Arts & Humanities

6 Times Columbia Appears in Video Games

By
Santiago Barraza Lopez '21LAW
|
Jun. 24, 2025

Columbia has produced its fair share of Nobel Laureates, Pulitzer Prize winners, and Supreme Court justices. But among the University's more under-appreciated achievements are its cameos in video games. In some instances, Columbia is acknowledged outright. In others, the stylized features of pixelated buildings make the campus unmistakable. We know it when we see it.

Insomniac Games

Spider-Man

Columbia is no stranger to the *Spider-Man* franchise, which used College Walk as a setting for the 2002 movie starring Tobey Maguire. In the 2018 video game from Marvel and Insomniac Games, the Morningside campus makes another obvious appearance.

Rockstar North

Grand Theft Auto IV

In *Grand Theft Auto IV*, released in 2008 by Rockstar North, the uptown "Vespucci University" in the New York-inspired Liberty City features a curiously familiar quad, which the game's characters visit on their missions.

Radical Entertainment

Prototype

Known for its detailed rendering of Manhattan, *Prototype* — Radical Entertainment's 2009 game about a deadly virus outbreak in New York City — features a Columbia-like campus where players can scale neoclassical buildings and dash across mansard rooftops.

Ubisoft

Assassin's Creed III

Released in 2012 and set during the American Revolution, this game from Ubisoft features King's College, the downtown school that later became Columbia. The College, which educated Alexander Hamilton, John Jay 1764KC, and other Founding Fathers, served as a real backdrop for the American Revolution and was used as a military hospital by Continental and British forces.

Colossal Order

***Cities: Skylines* (campus expansion)**

This simulation game from Colossal Order lets players design and manage sprawling urban landscapes. The campus expansion pack, released in 2019, features a university building that resembles Low Library, albeit in a greener and more mountainous setting. The Columbia nod was formally acknowledged by the game's official YouTube channel.

Mojang Studios

Minecraft

In 2021, engineering students brought Columbia to pixelated life with “LionCraft,” a meticulously detailed replica of the Morningside Heights campus in the building game Minecraft. From familiar green rooftops to a strikingly accurate Butler Library, the project served as a digital love letter to campus during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Read more from ***Santiago Barraza Lopez '21LAW***

Guide to school abbreviations

All categories >

Read more from ***Santiago Barraza Lopez '21LAW***