



Rocking On: Harmonix, QA & RB4

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Who am I?

- Started @ HMX for RB1 (9 years ago)
- Net, Functional, Cert, Hardware, Engine, Embedded, Outsource Mgmt. All as QA.
- QA Lead and Discipline Principal



What is this talk?

- RB4 QA
- QA Discipline Changes in RB4
- QA Discipline Changes in all of Rock Band
- *How has QA changed at Harmonix and where are we now?*

HARMONIX?

- Founded in 1995
- Cambridge, MA
 - (now in Boston)
- The Axe, Frequency, Karaoke Revolution, Eyetoy: Antigrav, Amplitude, GH1 & 2
- Story Time w/ Alex (Pax East 2014)



COURTESY: HARMONIX

The Early Years: 2007-2009

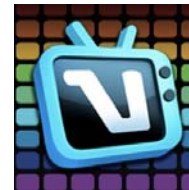


The Early Years, 2007-2009

- Aspects of QA
 - Big
 - Separate
 - New People



Innovation Again, 2010-2012



Innovation Again, 2010-2012

- Aspects of QA
 - Formal recognition of System Owners
 - Participation in Feature Strike Teams
 - Embedded in the Engine team
- Studio adopted agile methodology



Harmonix goes Indie, 2013-2014



Harmonix goes Indie, 2013-2014

- Aspects of QA:
 - QA Presence during Pre-Production
 - Engine QA as Technical Branch
 - Fully embedded scrum testers
- Finally learned how to do scrum.



2014 Re-Org

- Project-Based v. Department-Based
- 3 Pillars of Making Games:
 - Publishing
 - Creative
 - Development



Harmonix of Today, 2015–Now



Harmonix of Today, 2015-Now

- Aspects of QA:
 - QA Members as Dev Pillar Advocates
 - QA and 1st party Efficiency
 - Beginning of Meta-level QA expertise



RB4 - Engine Development

- Animation System
 - Checked animations in Engine
 - Verified UI issues early to help ramping
- Camera System
 - Very effected by updating to next gen
 - Combinatorics before implemented in the game

RB4 – Prototype Development

- Freestyle Guitar Solos
 - Immediate feedback
 - Fun before it was done
- Freestyle Vocals
 - Leveraged a great community
 - Exercised the knowledge



RB4 –Development Development

- Optimization
 - Defined standards concurrently
 - Working towards targets v. questions
- Hardware
 - Iteration was key
 - Cross-team process improvements



Conclusions?

- QA's value is persistent throughout a project's life
- QA is a perspective, not just a skill set
- The structures we work in don't define how we work, but they color our understanding.
 - How does your org structure help your QA group?