



Don't You Dare Say "Showstopper"

Bootstrapping a QA Team

or

How I Got Promoted Into My First Job In Games
All Over Again

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- @jesseRvigil



This can work for anyone.





Our games are increasingly public-facing

Finally Someone Invented A Cat Monster Game

No I'm not kitten you. It's fur-real.

posted on Aug. 12, 2016, at 2:34 p.m.



Jeff Barron
BuzzFeed Staff

Congratulations on living this long! Now you can enjoy the fruits of human ingenuity where we invent card games about experimental cats battling for dominance!





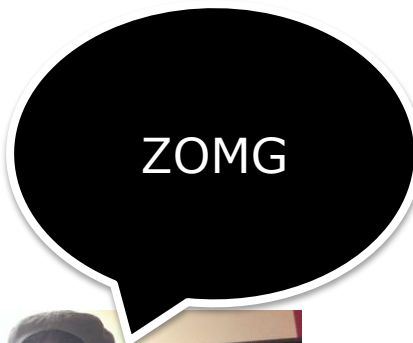
Classes starting to reflect this

- The difference between “Finished” and “Done”





Enter: USC GAMES PUBLISHING





Consoles have rules

- Lots of Rules





My first job in games





Formalizing QA Education

7

USC Games



Quality Assurance Crash Course Manual

Bug Reporting and Tracking Procedure

Process Step-by-Step





Everyone starts with passionate amateurs.





Part One : Onboarding





Lesson: Make QA *awesome* again





Highlights from the crash course





Lesson: frame the task well

“A crime has been committed”





LESSON: JARGON IS GOOD

- *"Full regression," "dupe," "d-cam," "progression blocker," "expected result," "repro," "test suite," "Sev A" "open/fixed/closed/needs info," "NAB"*
- Giving the students new terms, slang, and insider lingo had many benefits





LESSON: Help From Our Friends

- 2003 – my QA buddy



- 2016 – Head of Konami QA





The QA Bible

QA Crash Course Manual AGP EDITION

Quality Assurance is fundamentally different than usability testing. It is, for our purposes, the domain of production. It is Production's job to ensure that your team ships a product, but a *quality* product.

Process

Your game will enter four basic phases of testing over the next ten weeks.

Pre-Alpha

As features are implemented, a loose test team needs to be in place and responsible for testing new features and content and providing quick and detailed feedback to *devs*. Formalizing this process will significantly improve to rate and quality of your team's production.

Alpha

Now is the time to have a small dedicated test team for **functionality testing**. Production is responsible for ensuring Dev delivers a *weekly stable build* suitable for test. Dev should also provide Build Notes, noting Known Issues (do not test, we know about this problem) and key changes and updates.

Test will check the build thoroughly and report issues using an instituted *bugbase*. (Google Forms are probably not sufficient!) Formal QA happens at this point.

Beta

Functionality testing is greatly expanded. All aspects of the game should now be fair game for test. Weekly builds/tests should continue, expand as needed to biweekly, or to verify key fixes. *Do not wait on an arbitrary schedule if you need verification or additional test to lock something down.* **Requirements testing** should also begin in earnest by beta. Standard AGP will have some minimum requirements testing *similar to* intermediate (logos, branding, credits, base compatibility, rights clearances documented). Special projects must enter strict console requirements testing.





EXCERPT:

Some Quick Tips To Get Started

- Play Sub-Optimally
 - The goal is no longer to win the game or beat the level
- Become a Cartographer
 - Have you seen every corner of the game?
 - Have you fallen down every pit?
 - Have you climbed every wall?
- Play counter to the designer's intentions
 - If it's clear I need a key to get through the door...
 - Your challenge is now to get in that door WITHOUT A KEY





Highlights and most effective teaching points





Good QA Testers are probably kind of bad at playing video games ***optimally***.





USING Google Forms

- Create a bug report testers (including you) can fill out
- The form populates a spreadsheet you'll use to track and prioritize
- Everyone on your team should be shared on this

Page 1 of 1

generic bug report

Form Description

Your name*

What kind of issue is this?*

☐ This is a bug. Something in the game is wrong or broken.

☐ This is feedback. It doesn't affect my playing of the game but is a suggestion.

Describe the Issue*

In a sentence, state the nature of the issue.

BUG ONLY: How severe is the Bug?

☐ A - This bug is a crash or otherwise prevents my ability to keep playing the game.

☐ B - This is not a crash or a progression-blocker but represents a serious issue with the intended functionality

☐ C - I can keep playing, but this is an issue that bears investigating.

☐ D - this is a minor nitpick or cosmetic issue

BUG ONLY: Details

If this is a bug, please provide the following: area of the game issue encountered, steps to reproduce, expected result, actual result, and frequency of occurrence. (EG: 1/3 times, instead of giving me a new opinion, the game crashes)





LESSON: make a game out of it

NAME THAT SEVERITY!





BUG: GYM – talking to a character doing boxing animation causes characters to clip



C





BUG: Rope attaches to camera, cannot unstick





Coming to Terms with Triage





BUG: You can put certain things in your pack (cans) but not others (books)



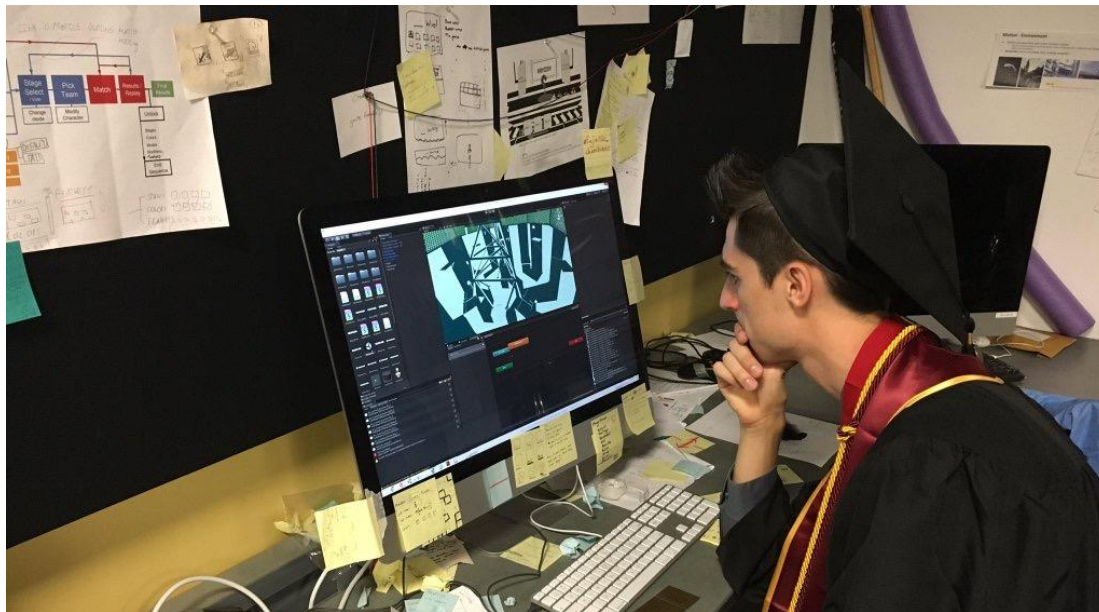


The Culture is Important





Part two: in practice





Unexpected result: more mindful developers



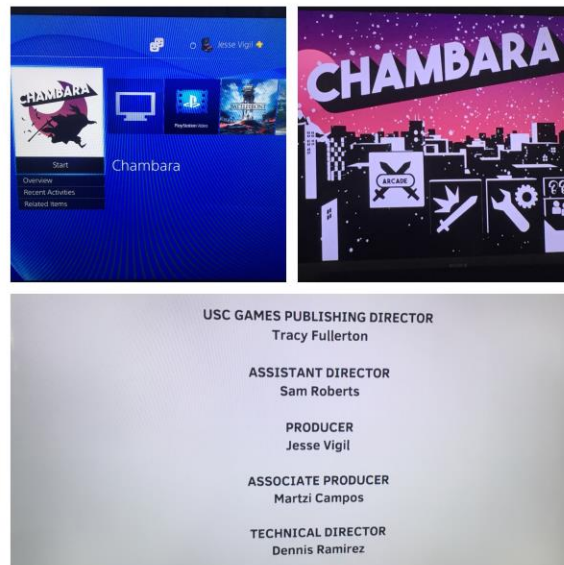
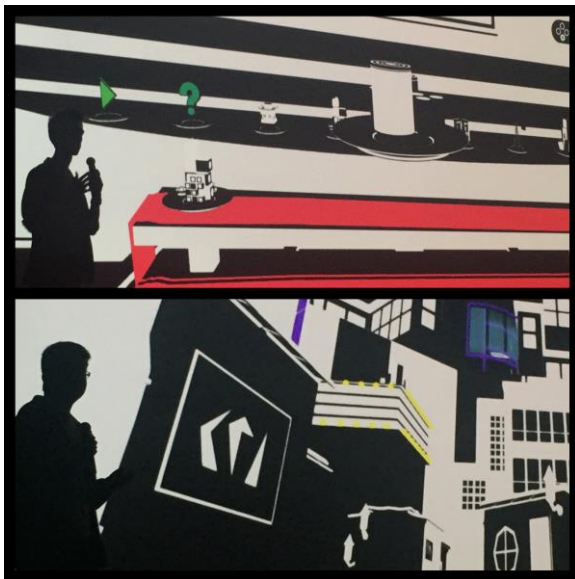


part three: ship it





Chambara was not easy





The benefits of going to console





Tips for your programs

- Make QA part of the practice in every class, even if it's just a mention
- A dedicated class or summer workshop was a BIG LEAP forward
- A small group that's been through an intensive carries benefits outward
- This works best with practical real software and goals
- Celebrate the success of QA and make them part of the whole team
- Give them lots of scaffolding (guides, examples, sample test suites, set up the bug report for them) to overcome the barriers to entry
- ANECDOTES ARE KEY – get them, share them, make them a core part of your teaching
 - The stories Tom and I told about our best Vivendi bugs stayed with them/informed their practice





Anyone can hire some bughunters.

Building a *culture* of quality changes the game.





EPILOGUE



Chambara

University of Southern California

PSN Game | Released Jul 26, 2016 | ★★★★★



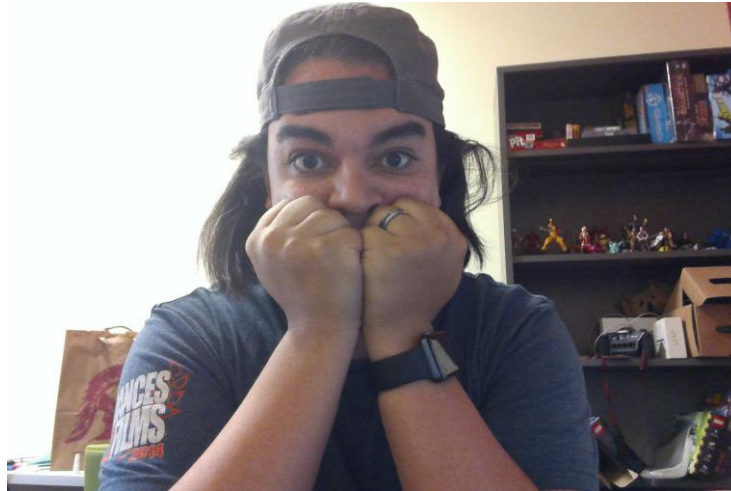


EPILOGUE





This was special. Thanks.





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