Get Ready for Launch: How AAA Titles Do it

Ashley Bennett
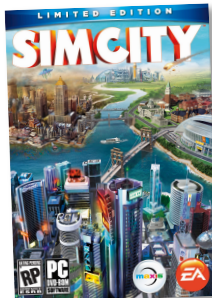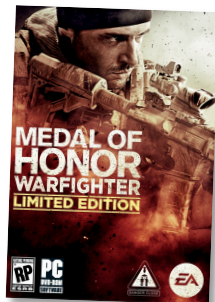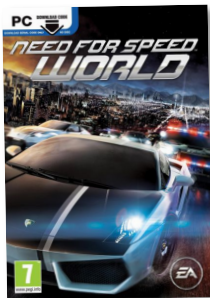Technical Project Manager, EA

Congratulations

- Your game launches on Tuesday!

- But wait... something is wrong...

Launch Experiences

What are we Covering?

- Runway to Launch
  - Materials
  - Best Practices
- Launch Window
  - Triage Flow
  - Live Ops Dashboard
- Questions in wrap up room

Runway to Launch
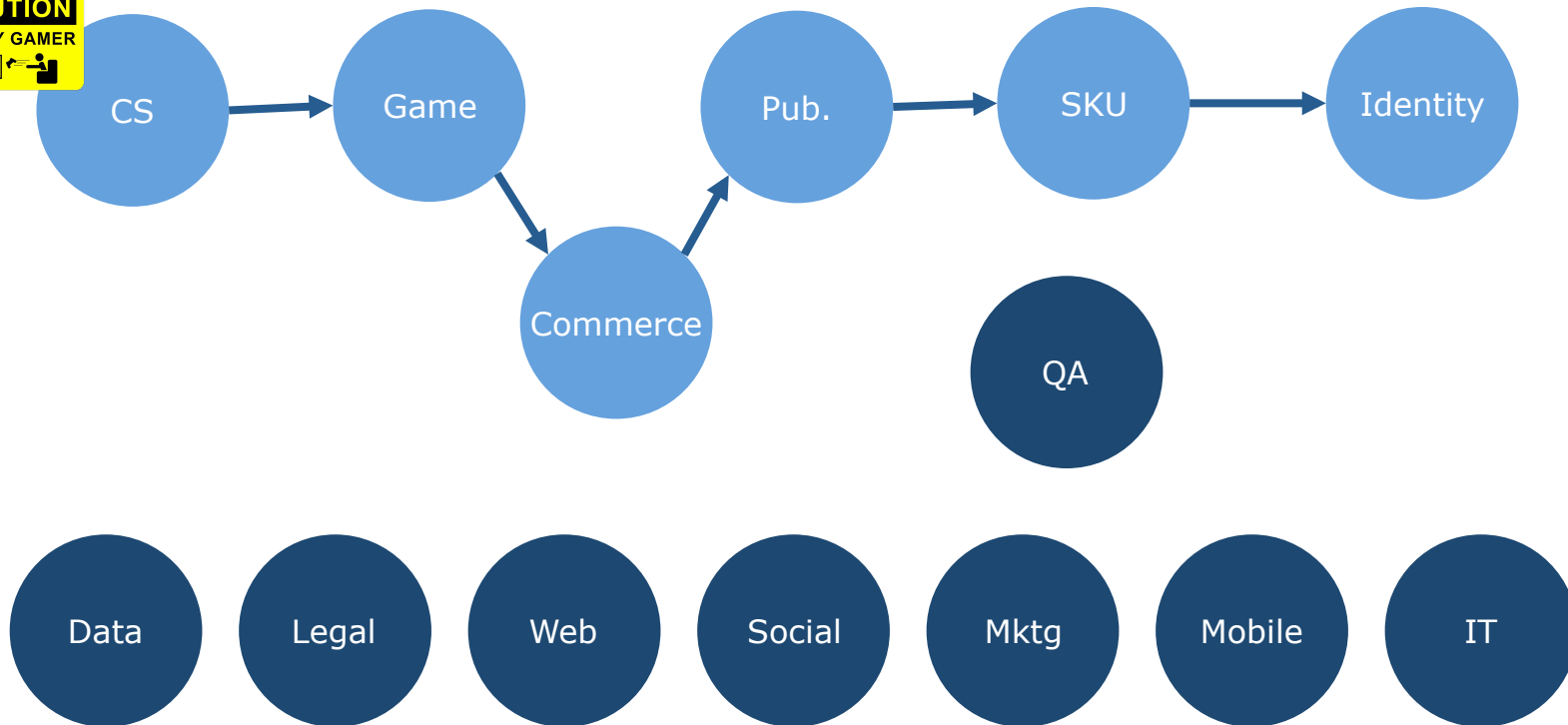
Preparing for take off

Angry Best Buy Guy

Customer Support gathered more info:

- PC preorder consumers at retail
- Limited Edition copies
- Missing bonus content when installing the game

Communication Chain

Define Your Partners

Recommended Materials

- 24x7 Coverage plans
- Countdown to Launch Calendar
- Data Dictionary
- Digital Offering and Unboxing Guide
- End-to-End Flows

Other Best Practices

Recommendations
- War Room
- Kill Switches
- Localized Support
- Onboard 3rd Parties

Launch Window

Dealing with Live Issues

What were our Challenges?

- Unclear support and escalation paths
- Little awareness of partner issues
- No aggregate list of issues
- No common format for reporting status

Our Solutions

Unclear support and escalation paths

- Define shifts for the title, usually for 2 weeks
- Gather names and contact details with each partner
- Make this data accessible
- Train everyone on triage flow

Our Solutions

Little awareness of partner issues

- Put all partner team reps into the triage flow

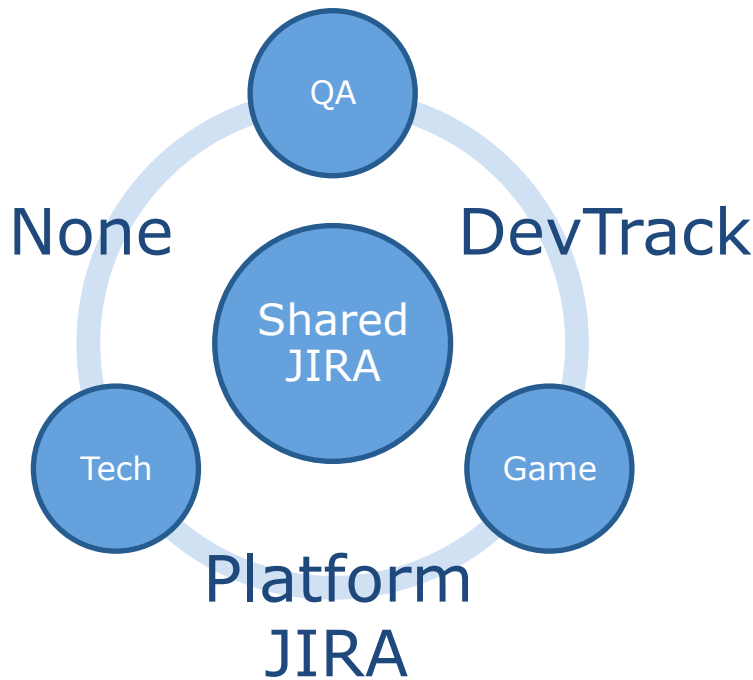- Setup shift handoff calls to sync status

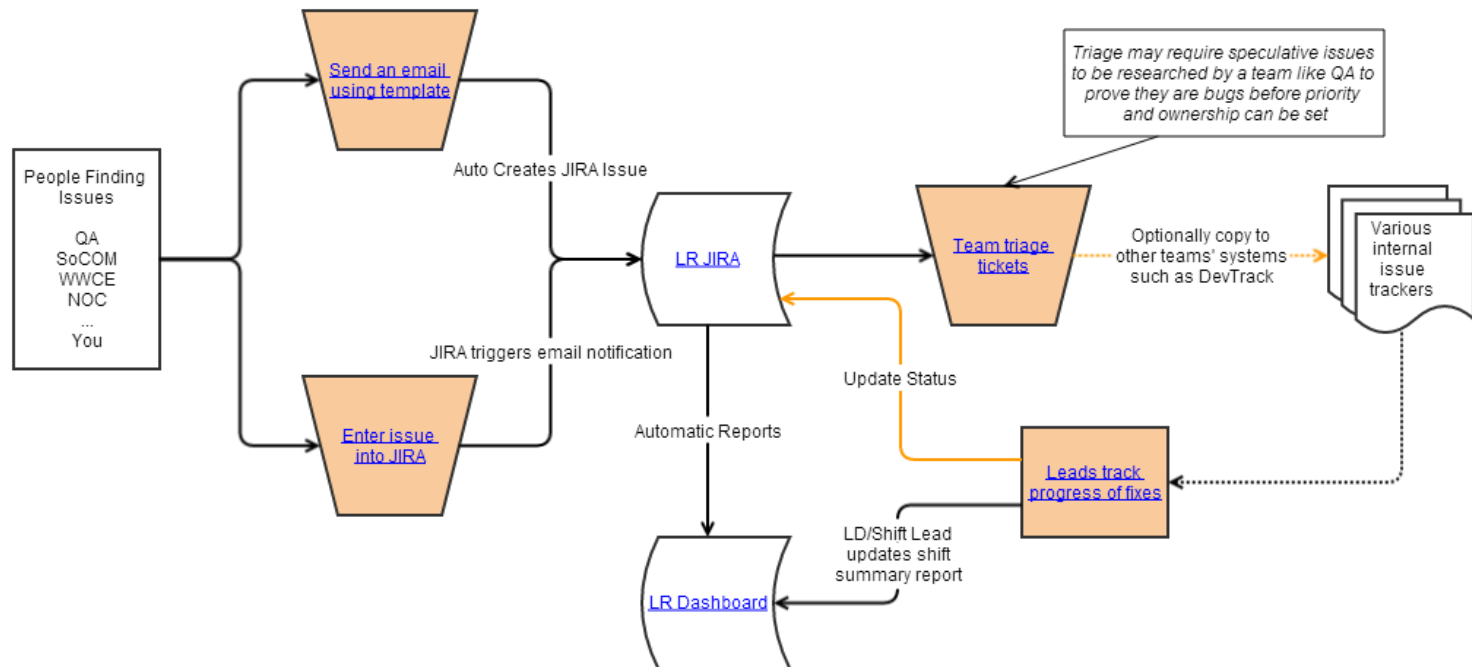- Run a war room

Our Solutions

No aggregate list of issues or common reporting format

- Accessible Confluence & JIRA

- Reduces manual work for tracking and reporting

Triage Flow

Live Ops Dashboard

Report Live Ops Issue

Update: 5-Mar-14 4PM PST

Next Update: 6-Mar-14 6PM PST, Plants vs. Zombies - Garden Warfare Status Update Summaries

Launch Director's Score	Status										
4	**Teams:**	Game	Marketing	QA	Publishing	EADP	DPIO	Origin	Systems Test	WWCE	Community	Analytics	Commerce	Legal
Scale 0-5	**Techs:**	Blaze	Origin	Identity	Commerce	Data	Infrastructure	MS	Sony			
	Features:	Multiplayer	Commerce	Companion Apps	Website	DLC/Updates						

Notes

- **Analytics:** Reporting on live data is improving. **–IN PROGRESS**
  - EADP and Analytics are addressing, with assistance from Game, GOS and DPIO.
  - Game server updates have been rolling out to fix some issues.
  - Xbox One co-op data has been missing, which has been tracked down to a client bug which means waiting until the next patch in April to resolve.
- **EADP/Blaze/Multiplayer:** Players reported not being able to join or create game sessions on Xbox One and Xbox 360. **–NO LONGER USER IMPACTING**
  - GOS found an issue with some drivers for NIC's on some Blaze server hardware. This has been worked around overnight so we hope this resolves the problem.
  - Note that Garden Ops mode is peer-hosted, not using our dedicated game servers, so users reporting issues with lag, dropping/getting kicked from games, etc. may be having issues with their connection to other players, which is to be expected in P2P games. Playing over a WiFi connection, for instance, is not recommended.
- **Game:** Some players report problems with weapons and abilities unlocking. **– IN PROGRESS**
  - Game team have a script for fixing users in this state that will be run with each Blaze update/deploy.
  - Next Blaze deploy will include some changes that should make it less likely for users to get into this state.
- **Game:** Some players are reporting that the Sticker Shop is unavailable or that they aren't receiving all of the coins they earn **– IN PROGRESS**
  - A handful of reports each day, but QA are unable to repro.
  - WWCE and Community teams have been asked to reach out to users to gather more specific info.
- **Game:** Miscellaneous Gameplay Bugs **– IN PROGRESS**
  - Live QA have reported a small handful of gameplay bugs seen during retail playtesting. These are being tracked by the game team for fixing in future patches/DLC. A Microsoft VOIP issue preventing customers hearing each other in some circumstances is causing some comment.
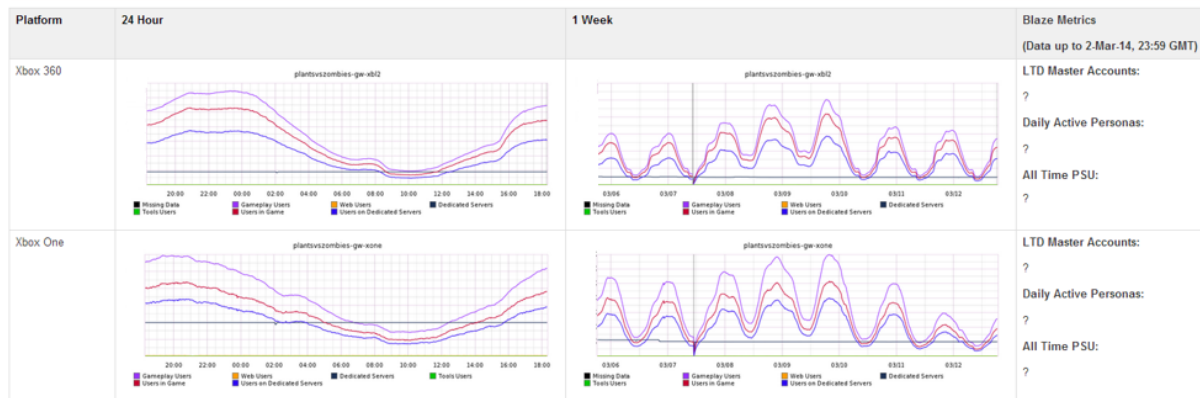
Live Ops Dashboard

Live Ops Dashboard

Critical Issue List

PvZ Live Ops Open JIRA Issues List						▲
Priority	**Summary**	**Deliverable Status**	**Comments/Resolution**	**Functional Team**	**Created**	**Updated**
2	XONE: Garden Warfare Issue - "Unable to Join Session"	On Track	GOS deployed a Blaze fix at 1am PST on 1-Mar. Muc	EADP DevRel	25/Feb/14	05/Mar/14
3	Telemetry Issues - Large/Long telemetry files are arriving corrupted	On Track	Game, Data, GOS and DPIO are all looking at various	Analytics	20/Feb/14	05/Mar/14
			New game server on 1-Mar seems to have fixed at lea			
			Xbox One co-op data requires a client patch.			
			Analytics are starting to get some more reporting bas			
3	PvZGW XONE Abnormal Trend	Not Started		Launch Director	08/Mar/14	08/Mar/14
3	PvZGW XONE Abnormal Trend	Not Started		Launch Director	08/Mar/14	08/Mar/14
3	ERT Problem Alert - PvZ: Garden Warfare - Character Weapons Not Unlocking For Some Users	Not Started	DB script fixed up users with previous Blaze deploys,	QA	26/Feb/14	06/Mar/14
3	APAC PVZ check Mar 11	Not Started		Launch Director	11/Mar/14	11/Mar/14
3	PVZ GW XBL2 Unusual trend	Not Started		Launch Director	11/Mar/14	11/Mar/14
3	PvZ GW: Blaze outage for Thursday 3 AM PDT / 10 AM GMT 13th March 2014	Not Started		Launch Director	11/Mar/14	11/Mar/14
4	Sticker Shop unavailable	Not Started	A handful of reports each day on answers.ea.com. Q/	Game	26/Feb/14	05/Mar/14
			Game & QA have extra Q's for WWCE/Community to			

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Issue Triage	Graphs & Stats	Launch Week Calendar
Got an issue to report? This is how to do it, including a 24x7 Coverage Plan and Customer Response Messaging	Server usage graphs, telemetry reports, Blaze user metrics, WWCE Contact Reports and more	Tracking events as they will happen around the world, such as website updates, game build propping, etc.

Results

- Achieved our goals
- Used by several teams
  - Others have had spin-off ideas
- Another perspective
  - FIFA Live Team differences

Closing Thoughts

- Key messages are simple:
  - Cross-functional planning
  - Open communication

- Applies to any team, not just AAA or LR

- How does your team do it?

Questions in Wrap Up Room

Thanks for listening!

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Get Ready for Launch: How AAA Titles Do it

Room 304, South Hall
Today, 12:00pm - 12:30pm

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