of our current and planned releases are based on intellectual property, other character or story rights, and music rights licensed from third parties, as well as a combination of characters, worlds, and concepts derived from our extensive library of titles, and original characters and concepts owned and created by us. When publishing products based on licensed intellectual property rights, we generally seek to capitalize on the name recognition, marketing efforts, and goodwill associated with the underlying property. For intellectual property owned by Activision, we generally attempt to establish such properties as sustainable, long-term game franchises.

In acquiring intellectual property rights from third parties, we seek to obtain rights to publish titles across a variety of platforms, to include the ability to produce multiple titles and to retain rights over an extended period of time. In past years, we have been able to enter into a series of long-term or multi-product agreements with owners of various intellectual properties that are well known throughout the world and to create products based on these recognizable characters, story lines, or concepts. These agreements typically provide us with exclusive publishing rights for a specific period of time and, in some cases, for specified platforms and, in other cases, with renewal rights upon the satisfaction of certain conditions. The scope of our licensing activities includes theatrical motion pictures, television shows, animated films and series, comic books, literary works, music, sports personalities and events, and celebrities. We intend to continue expanding relationships with our existing intellectual property partners and to enter into agreements with other intellectual property owners for additional recognizable properties, characters, story lines and concepts. However, we may not be able to maintain or expand our existing relationships or to seek out and sustain new long-term relationships of similar caliber in the future.

Product Development and Support

We develop and produce titles using a model in which a core group of creative, production, and technical professionals, in coordination with our marketing and finance departments, have responsibility for the entire development and production process including the supervision and coordination of internal and external resources. This team assembles the necessary creative elements to complete a title using, where appropriate, outside programmers, artists, animators, scriptwriters, musicians and songwriters, sound effects and special effects experts, and sound and video studios. We believe that this model allows us to supplement internal expertise with top quality external resources on an as-needed basis.

In addition, we often seek out and engage independent third-party developers to create products on our behalf. Such products are sometimes owned by us, and usually we have unlimited rights to commercially exploit these products. In other circumstances, the third-party developer may retain ownership of the intellectual property and/or technology included in the product and reserve certain exploitation rights. We typically select these independent third-party developers based on their expertise in developing products in a specific category and use the same developer to produce the same game for multiple platforms. Each of our third-party developers is under contract with us for specific or multiple titles. From time to time, we also acquire the license rights to publish and/or distribute software products that are or will be independently created by third-party developers. In such cases, the agreements with such developers provide us with exclusive publishing and/or distribution rights for a specific period of time, often for specified platforms and territories. In either case, we often have the ability to publish and/or distribute sequels, conversions, enhancements, and add-ons to the product initially being produced by the independent developer and frequently have the right to engage the services of the original developer with regard to the development of such products.

In consideration for the services that the independent third-party developer provides, it receives a royalty generally based on net sales of the product that it has developed. Typically, the developer also receives an advance, which we recoup from the royalties otherwise payable to the developer. The advance generally is paid in milestone stages. The payment at each stage is tied to the completion and delivery of a detailed performance milestone. Some contracts include minimum guaranteed royalty payments which are recorded as an asset when actually paid and as a liability when incurred, rather than recording the asset and liability upon execution of the contract. Working with an independent developer allows us to reduce our fixed development costs, share development risks with the third-party developer, take advantage of the third-party developer's expertise in connection with certain categories of products or certain platforms, and gain access to proprietary development technologies.

From time to time, we may make a capital investment and hold a minority interest in a third-party developer in connection with interactive entertainment software products to be developed by such developer for us, which we believe helps to create a closer relationship between us and the developer. We account for those capital investments over which we have the ability to exercise significant influence using the equity method. For those investments over which we do not have the ability to exercise significant influence, we account for our investment using the cost method. There can be no assurance that we will realize long-term benefits from such investments or that we will continue to carry such investments at their current value.

Greenlight Process

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We have adopted and implemented a rigorous procedure for the selection, development, production, and quality assurance of our internally and externally produced interactive entertainment software titles. The process, known internally as the Greenlight Process, involves four phases throughout the development and production phases of a title, each of which includes a number of specific performance milestones. The four phases of the Greenlight Process are the concept, prototype, first playable, and alpha. This procedure is designed to enable us to manage and control production and development budgets and timetables, to identify and address production and technical issues at the earliest opportunity, and to coordinate marketing and quality control strategies throughout the production and development phases, all in an environment that fosters creativity. Checks and balances are intended to be provided through the structured interaction of the project team with our creative, technical, marketing, and quality assurance/customer support personnel, as well as our legal, accounting, and finance departments. In order to maintain the competitiveness of our products and to take advantage of increasingly sophisticated technology associated with hardware platforms, our development process includes a significant amount of time for play-testing new products, and extensive product quality evaluations.

Product Support

We provide various forms of product support to both our internally and externally developed titles. Our quality assurance personnel are involved throughout the development and production of each title published by us. We subject all such products to extensive testing before release to ensure compatibility with all appropriate hardware systems and configurations and to minimize the number of bugs and other defects found in the products. To support our products after release, we provide online access to our customers on a 24-hour basis as well as telephone operator help lines during regular business hours. The customer support group tracks customer inquiries and we use this data to help improve the development and production processes.

Publishing Activities

Marketing

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Our marketing efforts include online activities (such as the creation of World Wide Web pages to promote specific titles), public relations, print and broadcast advertising, coordinated in-store and industry promotions (including merchandising and point of purchase displays), participation in cooperative advertising programs, direct response vehicles, and product sampling through demonstration software distributed through the Internet or on compact discs. From time to time, we also receive marketing support from hardware manufacturers and retailers in connection with their own promotional efforts. In addition, certain of our products contain software that enables customers to electronically register their purchases with us online.

We believe that certain of our franchise properties have loyal and devoted audiences who purchase our sequels as a result of dedication to the property and satisfaction from previous product purchases. We therefore market these sequels both toward the established market as well as broader audiences. In addition, in marketing titles based on licensed properties, we believe that we derive benefits from the continued exploitation of these licensed properties and the marketing and promotional activities of the property owners.

Sales and Distribution

North America. Our