

GDC

March 20-24, 2023
San Francisco, CA

Creating Stakeholder Buy-in for Accessibility in Game Design

Jameil Johnson, M.P.S

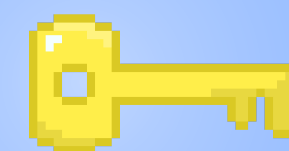
User Experience Researcher

The AbleGamers Charity

#GDC23

ADVENTURES OF AN ACCESSIBLE GAMING ALLY

START



Create a Profile:

Enter Character Name:

Jameil

Choose your role:

UX Researcher


Graphic Designer

Dog Dad

Anime Fanatic



@JAMEIL_U



The (UX) Duties

- to **define** and **analyze**
- to **understand** and **empathize**
- to **create** the **solutions** that meet their **needs**



START



Accessibility

The Interaction Design Foundation defines Accessibility as “the concept of whether a product or service can be used by everyone—however they encounter it.”

Accessibli-key



Oh No! Stakeholders!

Get them to see the light! ✨



Training Grounds

Choose your weapon:

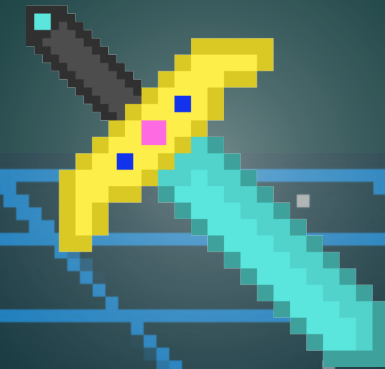
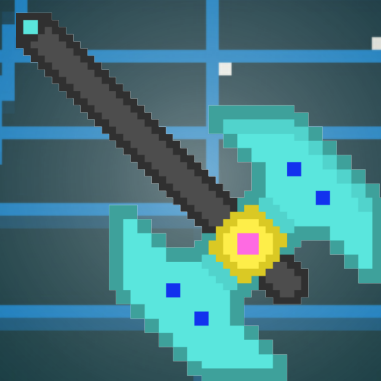


Mission Loadout

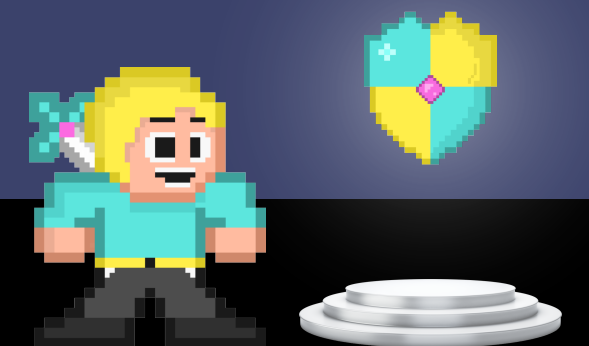
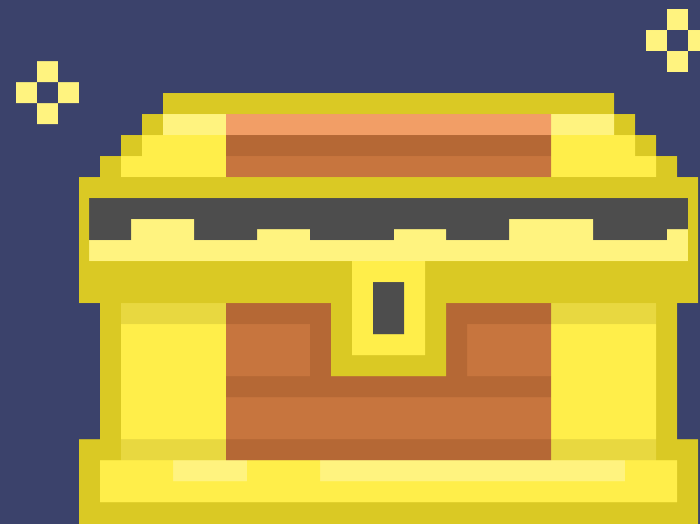
Economic

Social

Legal



LEVEL 1: THE ECONOMIC





A new foe has appeared!

A WILD STAKEHOLDER HAS APPEARED!

Bottomline Beni

Beni's bio:

"I'm not too convinced that including more accessibility options **is a sound investment**. **Do people with disabilities even play video games?** I'm sure they have more important things to spend money on and **are not buying games.**"

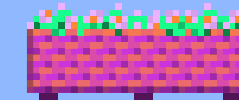
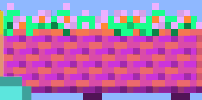
- Sr. Director of Production
- Large AAA Studio
- New York, New York

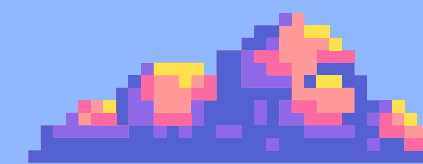




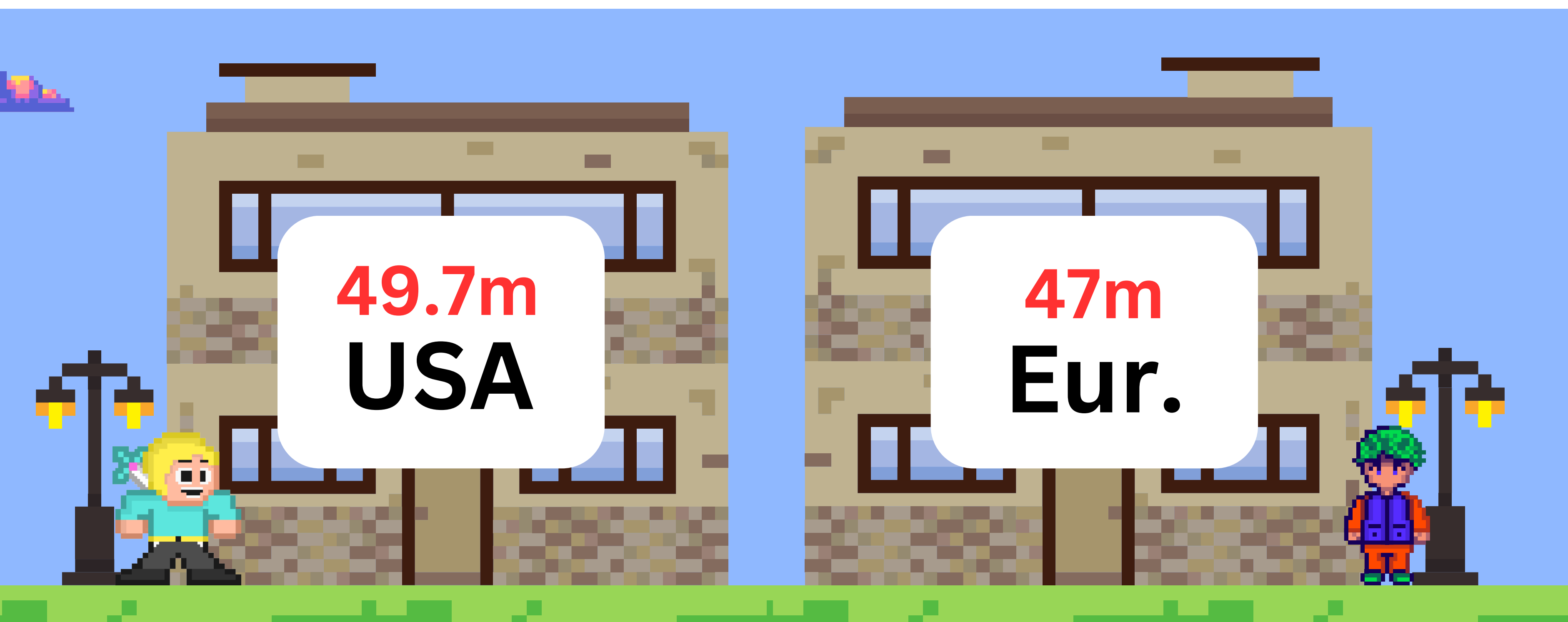
MENU

THE DISABILITY MARKET





of people with disabilities that have gaming equipment at home

A pixel art illustration of a two-story house with a brown roof and tan walls. A white sign with rounded corners is placed in front of the house. To the left of the house is a black lamppost with two yellow lights, and a character with blonde hair and a blue shirt is standing next to it. To the right of the house is another black lamppost with two yellow lights, and a character with green hair and a blue vest is standing next to it. The ground is green grass.

49.7m
USA

47m
Eur.



MENU

China

United States

Japan

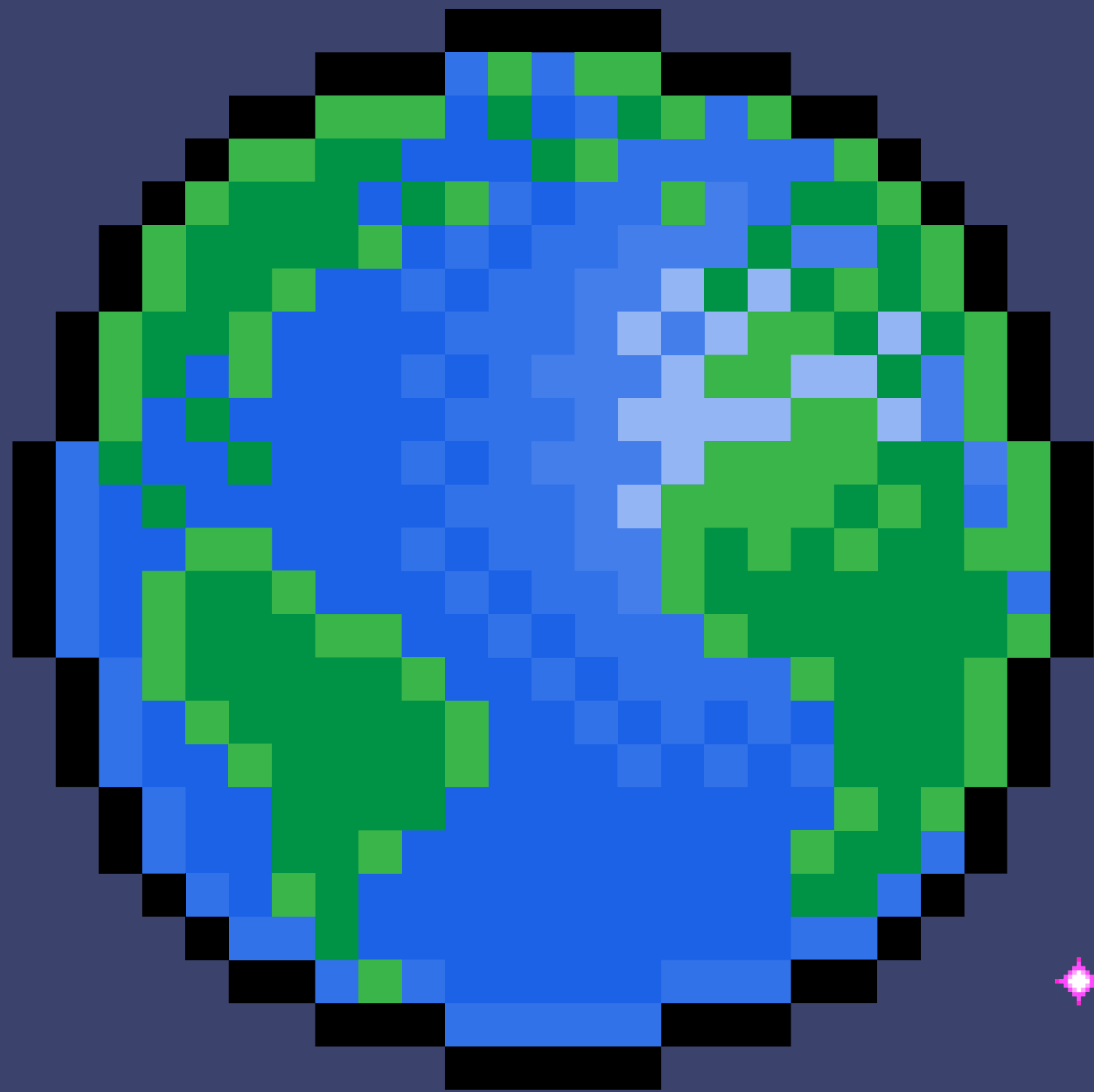
Korea

UK

The Top Five Gaming Markets



Gamers are Worldwide...



1.85

Billion People with
Disabilities worldwide

Companies are Investing
in Educating their staff.



NETFLIX



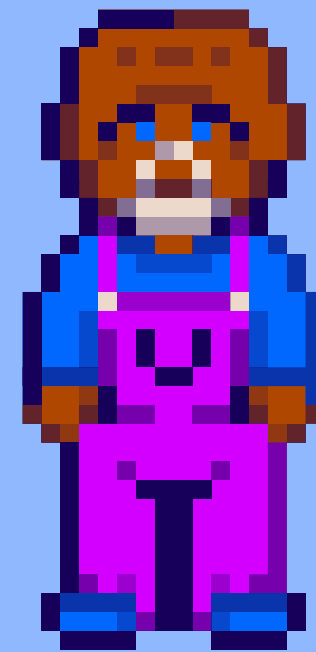
Avalanche
Studios Group



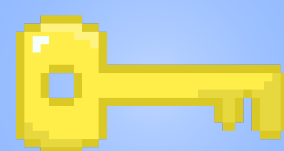
And many more!



**Baby Boomer population has over
\$15 Trillion in disposable income.**



YOU WIN



LEVEL 2: THE LEGAL





A new foe has appeared!

A WILD STAKEHOLDER HAS APPEARED!

Adrian's bio:

"I don't see why we should be concerned. Including accessibility could be fine but unless specifically required to do it then I don't see the point. It doesn't seem like there are even any rules that exist around that kind of thing or if there ever will be."

- Founder and CEO
- Small Independent Studio
- Phoenix, Arizona

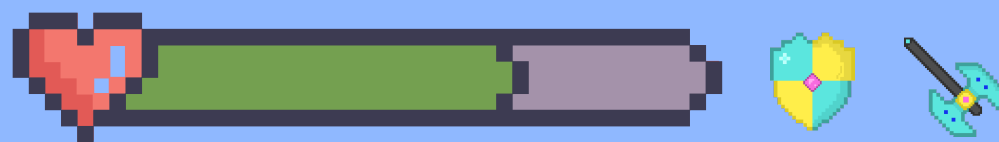




Objection!

GAMING LAWSUITS & LEGISLATION

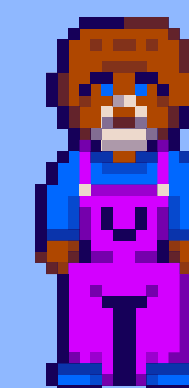
I am NOT a lawyer.

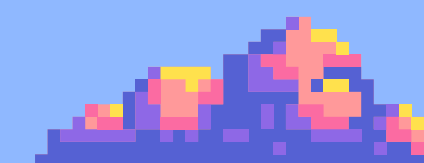
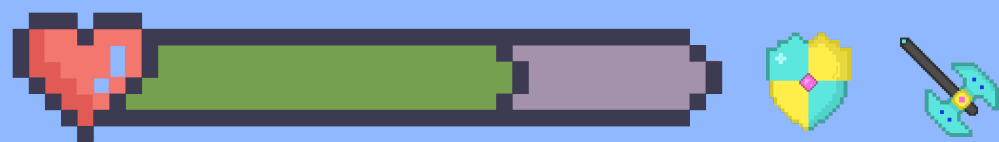


You can **always** be sued by someone

- “**Pokémon Go**” - Filed in Dec 2022 – Case Still Pending
- "**Oblivion: The Elder Scrolls IV** - 2011 - Still Pending
- "**Super Mario Kart**" - 2001 - Settled for Undisclosed amount

I am still **NOT** a lawyer.

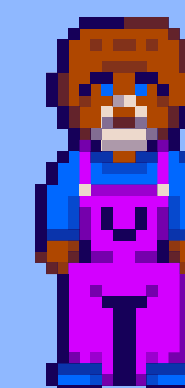




Accessibility Legislation in Tech Communications Globally

- The Communications and Video Accessibility Act
- EN 301 549: European standard for digital accessibility
- Accessible Canada Act

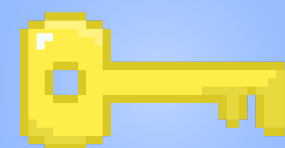
Nope, NOT a lawyering at all.



wow that was basically law school.



YOU WIN



maybe I am a lawyer?

LEVEL 3: SOCIAL APPROACH





A new foe has appeared!

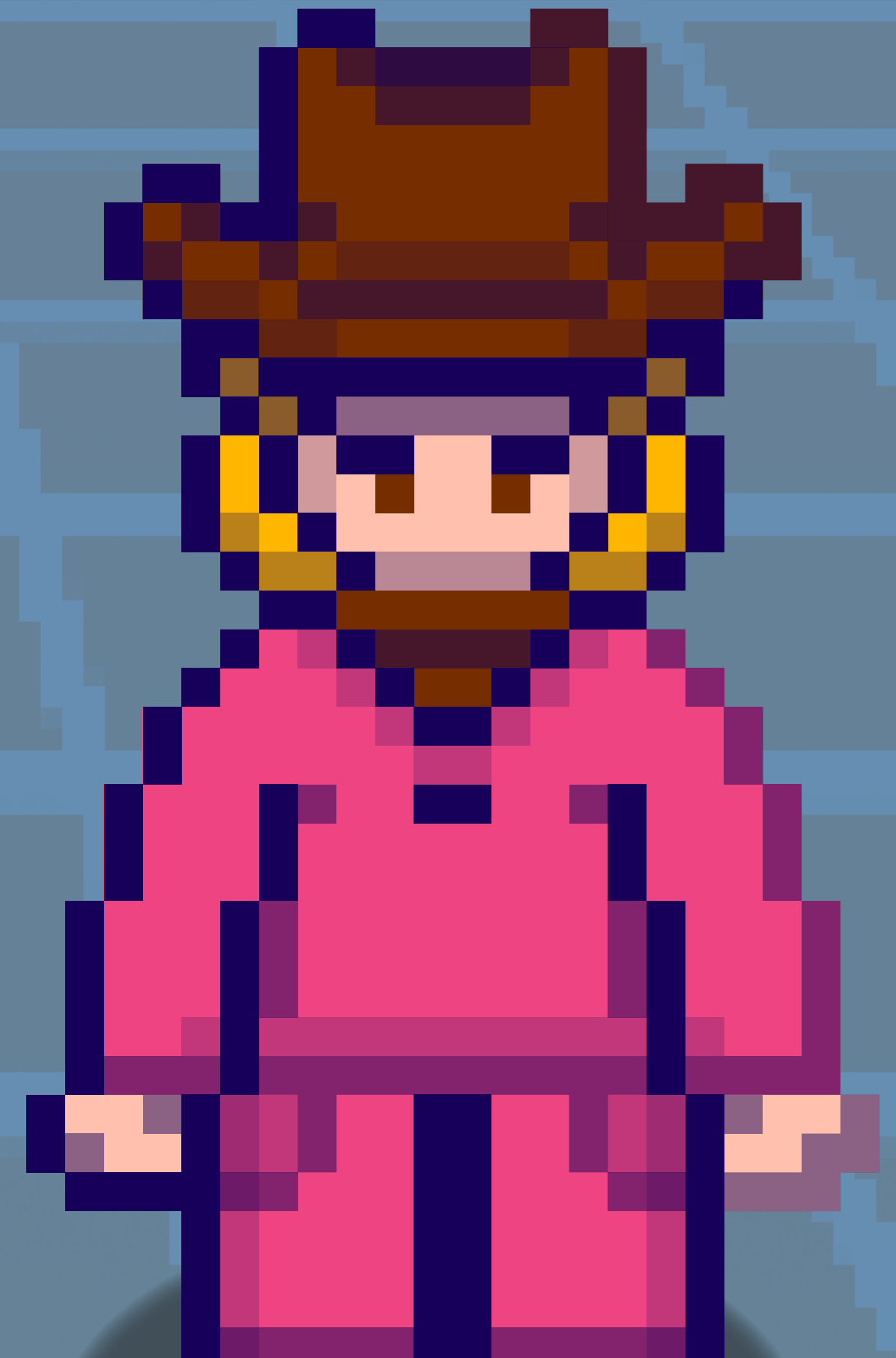
A WILD STAKEHOLDER HAS APPEARED!

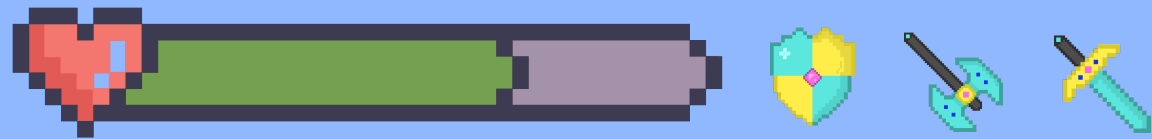
Miki

Miki's bio:

"Does every game really need to be accessible to everyone? Sounds like we would be making our games **easier and less fun** just for a small group of people. Wouldn't they be happy for a challenge and focus on cooler features? **I don't think most players will even notice or care."**

- Senior Game Developer
- Medium Sized Gaming Studio
- San Francisco, California





MENU

THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IMPACT



95

Opencritic

10 | 10

GAME RANT

10 | 10

TRUSTED REVIEWS

10 | 10

DIGITALLY DOWNLOADED

10 | 10

EGM

95

Metacritic

The Last of Us Part II

God of War Ragnarök

94

METACRITIC

10 | 10

PSU

10 | 10

SILICONERA

10 | 10

GAMEBLOG

10 | 10

VG247

94

OPENCritic



6 key experiences players with disabilities

Connection

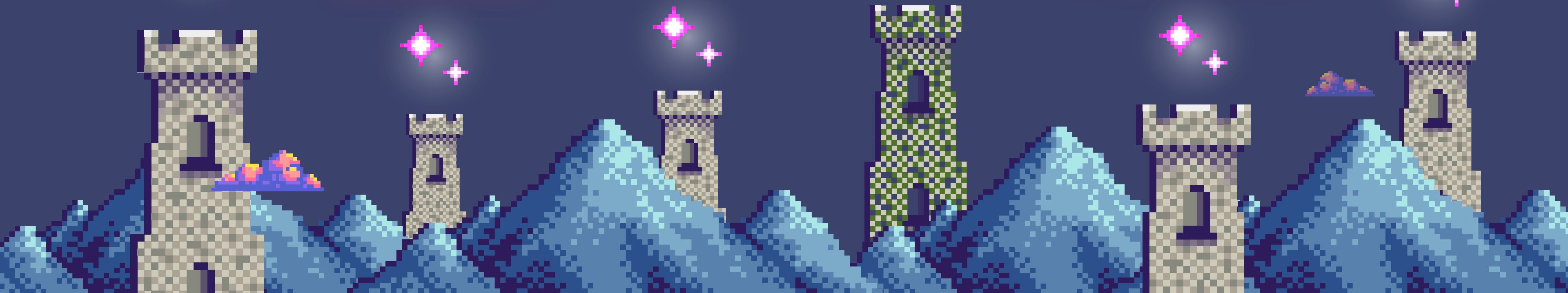
Enablement

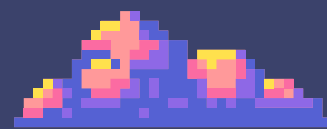
Benefit

Diversion

Escapism

Artistic
Experience





Gamers absolutely care...



11/29/2022

👍 1046
of 1062



Deaf gamer review

Thank you, you have no idea how much it means to me being able to see my kids words on screen as they talk into a mic. I only wish other game helped me out a little. But SEEING "RUN mom a spiders chasing you" made me feel included, even though I died.

& are becoming more vocal



Steven Spohn (Spawn) ✓
@stevenspohn

...

DIFFICULTY level set to EASY is to make the game EASIER for people who

A) Have disabilities which make "normal" difficulty almost impossible

or

B) Prefer to focus on the story and not combat

Please stop writing articles complaining EASY is bad. Let people play how they want!

1:18 PM · Apr 10, 2020

3,560 Retweets 134 Quote Tweets 16.6K Likes



[REDACTED]

..

REPEAT AFTER ME:

More accessibility options in gaming won't take away from my experience, but will allow others to have their own.

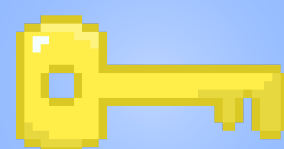
It doesn't matter what difficulty I play a game on, everyone deserves the opportunity to play at their own pace & ability.

Gaming is for everyone.

6:13 PM · Jul 14, 2021

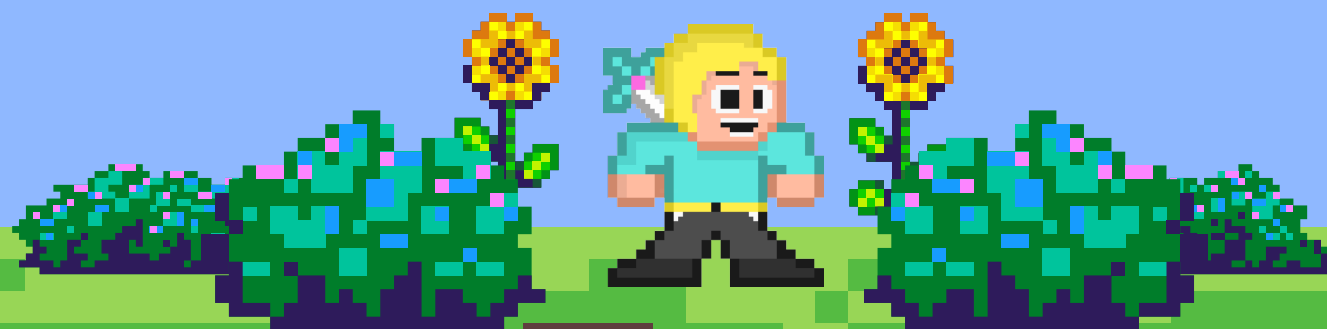
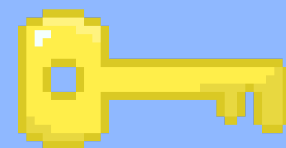
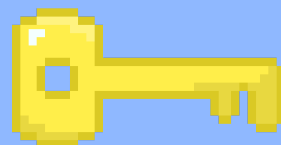
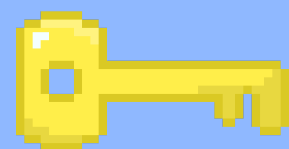
1,779 Retweets 49 Quote Tweets 5,725 Likes

YOU WIN



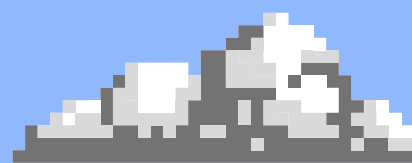
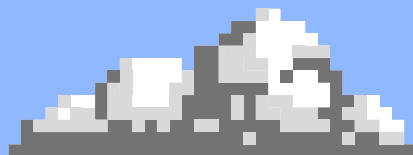
GG

GAME
OVER



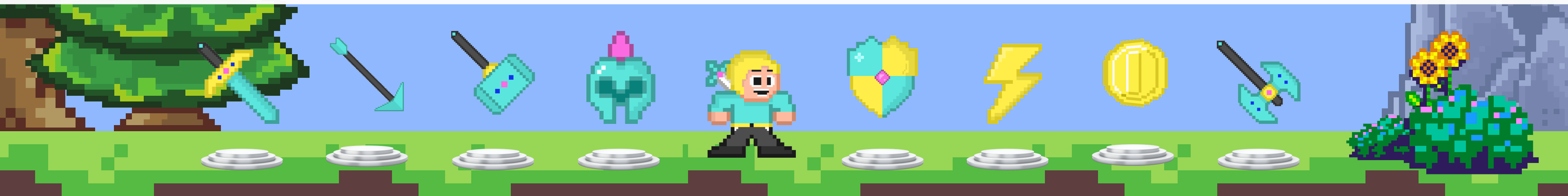
REKT

LOL



Wrapping it up.

- They are many tools you can use to ~~defeat~~ win over stakeholders
- People with disabilities are **consumers**.
- Laws around accessibility are **always changing**
- Everyone deserves to **experience** video games.
- **Accessible design** is attainable for any studio.




Become a Certified Accessible Player Experiences[®] Practitioner with AbleGamers!



Become a Certified APX Practitioner (CAPXP) and master player-centric accessible design in an 100% online remote course.

Learn more at:

<https://accessible.games>

The background is a pixel art scene. At the top, there are two identical health bars, each with a red heart icon and a green bar. Below them, the text "THANK YOU." is displayed in a large, white, pixelated font with a cyan and magenta outline. Underneath the text is the email address "jameil@ablegamers" in a smaller, white, pixelated font. The scene features two stone castles with grey and white checkered patterns and blue roofs. Between the castles are two green trees with brown trunks. In the center, four pixel art characters stand on a blue ground: a boy with green hair in an orange shirt, a girl with brown hair in a blue shirt, a boy with brown hair in a red shirt, and a boy with blonde hair in a blue shirt. To the right of the characters is a yellow treasure chest. The sky is black with several small, colorful pixel art clouds and stars.

THANK YOU.

jameil@ablegamers

Q&A

