

Designing for Multiple Minds

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Who are we?



Kimberly Voll

Designer / Researcher



Weszt Hart

Designer / Musician



Focus of today's talk

1. Demonstrate:

- Why Player Dynamics is something unique and useful
- That we're not equipped as is
- What Player Dynamics is today

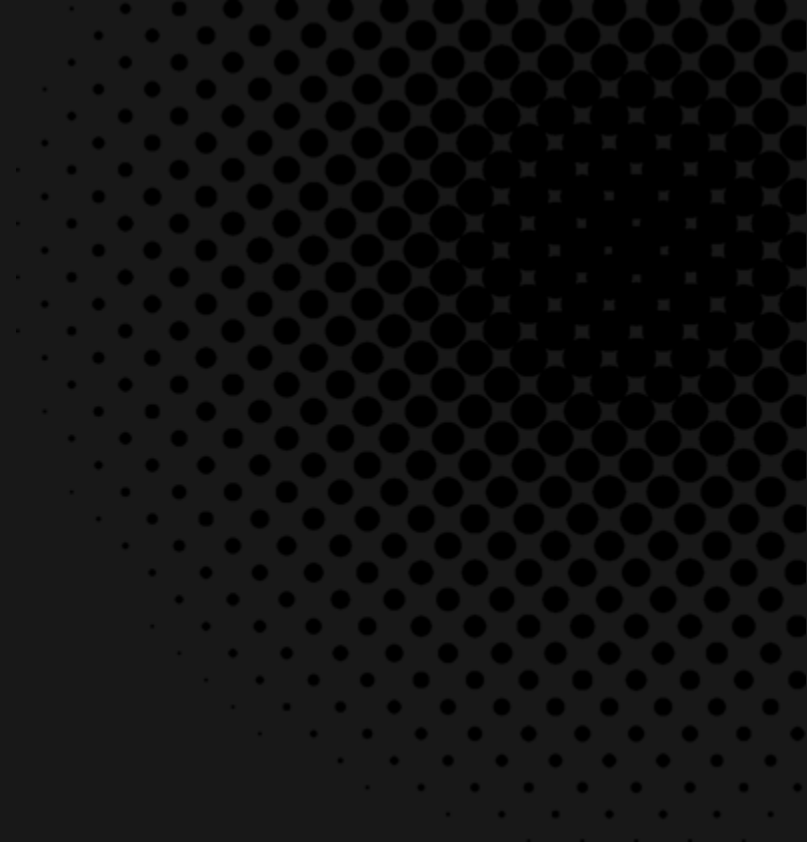
2. Walk through the three-part design process:

- Research and understand introducing some proven tools and frameworks
- Designing proactively and talk about some methods to do this
- Be prepared to intervene

**Backed by science and years of development
at multiple companies**

Introduction

Player Dynamics

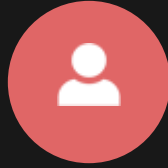




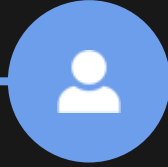
Play



Interaction

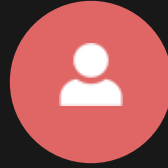


Game Design

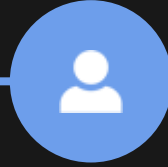


UX

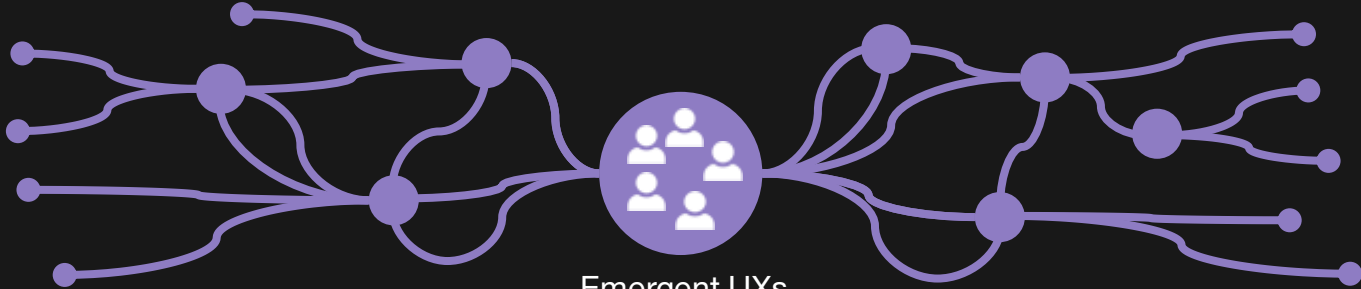




Game Design



UX



Emergent UXs



Play



Interaction



Interplay

Player Dynamics (PD) /pleɪ·ər daɪˈnæm·iks/

Noun

1. The craft of creating products that help people play well together, typically in games and social systems.
2. Interplay design.
3. Designing for multiple minds.



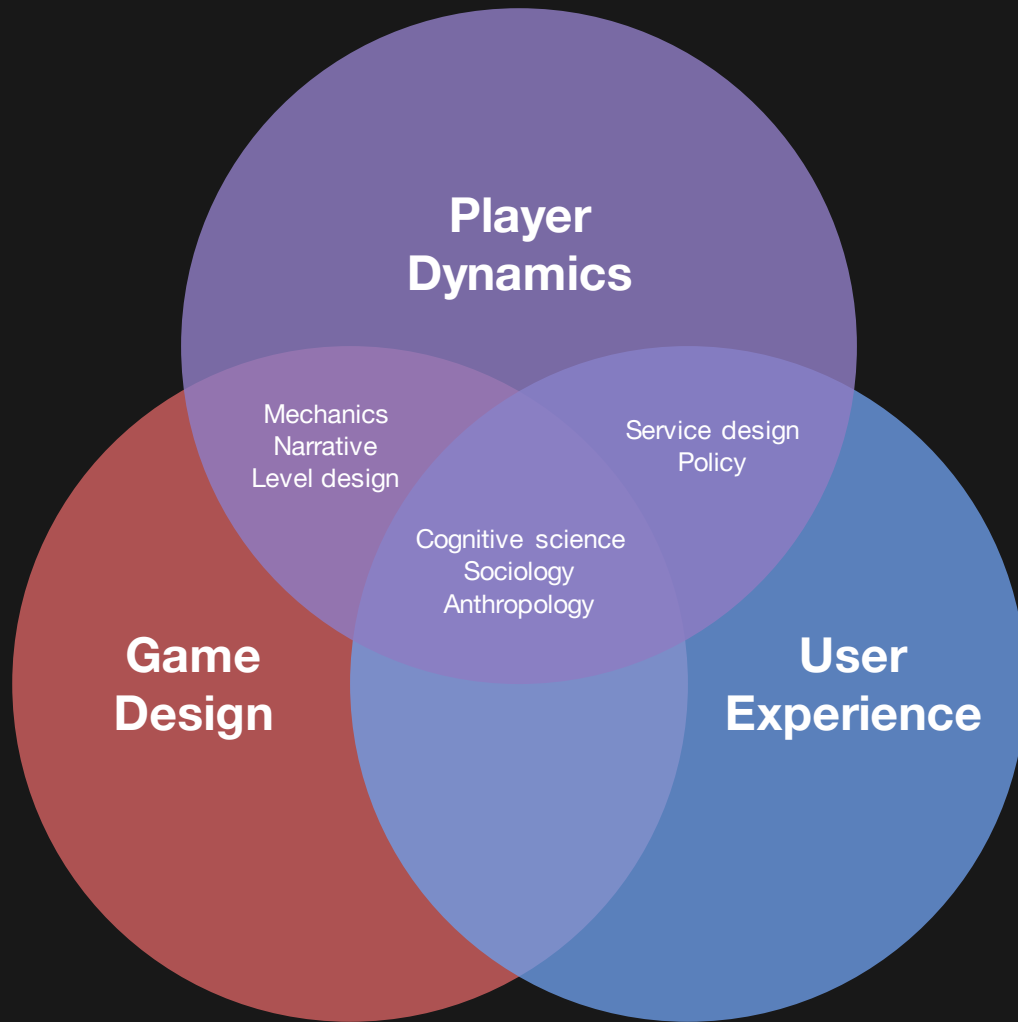
Play



Interaction



Interplay



What is Player Dynamics
really all about?

Hello!

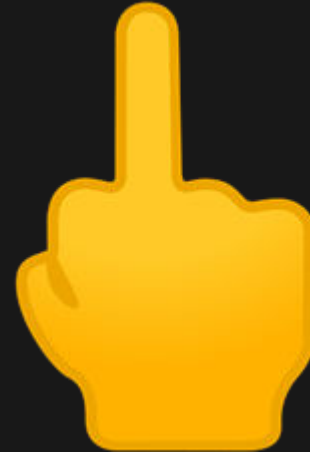


You

Hello!



You



Them

Remove the bad actors, right?

~~Remove~~ ~~ors, right?~~



So it's about making friends?

So it's about making friends?

Friendship

is not a magic bullet



We *have* to
be friends?

Actually,
no

Great player dynamics = cohesion

Design process

Cohesion through Player Dynamics





Research and understand



Design proactively



Be ready to intervene



1

Research and understand

Cohesion in context

Players as individuals and groups

Conditions influencing players



2

Design proactively

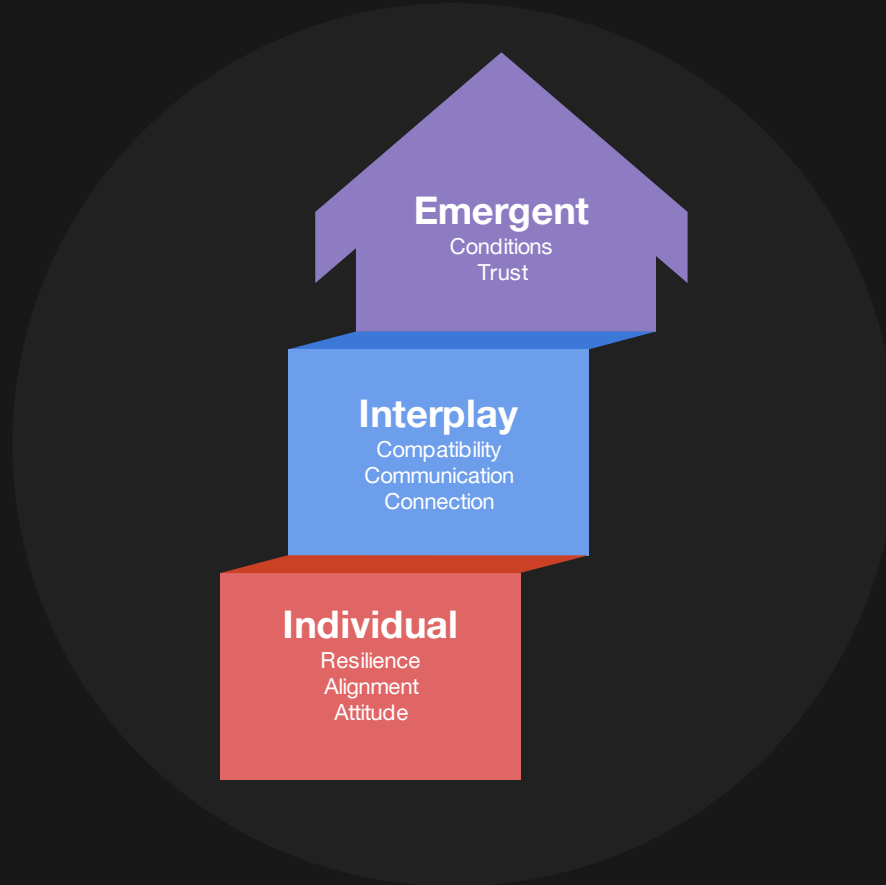


3

Be ready to intervene

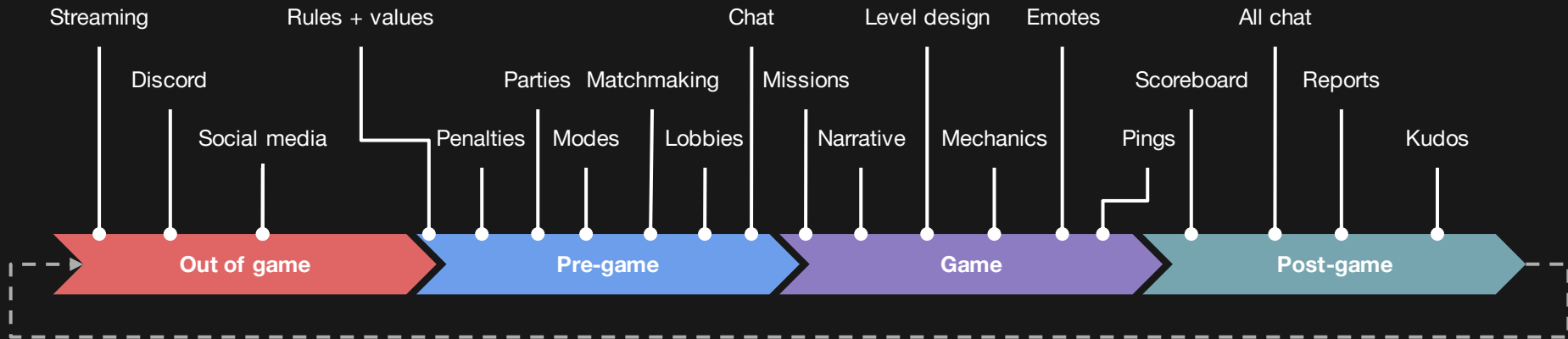
Tool #1: Cohesion ladder

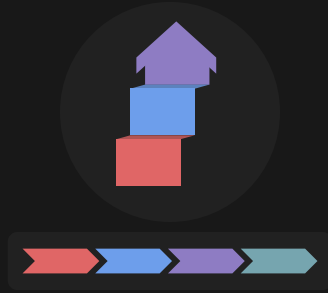
Understand cohesion



Tool #2: Experience maps

Understand the game





Consider player perspectives

Tool #3: Cognitive bias lenses

Understand players as individual humans

59

Player Dynamics lens

Pygmalion Effect



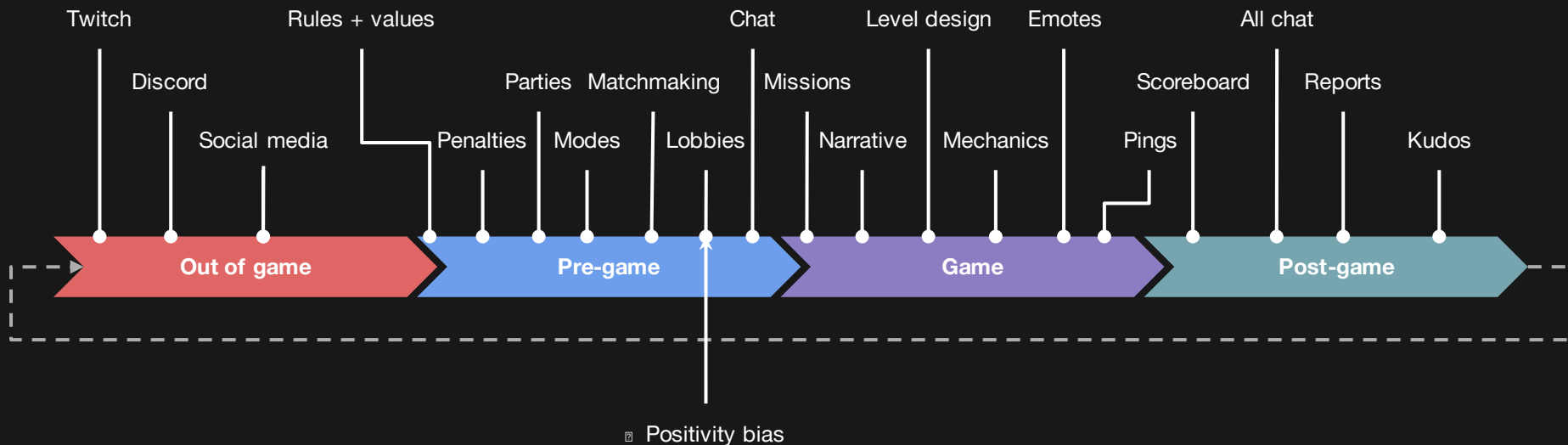
Renekton Ford

Expectations can affect performance

- What will players be expecting from each other?
- How does the interface and flow set expectations?
- How might communication systems be affecting the team's expectations?
- What influence does the genre have?
- What's the language that we've been using to set expectations?

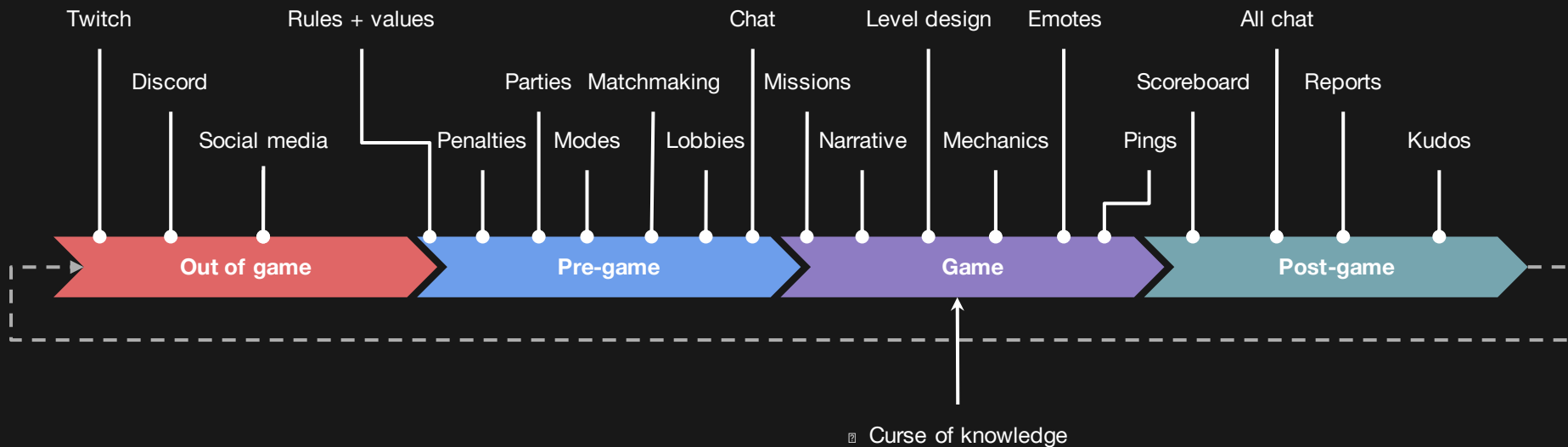
Identify bias troublespots and opportunities

Examples



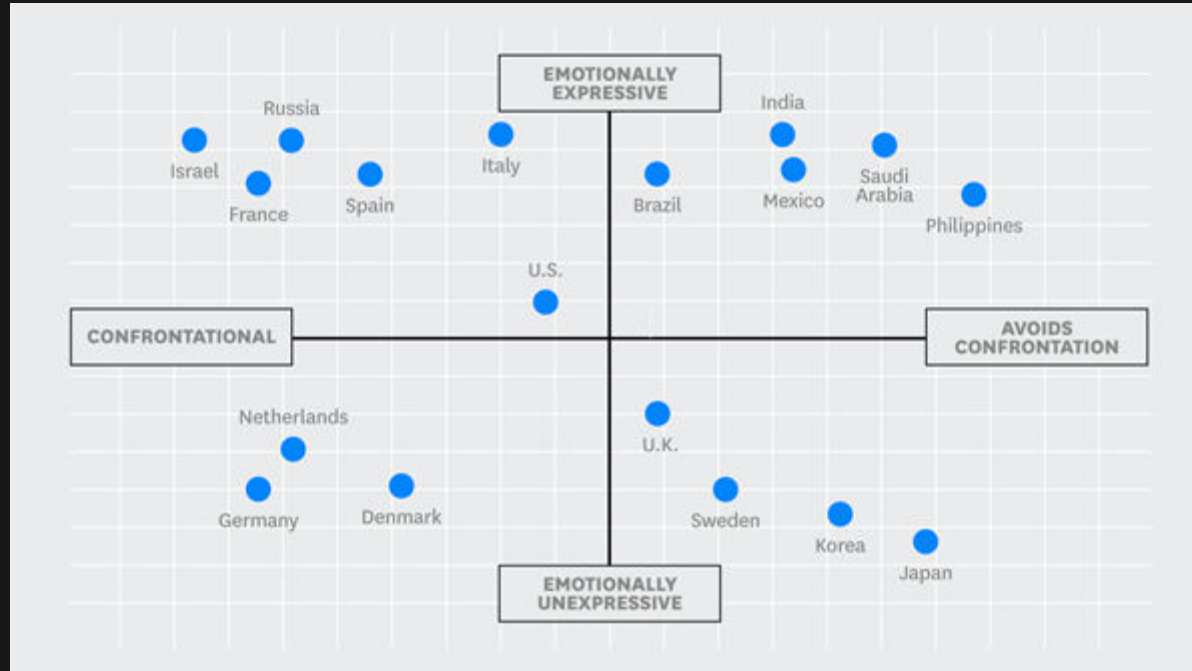
Identify bias troublespots and opportunities

Examples



Tool #4: Culture maps

Understand players as populations



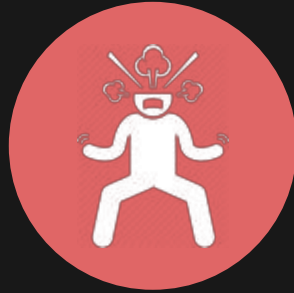
Credit: Erin Meyer

Tool #5: Behavior subgroups

Understand general behavior patterns



Antagonizers



Ragers



Inconsistent
Average



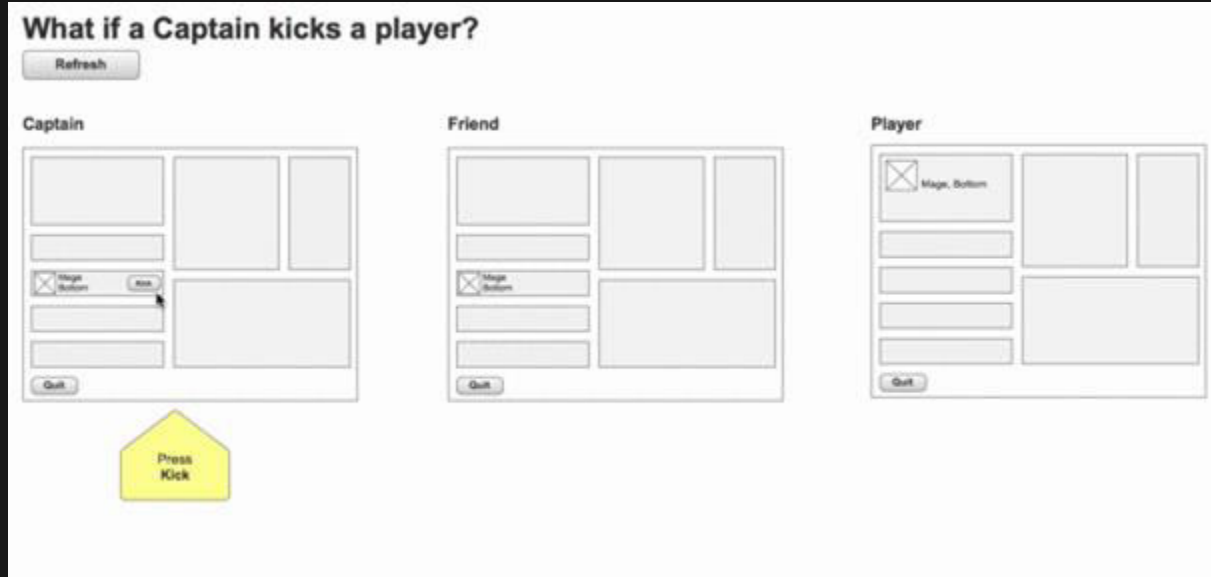
Followers



Sunny Solid

Tool #6: Multi-perspective prototypes

Understand everything at the same time



Team Builder prototype

Tool #7: One-sheets

Bring it all back to the company

Genre one-sheet

Collectible Card Games

CCG, aka trading card games (TCG)



Communication

P2P communication in CCGs is typically limited to actions taken on the board, though some provide emotes.

Fair play

Matches in LoR are one-on-one, so there may be little chance to see common problems like poor communication, mis-

Games

- Magic Online
- Hearthstone
- The Elder Scrolls: Legends



1

Research and understand

2

Design proactively

Identify moments of truth

Reduce p2p friction

Make it easy to be good

3

Be ready to intervene

2

Design proactively

Identify

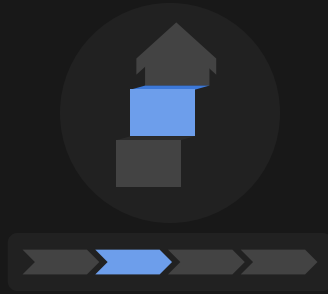
moments of truth

Reduce

p2p friction

Make it easy

To be good



Matchmaking



Warm bodies

+



Skill

= good match?

It's more like

Playstyle
Personality
Social preferences
Time constraints
Seriousness
Mindset
Levels of trust
Parties
Desired role
Mentorship preferences
Skill or experience
Unspoken rules
...and more

= good
match!



Lots of criteria

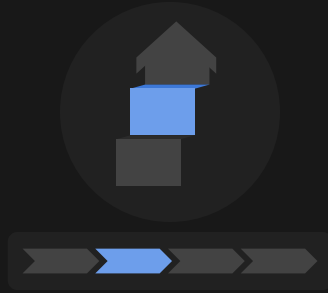
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Long waits

=

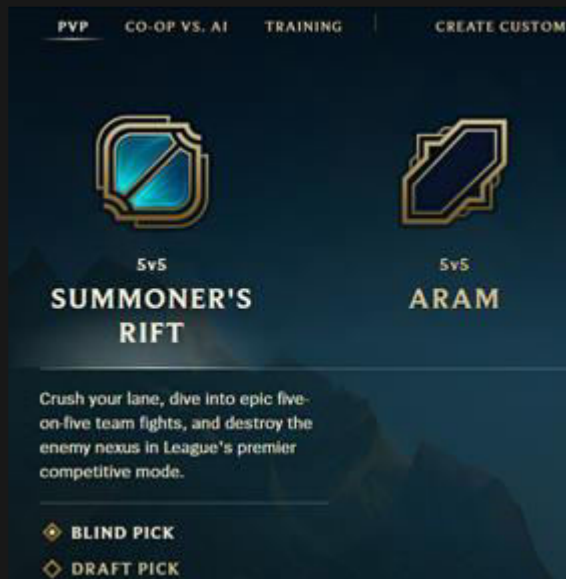




Self-organization

Offer a choice of modes

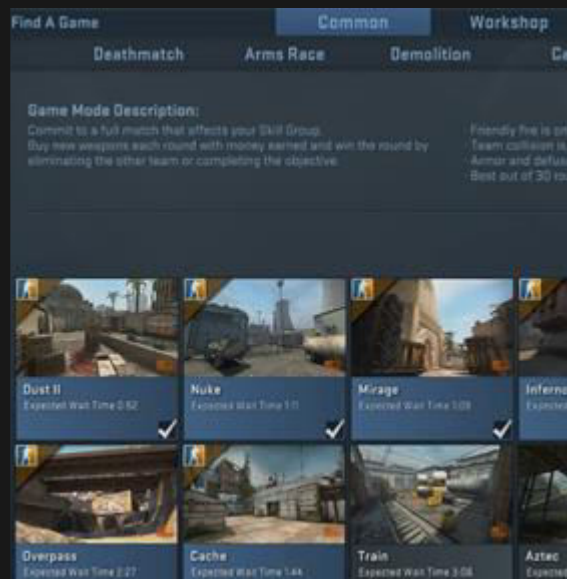
Finding the right game



League of Legends



Minecraft



CS:GO

Support self-organization in and out of game

Finding the right people to play with



Looking for group



Teams with perks!

Support self-organization in and out of game

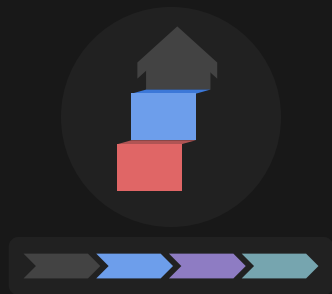
Finding the right job or role



Role selection...



... with feedback!



Narrative

Reinforce values with narrative



Repeating “Vault Hunters”



“Thank you” dialogue

OVERWATCH HANAMURA
MATCH TIME: 4:39

RATE MATCH: - ○ ○ ○ +

NEXT GAME BEGINS IN **10** MIN

Overwatch

10-2

10	2	00:03	1,382	0	4
ELIMINATIONS CAREER AVG: 9.56	OBJECTIVE KILLS CAREER AVG: 1.56	OBJECTIVE TIME CAREER AVG: 20:00	DAMAGE DONE CAREER AVG: 861	HEALING DONE CAREER AVG: 5	DEATHS CAREER AVG: 3.89

18% WEAPON ACCURACY CAREER AVG: 18%	4 BEST KILL STREAK	90 DAMAGE BLOCKED CAREER AVG: 41	0 SELF DESTRUCT KILLS CAREER AVG: 0.00	0 MIBOS CALLED CAREER AVG: 0.00
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25%
GOLD MEDAL +150 XP
1842 XP
342/32000

LEAGUE OF LEGENDS

TEMPLE OF ANGER
10/10/2016 2:41

NEXT BOARD STARTS IN 37

DEATHS KILLS TDS DAMAGE PULVERIZER

ANTI MATCH

BANK

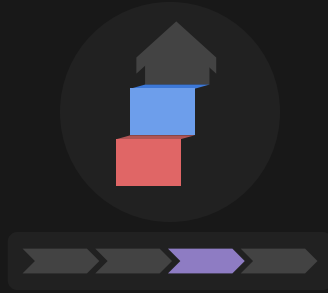
Player	Deaths	Kills	TDS	Damage	Pulverizer
DREWS	5	3	3	3	3
ENRYU	8	60%	60%	60%	60%
KETBLACK	3	50%	50%	50%	50%
ANGELX	3,810	1	1	1	1
PULVERIZER	0	0	0	0	0

ALL RATES TO GO

Team values

Celebrate the values you want to see in game





Gameplay & Level Design

Reduce conflict where unnecessary

Reduce conflict where unnecessary

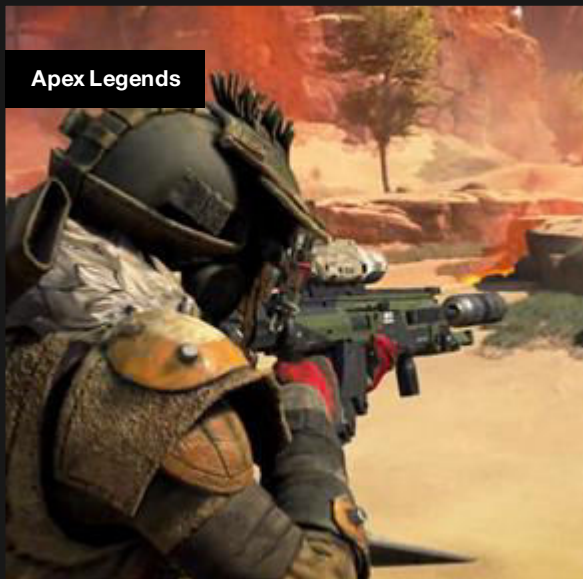


Share the loot!

Reduce conflict where unnecessary



Share the loot!



Think about the tradeoffs of friendly fire & body blocking

Design for positive interactions



Tasks that don't highlight skill disparities



Make positivity the “only” option

Create meaningful roles

Keep Talking and Nobody Explodes



Asymmetrical roles

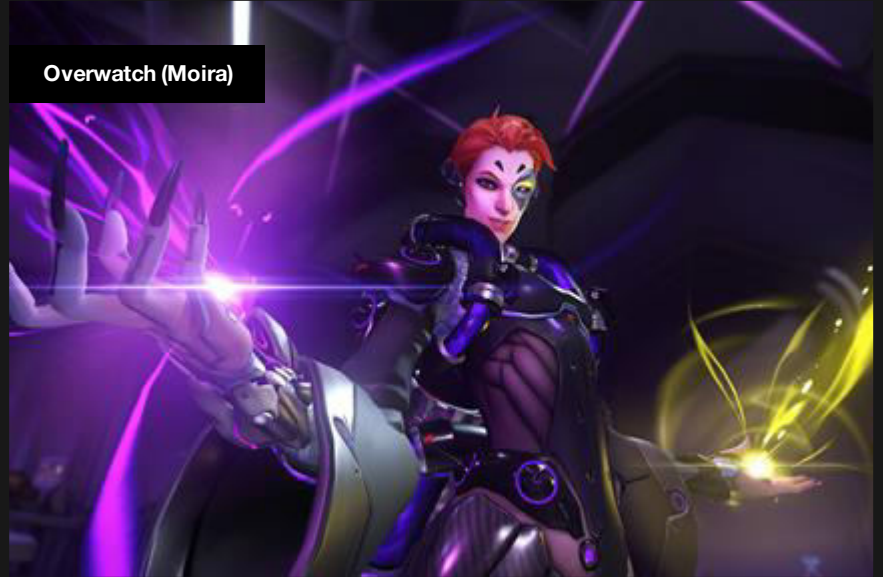
Create meaningful roles

Keep Talking and Nobody Explodes



Asymmetrical roles

Overwatch (Möira)



Flexible support roles

Create spaces that help people work together



Infrastructure for (pro)social good

Create spaces that help people work together



Think outside the core loop



Focus on bonding



Sometimes we all just need to dance

Destiny





1

Research and understand

2

Design proactively

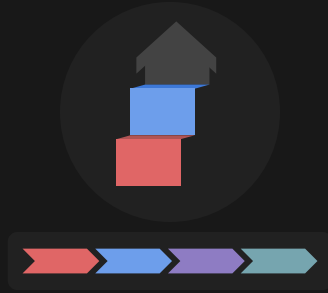
3

Be ready to intervene

Set rules & establish values

Require commitment

Empower players

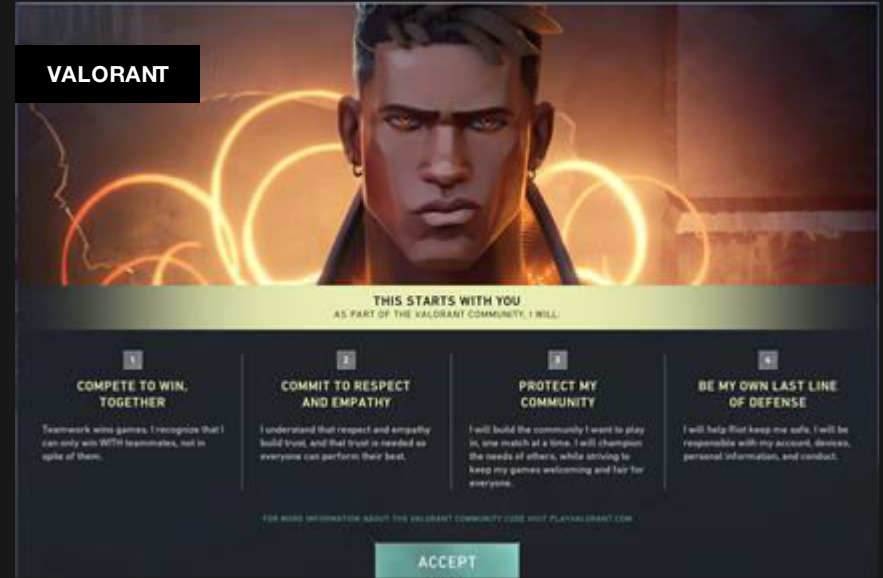


Proactive interventions

Set rules and establish values



Code of Conduct



Community Code

Require commitment



Behavior commitment in a mode

Empower players

ADD BANNED WORDS

Discord

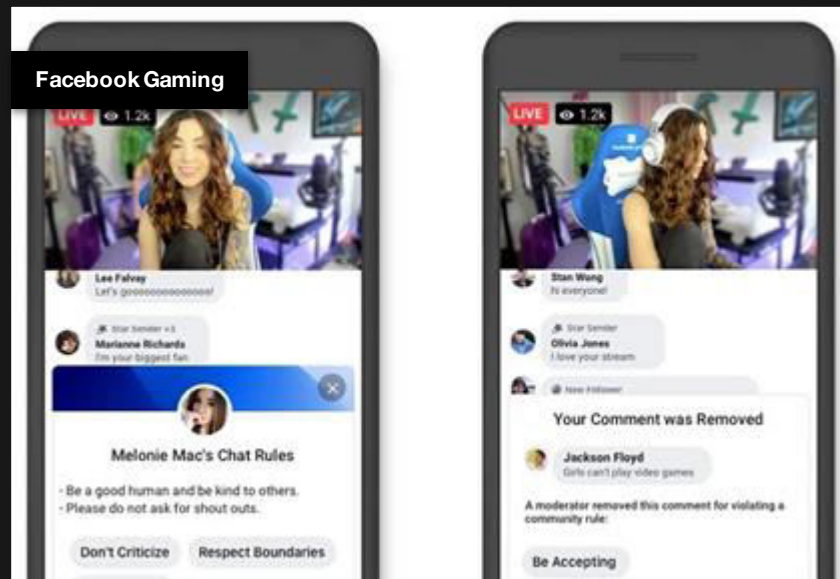
WORDS (COMMA SEPARATED LIST) - KEEP IN MIND THAT WORDS HAVE TO BE 3 CHARACTERS OR LONGER.

☒ MATCH ANY PART OF THE WORD

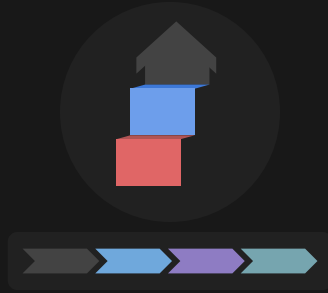
☐ MATCH EXACT WORD ONLY

Update

Filters



Tools for streaming

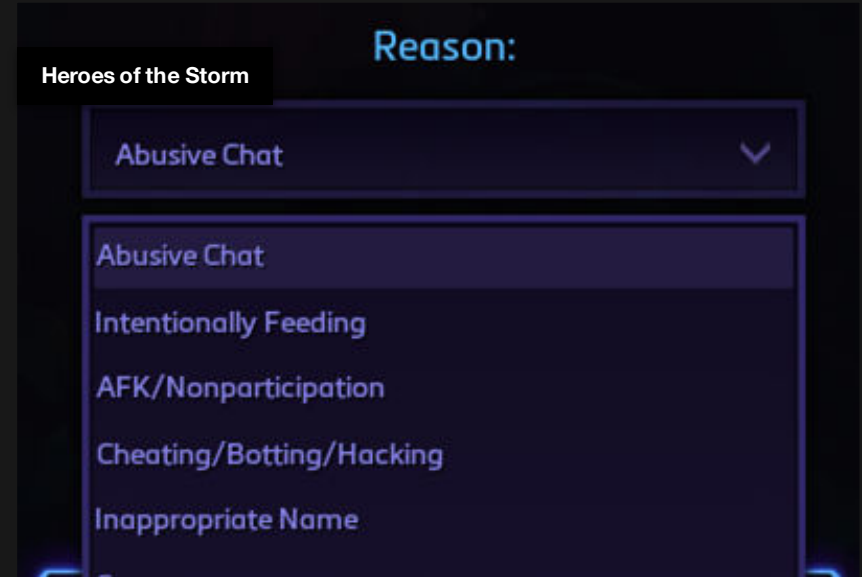


Reactive interventions

Process reports and issue penalties



Penalties



Reporting categories

Summary

Player Dynamics in design



Play



Interaction



Interplay

Player Dynamics design process



1

Research and understand

Cohesion in context

Players as individuals and groups

Conditions influencing players



2

Design proactively

Identify moments of truth

Reduce p2p friction

Make it easy to be good



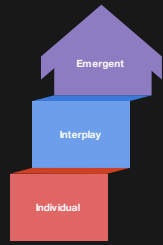
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Be ready to intervene

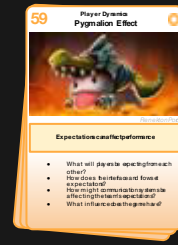
Set rules & establish values

Require commitment

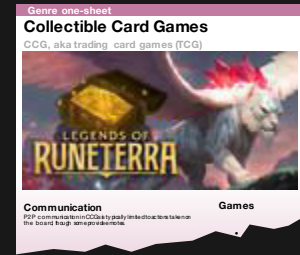
Empower players



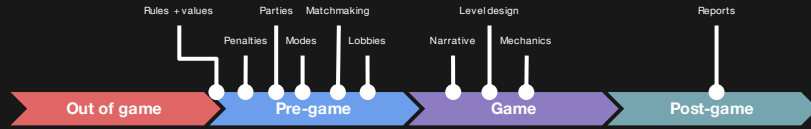
Cohesion ladder



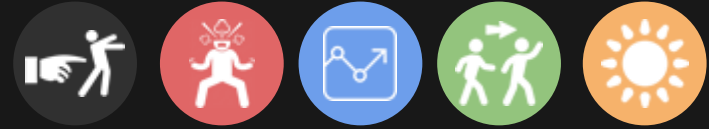
Cognitive bias lenses



One-sheets



Experience maps



Behavior subgroups



Culture maps



Multiperspective prototypes

Strategies for cohesion

Consider player perspectives

Match more than skill

Offer choice of modes

Support self organisation in and out of game

Reinforce values with narrative

Celebrate the values you want to see in game

Reduce conflict where unnecessary

Design for positive interactions

Think outside the core loop

Create meaningful roles

Create spaces that help people work together

Identify bias troublespots and opportunities

Design for different perspectives

Process reports and issue penalties



Where do we go next?

Our ask:

Prioritize

Experiment

Share

APEX
— LEGENDS —

A WAY OUT

BORDERLANDS 3

CS GO

DARK SOULS III

DEATH
STRANDING

DESTINY **2**

DIABLO

DISCORD

facebook gaming

Fallout 76

FORTNITE

HEROES
OF THE STORM

JOURNEY

KEEP TALKING
and NOBODY EXPLODES

**LEAGUE OF
LEGENDS**

LEFT 4 DEAD 2

MINECRAFT

OVERWATCH

*Sea of
Thieves*

VALORANT



Players are worth it.

Player Dynamics

Designing for multiple minds



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