GDC March 21-25, 2022 San Francisco, CA

Application of AI Technology and Organizational Design to Improve Game Quality and Productivity



Speaker



Katsuhiko Sato(DeNA) Business Development and Technical Director

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▼ Working at <u>DeNA's AI Promotion Division</u> from 2019.

- promote the use and adoption of AI in game products and business.

▼ In charge of AI development such as

- DARK SOULS III (FromSoftware)
- Shadowverse(Cygames)

▼ Experience in various positions

- researcher/engineer to planner/project manager/director, assistant producer
- promoted AI Development across both content development teams and R&D sections

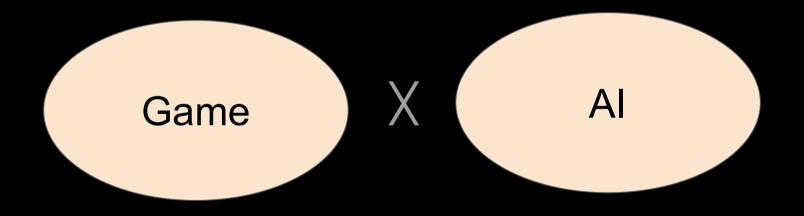
Introduction

Introduction

Background

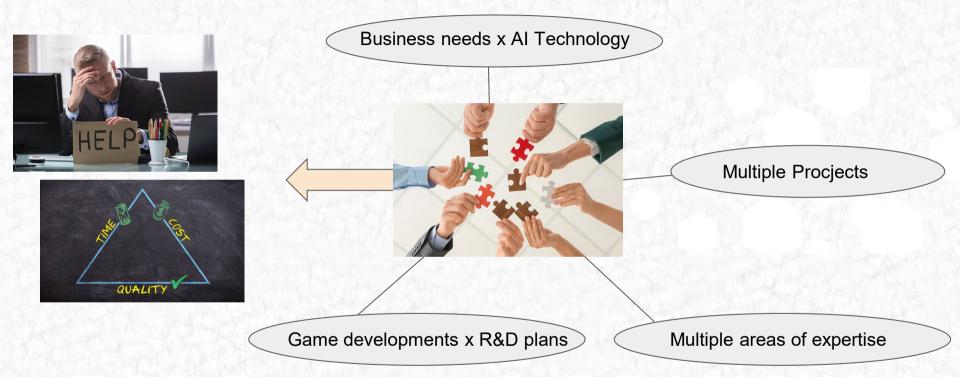
Bad patterns

How can we promote and scale them?



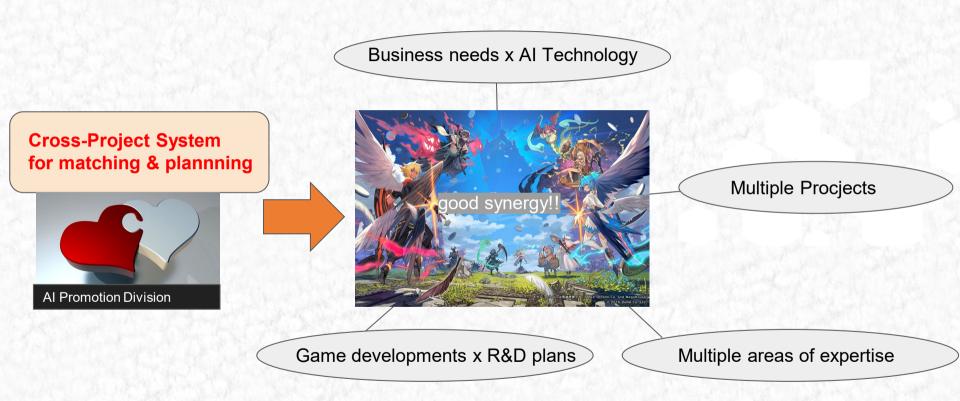
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There is many pieces...



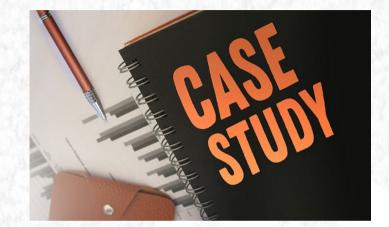


Mismatches can be tragic.



You can take away...

- Benefits of cross-project system and plannning
- · How to organize cross-project system
- Good and Bad theories in AI promoting and scaling



If you love AI and Game, this is for your session!! Please enjoy!!

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Agenda

- 1. Background
- 2. Bad patterns
- 3. Role of the deivision
- 4. Planning
- 5. Use case expansion
- 6. Common infrastructre
- 7. Risk control

Background

Introduction

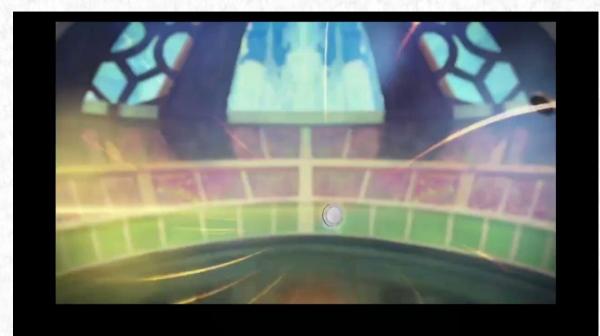
Background

Bad patterns

GDC.2019 Applying AI in Games with DeNA(Presented by Google Cloud)

We discussed the usage of machine learning technology in "Gyakuten Othellonia."



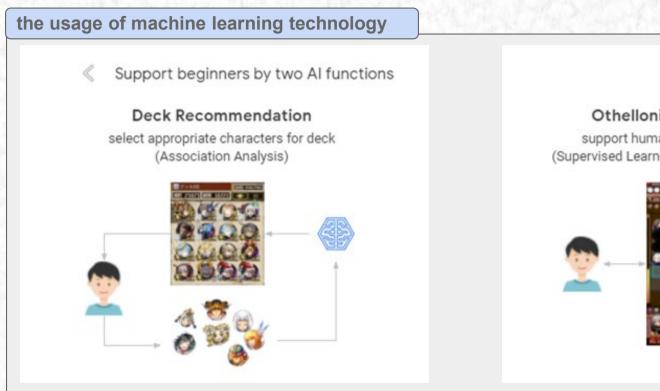


Strategic app game

- Based on Board Game (Othello / Reversi)
- Variety of Characters / Skills
 4000 Characters, 2 x 10⁴⁴ Deck
 patterns

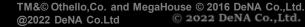
Released in 2016

30M downloads so far Region: Japan / Taiwan



Othellonia Dojo (battle AI)

support human-level AI for practicing (Supervised Learning w/ Deep Neural Network)



Use of AI in areas other than games

Virtual Security System





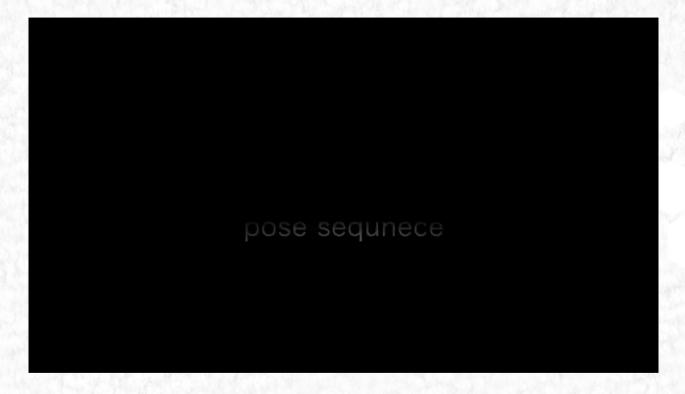
Route recommendations from demand forecast for taxis.



Analysis for services



Trials in animation production

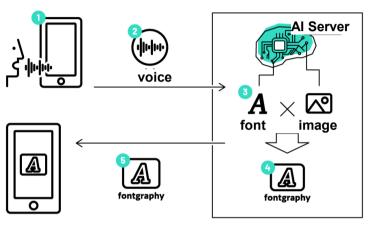


PSGAN(Progressive Structure-Conditional Generative Adversarial Networks)

Full-body high-resolution Anime Generation from 2D illustlation.

Graphics generation from user voice









fontography(2019/9-2020/7)

OK. Through these trials, we have found AI to be a useful tool.

What should we do next for the game business?

Expanding use cases

Improve development quality and respond to diversifying user needs

Establishment of reproducibility and scaling

Improve production and development efficiency



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- The scale of development is steadily expanding as the performance of terminals improves and user needs to diversify.
- The number of titles in operation is increasing every year, and there is an <u>urgent need to improve development production efficiency.</u>

Gaming in DeNA

Inhouse





Megido 72

Gyakuten Othellonia



Bandit Nation

Alliance

- Final Fantasy Record Keeper
- Uta Macross
- Touhou Danmaku Kagura

Nintendo Alliance Titles

- Super Mario Run
- Fire Emblem Heroes
- Animal Crossing: Pocket Camp

3rd Party

• Granblue Fantasy



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we have encountered many failures and obstacles.





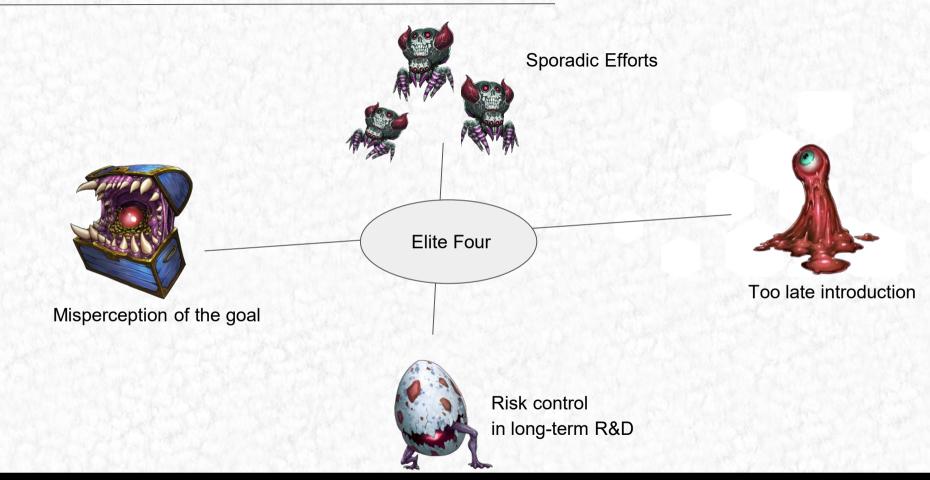
What's the problem?

Bad patterns

Introduction

Background Bad patterns

Causes of trouble



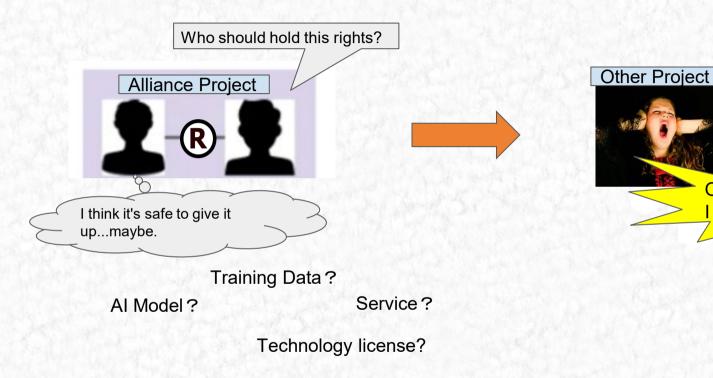


Individual...Guerrilla development... Only bottom-up...

Uncontrolled many communication paths...



Problems with intellectual property(1)



Generated assets?

Oh No!!

I wanted to use it!!

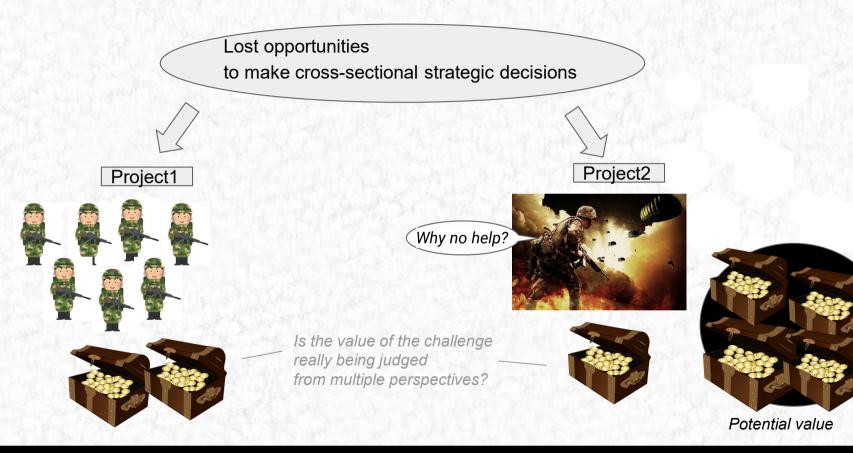
Problems with intellectual property(2)

Dissipation of know-how

Reinventing the wheel



Inappropriate resource allocation

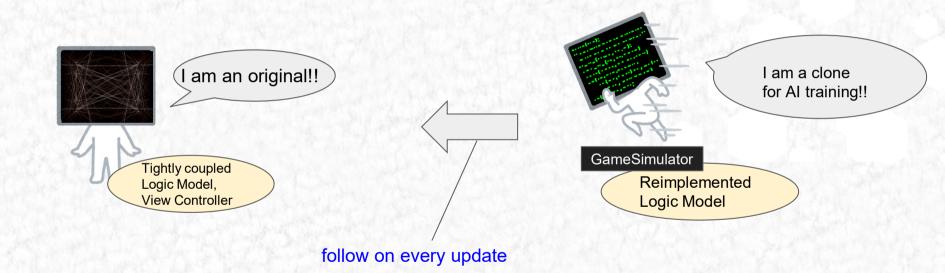


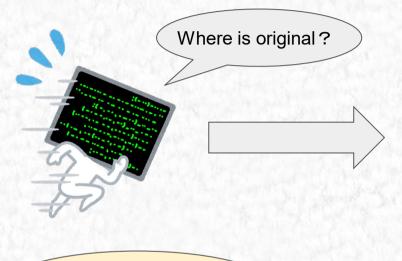
Too late introduction

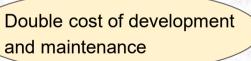
Introduction Background Bad patterns Role Planning Use case Ex Infrastructure Risk Cotrol

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In "Gyakuten Othellonia", it was difficult to modify the game engine after the release. So, we created for AI training...









Trouble caused by leaking follow-up



Hi!! we have trouble on balance designs.

We need the power of AI learning agents immediately!!



lack of the requirements for appropriate simulation

No preparation of training data

DATA Low



No R&D Time



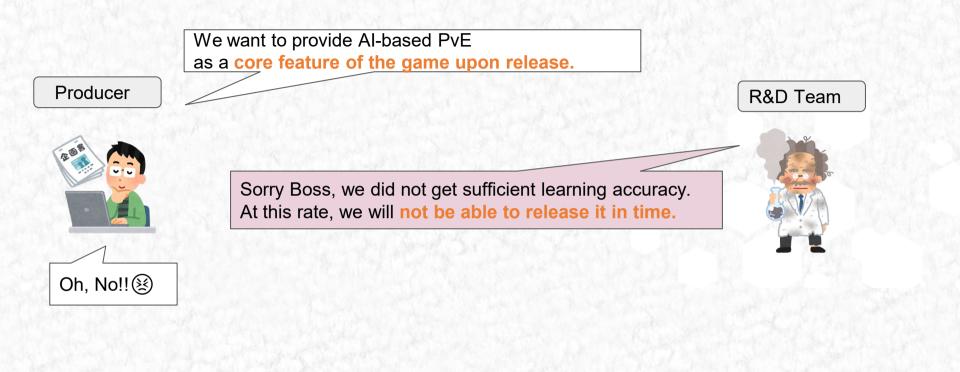


In realizing AI measures, it is very important to have a dialogue early in the game development process, with an eye to future demand.

Risk control in long-term R&D

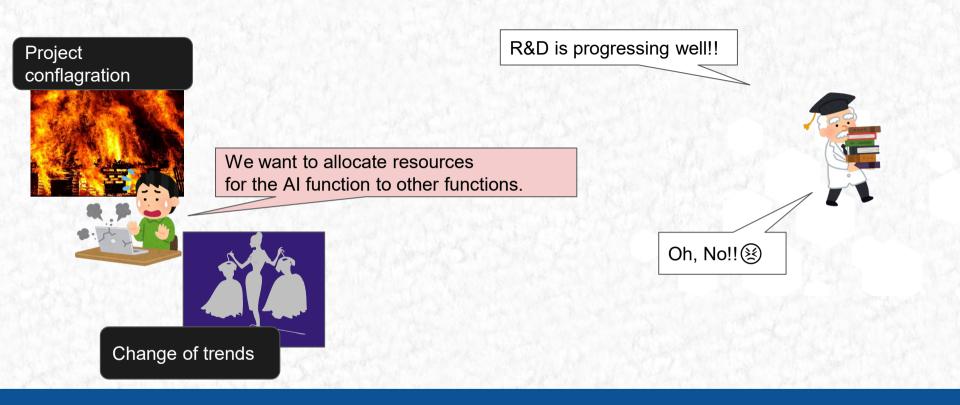
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 If you want to incorporate R&D into your plan always need to consider the possibility of experimental failure.





When incorporating long-term R&D into planning,

development status and changes in the environment need to be taken into account.



Misperception of the goal

Introduction Background Bad patterns Role Planning Use case Ex Infrastructure Risk Cotrol

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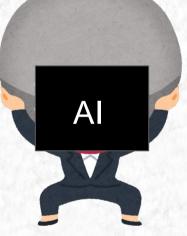


Development team requirements

input : the strength of a new character on a scale of 10 output : suggested adjustments



Subjective and ambiguous indicators



Too heavy an AI scope of responsibility



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Differences in domain knowledge often lead to incorrect goal setting and planning.

TM&© Othello,Co. and MegaHouse © 2016 DeNA Co.,Ltd. @2022 DeNA Co.,Ltd © 2022 DeNA Co.,Ltd. Why do you want the tool?





- We don't want to release a character with a different strength than expected.
- I wish to eliminate the dependency on personal skill and ensure mobility of personnel between projects.

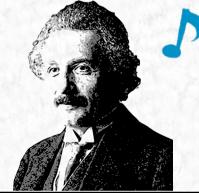


Is this goal feasible?

Objective indicators

- Calculate the win rate between deck archetypes
 as an objective measure by playing against the AI.
- Game designers compare the expected win rate to see if there are any deviations.





essentia

needs

Lack of a bird's eye view is a tragedy.

So what should we do?

Role of the division

Introduction

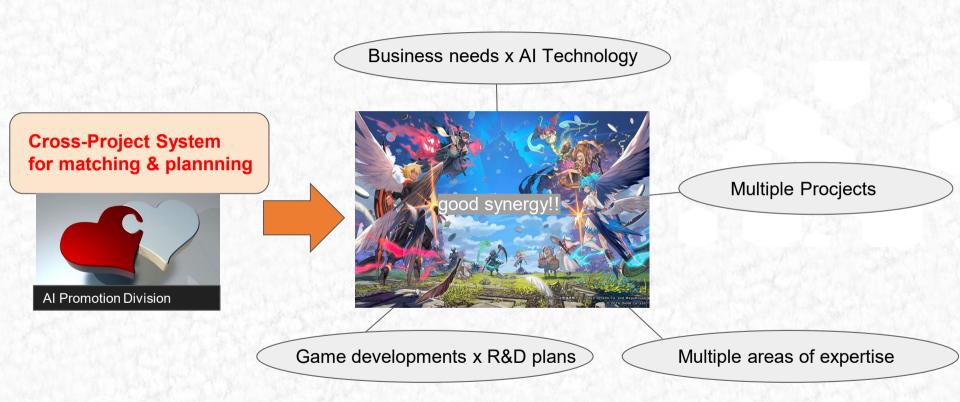
Background

Bad patterns

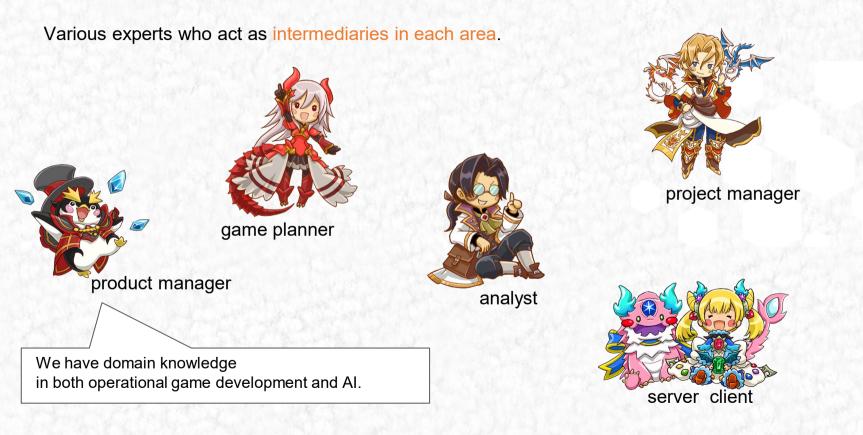
Use case Ex

Infrastructure

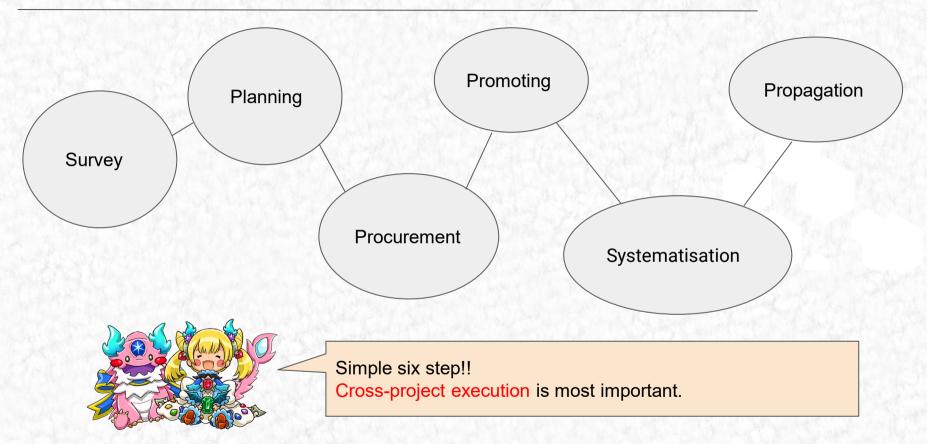
Risk Cotrol

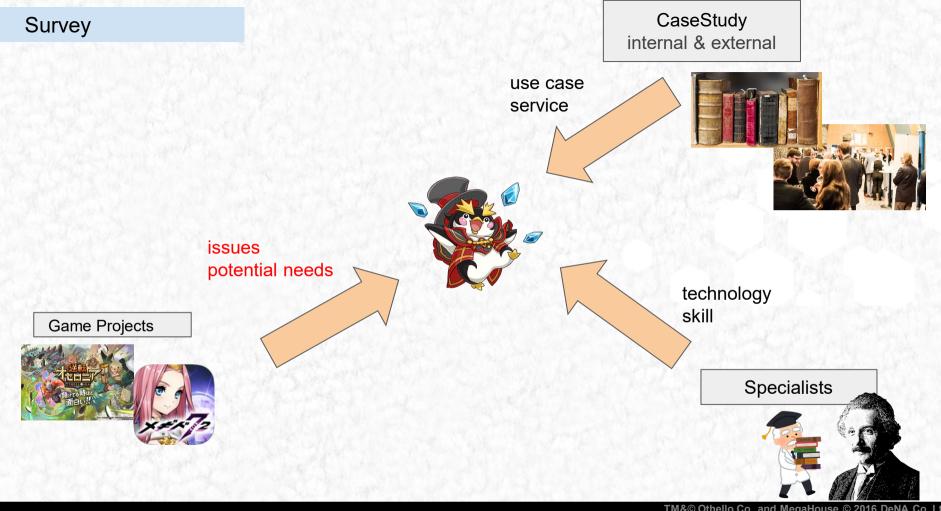


Division members

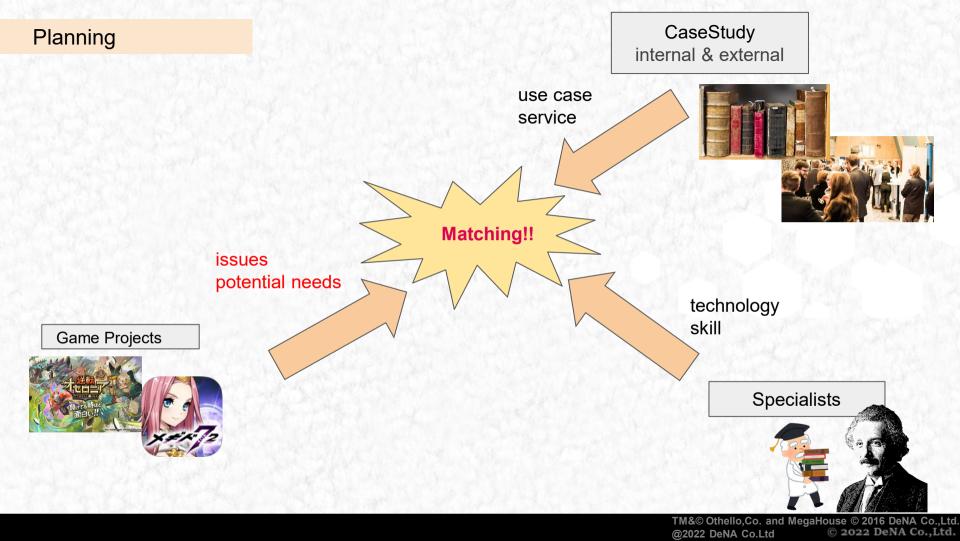


Role





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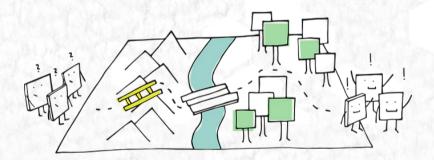




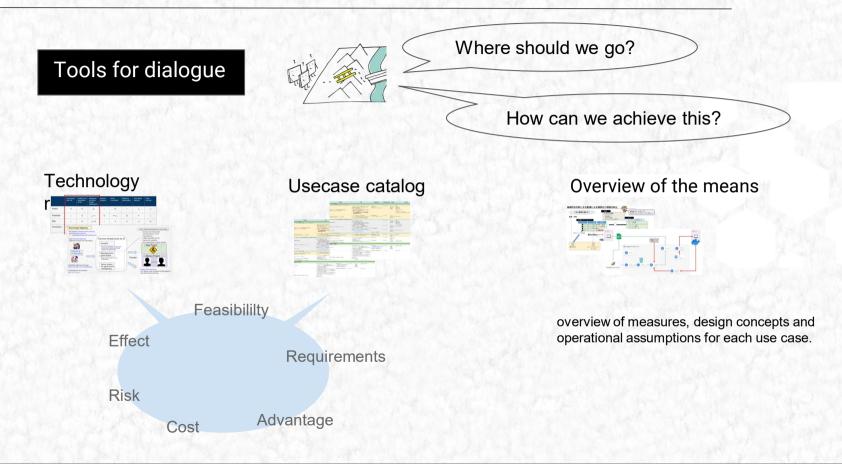
Define the requirements and use cases

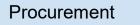
Evaluate and provide decision-making tools for the implementation of measures.

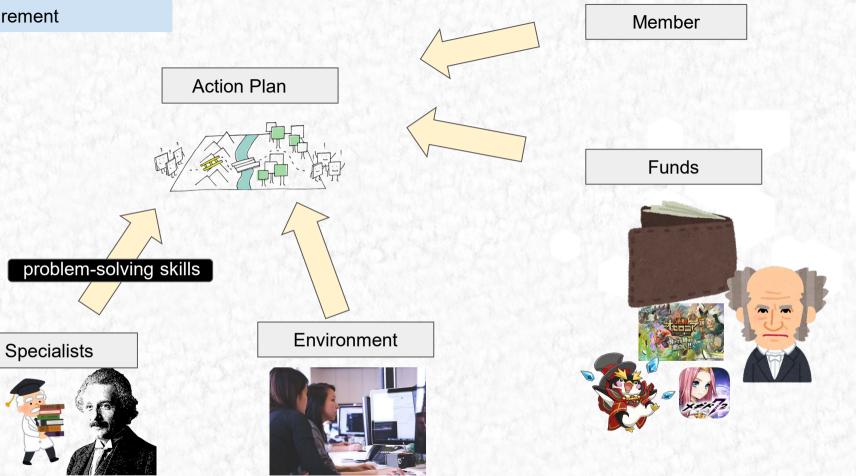
Provide direction and develop an action plan across projects and sections

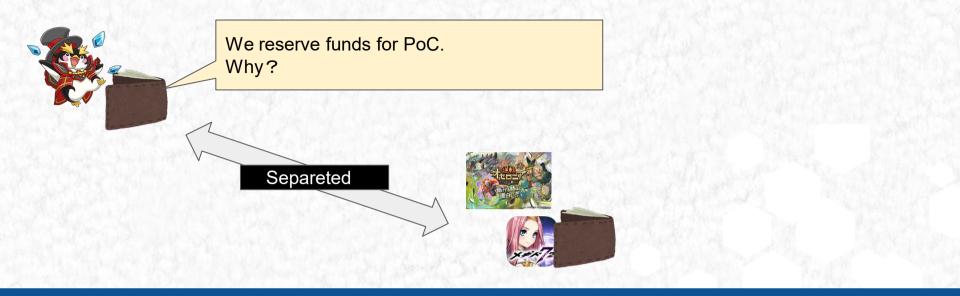


What's the decision making tool?



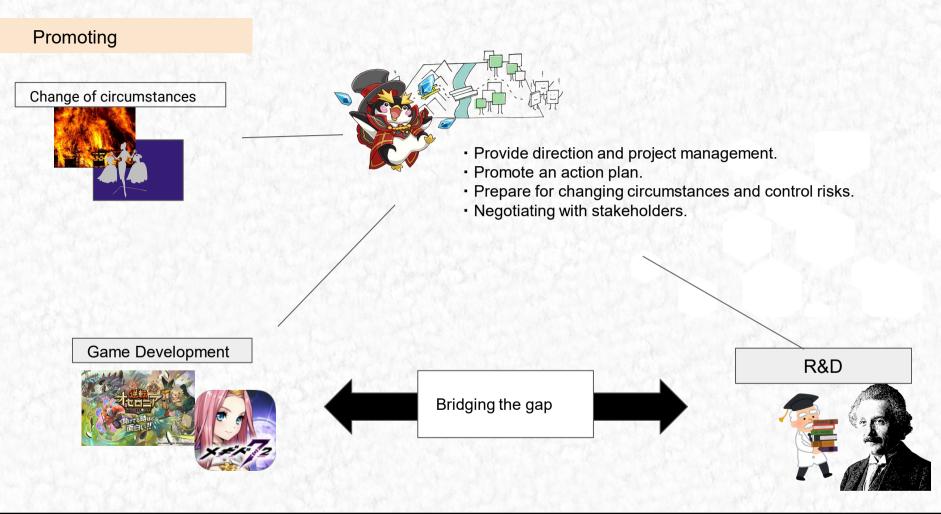






· Lighten the footprint of technical trials.

- Determine whether to introduce it into the title after improving the accuracy of the feasibility estimates.
- Patented materials will be validated during the PoC phase to limit the risk ofsitting on a game budget dependency.



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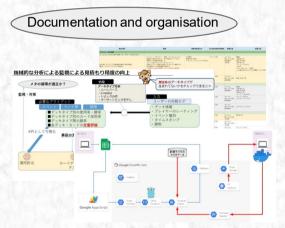
Systematisation

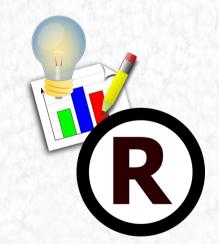
Evaluation of the results

Accumulate and generalize of Know-how

Obtain a patent

Building a common infrastructure









Propagation



Disseminate internally and externally

such as this session,wow!!



Let's follow the case study and see how it works in practice!

Planning

Introduction

Background

Bad patterns

Survey from both top-down and bottom-up perspectives.



- Games in Operation

- The cost of balance design and QC increasing year by year.
- The fluidity of personnel between projects.

- Reputational risk and damage caused by post-release problems.
- Quantitative indicators for dialogue. ex) about balance design deliverables

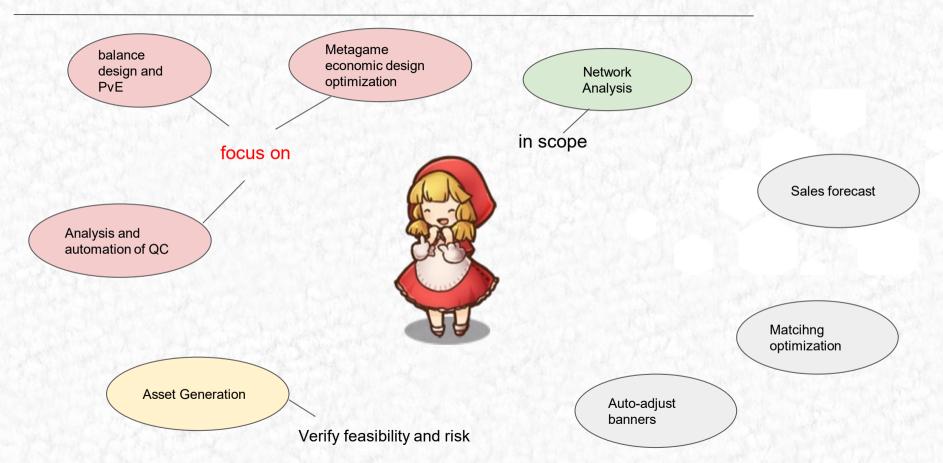


- Enhance the launch immediately after release.
- Increase the inflow and retention of casual users.

Evaluate each technical area

balance design and PvE Metagame economic optimizati	c design	
focus on	in scope	
	feasibility	Calcoferencet
Analysis and automation of QC impact	risk	Sales forecast Matcihng optimization
	advantage	
Asset Generation Verify feasib	Auto-adjust banners	

Evaluate each technical area



More depth for each area

Examples by QC

Ingame QC

▼ Difficult to solve with outside services

- Large differences in specifications between games, making it difficult to categorize and optimize test cases.
- The level of understanding of the game required for test design is also high.

▼ Test cases become bloated as operations become longer. (※Such as Character and skill combinations)

Outgame QC ▼ High accuracy of testing by outsourcing. • Fewer differences in specifications among titles, making it easier to categorize and optimize test cases.

▼ Foreign services are expected to enter the market.

Xex.Conversion of QC framework for web services



More depth for each area

Examples by QC

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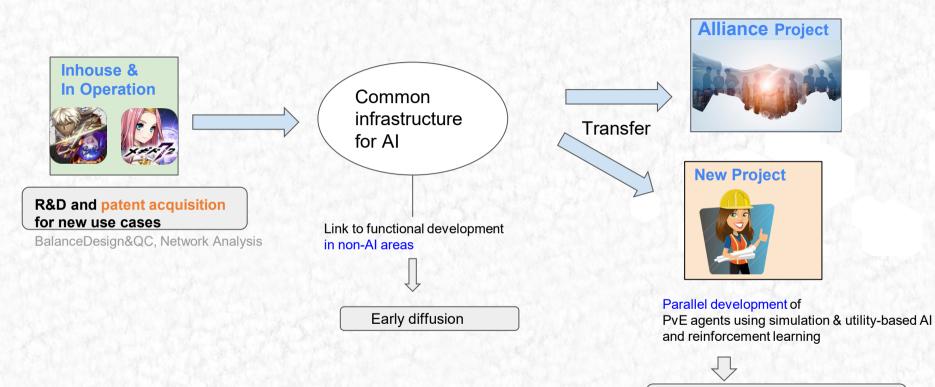
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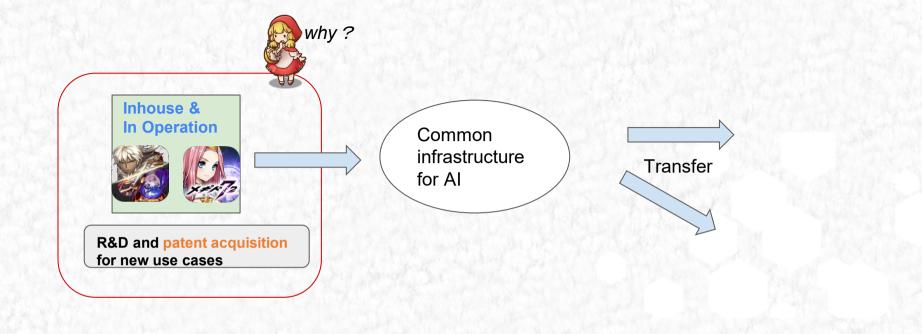


focus on

Core strategy in focus area to reproducibility through scaling



Risk control & Feature delivery on release



- By acquiring patents in advance for internally produced titles, the risk of alliance in intellectual property will be controlled.
- Conduct R&D on <u>in-operation titles with mature learning data for AI and game environments</u> and transfer them to titles under development can reduce R&D time and Improving feasibility.
- · Cost and development time are compressed with scaling.

In terms of feasibility and risk

Make the **smallest attempt** and verify both at **marketing measures** that are **not affected by the development status of the game**.

*X*From the standpoint of growing in-house technological capabilities, it may compete with other companies' middleware. But we judged that the comprehensive know-how related to the content application is worth keeping in check.



Nanakoe Nina 2021.5.7 - 2022/3/31

Free voice conversion service with promotional character



Under development in "Gyakuten Othellonia"

Marketing measures using characters created by image generation

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Nanakoe Nina 2021.5.7 - 2022/3/31

Free voice conversion service with promotional character

By consolidating issues and looking at them from a bird's eye view,

you can design goals, <u>assign roles</u>, and allocate resources with the expectation of <u>synergy between projects</u>.



Use case expansion



Introduction

Background Bad patterns

Plannir

Use case Ex

Infrastructure Risk Cotrol

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In this chapter, we show two samples!!



Network analysis for viral marketing



Al Agent for balance design



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Network analysis for viral marketing

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What is [Megiddo72] ?





- Japan Game Awards 2019
 first runner-up
- **RPG App Game** turn based rpg with an emphasis on strategy
- Released in 2017 region: Japan

:DeNA



- Enhance the launch immediately after release.
- Increase the inflow and retention of casual users.

Can advertising be the solution?

- Numerous titles in the market
- Return on investment for paid advertising is generally deteriorating.
- It is difficult to resonate with the game management's message alone.



 through Community Analysis, Identifying Influencers who will spread the information that the game wants to convey to the people around them.

• Solve Portfolio Optimization for Influence Spread on the internal network to formulate how to distribute ads and improve the efficiency of viral spread.

İ



Benefits of viral marketing

- Information from people the customer likes and trusts is more likely to resonate.
 - Recommendations from people at the center of the community, people you can trust.
- Leverage network analysis to inform not only famous influencers, but also diverse customers and communities.



Means used for advertising

- promotweet Au delivery allows advertisers to reach and deliver information to a variety of Twitter users.
 - The goal is to expand awareness and acquire new users.
 - Displayed on the timeline and search screen just like a normal tweet \bigcirc
 - \bigcirc Various delivery settings are available to deliver to specific users.



Experimental setup

Data used

- Twitter data of game titles to be distributed (four months)
- Twitter data for IPs with high affinity (10 types)

Calculate the probability that B is also muttered when A is muttered, and the IP with the higher value is considered as the IP with high

affinity.

Network

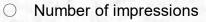
- Node: users (100K)
- Edge: retweet、mention、reply (600K)
- O Propagation Probability: Percentage of past retweets, mentions, and replies

Portfolio Optimization for Influence Spread

- Independent. Cascade+greedy
- Number of users extracted: 300

%Targeting the extracted users and their surroundings (people they follow) in the distribution

• Evaluation index(Comparison with an average of existing methods)



Cost per impression

Twitter Data



Portfolio Optimization for Influence Spread

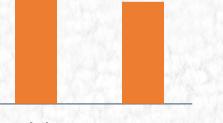
List of distribution targets

Number of impressions



existing methods





existing methods

- Delivering information to more users.
- Results can be fully utilized as one of the delivery methods.

- Costs are on a slight downward trend
 - O Distribution to niche but diffuse user groups
- Why didn't it go down significantly?
 - Active users are more difficult to acquire.
 - Characteristics of distribution auctions with competing titles

It has been transferred to almost all development and operation titles. It is also being used for pre-release advertising initiatives.



Transfer



Other Games



Pococha a social live application

<u>The lowest CPI and the highest growth</u> in distribution volume compared to existing methods.

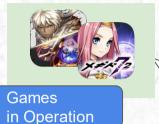


Al Agent for balance design

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Where is the issue?



- The cost of balance design
- Reliance on individual skills and reduced mobility of personnel



- Reputation risk due to post-release problems
- Lack of means to check the quality
 - of the collaborator's balance design deliverables

- Calculate the win rate between deck archetypes
 as an objective measure by playing against the AI Agent.
- Game designers compare the expected win rate to see if there are any deviations.





win rate between deck archetypes

	对数机	手の	デッキ	1			-	-						
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U.S.BARA	4.874			aters	4.70%	-12.20%	-25.12%	-		4.79%	4.85%	-	-11.70%	-21 80%
CARE AND	2 104	1.875		2.874	1.875	4.976	4.075	4.101	3.77%			410%	1.87%	1.07%
Pure Constant	170%	2.8%	1.00%	430	-1.20%	-	3.00%	3.995	1.075	-14.00%	-1.075	140%		1.80
Forka (A.S. B. C. Bar	4.875	185	27.00	4.000						-	2.005	100		-
7-15 0.08780	4.00		TROP	-	140	-2.075	- In care	4.000		4100		1.00		Later
F-10	100	-		-	-	-	-		-				-	4.315
Fred Land	1.00			-	1.810	-	4.000							
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U.P. B.C.Ba	4.075	4.0%	1.0%	1.80%	0.47%	4.875	6.075		4.78%		1.00%	-12 80%	6.82%	
F=10 0.0.0.0.00	4.00	4.05	6.10	1.00	1,005	4.05	4.005	4.875	-200%	4.0%	4.00	4105	1305	4.00
Poto	.4.7%	-	-	-	-			4.875	4.375	1.075	4755			-
7+40 0.000000	100	100	4.000	1.104	-14.80%	CATA						4.000	4.000	1.005
7+10 (ADD 400	1.000	125				1.475		4.00					1.07%	100
Parts	10000							-					-	
11100 CON 1100	1000	-						-		1				
P+82	1000	-18.80%	1000											
10.21 B 1.80	-17 80.0.	10.00		4.875		1.875	0.30%	-11.87%	-14 17%		18.875	18.00%	4.815	-14 80%
(A.R.B. 8 Ber	12.30%	-17.80%	4.875	10.00%	47 20%	-12.87%	4.4(5	44.19%	-1800%	4.79%	11.97%	12.80%	-10.50%	16,35%

Workflow

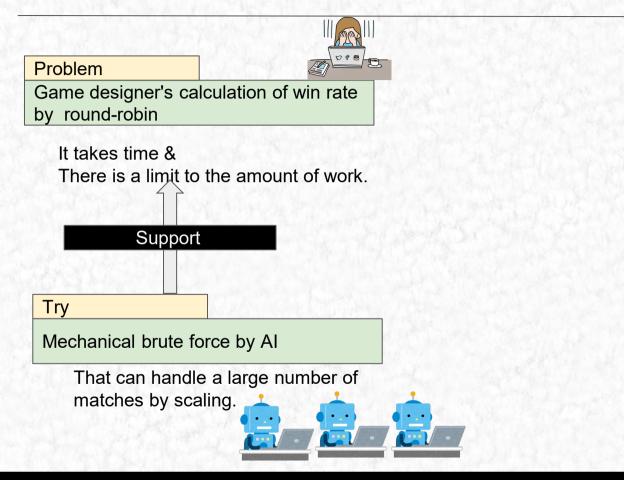


Problem

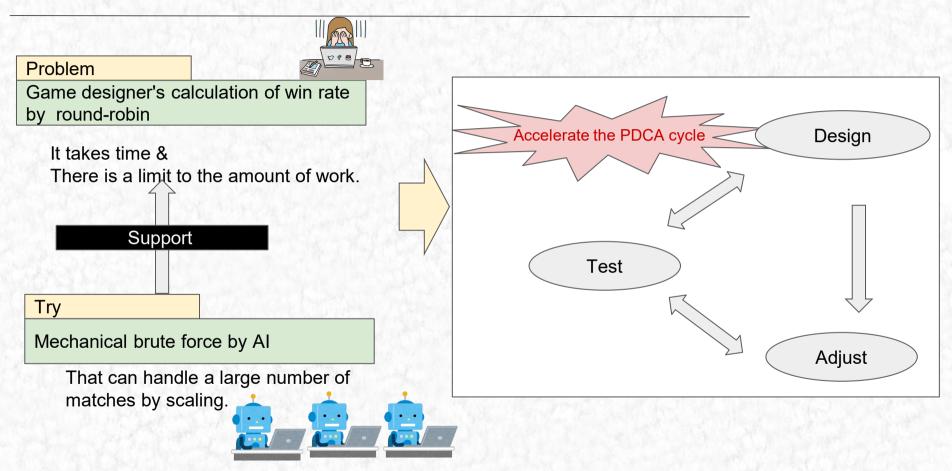
Game designer's calculation of win rate by round-robin

It takes time & There is a limit to the amount of work.

Workflow



Workflow

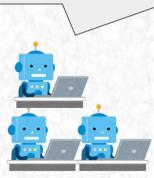


Where should I verify?



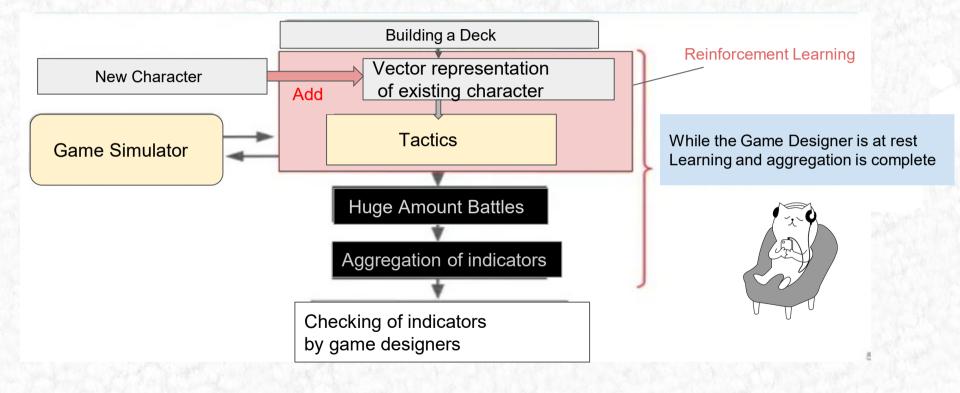
Human resources can be focused on highpriority coordination like top-tier decks.

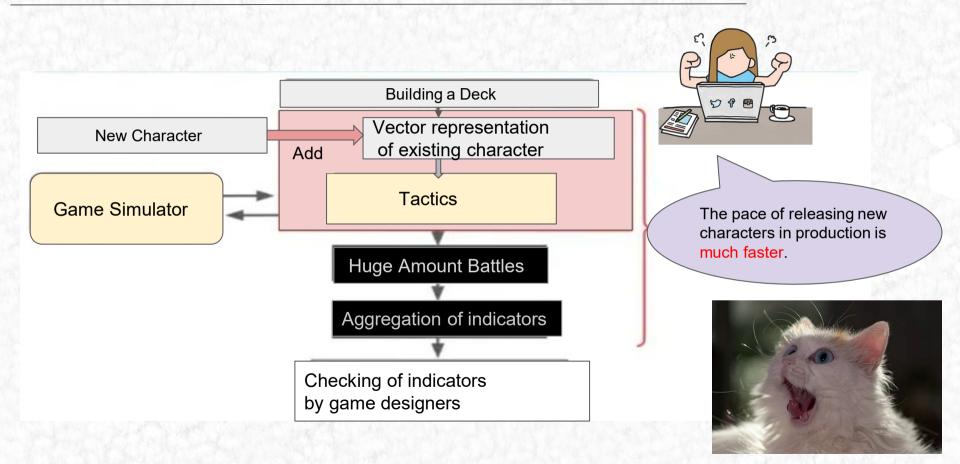
We can be used to quickly get a rough idea!!



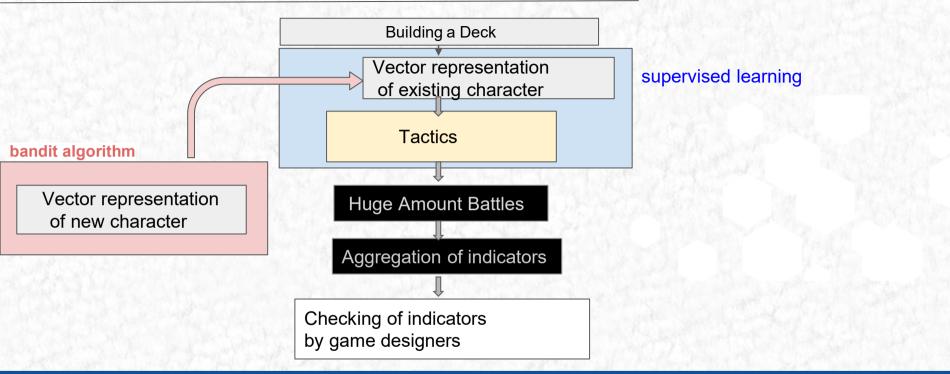
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Tool image at the beginning of development

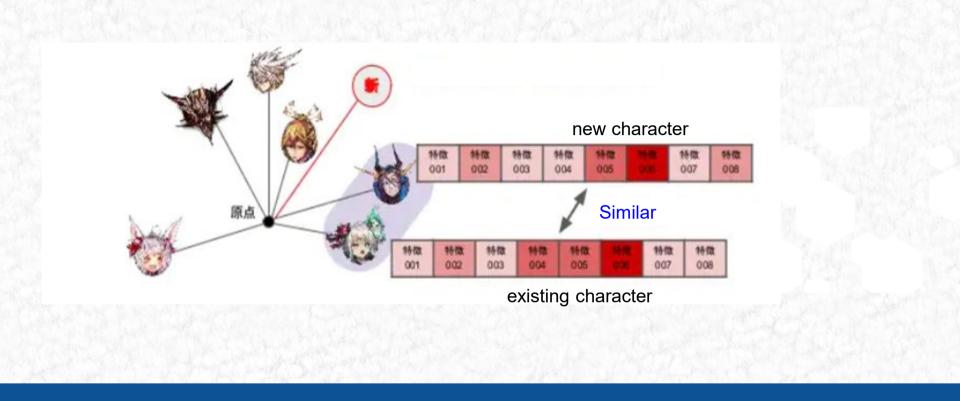




Revise the trajectory based on the actual operational flow

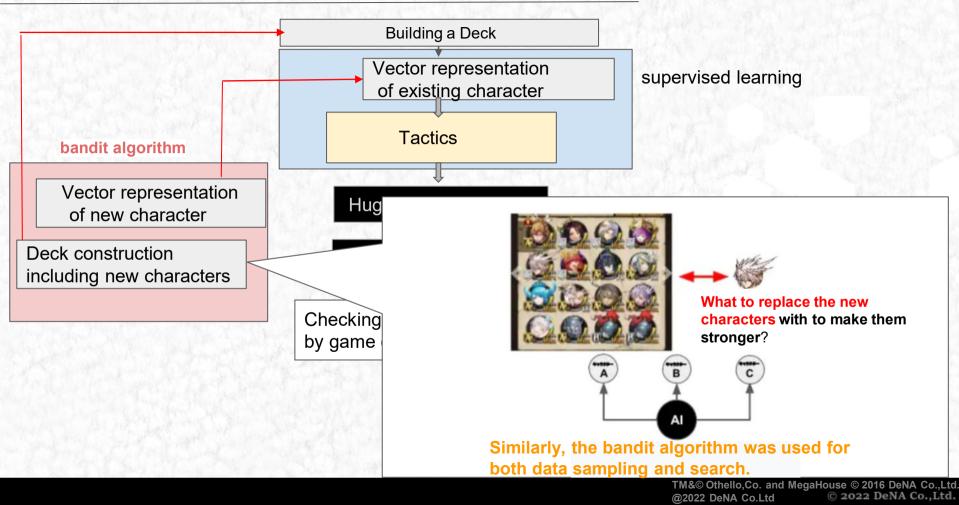


By using supervised learning in combination and limiting the target of reinforcement learning to new character representations, we were able to achieve a practical learning speed.



Estimate new character stance based on vector similarity with existing character representations..

Exploring Deck Construction



Results

Improving the coverage of test plays

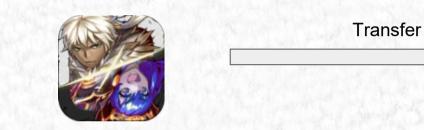
- · A large number of matches in a short time
 - 200,000 matches per 8 hours
 - Coverage of major deck archetypes

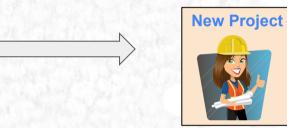
Reduce reliance on individual skills

- The level of evaluation indicators is sufficient.
 - Small margin of error from actual win rate after character release.



The deliverables and the know-how of creating AI agents by reinforcement learning obtained in the process of development are <u>being used in new development titles</u>.





Common Infrastructure



Introduction

Background Ba

Bad patterns

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anning

Use case Ex

Infrastructure Risk Cotrol

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In this chapter, we show two topics!!

	Common infrastructure for AI	
1st Topic	HandyRL A open source library for distributed reinforcement learning	
2nd Topic	Message-driven game engine It can reproduce game records for Simulation.	Link to functional development in non-AI areas
	Server system for game record management	Early diffusion
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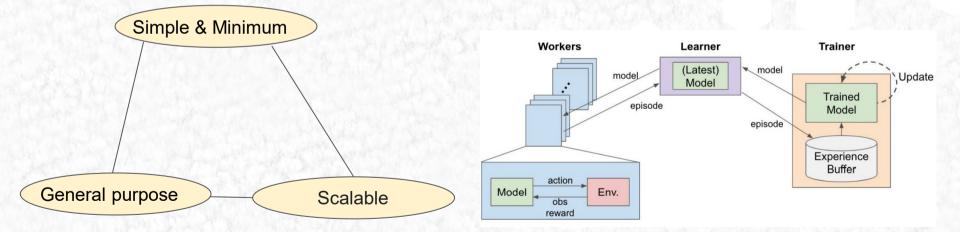
Handy RL



What's Handy RL?

An open source library for distributed reinforcement learning created by DeNA.

https://github.com/DeNA/HandyRL



Simple & Minimum

Focus on ease of use.

Generic Use

- Extensible implementation allows for greater customization and uses in a variety of games.
- It can be used not only for two-player games but also for multiplayer games.
- · Ensure loosely coupled implementation with game engines.

Scalable

- Can be prepared to scale according to CPU and GPU resources
- Able to handle large scale utilization of computing resources

Performance evaluation

▼Scale according to CPU and GPU resources

small experiment worker: 96-core CPU learner/trainer: 24-core CPU + 1 GPU



large experiment worker: 96-core CPU x8 learner/trainer: 96-core CPU + 4 GPU

XStandard configuration currently used for learning in in-house game development.



Performance evaluation

Won in Kaggle's competition for multi-agent development in games.



▼Hungry Geese
 2021/1/25~7/26
 Torus Snake game for 4 players



<u>Monthly Awards(2021/2) : 1st</u> Using "Handy RL", we were able to achieve reinforcement learning in a short period of less than one month

Final Awards(2021/8) : 1st



Ikki Tanaka Data Scientist(Kaggle Master)

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Katsuki Oto

Al Spectialist

Many ready-made libraries are for research purposes and are not easy to use. Handy RL is very lightweight and easy to handle.

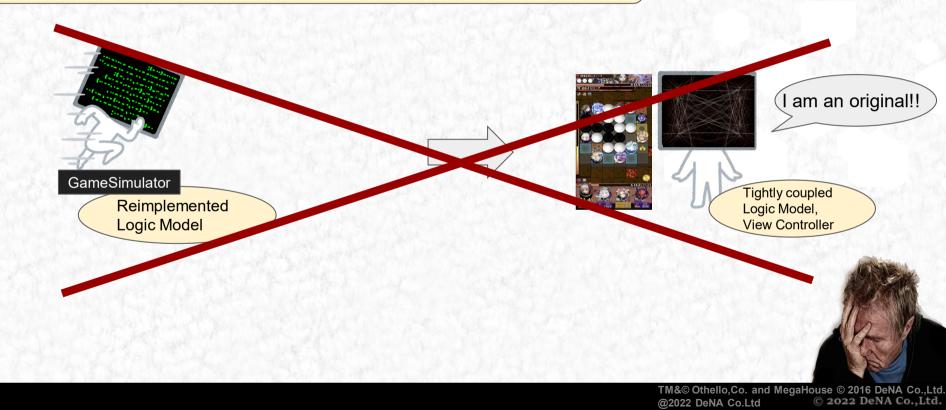
The number of applications of reinforcement learning in games is still small... and so we expect to expand the use cases and mutual penetration of know-how through the use of the library!!



Designed for early penetration

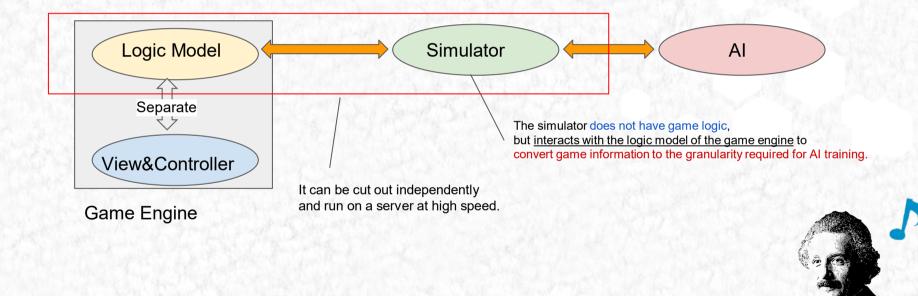


In the training of AI agents, it is important to realize <u>a fast simulator</u> of game behavior <u>with a low maintenance burden</u>.



How should it be?

Since game specifications and code change daily, it is desirable that the behavior of the simulator always **follows automatically** as the game engine is updated.



What are the requirements for a game engine?

- MVC Separation
- Models can be executed independently and in parallel on a server.

• The game situation can be reproduced from the game log.

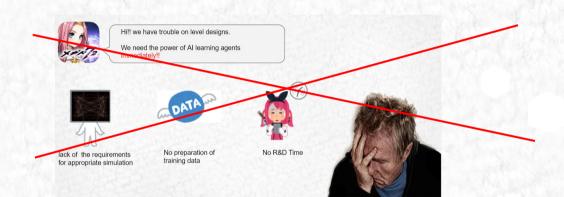
Responsiveness to simulate specific situations

		If I take this action on the phase, what happens next?
No. Harden Pro	phase data, possible actions	
Logic Model) hase data, action	Simulator
	simulated phase data	

Difficulty of fulfilling requirements

Easy : In the early stages of game engine design.

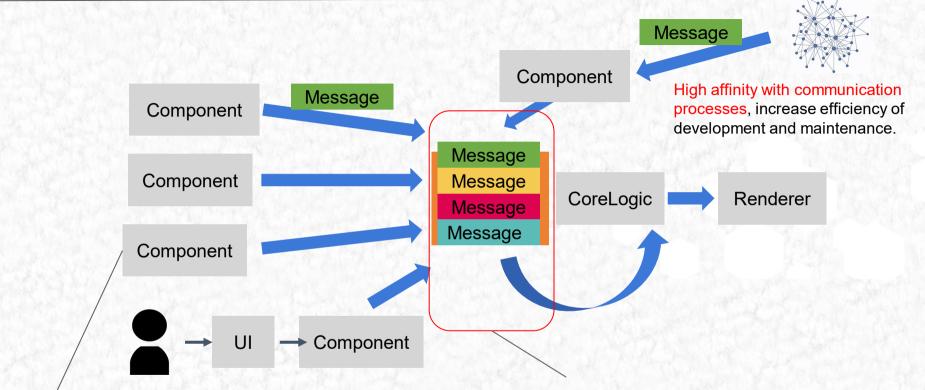
Difficult : Refactoring after the game engine is completed.



In realizing AI measures, it is very important to have a dialogue early in the game development process, with an eye to future demand.

Message-driven benefits

Network



Easier central monitoring and logging of game status. It is also easy to recreate game situations from game logs.

Components remain loosely coupled increase maintenance efficiency

Benefits of the replay mechanism

easy to recreate game situations from game logs

Link to functional development in non-Al areas

- recovery processing when communication is cut off
- cheat detection
- a game spectator function
- reproduction of the situation and bugs for QC
- Automation of regression testing



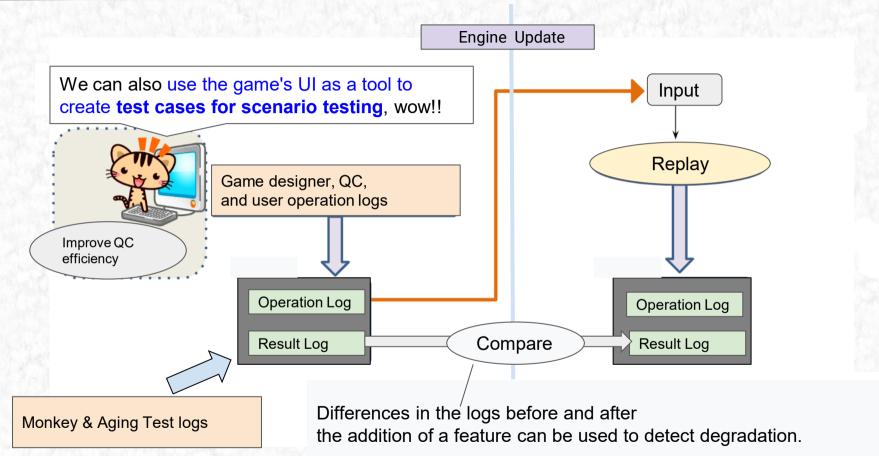
easy to recreate game situations from game logs

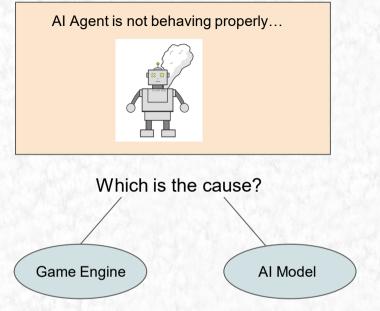
Link to functional development in non-Al

We can reduce the cost and psychological hurdles by increasing surrounding understanding and total development of <u>the overall benefits of the infrastructure, including non-Al areas</u>.



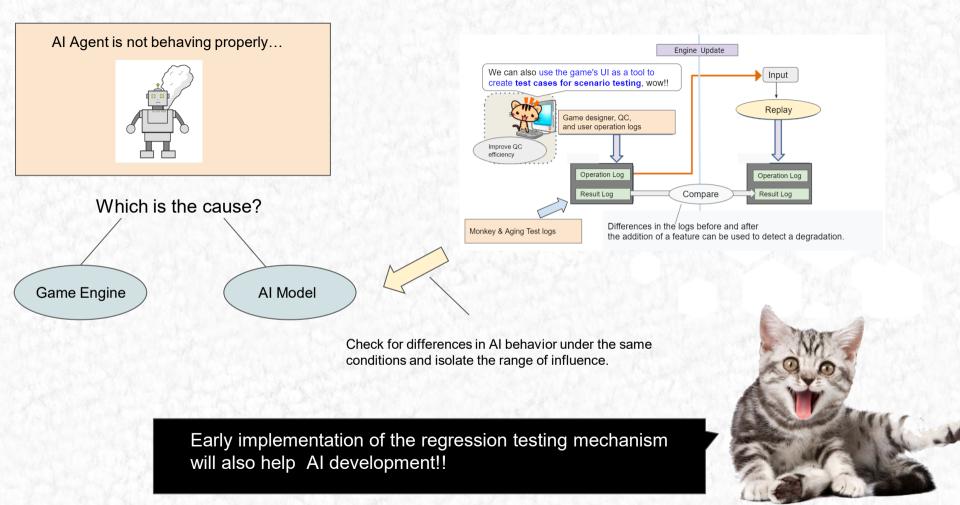
Automation of regression testing





It is difficult to distinguish whether the anomaly is due to the AI implementation or the game engine...





Establish a **company-wide QC flow** to record changes to bug tickets when bugs are handled.



A model to predict the bug rate for each file using LightGBM.

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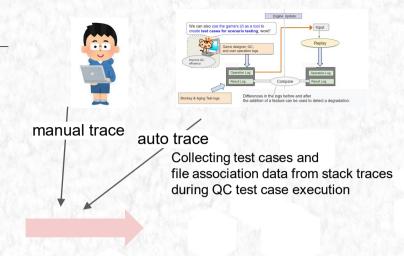
Provided as a metric for engineers to improve development

*Conduct experiments with titles in operation, and then offer them to newly developed titles.



A model to predict the bug rate for each file using LightGBM.

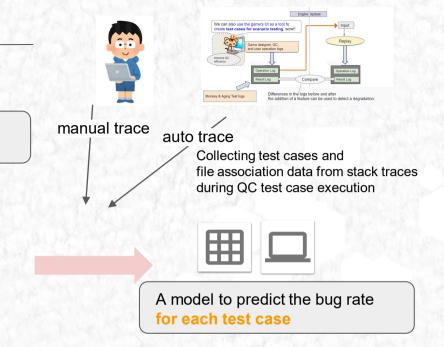
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A model to predict the bug rate **for each file**.

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A model to predict the bug rate for each file using LightGBM.

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A model to predict the bug rate for each test case

metric for optimizing the allocation of human resources for each test case ※Undergoing trials to verify the efficacy

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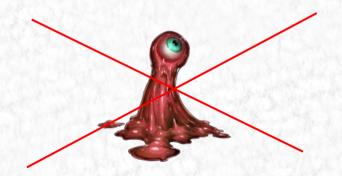
Establish a company-wide QC flow to record changes to bug tickets when bugs are handled.

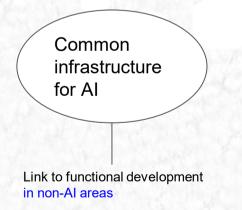
Git update history statistics

Cross-project planning enables cross-cutting efforts to **share and collect learning data.**

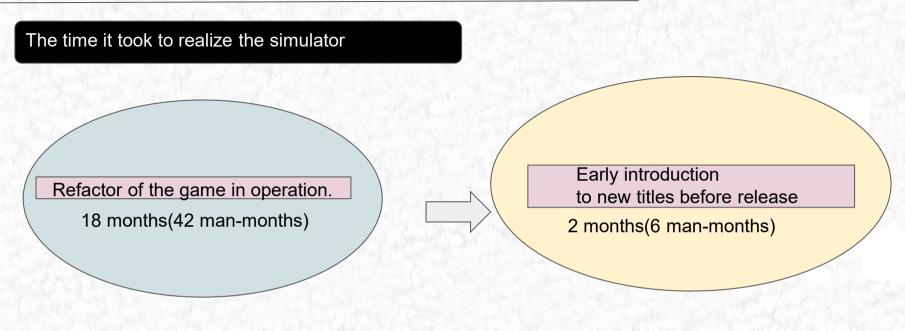
Approaches in infrastructure diffusion

- Conducted dialogue on AI measures and infrastructure implementation from the <u>early stages of planning and development of new games</u>.
- Reduce the cost and psychological hurdles to implementation by increasing surroundings understanding and total development of the overall benefits of the infrastructure, including non-Al areas.



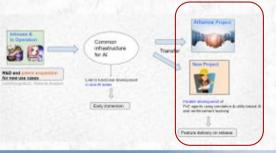


Results



- Succeeded in significantly reducing implementation costs and time required.
- The timing for learning has been accelerated, and we can now consider providing agents at the time of game release.

Risk control



Introduction

Background Bad patterns

R

nning

se case Ex

astructure Risk Co

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Where is an issue?



- Enhance the launch immediately after release.
- Expand the number of incoming users by supporting casual users.

Dig deeper based on the game concept

• They are games with complex strategy, e-sports, and collection elements.



The more the operation progress, the more complex the rules become.

New rules, new skills, and new characters...



casual user



- · It's no fun if they can't win.
- · Asset gap with advanced users.
- Fear about playing against other people.

Counter Measure



Al advice on user's next move

Examples of how to fight through PvE

XAI that can realize strategies and tactics for each deck archetype



Dynamic taming in PvE to ensure users' initial success experience

*Evaluate the shape of the board and adjust player's moves

PvE that can continue to be played as end content

*AI with capabilities comparable to those of top-class users



R&D needs a long time.

We want them immediately after release..





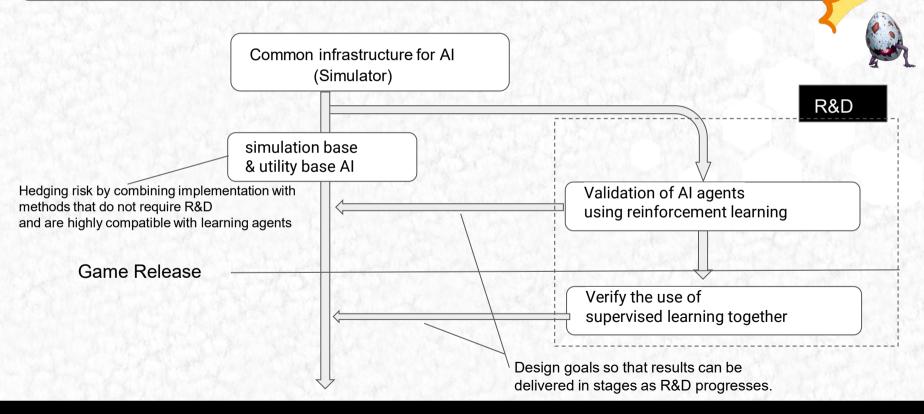


OK. We will try simultaneously developing the game and conducting R&D.

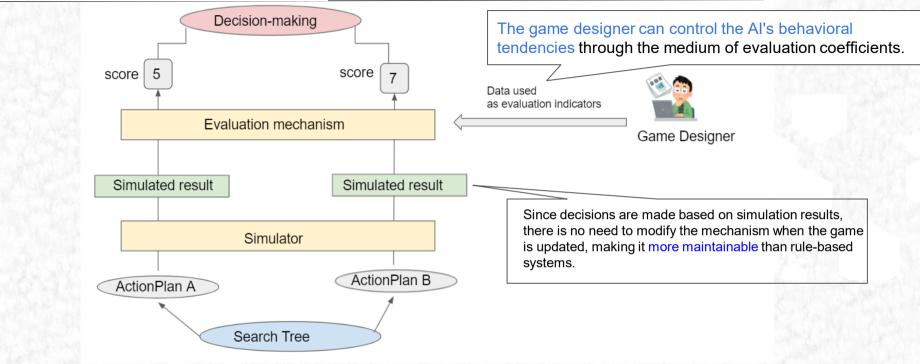


Hedging risk through the use of sub-plans and step-by-step goals

Since PvE is a core feature that is mandatory at release time, it is necessary to prepare for the risk if the learning accuracy does not meet the expected value.

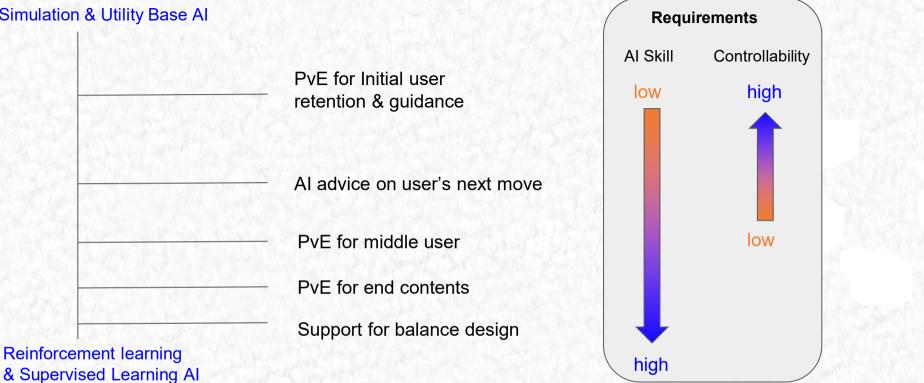


Simulation base & utility base AI



- Goes well with data-driven, low-cost mass production of AI with diverse personalities.
- Balancing maintenance efficiency and usability by game designers.
- High affinity with learning AI and similar usage infrastructure, making it easy to migrate and use together.

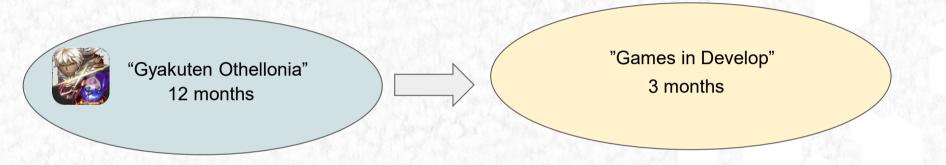
Simulation & Utility Base AI



- Design goals so that results can be delivered in stages as R&D progresses.
- Visualization of intermediate deliverables facilitates project progress and reduces the risk of interruptions.

Result

Costs & time required for AI agents to reach practical accuracy through reinforcement learning.



• Achieve better win rates than game designers and Simulation base & utility base AI.

 By analyzing the battle logs of reinforcement learning agents using time-series search trees, we visualized of winning strategies for each deck archetype.
 We confirmed that the AI was learning how to stand based on the characteristics of the deck.

Summary

- It is necessary to set appropriate goals based on an understanding of both the essential needs in game operation and the characteristics of the AI technology.
- By consolidating issues and looking at them from a bird's eye view, you can design goals, assign roles, and allocate resources with the expectation of synergy between projects.
- In realizing AI measures, it is very important to have a dialogue early in the game development process, with an eye to future demand.
- When simultaneously conducting game development and AI R&D, it is important to hedge risks by designing goals in stages and using subplans.



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Thank you for viewing! !



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