Global Game Industry: Level 6
(MLI26C738)

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Sean O., unsplash.com

Today's main arguments

Quality Assurance often focuses on four different levels. As such, it has tremendous impact on perceived quality and player loyalty.

User testing, in a way, supports QA but also goes beyond that by generating insights for new service components.

User testing and Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance

= Game behaves as intended, meets the customers' quality expectations, and complies with the platform requirements (e.g. PEGI, Sony's TRC)

PEGI = Pan European Game Information

TRC = Technical Requirements Checklist

One strike and you're out! (almost) = customers will remember bad quality, good quality is the baseline

OK, one more time, please. Why is QA so important?

Because you won't create loyal customers by producing s**t!

User testing and QA: key distinction

User testing and QA	→	Product launch	→	User testing

Quality Assurance: four major dimensions

- Functionality ('traditional' game testing)

    ○ How many bugs can we squash?

- Compliance (e.g. PEGI, Nintendo, Microsoft, etc.)

    ○ Do we play by the rules? Do we meet the quality requirements?

- Localization

    ○ How would you translate this?

    ○ Examples of localization failures in the next slides. Do you recognize them?

CHALLENGER!

Your fists of evil are about meet my steel wall of niceness

A WINNER IS YOU

CATS: ALL YOUR BASE ARE BELONG TO US.

Quality Assurance: four major dimensions

- Functionality ('traditional' game testing)
  - How many bugs can we squash?

- Compliance (e.g. PEGI, Nintendo, Microsoft, etc.)
  - Do we play by the rules? Do we meet the quality requirements?

- Localization
  - How would you translate this?

- Compatibility
  - Does this work on all PCs? Maybe yes…

Reflection point 1

How you encountered any oddities / peculiarities in games? What kind of mistakes / bugs were they?

How did they impact your gameplay experience? Attitude towards the brand? (also, what brand exactly? Game or the developer? Publisher?)

Did you request a refund / compensation? Why, why not?

Quality Assurance: importance revisited

- Brand damage
- People stop buying your products
- Social media – bad reviews go viral
- Games as services – multiply that f**k up by 100x
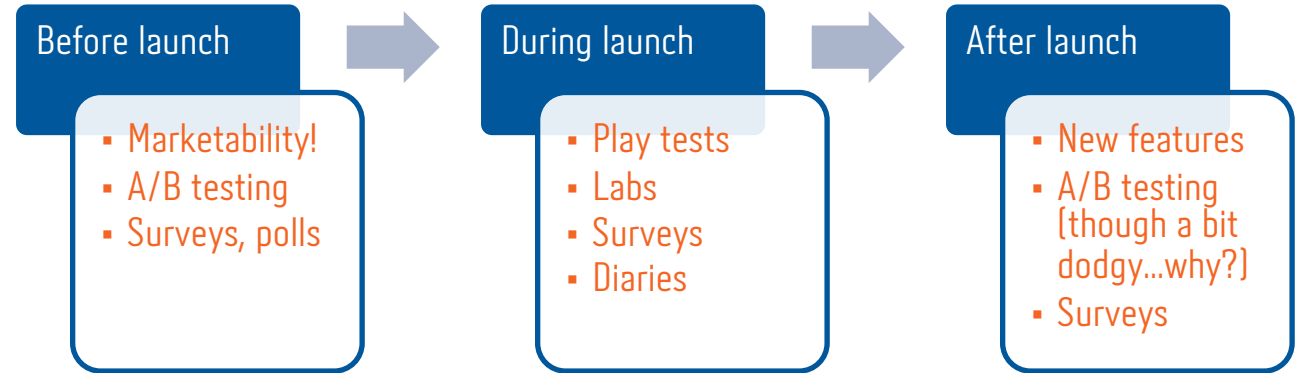
Got it. So QA functions as a sort of sanity check?

If QA done right, no need for user testing?

WRONG! User testing participates in creating value propositions for your players!

User testing: before, during, after

Before launch	During launch	After launch
▪ Marketability! ▪ A/B testing ▪ Surveys, polls	▪ Play tests ▪ Labs ▪ Surveys ▪ Diaries	▪ New features ▪ A/B testing (though a bit dodgy...why?) ▪ Surveys

A/B testing: comparing two versions of the game (or any other digital service) in terms of their performance

Finally, the dark side of QA

"Imagine your favorite movie. Now take your favorite 30-second clip from that movie. Now watch that 30-second clip over and over again, 12 hours a day, every day for two months. When you've done that, tell me if what you've been doing is watching movies all day. I'm willing to bet you'll find that it's not quite the same thing...You get an area of the game, that's your area, and you test everything about that one area for months on end."

https://www.ign.com/articles/2012/03/29/the-tough-life-of-a-games-tester

'Degradation of fun'? (Bulut, 2015)

- Bulut understands this as the exploitation of those individuals how engage in user testing and quality assurance
  - However, not everyone feels this way. Managers, for instance, might have experienced this as more junior employees.
- Whilst user testing and QA are critical for game development studios, individuals carrying out these tasks are often ignored as there is an abundant pool of labor
  - Companies can also decide to outsource most of their user testing and QA
  - These functions often seen as some of the entry points to the industry (esp. if you don't have coding skills)
- Bulut's study, however, is an illustrative example, not an industry standard.
- Key point: games are fun, work might not be always fun. People in the game industry often driven by passion, so how do we ensure that passion is not extinguished?

QA and localization: further reading

- https://www.gamasutra.com/blogs/TulayTetikerMcNally/20130430/191534/Part_4_Adopt_Adapt_and_Improve__Agile_QA_BioWare_Style.php
- http://gamasutra.com/view/news/328996/Common_problems_when_translating_games_into_Japanese.php
- http://gamasutra.com/view/news/329013/Rockstar_states_overtime_is_optional_for_studio_that_sometimes_pulled_50hour_weeks.php

Today's main arguments revisited

Quality Assurance often focuses on four different levels. As such, it has tremendous impact on perceived quality and player loyalty.

User testing, in a way, supports QA but also goes beyond that by generating insights for new service components.

All this from a company's perspective, but what about the human (=employee) aspect? Game development often glorified, user testing and QA not so.

Your next challenge!

However, most game
companies ignore the
importance of studying
contextual consumption!
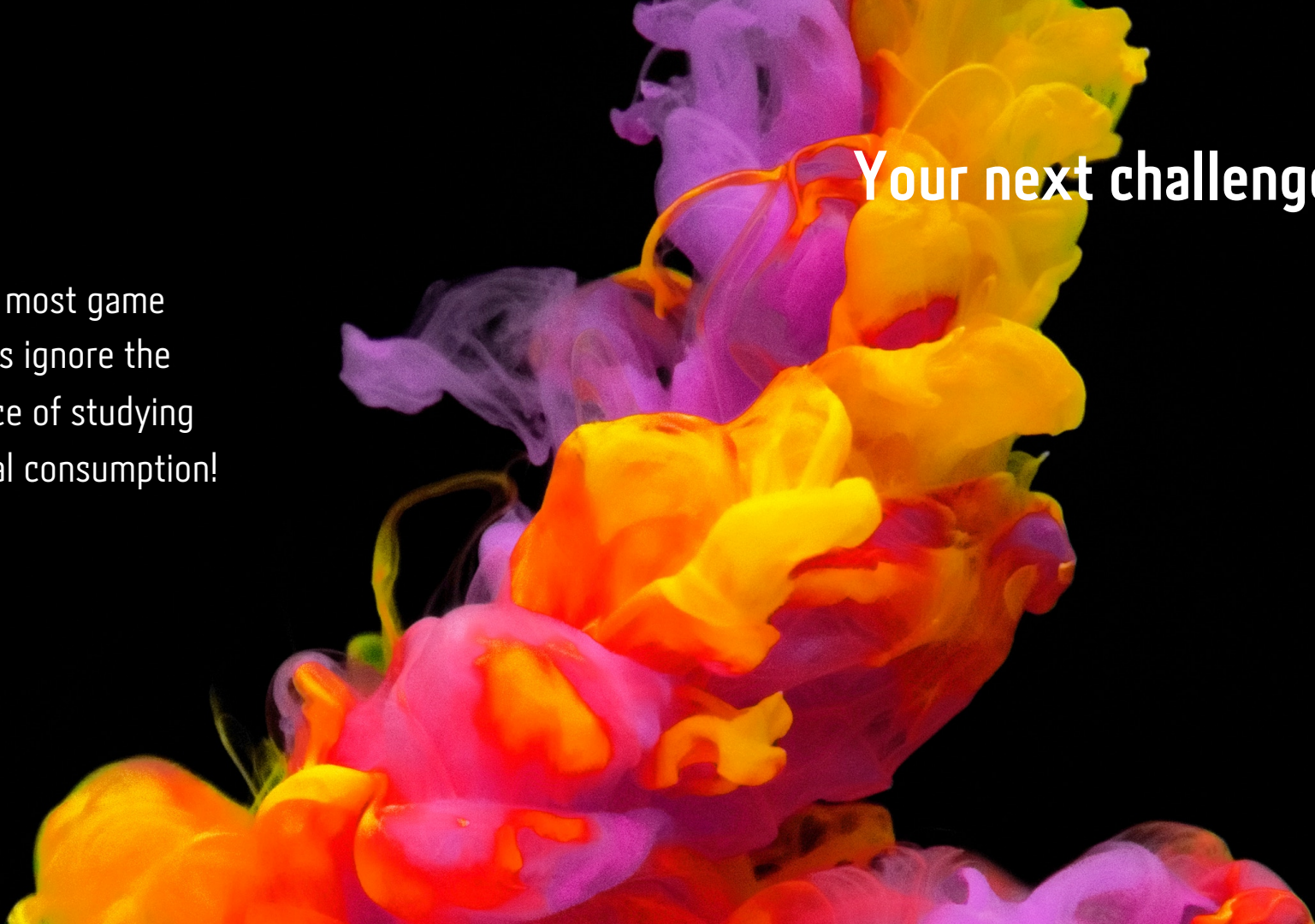
Team assignment: user testing

- The Contextualized Consumption Model focuses on studying gameplay in natural settings
- Your team assignment: conduct user interviews on why people play games, in what situations, and what kind of issues make people feel annoyed by games
- Each team interviews 4 to 5 people
- End result: mindmaps of the main findings / insights on miro

Useful interview questions

Questions
- What kind of games do you play and why?
- Can you show us this game?
- In what kind of situations do you play games? Single player or multiplayer? Why?
- Do you consider yourself a player?
- What kind of issues make you feel annoyed with games? Can you give any examples?
- But feel free to come up with your own questions!

Preparing the mindmap

- Identify main issues or insights (3 to 4) from your interviews
- List these in your mindmap **with business implications**
- Also, list games mentioned by the interviewees
- Please keep in mind that the mindmap should be self-explanatory: i.e. it doesn't need additional explanations, but whoever is looking at it should understand what are your main points

See you tomorrow!

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