Backstory

- Madden NFL 17 had accessibility features covered in GDC 2017 talk "Practical Visual Fixes from EA's Madden NFL Franchise"
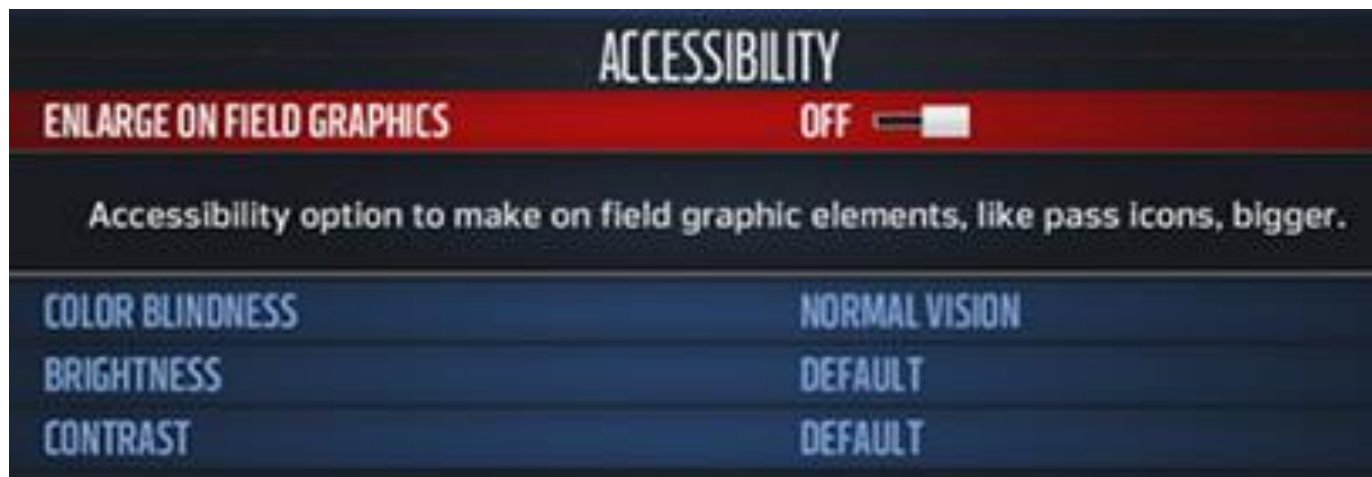
Backstory

- EA news blog advertised update

- Original feedback channels
  - AccessibilityFeedback@ea.com
  - Twitter: @ea_accessible

User Feedback

- "I'm blind, but was able to play past versions of Madden NFL. Changes were made to the kick meter that are making it harder to play, can you help?"
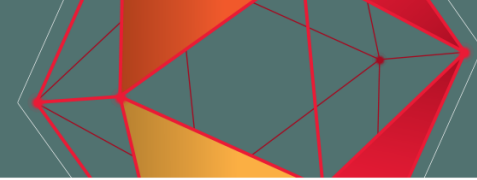
User Feedback

- I'm blind and I can play UFC, but am having trouble with submission mechanics

- I'm blind and I can play NHL, but have trouble knowing when the puck is about to hit the ice

- I'm blind and I can play Need for Speed, but I sometimes go off map and get lost

User Feedback

- I can play UFC

- I can play NHL

- I can play Need for Speed

How's Sightless Gaming Possible?

- 3d sound design – realism = playable

- Reaction indications – select option, attack, etc

- Cued menu wrapping – audio location landmarks

- Haptic feedback – controller rumbles = clues

- Deterministic menus – randomness is confusing
  (for everyone)

Sightless Gaming Aids

- Comprehensive written tutorials – not ideal, but can help get people into your game quickly

- OCR technology via computer application or translation pen to read text

NV Access

Empowering lives through non-visual access to technology

Madden NFL

Madden NFL - Commentary

- The game's commentary provides extremely detailed information as to where players are on the field and what they are doing
  - Information on the opposing team's positions
  - Current yard line number and down number
  - Feedback on team members actions

Madden NFL - How to Move

- Default camera = goal was to always move "up"

- AIs steer players until directed by user

Need For Speed

Need For Speed

- Realistic sound design
    - Different sounds for driving on pavement, dirt, grass
    - Whooshing sounds while passing obstacles
    - Directional sound for surrounding cars
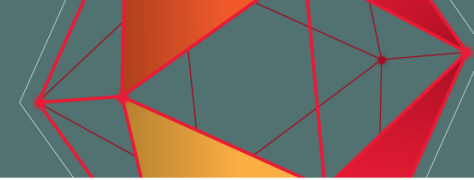   - Engine pitch helps determine speed

Need For Speed

- Controller rumble (vibrations)
  - Useful for collision feedback
  - Indicates when going off track

NHL

NHL

- Detailed Audio
  - Commentary announces when the goalkeeper needs to make saves
  - Players movements are audible, i.e. scraping ice

NHL

- There are 10 different camera options available in NHL 18, some with fixed orientation

NHL

- Assistive shot aiming & passing

UFC

UFC

- Commentary also provides contextual clues to opponent's actions

  - "Wow what a great transition. What a right hand"

- Trial and error determined a pattern between rumbles and reactions

  - When you successfully complete a move, the controller rumbles with a particular intensity

Next : Support & Improvements

- Soliciting feedback is key to identifying low hanging fruit

- Many of our titles have yearly releases, which promotes continuous improvements

- Two games have already shipped features
  - Madden NFL 18
  - UFC 3

Madden NFL 18 : New Feature

- Vision Assist accessibility option adds optional controller rumbles to the game

  - Play type: kick, pass, run, etc

  - Kick meter: power, accuracy

  - Ball snap occurrence
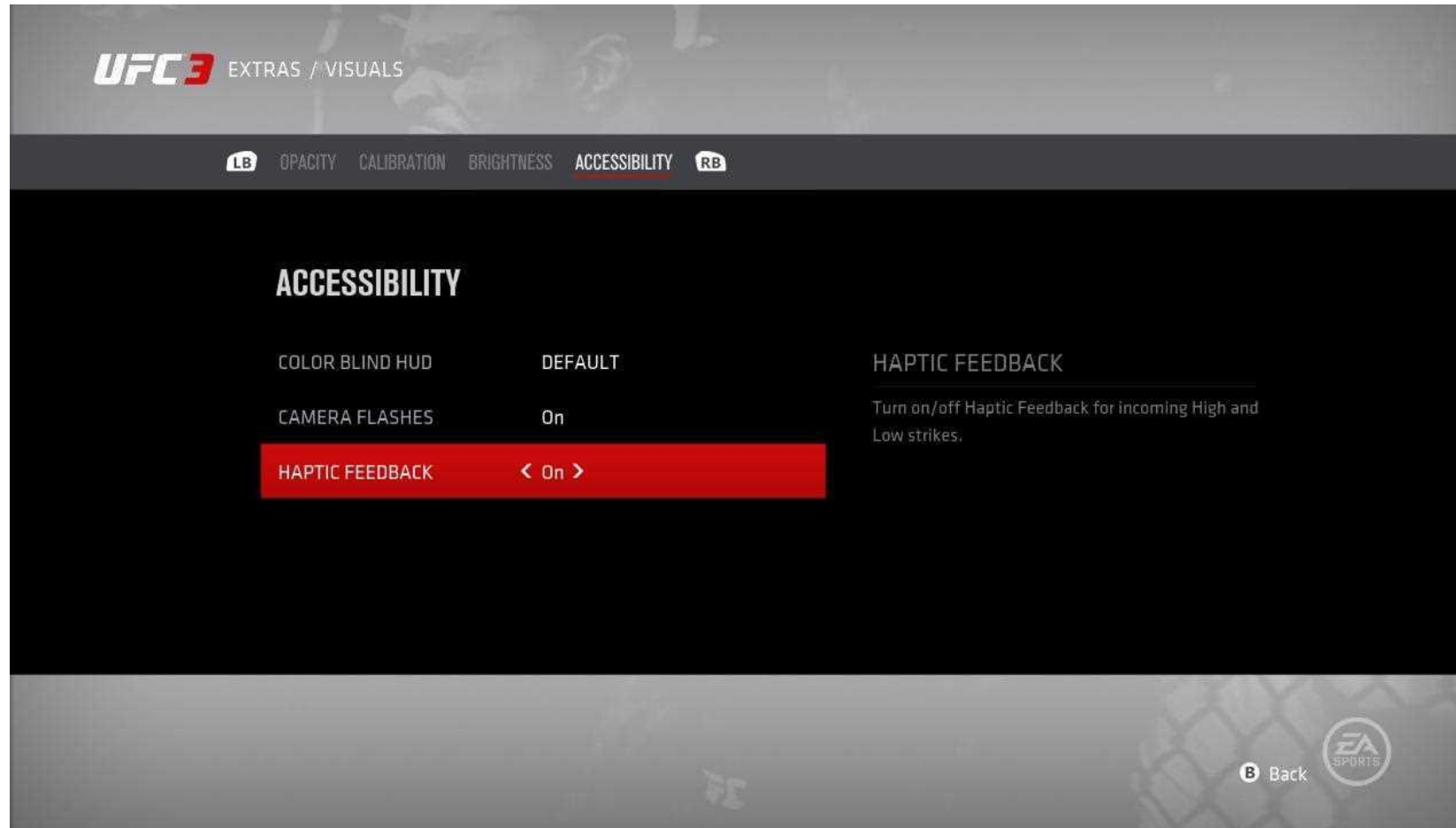
  - Ball in air from being passed

Madden NFL 18 : New Feature

- Longshot story mode underwent minor modifications to ensure no events which required eyesight would block story advancement

UFC 3 : New Feature

UFC 3 : New Feature

- Controller rumble option for opponent attacks
  - If the right motor rumbles, your opponent is throwing a high strike
  - If the left motor rumbles, they are throwing a low strike
  - The intensity of the rumble tells you how far away your opponent was when they threw the strike

Accessibility Portal - ea.com/able

- Contains guides for the blind and visually impaired, text manuals, and feature details

UFC 3 – Text Manual Screencap

STRIKING: TAKEDOWNS

- Single leg: L2 + right stick right

- Double leg: L2 + right stick left

- Power single leg: L1 + L2 + right stick right

- Power double leg: L1 + L2 + right stick left

Madden NFL 18 – Guide

- Extensive text-only guides have been written

  - Base concept of American football

  - Explains first sign in, set up, key available user options, and how to update options – including resetting all options to default

  - Provides guidance to story mode quick time events

  - Provided in a key-by-key format, covering both consoles

Madden NFL 18 – Guide Screencap

From the main menu:

- On the left stick, press right 4 times, then down 2 times to reach the practice menu icon.

- Press A to enter practice menus

- The next menu has 3 options, normal, offense only, and kick-off. For now, let's practice kicking. Press down twice, then A

Ongoing Effort

- The general goal, for all forms of accessibility: every time a feature is updated, it must never regress, only improve

- Low-hanging fruit can quickly unblock large portions of your audience

- Ask your audience for its pain points

Let's Make Games People Can Play

- Audiogames.net is a great place to meet your audience

- Additional content available: http://ea.com/able

- Contact @ea_accessible, able@ea.com

- Questions?