

User Profiles

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Introduction

What makes a breakout game? First you have to get somebody to sit down. Then you have to make sure they don't get back up off the couch again. Creating new fans and financial success takes more than luck.

The first hour of game play can make or break a game. Tutorials have to be engaging and move at the right pace. The story has to be compelling enough to make the player want to keep going.

Our co-discovery sessions will use profiles and personas (defined below) to find real life users to play Tomb Raider. Does learning to play a game with someone they know make a novice player more likely to keep playing or to stop playing? We hope to answer that question.

We built our profiles by starting with a basic structure provided by our stakeholder and followed by research about the game, learning, decision making, and motivation. Then we read comments and posts on several social media platforms to humanize these basic profiles by giving them believable characteristics and personality traits.

Process

We received some general guidelines from the project stakeholder and collaborated with other student teams to define 'Novice' and 'Experienced' skill levels for use in creating profiles and recruiting testers. We ideally would like to recruit individuals who have a friendly relationship with each other and would be more likely to replicate real-world social gaming dynamics – excitedly yelling, teasing, casually chatting, etc. (Klastrup 2003).

Experienced Users

For our experienced users we targeted active gamers who were heavily invested in the game's genre, and have experience with the 2013 Tomb Raider addition to the series.

- 18 - 35 Years Old
- Very interested in Action/Adventure games
- 25 or more hours in Tomb Raider
- At least five hours per week playing console games
- Does not work in the gaming industry
- Has a friendly relationship with the novice user

Gaming Goal: Wants to share their interest in adventure games with someone they know, so they can talk about it and even possibly play together.

Novice Users

For our novice or so-called “breakout” users we targeted those that don’t play video games but could be converted. Living in the periphery of experienced gamers but are more likely to use the console to watch Netflix than play video games.

- 18 - 35 Years Old
- Familiar with controller and has played games before or at least used a console for other uses - apps, music etc.
- Haven’t played Tomb Raider or other action/adventure games
- Less than 1 hour per week on console gaming
- Does not work in the gaming industry

Gaming Goal: Wants to learn the game but without having their hand held the entire time; wants to be a “good enough” second player for multiplayer mode.

User Motivations

We dug into our own knowledge of psychology gleaned from such sources as undergrad Psych, marketing conferences, and books (Pink 2009). The following motivations resulted.

Escape - Games like Tomb Raider allow the player to be someone else, doing something else, having an experience that wouldn’t be possible for most people in real life.

Learning - The act of learning and mastering a skill is rewarding.

Flow - The ‘sweet spot’ where an activity provides the perfect amount of challenge and accomplishment. Flow is it’s own motivation.

Decision Making - The core of Game Theory.

Social - A partner or friend plays console games and they want to connect with them through the game.

User Research

To humanize our personas, we researched social media, interviewed players, and read articles written by professional game reviewers. Certain characteristics, commonalities, and traits surfaced that we infused our expert personas to bring them to life.

Twitter - Read feed of Tomb Raider and feeds of users posting about @tombraider.

Wikipedia - Read common history and background of the game to understand context.

Facebook - Read Posts from players and developers to see the interaction between them.

Amazon Buyer Reviews - These were notable because they are representative of novice and experienced users.

Giant Bomb - Users post very polar opinions about the latest games and updates.

Klastrup, Lisbeth. "You Can't Help Shouting and Yelling': Fun and Social Interaction in Super Monkey Ball." Proceeding Of: Digital Games Research Conference 2003 (2003): n. pag. Web.

Pink, Daniel. (2009) "Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us" Riverhead Hardcover