

THE SCIENCE BEHIND SHAPING BEHAVIOR IN ONLINE GAMES

JEFFREY “LYTE” LIN | LEAD SOCIAL SYSTEMS DESIGNER



SPECIAL THANKS TO THE RIOT GAMES PLAYER BEHAVIOR TEAM

A large, semi-transparent warning sign is centered in the background. It is a triangle with a thick border and a black circle at the bottom center.

HEADS UP

YOU WILL SEE INAPPROPRIATE
LANGUAGE IN THIS TALK

**WE USED TO BELIEVE TOXIC BEHAVIOR
AND ONLINE GAMING WENT HAND-IN-HAND**



Teemo [24:50]: GIMME a T

Teemo [24:55]: GIMME an A

Teemo [24:59]: GIMME a L

Teemo [25:08]: GIMME an O

Teemo [25:12]: GIMME a N

Teemo [25:17]: WHATS THAT SPELL

Talon [25:19]: talon?

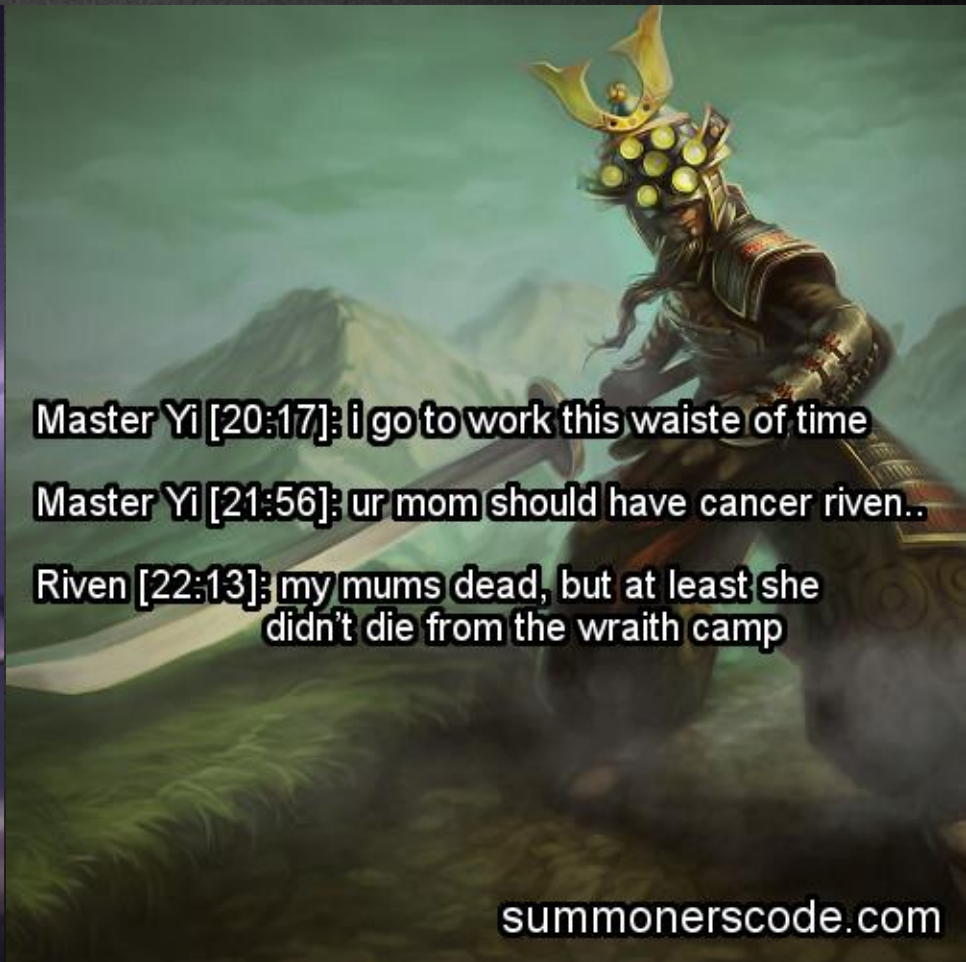
Teemo [25:23]: USELESS FUCKIN CUNT

summonerscode.com



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Talon [25:19]: talon?
Teemo [25:23]: USELESS FUCKIN CUNT

summonerscode.com



Master Yi [20:17]: i go to work this waiste of time

Master Yi [21:56]: ur mom should have cancer riven..

Riven [22:13]: my mums dead, but at least she
didn't die from the wraith camp

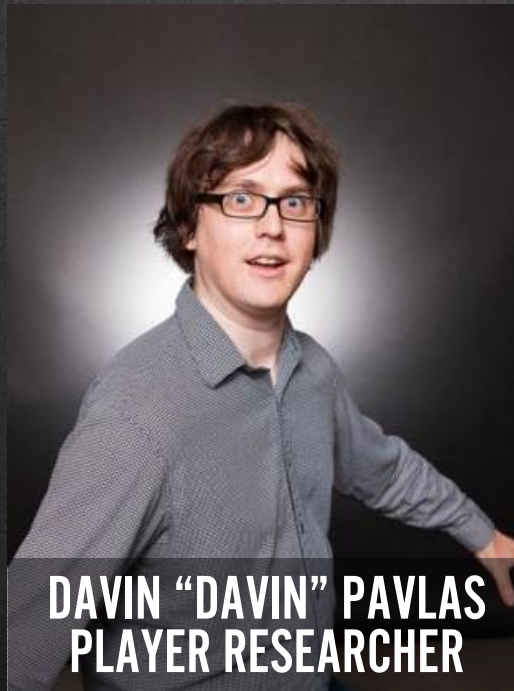
summonerscode.com

SPECIALISTS



RENJIE "STINKYTOFU" LI
LEAD STATISTICIAN

**PHD – BRAIN &
COGNITIVE SCIENCES**



DAVIN "DAVIN" PAVLAS
PLAYER RESEARCHER

**PHD – HUMANS FACTORS
PSYCHOLOGY**



JEFF "LYTE" LIN
LEAD DESIGNER

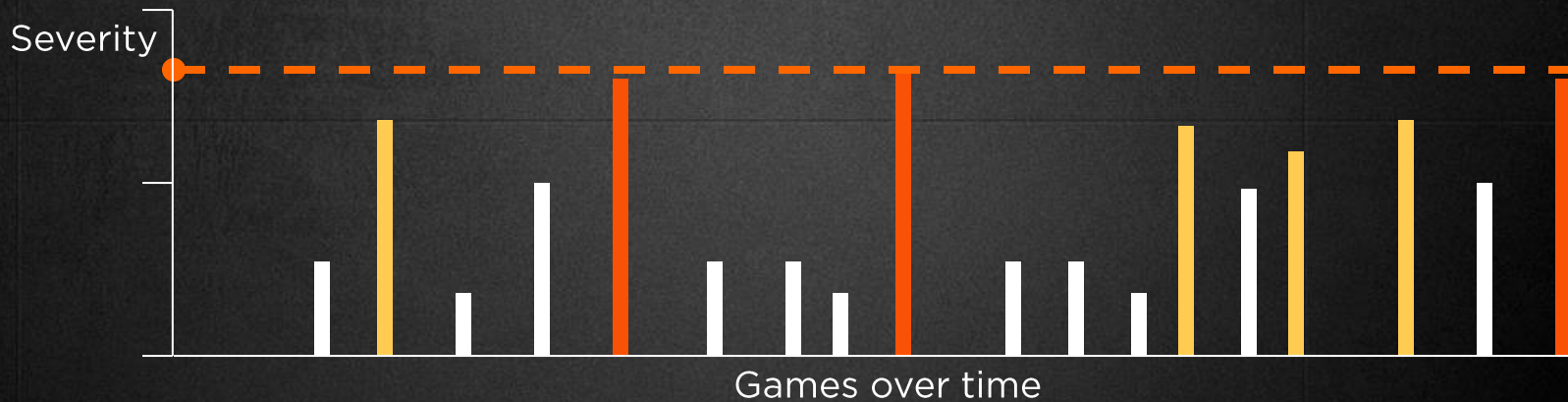
**PHD – COGNITIVE
NEUROSCIENCE**

THE TEAM



ANALYZING THE PLAYER BEHAVIOR PROBLEM

**TOXIC
PLAYERS**

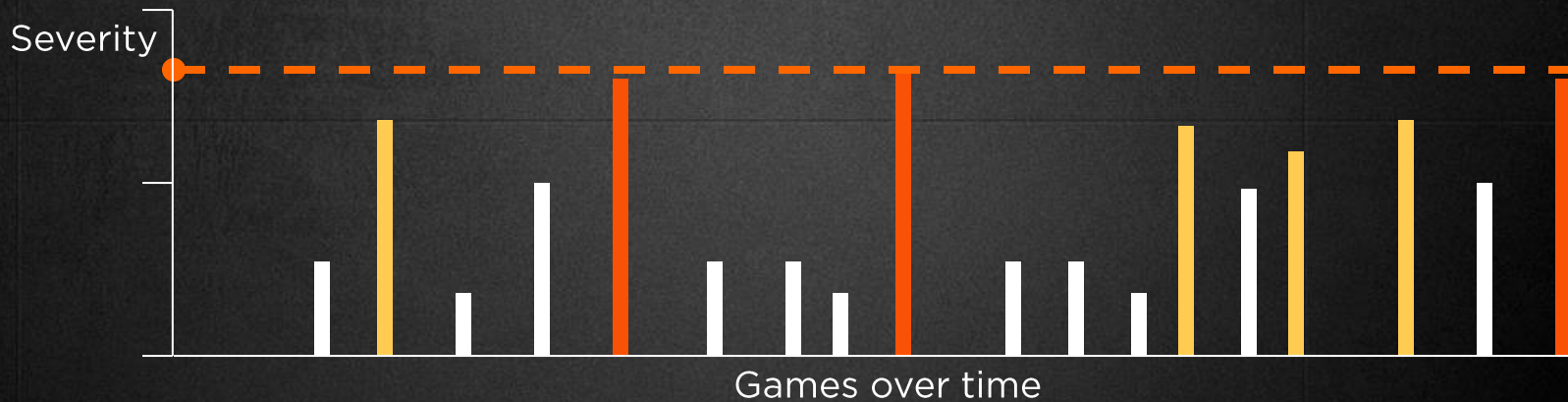


TOXIC PLAYERS



ANALYZING THE PLAYER BEHAVIOR PROBLEM

**TOXIC
PLAYERS**



**NORMAL
PLAYERS**



**IF WE REMOVE ALL TOXIC PLAYERS FROM THE GAME,
DO WE SOLVE THE PLAYER BEHAVIOR PROBLEM?**

**IF WE REMOVE ALL TOXIC PLAYERS FROM THE GAME,
DO WE SOLVE THE PLAYER BEHAVIOR PROBLEM?**

NO.

ANALYZING THE PLAYER BEHAVIOR PROBLEM

PLAYER 1



PLAYER 2



PLAYER 3



PLAYER 4



PLAYER 5



Games over time

PLAYER 6



PLAYER 7



PLAYER 8



PLAYER 9

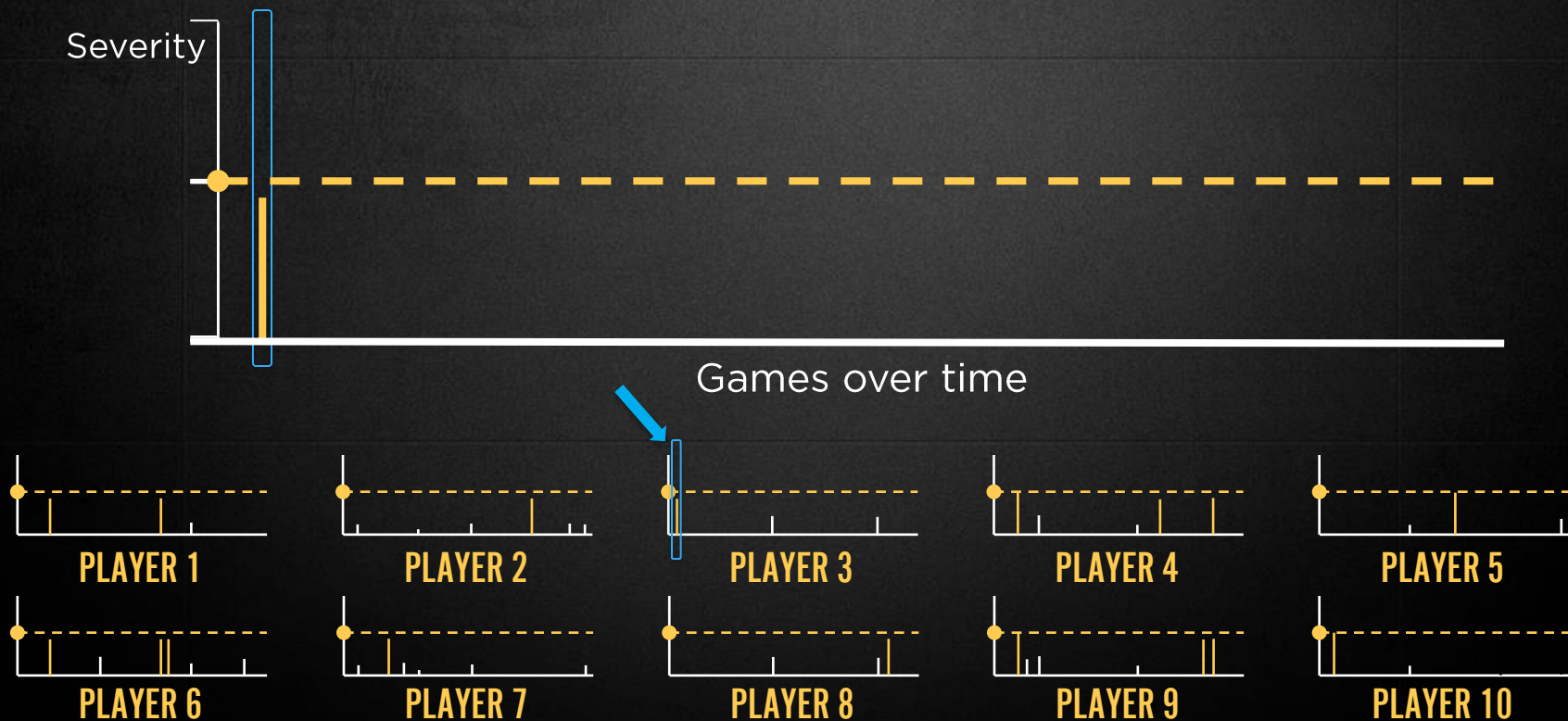


PLAYER 10



Games over time

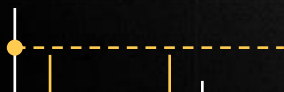
ANALYZING THE PLAYER BEHAVIOR PROBLEM



ANALYZING THE PLAYER BEHAVIOR PROBLEM



ANALYZING THE PLAYER BEHAVIOR PROBLEM



PLAYER 1



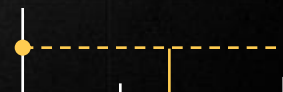
PLAYER 2



PLAYER 3



PLAYER 4



PLAYER 5



PLAYER 6



PLAYER 7



PLAYER 8



PLAYER 9



PLAYER 10

ANALYZING THE PLAYER BEHAVIOR PROBLEM

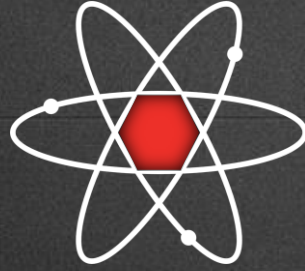


ANALYZING THE PLAYER BEHAVIOR PROBLEM



MANY GAMES SEEM TOXIC BECAUSE AT LEAST ONE PLAYER'S HAVING HIS/HER BAD DAY

**HOW DO WE PREVENT PLAYERS
FROM FLIPPING TABLES BECAUSE OF **CONTEXT**?**



THE CROSS-TEAM CHAT EXPERIMENT



CORE PILLAR

1

shield players
from negative
behavior



HYPOTHESIS

MAKING CROSS-TEAM CHAT
AN OPT-IN PROCESS
CAN IMPROVE PLAYER BEHAVIOR

More Options

Map Options

Show Neutral Camps ☒

Map Scroll Speed

Interface Options

Cooldown Display

Sec

Use Movement Prediction



Hide Center HUD Wall



Auto-Display Target



Flash Red When Damaged



Line Missile Display



Flip Minimap



Smartcast Range Indicators



Show Timestamps



Camera Smoothing



Show [All] Chat (Matched Games)



Mouse Speed

Surrender

OK

Cancel

CROSS-TEAM EXPERIMENT RESULTS

CHAT LOG
ANALYSIS

ONE WEEK BEFORE

[April 24 - April 30]

ONE WEEK AFTER

[May 1 - May 7]

46% of games had no [all] chat

81.7% were negative

9.6% were neutral

8.7% were positive

CROSS-TEAM EXPERIMENT RESULTS

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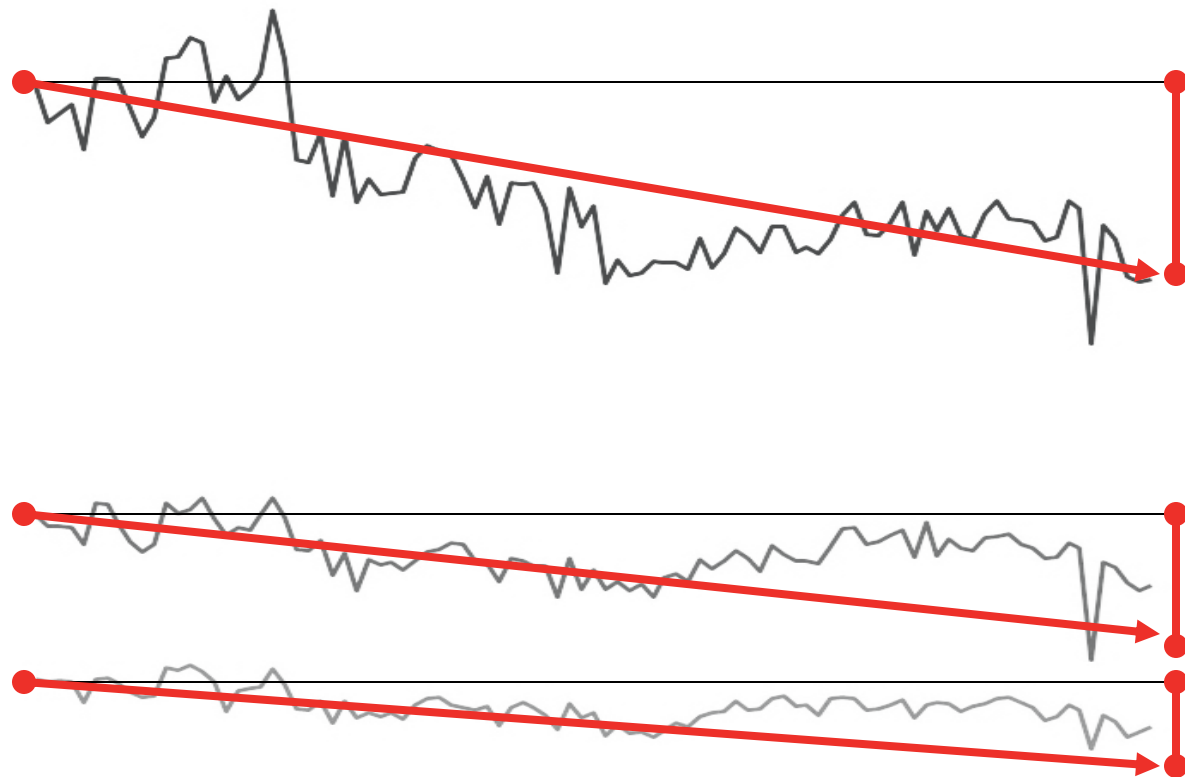
-1.9% neutral chat

8.7% were positive



+34.5% positive chat

REPORTS PER ACTIVE PLAYER



-17%
in Offensive Language
on Summoner's Rift

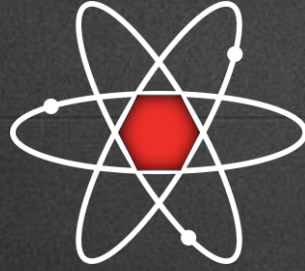
-12%
in Verbal Abuse
on Summoner's Rift

-6%
in Negative Attitude
on Summoner's Rift

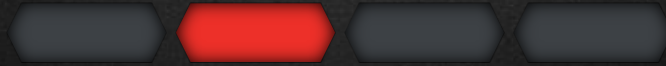
*REPORT DATA FROM 5/1/2012 TO 9/1/2012

DEFAULT CHAT OFF TAKEAWAYS

- ▶ A small change can have a large impact
- ▶ Shielding players from toxic behavior can also reduce the frequency of the behavior



THE TRIBUNAL EXPERIMENT



CORE PILLAR

2

reform or
remove toxic
players



HYPOTHESIS

ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY TO MANAGE
THEIR OWN BEHAVIOR CAN BE AN
EFFECTIVE APPROACH IN FIGHTING TOXIC BEHAVIOR

THE TRIBUNAL

[Review Cases](#)[Justice Review](#)[Guidelines](#)[FAQ](#)

Reviewing:

Case #5846248

In this case: 8 reports | 4 games



Pardon



Punish

[Skip >](#)

Recent games:

1

2

3

4

General Information

Date	Game Type	Game Length	Outcome
2012-10-10	Classic	16:54	Loss

Color legend

■ Ally

■ Enemy

■ Reported Player

Report Comments

1

Offensive Language

Reported by: Enemy

2

Verbal Abuse

Reported by: Enemy

Chat Log

Filter: ☒ Allies ☐ Enemies ☐ All

Jax [All] [00:01:12] 1v1 me rengar
Pantheon [All] [00:01:14] balls...and....weiners....
Tryndamere [All] [00:01:25] spindamere
Rengar [All] [00:01:29] where at bro?
Akali [All] [00:01:30] ill 1v1
Jax [All] [00:01:32] top
Jax [All] [00:01:35] lets go.
Akali [All] [00:01:37] meet me under tower
Dr. Mundo [All] [00:01:48] lol
Tryndamere [All] [00:01:49] our tower
Pantheon [All] [00:03:16] WHAT?!?!?!? I FUCKING ATTACKED YOU
Pantheon [All] [00:03:27] BULL TO THE MOTHERFUCKING, SHIT
Akali [All] [00:03:29] request denied
Pantheon [All] [00:03:40] BITCH PLEASE

THE TRIBUNAL



105MM+
VOTES

280K+
REFORMED PLAYERS

*As of 3/12/2013 in NA and EU

HOW ACCURATE IS THE TRIBUNAL?

Reviewing:

Case #5625567

In this case: 7 reports | 4 games



**Decision
Punish**

**Agreement
Majority**

**Punishment
Warning**

Recent games:

1

2

3

4

General Information

Game Type
Classic

Game Length
57:07

Outcome
Loss

Color legend

Ally

Enemy

Reported Player

Report Comments

1

Reported by: Ally

2

Reported by: Ally

3

Reported by: Ally

**EXAMPLE: MODERATE TOXICITY
QUALIFIED FOR AN E-MAIL WARNING**

Chat Log

Filter: ☒ Allies ☐ Enemies ☐ All

Teemo [00:55:41] UP BACK AWESOME!!!

Master Yi [00:55:12] fuk u

Teemo [00:55:45] lol

Teemo [00:55:48] AWESOEM!!

Teemo [00:56:03] man i wish i had ur lvl of skill

Master Yi [All] [00:56:06] sick

Master Yi [00:56:20] i wish i had your skill

Master Yi [00:56:22] level

Master Yi [00:56:24] you ar ethe best

Teemo [00:56:29] true

Master Yi [00:56:35] gay

Master Yi [00:56:44] can i get some lessons?

Teemo [00:56:47] tell me more bout ur dad

Master Yi [All] [00:56:55] big dick

Master Yi [00:57:01] your mum would know all about it

HOW ACCURATE IS THE TRIBUNAL?

Reviewing: **Case #5625577**
In this case: 5 reports | 4 games

Decision Punish **Agreement Overwhelming Majority** **Punishment Time Ban**

Recent games: 1 2 3 4

General Information

Game Type Classic	Game Length 40:04	Outcome Loss
----------------------	----------------------	-----------------

Color legend
Ally
Enemy
Reported Player

Report Comments

1 Reported by: Ally
2 Reported by: Ally

Chat Log

Filter: ☒ Allies ☐ Enemies ☐

Ziggs [All] [00:12:08] I have the worst players ive ever played with on my team

Ziggs [All] [00:12:21] OMG

Ziggs [All] [00:12:22] DUDE

Ziggs [All] [00:12:23] kill yourself

Ziggs [All] [00:12:25] seriouslyky

Ziggs [All] [00:12:26] just do it

Ziggs [All] [00:12:29] murder yourself

Ziggs [All] [00:12:36] get outa tehre top

Cho'Gath [All] [00:12:59] that guy is 10/0

Ziggs [All] [00:13:26] im done with this game

Cho'Gath [All] [00:13:28] fucking bot

Cho'Gath [All] [00:13:31] im reporting both guys on bot

Ziggs [All] [00:13:35] gonna sit at base, way to go bot please murder yourselves

EXAMPLE: SEVERE TOXICITY
QUALIFIED FOR A LONG-TIME BAN

HOW ACCURATE IS THE TRIBUNAL?

Reviewing: **Case #5625564**
In this case: 1 reports | 1 game

Decision: **Pardon**

Agreement: **Overwhelming Majority**

Punishment: **None**

Recent games: 1

General Information

Game Type Classic	Game Length 40:31	Outcome Win
----------------------	----------------------	----------------

Color legend
■ Ally
■ Enemy
■ Reported Player

Report Comments




























1 Reported by: Ally

"Trash talked while we carried~~~~"

Chat Log

Filter: ☒ Allies ☐ Enemies ☐ All

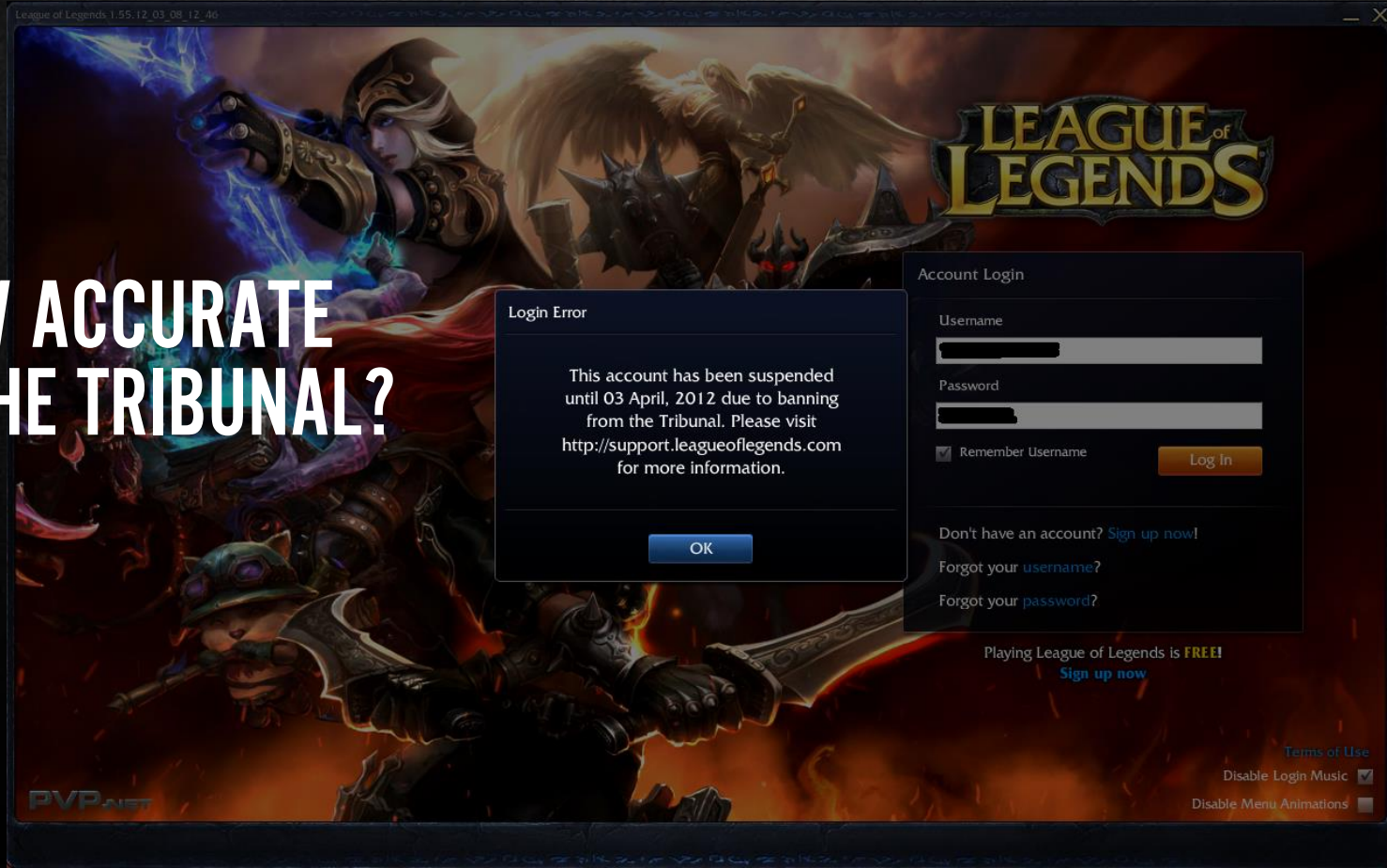
Players

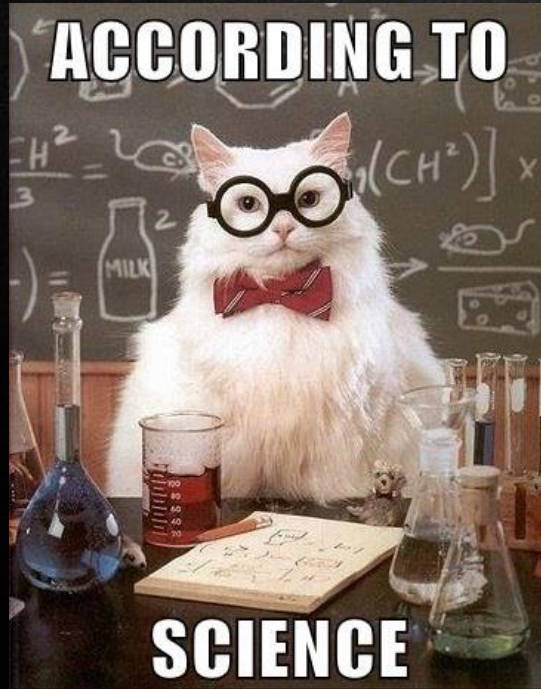
Level									
18		Master Yi	8/1/9	 	     	13737	205		
18		Nunu	17/6/21	 	     	16656	120		
18		Katarina	21/8/13	 	     	16761	123		

EXAMPLE: PARDONED
RECEIVED NO PUNISHMENT

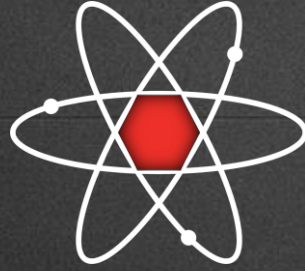
PLAYERS KNEW THEY WERE BANNED...BUT NOT WHY

HOW ACCURATE IS THE TRIBUNAL?





WE KNOW **SPEED AND CLARITY** OF FEEDBACK
PLAY CRITICAL ROLES IN SHAPING BEHAVIOR



THE FEEDBACK LOOP EXPERIMENT



CORE PILLAR

2

reform or
remove toxic
players



HYPOTHESIS

SHOWING BANNED PLAYERS EXACTLY
WHY THEY WERE BANNED
CAN IMPROVE REFORM RATES

TRIBUNAL REFORM CARDS

Reviewing:

Case #5657463

In this case: 4 reports | 3 games



**Decision
Punish**

**Agreement
Majority**

**Punishment
Time Ban**

Recent games:

1

2

3

General Information

Game Type
Classic

Game Length
32:00

Outcome
Loss

Color legend

■ Ally

■ Enemy

■ Reported Player

Report Comments

1

Reported by: Ally

2

Reported by: Ally

Chat Log

Filter: ☒ Allies ☐ Enemies ☐ All

Dr. Mundo [00:01:46] aw
Ahri [00:01:48] dammit
Ahri [00:01:54] runes op
Tristana [00:02:13] ahirt wtf??
Ahri [00:02:17] wtf
Ahri [00:02:20] i mid
Tristana [00:02:23] i go mid
Dr. Mundo [00:02:23] got top
Tristana [00:02:25] i first
Ahri [00:02:30] noob
Ahri [All] [00:02:42] GG
Ahri [All] [00:03:01] bad team
Ahri [00:05:11] brb
Sejuani [00:05:17] k
Tristana [00:05:22] mid ss

Players

Level



TRIBUNAL REFORM CARDS

% CHANGE IN REPORTS PER GAME AFTER A PUNISHMENT

INCREASE
IN REPORTS ↑

WARNING

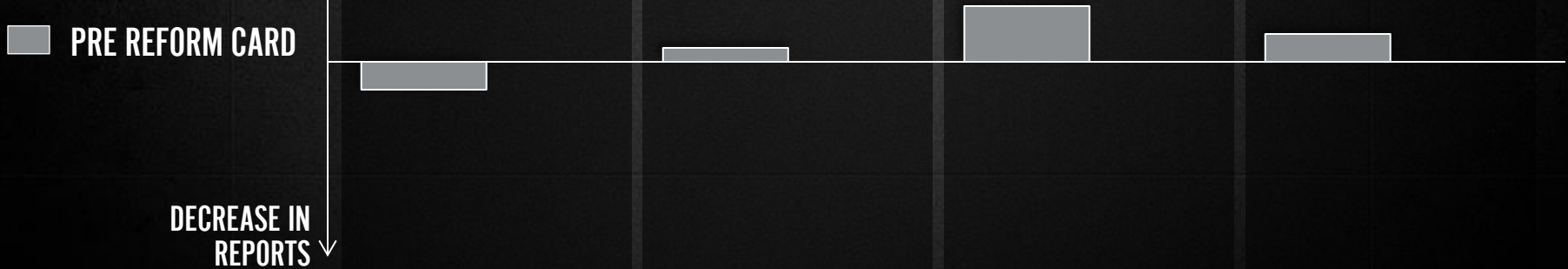
3-DAY BAN

7-DAY BAN

14-DAY BAN

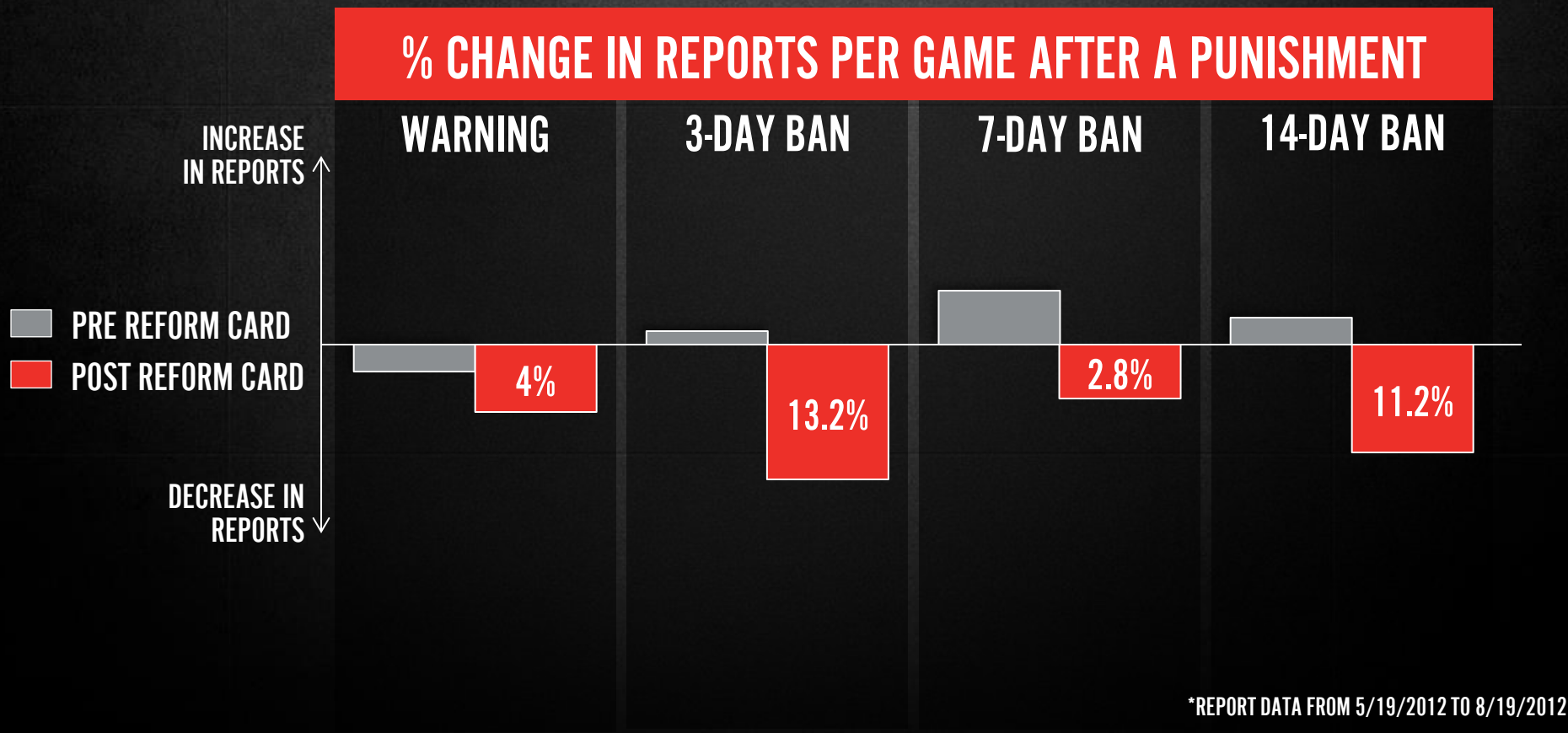
■ PRE REFORM CARD

↓
DECREASE IN
REPORTS



*REPORT DATA FROM 5/19/2012 TO 8/19/2012

TRIBUNAL REFORM CARDS




SUMMONER 1:

“Perma-banned because my team sucked, and i called them f@gs”



League of Legends Community

League of Legends Community > League of Legends > General Discussion
L perma-banned because my team sucked, and i called them f@gs



Page 1 of 2 1 2 >

View First Unread



??

Member



07-26-2012

here is my report. one, SINGLE game, in a tribunal agreement that "was controversial," for which i am now permabanned. a complete bull**** game, in which i had double the CS of anyone on my team, had the most gold of anyone on my team, and tried MY HARDEST throughout to win the game. but i'm banned, forever, because i called my TROLL teammates "*****s." sorry, they were being "*****s, who refused to help with dragon, refused to help in team fights, and refused to do anything to try to win the game. and then they make it look like i was AFK, when, in fact, i was dead and the game WAS OVER


this is yet another example in the long line of reasons why the tribunal is absolute bull****, because premade players report those that they simply DON't LIKE, instead of those that actually lose games.

tl;dr: i'm permabanned for ONE GAME, in which i was by far the best player on my team, in which my team REFUSED to help me win the game, because ... why, Riot? oh, i called them "*****s," oh well. they were being fagg0ts, who refused to help try to win the game. review the case if you want.

<http://na.leagueoflegends.com/tribunal/en/case/5602498/>

SUMMONER 1:

“Perma-banned because my team sucked, and i called them f@gs”




07-26-2012

You deserve every ban you get when you use language like that.

“You deserve every ban you got with language like that.”

+2




07-26-2012

Haha. I love these new cards. They make it pretty clear why people like you get banned.

“I love these new cards. They make it pretty clear why people like you got banned.”

+0

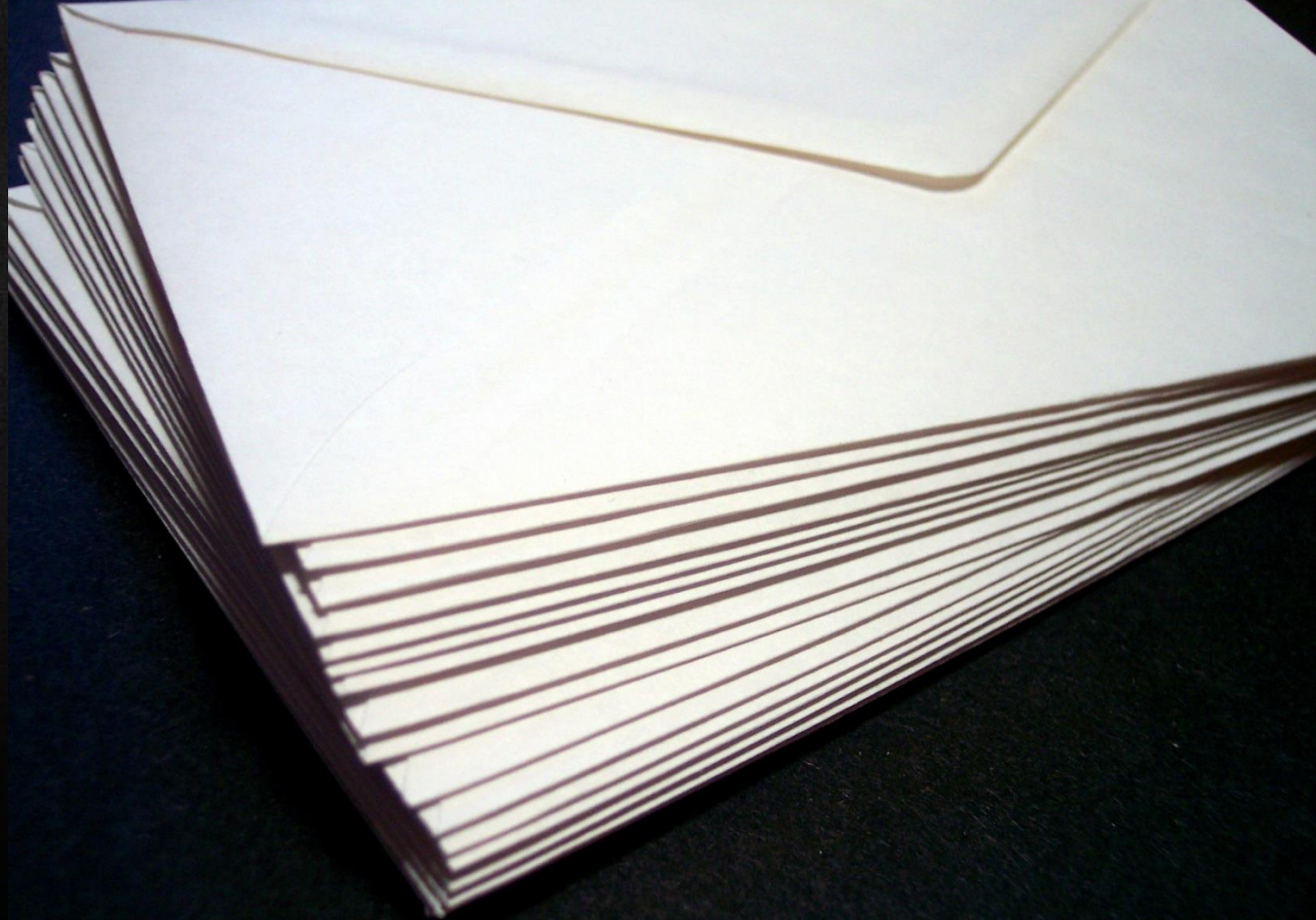


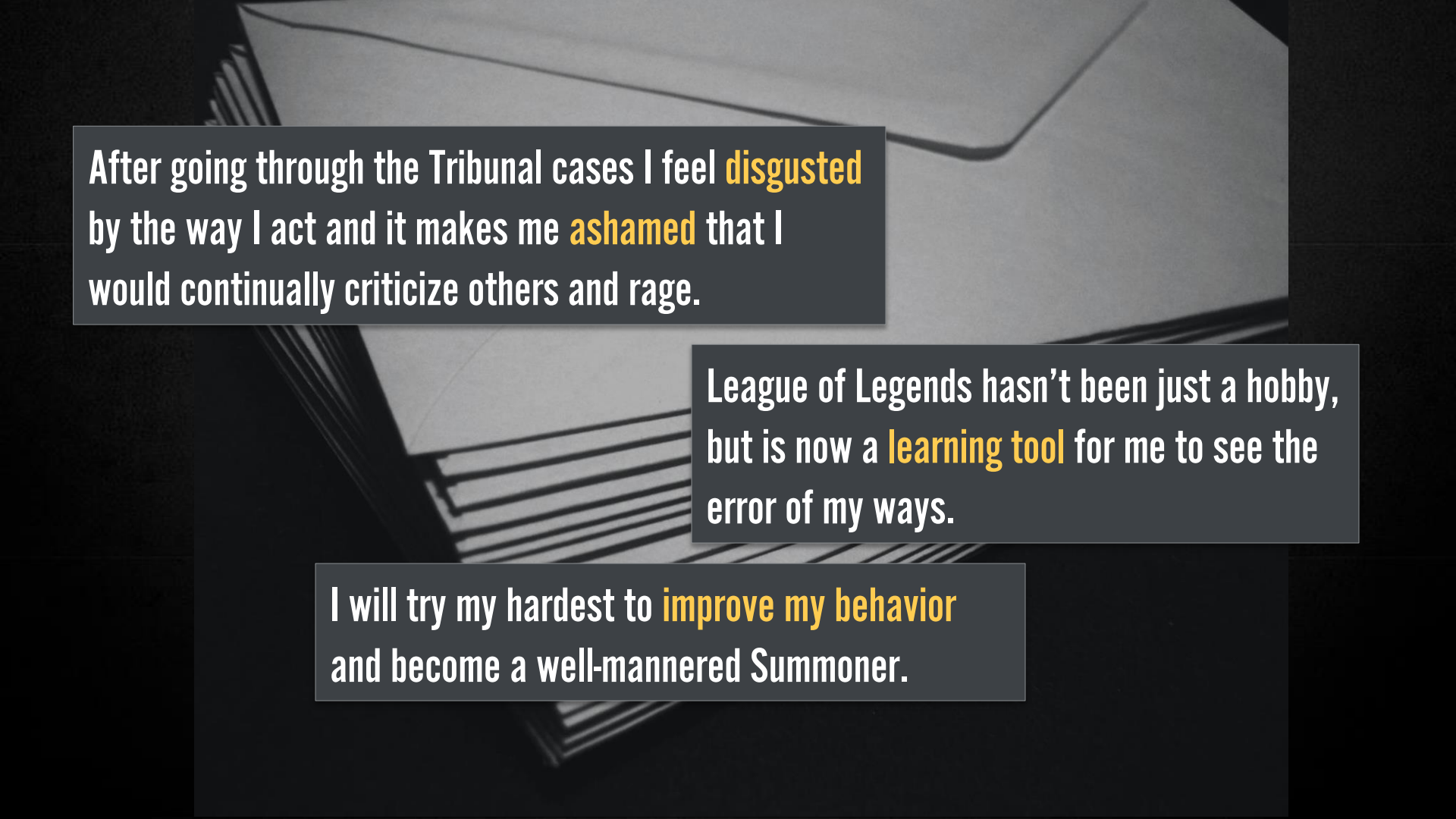
07-26-2012

It seems as if you totally miss the point of tribunal if you think this is unfair. I would never want to play a game with you.

“I would never want to play a game with you”

+0

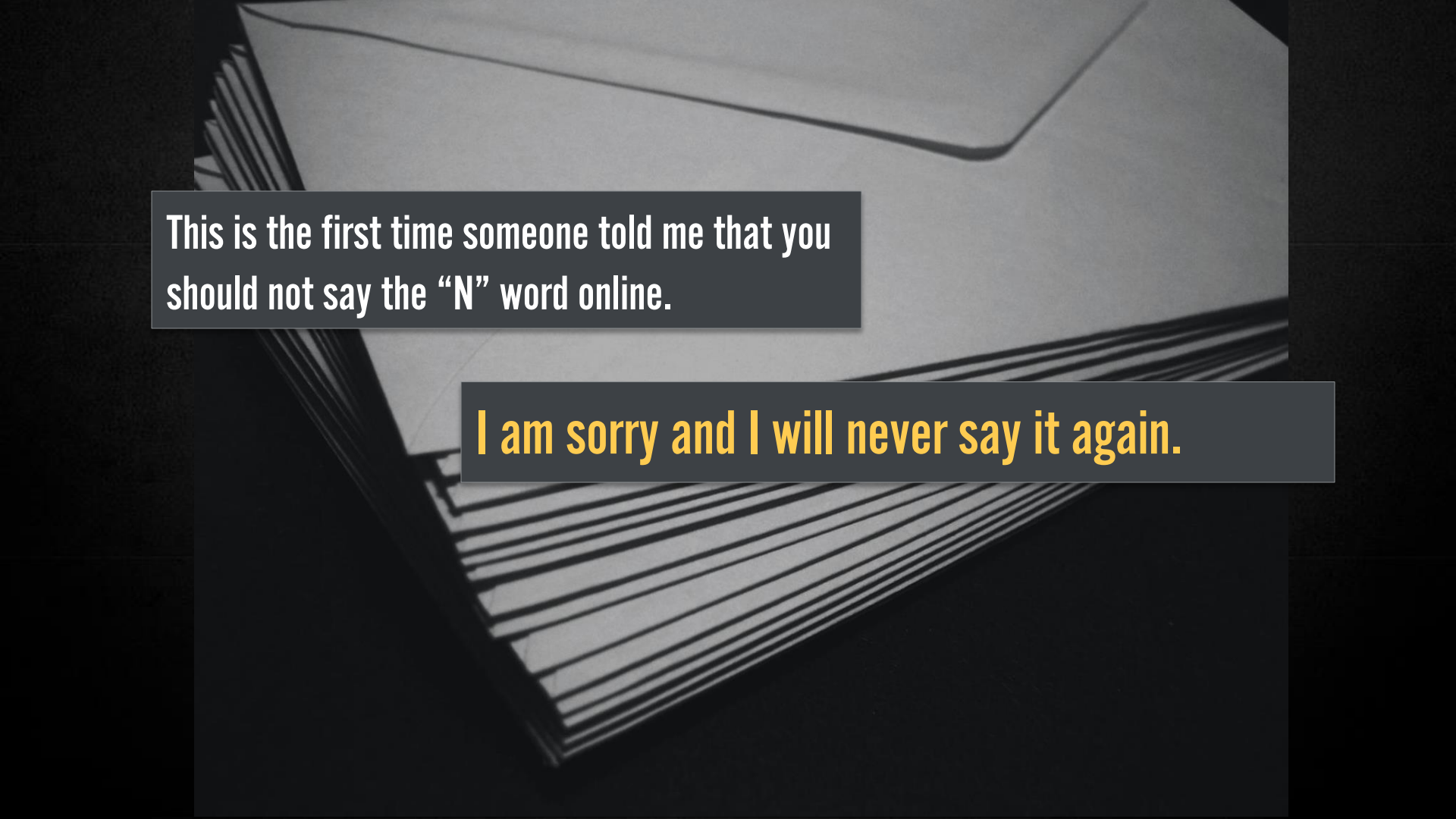




After going through the Tribunal cases I feel **disgusted** by the way I act and it makes me **ashamed** that I would continually criticize others and rage.

League of Legends hasn't been just a hobby, but is now a **learning tool** for me to see the error of my ways.

I will try my hardest to **improve my behavior** and become a well-mannered Summoner.

The background of the image is a stack of papers, with the top sheet being a light grey color. The edges of the papers are visible, creating a sense of depth. A dark grey rectangular text box is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the image.

This is the first time someone told me that you should not say the “N” word online.

The background of the image is a stack of papers, with the top sheet being a light grey color. The edges of the papers are visible, creating a sense of depth. A dark grey rectangular text box is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the image.

I am sorry and I will never say it again.



I'm really sorry for contacting you this way but
I really don't know what to do.

The language I saw myself using is not language I even
use and my attitude towards players was shocking.

I am actually the polar opposite of what
my chat logs showed.

What I saw wasn't me.

Maybe give me a little guidance or help.

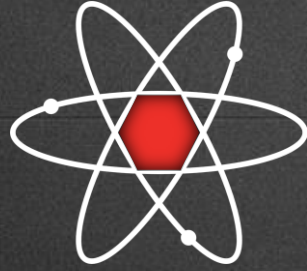
**IS IT OUR RESPONSIBILITY
TO HELP THESE PLAYERS?**

YES.

**IS IT OUR RESPONSIBILITY
TO HELP THESE PLAYERS?**

TRIBUNAL TAKEAWAYS

- ▶ **[Tribunal]** A vast majority of the gaming community find toxic behavior disgusting. Providing tools can change a culture.
- ▶ **[Reform Cards]** By showing toxic players peer feedback and promoting discussion among the community, players reformed.



THE OPTIMUS EXPERIMENT



THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PRIMING

PRIMING

prim-ing (prɪmɪŋ) *n.*

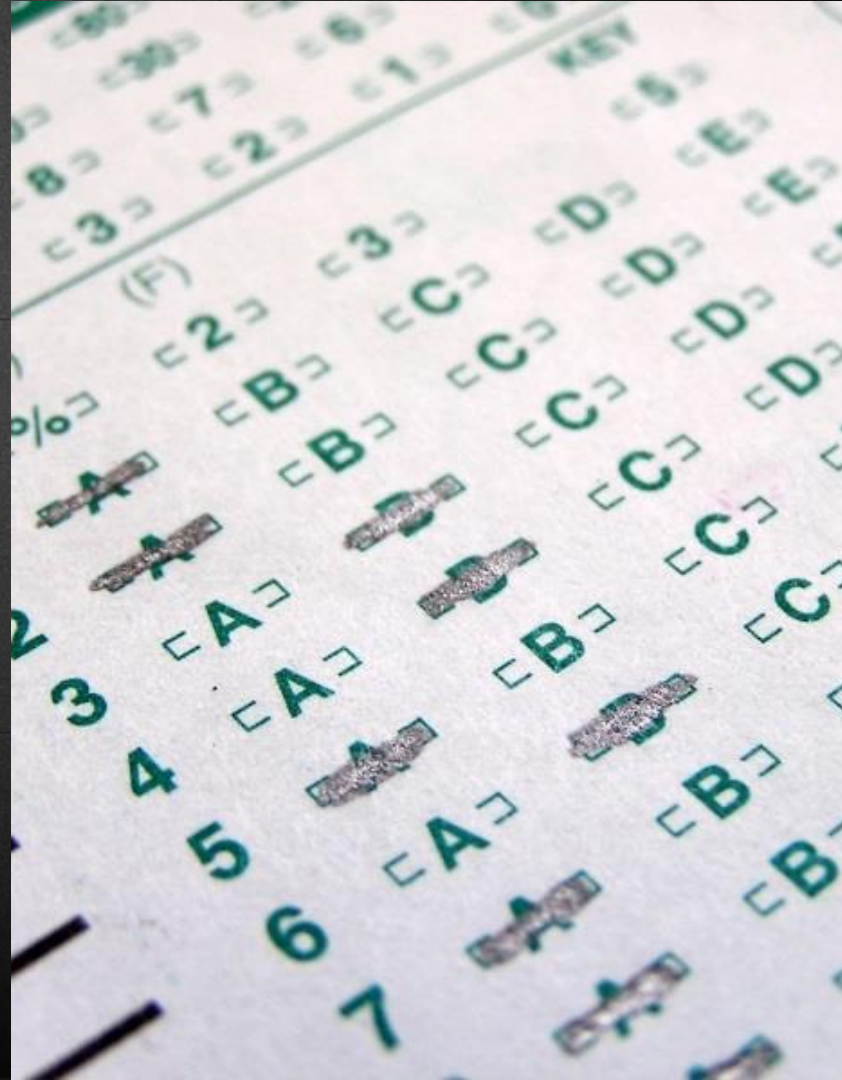
a memory effect where exposure to a stimulus
can affect later behavior

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PRIMING

A brief glimpse of
RED

before achievement tasks can
impair performance by $\sim 20\%$

(Elliot et al., 2007)



THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PRIMING

Doing a task with words related to
ELDERLY
can influence your walking speed
leaving the room

(Bargh et al., 1996)



CORE PILLAR

3

**create a
culture of
sportsmanship**



HYPOTHESIS

**PRIMING CAN SHAPE
ONLINE BEHAVIOR**

Did You Know:

Sunglasses are an important accessory for reducing damage from the Sun.

0 0 0 00:14

FPS: 50

Player 1



58
0
0.63
335
21
31

475



Q W E R D F B

517 / 517
275 / 275



OPTIMUS PRIME

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

C1

CATEGORY 1: FUN FACTS

“Nautilus’ /joke makes him swim through air.
He’s weird like that.”

OPTIMUS PRIME

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

C1

C2

CATEGORY 2: POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

“Players perform better if you give them constructive feedback after a mistake.”

OPTIMUS PRIME

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

C1

C2

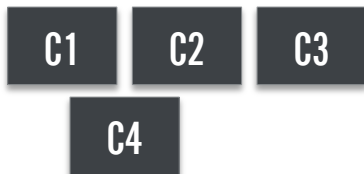
C3

CATEGORY 3: NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR

“Players who verbally abuse their teammates lose 16% more games.”

OPTIMUS PRIME

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

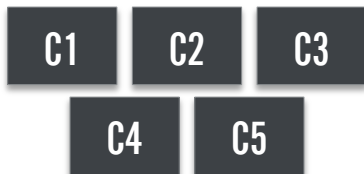


CATEGORY 4: SELF-REFLECTION

“Who will be the most sportsmanlike player in this game?”

OPTIMUS PRIME

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

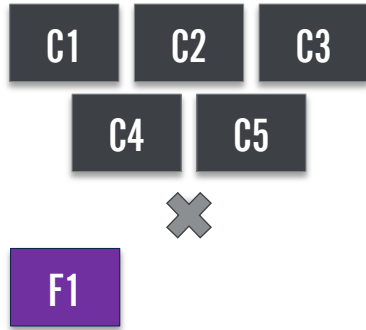


CATEGORY 5: GAMEPLAY TIPS

“Hold down the ALT key while casting an ability to cast it on yourself.”

OPTIMUS PRIME

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN



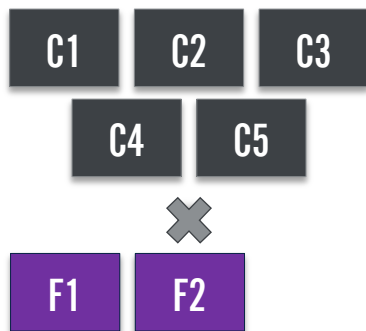
FONT COLORS

Font Color 1 | Red

Potentially promotes error-avoidance or
criticality

OPTIMUS PRIME

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN



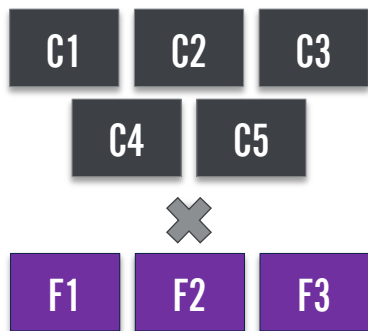
FONT COLORS

Font Color 1 | Red
Font Color 2 | Blue

Potentially promotes creativity

OPTIMUS PRIME

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

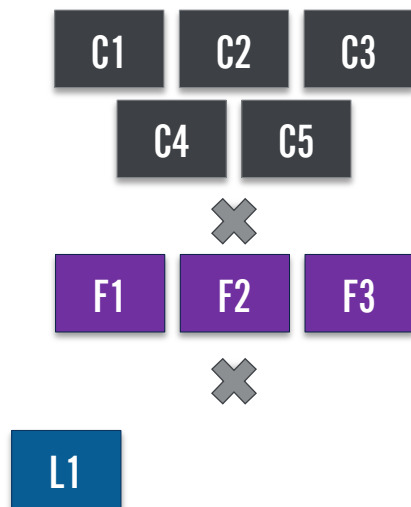


FONT COLORS

Font Color 1 | Red
Font Color 2 | Blue
Font Color 3 | White (Control)

OPTIMUS PRIME

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

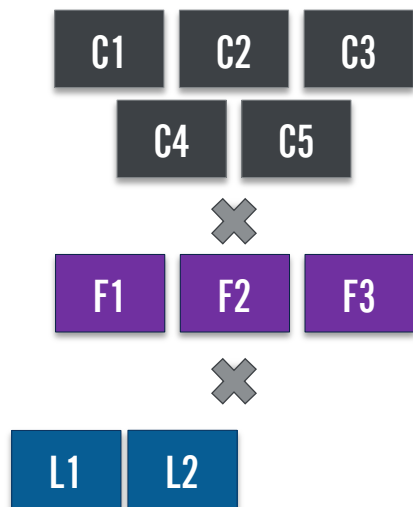


LOCATIONS

LOCATION 1: Loading Screen

OPTIMUS PRIME

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN



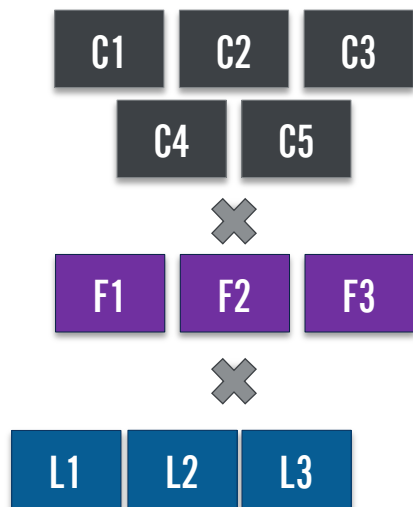
LOCATIONS

LOCATION 1: Loading Screen

LOCATION 2: In-Game

OPTIMUS PRIME

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN



LOCATIONS

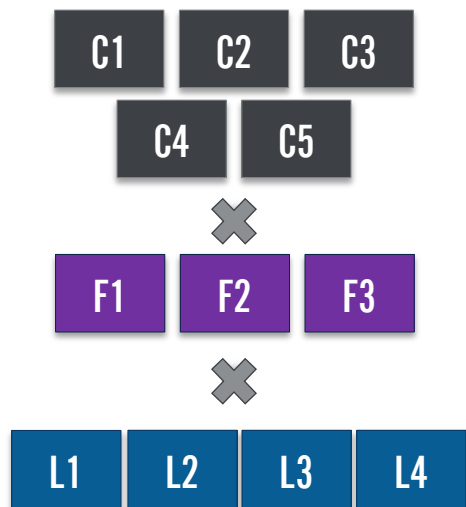
LOCATION 1: Loading Screen

LOCATION 2: In-Game

LOCATION 3: Both

OPTIMUS PRIME

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN



LOCATIONS

LOCATION 1: Loading Screen

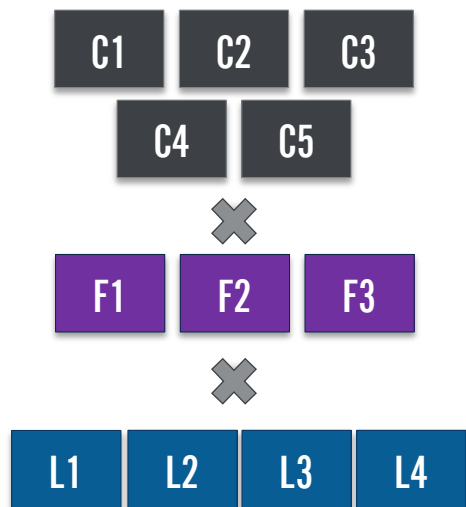
LOCATION 2: In-Game

LOCATION 3: Both

LOCATION 4: None (Control)

OPTIMUS PRIME

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN



COMPLETE EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN:

24 TIPS ACROSS 5 CATEGORIES



3 FONT COLORS



3 LOCATIONS + 1 OVERALL CONTROL



217 UNIQUE CONDITIONS

EVERY GAME OF *LEAGUE OF LEGENDS* GOT A
RANDOM TIP, LOCATION & FONT COLOR

(10% OF GAMES GOT NOTHING TO ACT AS CONTROLS)



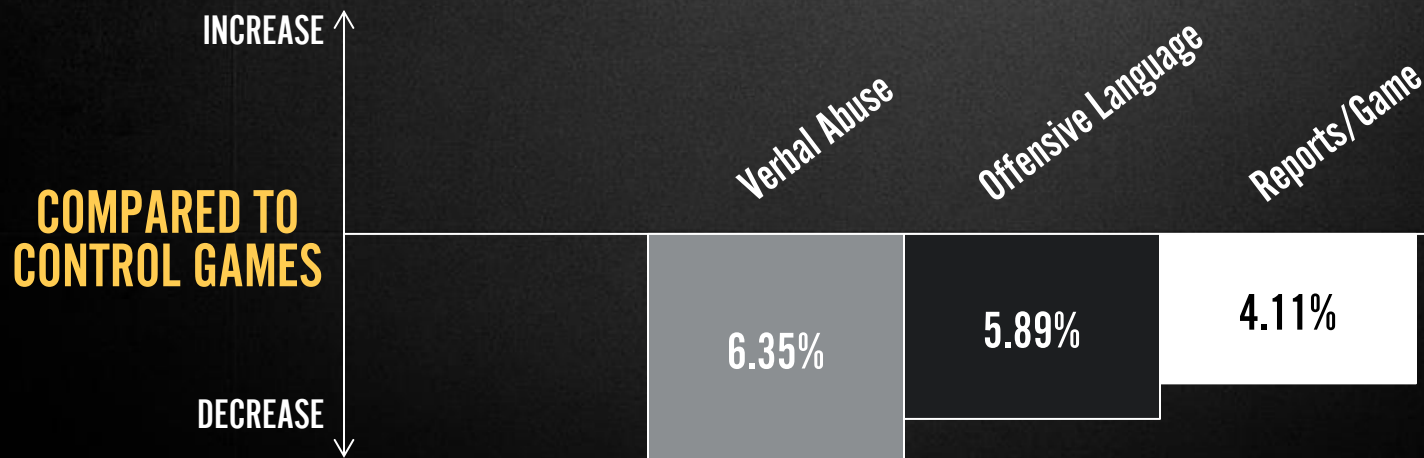
**FOR THE FIRST TIME,
WE'RE REVEALING SOME RESULTS
FROM THIS EXPERIMENT**

OPTIMUS PRIME RESULTS

TIP: “X% of players punished by the Tribunal improve their behavior and are never punished again”

FONT: White

LOCATION: Loading Screen



*Optimus data from 11/2012

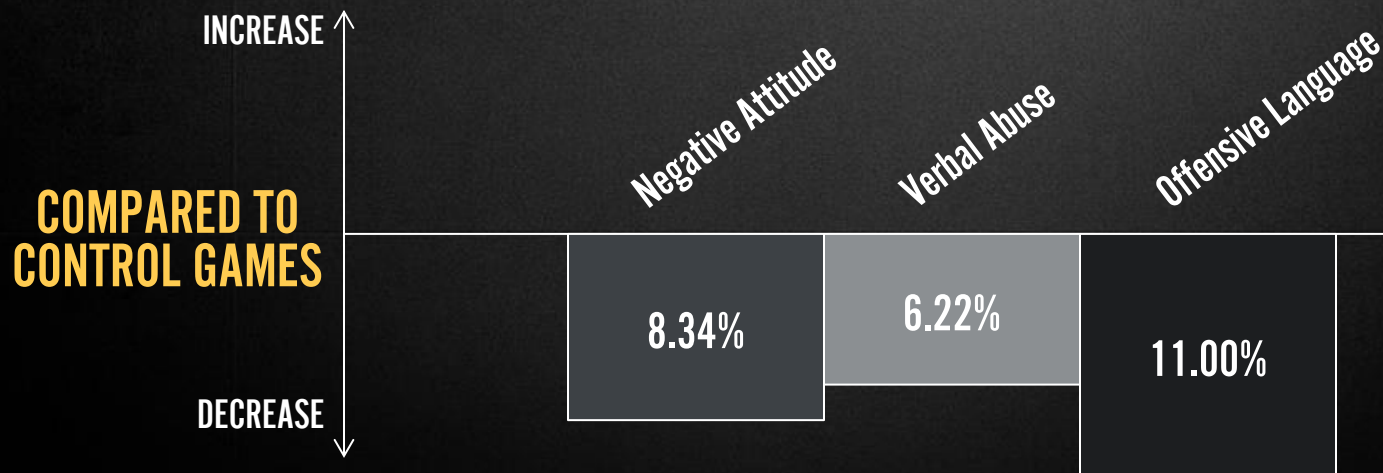
HOW DO **FONT COLORS** INTERACT
WITH TIP CATEGORIES?

OPTIMUS PRIME RESULTS

TIP: “Teammates perform worse if you harass them after a mistake.”

FONT: Red

LOCATION: Loading Screen



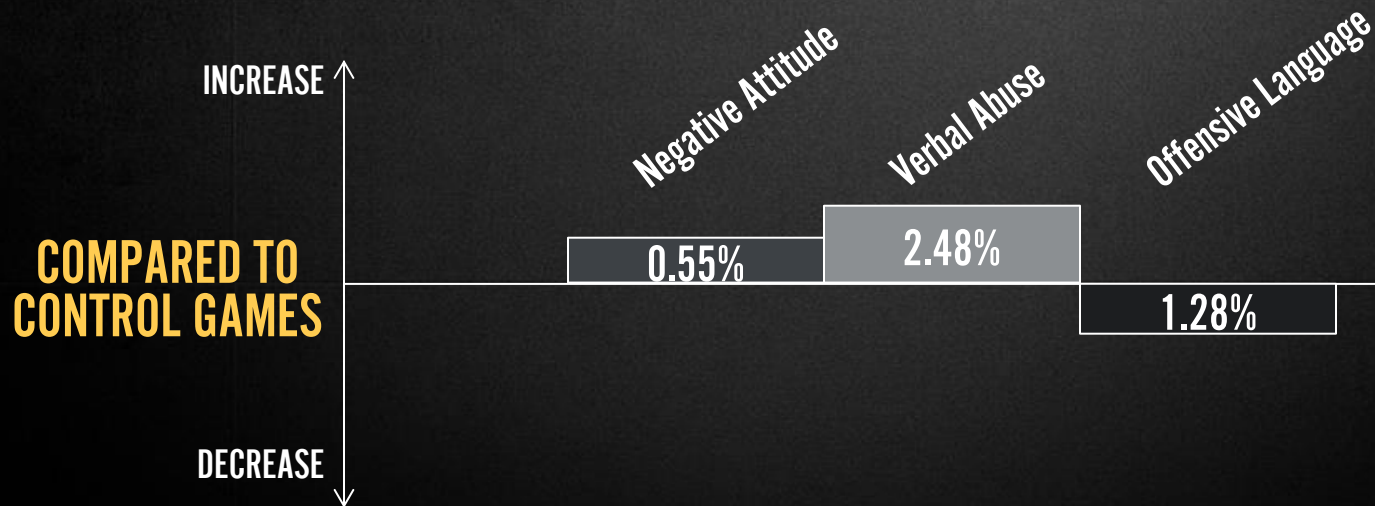
*Optimus data from 11/2012

OPTIMUS PRIME RESULTS

TIP: “Teammates perform worse if you harass them after a mistake.”

FONT: White

LOCATION: Loading Screen



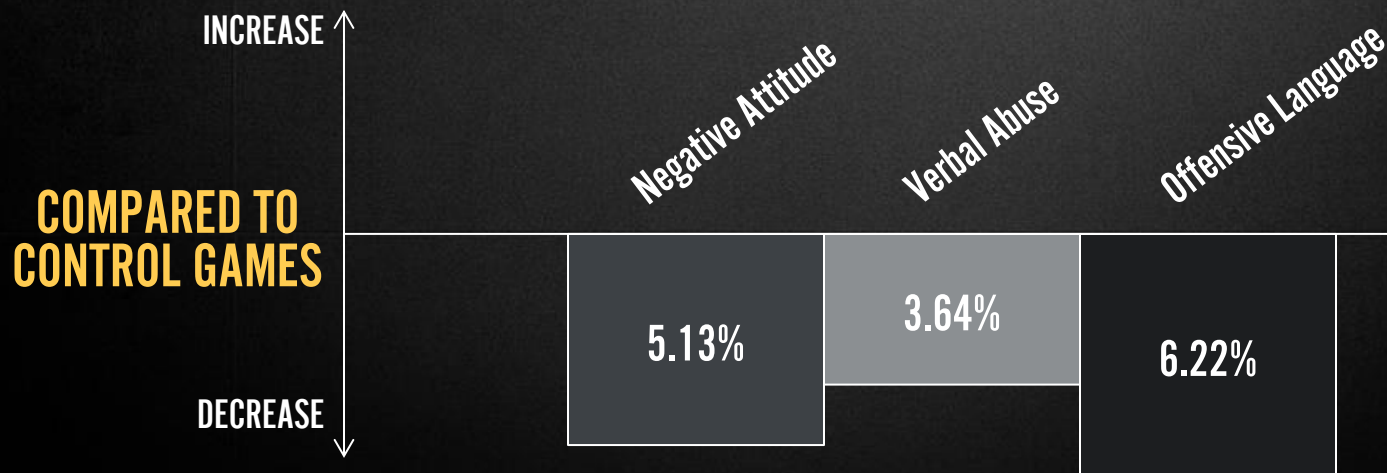
*Optimus data from 11/2012

OPTIMUS PRIME RESULTS

TIP: “Players who cooperate with their teammates win X% more games.”

FONT: Blue

LOCATION: Loading Screen



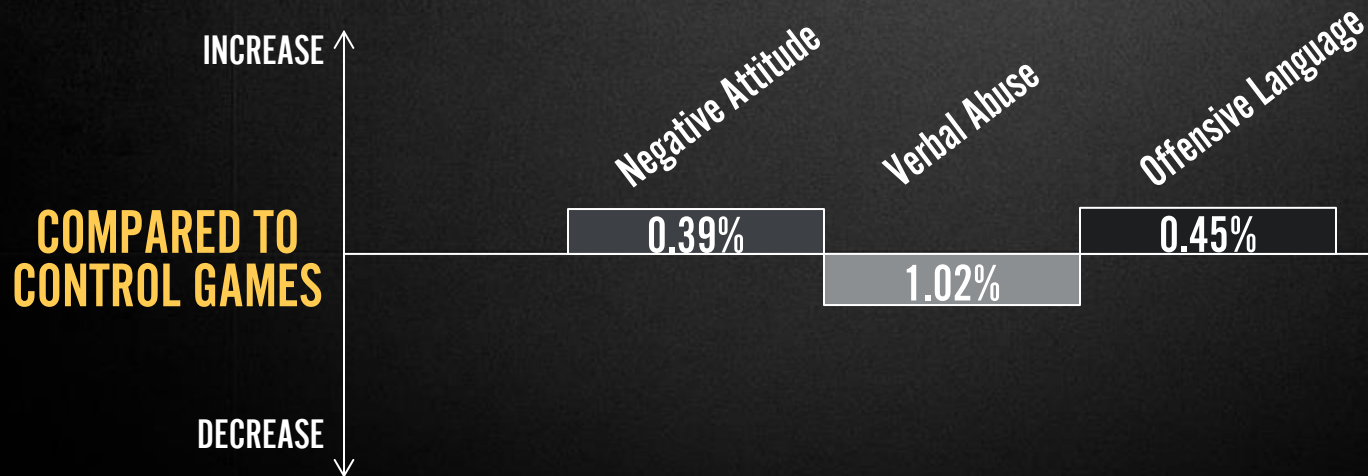
*Optimus data from 11/2012

OPTIMUS PRIME RESULTS

TIP: “Players who cooperate with their teammates win X% more games.”

FONT: Red

LOCATION: Loading Screen



*Optimus data from 11/2012

OPTIMUS PRIME RESULTS

TIP: “Who will be the most sportsmanlike player in the game?”

FONT: Red

LOCATION: Loading screen

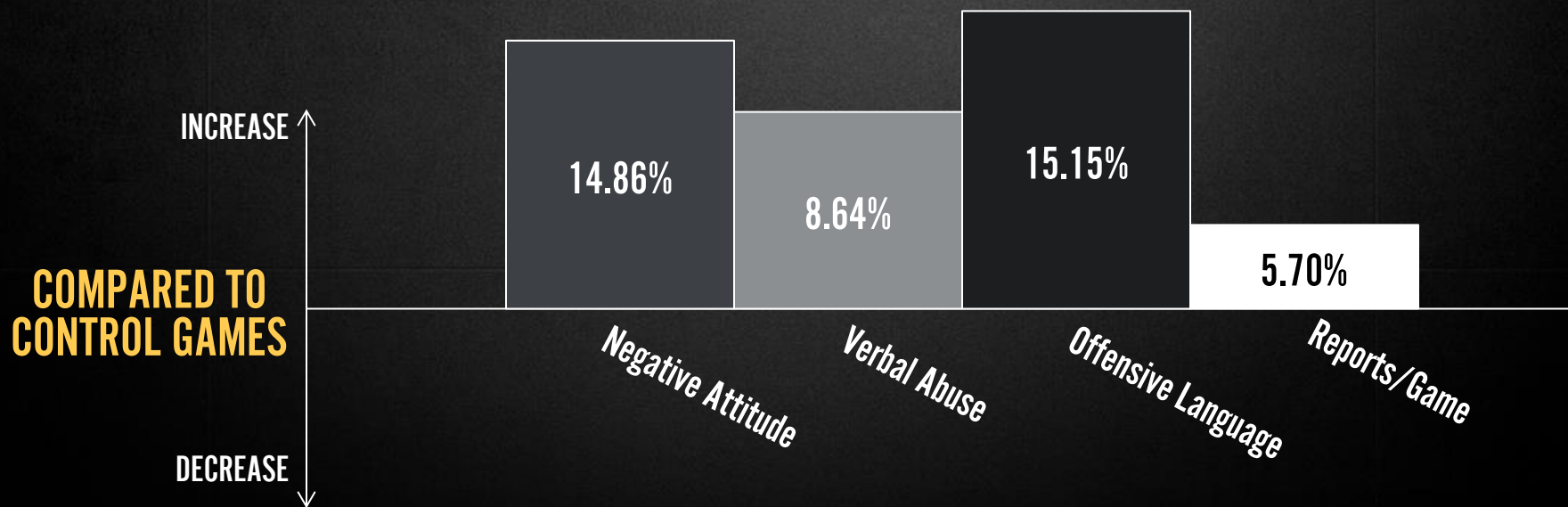
INCREASE ↑
COMPARED TO
CONTROL GAMES
DECREASE ↓

OPTIMUS PRIME RESULTS

TIP: “Who will be the most sportsmanlike player in the game?”

FONT: Red

LOCATION: Loading screen



*Optimus data from 11/2012

**AS A SCIENTIST, THIS WAS AN
[EPIC] EXPERIMENT**

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

[Q1] How do priming effects change over time?

[Q2] For each country, what were the most effective categories?

[Q3] Does priming only work on players of a certain skill range?

[Q4] Does priming affect different cultures in different ways?

[Q5] Are there gender differences?

OPTIMUS TAKEAWAYS

- ▶ Nearly every video game uses in-game tips.
- ▶ Combining gameplay tips with priming unlocked huge potential and had a significant impact on player behavior.

BUT REMEMBER:

**TAKE CARE NOT TO DAMAGE PLAYER
EXPERIENCE IN THE NAME OF SCIENCE**

WRAP-UP

WRAP-UP

[PILLAR 1] Shield players from the impact of toxic behaviors



WRAP-UP

[PILLAR 1] Shield players from the impact of toxic behaviors

[PILLAR 2] Reform or remove toxic players



WRAP-UP

[PILLAR 1] Shield players from the impact of toxic behaviors

[PILLAR 2] Reform or remove toxic players

[PILLAR 3] Create a culture of sportsmanship



WRAP-UP

[PILLAR 1] Shield players from the impact of toxic behaviors

[PILLAR 2] Reform or remove toxic players

[PILLAR 3] Create a culture of sportsmanship

[PILLAR 4] Reinforce positive behaviors



WRAP-UP

[PILLAR 1] Shield players from the impact of toxic behaviors

[PILLAR 2] Reform or remove toxic players

[PILLAR 3] Create a culture of sportsmanship

[PILLAR 4] Reinforce positive behaviors

[PILLAR 5] Create better match chemistry



WE WANT
LEAGUE OF LEGENDS **TO HAVE THE**
MOST SPORTSMANLIKE COMMUNITY
IN CORE COMPETITIVE GAMES



**As an industry, we can
make a difference in online behavior.**

Come make a difference with us.

**JEFFREY "LYTE" LIN
LEAD SOCIAL SYSTEMS DESIGNER**

jlin@riotgames.com | @RiotLyte



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