

Video game trailers: how storytelling is used to create identification and appeal with audiences

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Thesis submission for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis Title and Abstract	Declarations	Inclusion of Publications Statement	Corrected Thesis and Responses
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Thesis Title

Video game trailers: *how storytelling is used to create identification and appeal to audiences*

Thesis Abstract

Abstract

Video game trailers are an effective promotional form of intermediation that enables audiences to navigate and engage with old and new media. Although video game trailers function as advertisements designed to sell a game, they are also stories that provoke social media commentary and debate. Trailers aim to draw the viewer in, convey sound and imagery, and evoke an involuntary reaction of excitement and awe.

In this thesis, I will be using the games Fallout 4, Watch Dogs 2, and Assassin’s Creed: Syndicate. In the case studies, I investigate how viewers make sense of the promotional and storytelling aspects of video game trailers. I examine how video game trailers have the potential to arouse emotions and interest before viewers even play the game. Trailers provide an insight into the basic gameplay, not only into the gameplay but also into the story and the characters (protagonists and antagonists). They show audiences the video game theme genre and provide the viewer with a visual and auditory tool to entice possession. This project explores these themes, showing how video game trailers have an inherited cinematic quality but also how trailers actually spend little time presenting actual gameplay. There is a clear connection with movie trailers, teasing the events that will take place in the game and asking the player what will happen next.

In this study, I used the methods of narrative analysis and textual analysis to analyse comments from YouTube, Facebook, and a survey of video gamers. The textual analysis of the trailers raises questions of representation and authenticity. In this research, I identified an incongruity between the representation of the core features of a game and the promotion of those features in the trailer. The narrative analysis of the trailers focused on storytelling and emplotment in the trailers. A key theme that has emerged from the analysis is that superheroes engage in vigilantism, a justifiable form of self-administered violence. Gamers may feel at ease with the violence used to correct perceived injustices. There is potential for gamers to consider the moral grey area of vigilante violence and romanticised vigilantism.

With their enhanced ability to simulate complex interactive narratives for actual and simulated authenticity, video games offer a sophisticated engagement with players that contributes significantly to their widespread and universal support. The role of culturally created characters in the experience of playing a video game helps stimulate philosophical research. I explore whether normative audience expectations can speed up the development of cultural expectations about the relationship between the player and the narrative of the game and its audience.

In this context, I examine case study video game trailers and ask what it means to revise our understanding of the relationship between power, law, and morality while playing the game. I examine and critique how the narrative, and thus the mechanics of a specific game, shapes our understanding of connection, power, law, or morality; I contend that prestige reflects normative privilege and law.

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**Video game trailers:
*how storytelling is used to create identification and appeal
with audiences***

Han Ayshan

A thesis in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Arts, Design & Architecture

School of Humanities & Languages

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Abstract

Video game trailers are considered a form of promotion and mediation that enable audiences to navigate and engage with old and new media. Although video game trailers function as advertisements designed to sell a game, they are also stories that provoke social media commentary and debate. Trailers aim to draw the viewer in, convey sound, imagery, and evoke an involuntary reaction of excitement and awe.

In this thesis, using the vigilante games and *Assassin's Creed: Syndicate* as case studies, I investigate how viewers make sense of video game trailers' promotional and storytelling aspects. I examine how video game trailers can arouse emotions and interest before viewers even play the game. Trailers provide an insight into the basic gameplay, not only into the gameplay but also into the story and the characters (protagonists and antagonists). They show audiences the video game theme genre and provide viewers with a visual and auditory tool to entice engagement. This thesis explores these themes, showing how vigilante video game trailers have an inherited cinematic quality and spend little time presenting actual gameplay. Instead, there is a clear connection with movie trailers, teasing the events that will take place in the game and asking the player what will happen next.

In this study, I used the methods of narrative analysis, textual analysis of comments from YouTube, and Facebook and a survey of video gamers. The textual analysis of the trailers raises questions of representation and authenticity. I identified a dichotomy between the representation of the core features of a game and promotion in the trailer in this research. The narrative analysis of the trailers focused on storytelling and emplotment in the trailers. A key theme was that superheroes engage in vigilantism - a justifiable form of self-administered violence. Gamers may feel comfortable about the violence that is used to right perceived injustices. However, there is potential for gamers to consider the moral grey area of vigilante violence and romanticised vigilantism.

With their enhanced ability to simulate complex interactive narratives for real and simulated authenticity, video games offer a sophisticated engagement with players that contributes significantly to their widespread and universal support. Thus, the role of culturally created characters in the experience of playing a video game helps stimulate philosophical research. They are exploring whether normative audience expectations can speed up the development of cultural expectations about the relationship between the player and the narrative of the game and its audience.

In the thesis I examine video game trailers in this and ask what it means to revise our understanding of the connection between power, law and morality while participating in the game. I analyse and criticise how the narrative, and thus the mechanics of a particular game, shape our understanding of connection, powers, laws, or morality; I argue that prestige reflects normative privilege and law.

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Glossary of Terms

- **Audience:** Spectators watching or listen to a play, film, someone speaking
- **Avatar:** The model, character or picture used to represent each player in the game.
- **Cinematics:** Segments of a game that are not controlled by the player. These are usually used to draw attention to major story points.
- **Emplotment:** Details of a compelling story as part of a broader narrative theme in a process. Fundamentally the association of a series of events into a narrative with a plot.
- **Feature:** Any aspect of a game that creates its value and purpose. Mechanics, story, and level design are all considered features.
- **Game:** an entertaining activity or sport, especially one played by children, or the equipment needed for such an activity
- **Gamer:** Anyone that enjoys playing a lot of games and does so for a lengthy period. Enjoys games thoroughly either competitively, casually, or as a collector.
- **Game designer:** One who designs the aesthetic and structure of a game. NOTE: The terms “game designer” and “game developer” are often used interchangeably, though the two roles technically vary.
- **Game developer:** One who turns a game design into a playable game through coding and in-engine asset creation. NOTE: The terms “game designer” and “game developer” are often used interchangeably, though the two roles technically vary.
- **Game development:** The act of creating a game; sometimes referred to as “gamedev.” The game development process typically requires input from one or more game designers, artists, programmers, animators, testers, project managers, etc., though some games have been created by just one or two game developers.
- **Mechanics:** The essential functions, rules, and outcomes that create gameplay. Mechanics are what make a game rewarding, entertaining, and interactive.
- **Mobile gaming:** Because you can play a mobile game almost anywhere, mobile gaming is one of the most popular forms of gaming in the world.
- **Multiplatform:** Compatible with more than one kind of hardware or operating system.
- **MMOG:** Massively multiplayer online game.
- **MMORPG:** Massively multiplayer online role-playing game.
- **Narrative:** a story that connects and explains a carefully selected set of supposedly true events, experiences, or the like, intended to support a particular viewpoint.
- **RPG:** Role-playing game.
- **Sandbox:** An open-ended style of gameplay without a set plot to progress through.
- **Terrain:** Anything that creates the environment in a video game.
- **Storytelling:** Refers in a narrow sense specifically to oral storytelling and in a looser sense to techniques used in other media to unfold or disclose the narrative of a story.
- **Trailer:** Is a commercial advertisement, originally for a feature film that is going to be exhibited in the future at a movie theatre/cinema. The trailer format has been adopted as a promotional tool for television shows, video games, books, and theatrical events/concerts.
- **Video Game/s:** a game in which the player controls moving pictures on a screen by pressing buttons.
- **Vigilantism:** *the practice of ordinary people in a place taking unofficial action to prevent crime or to catch and punish people believed to be criminals*

Chapter 1: Introduction

Video game trailers:

how storytelling is used to create identification and appeal with audiences

In this Chapter, I introduce the thesis's objectives and its overall aim to explore the impact storytelling, narratives, and rhetoric have on video game trailer audiences. This includes focusing on the importance of how audiences' views are shaped by the video game trailers storytelling, narrative, and rhetoric. The Chapter also explains the importance of viewers' comments when extrapolated. This serves as a valuable source of information to better understand their audience's wants and adjust video game designers' material accordingly. Viewers can use comments to express their thoughts about specific pieces of content, engage in active discussions with other viewers, and ask content creators questions. The work in this thesis is informed with the extraction, classifying, and summarising information-based comment data, allowing for a deeper understanding of the impacts of video trailers and their associated comments have on audiences. As an especially prevailing sub-culture of the new-age media.

Research Themes

Video game trailers are a significant promotional form of intermediation that enable audiences to navigate and engage with old and new media. Although video game trailers function as advertisements designed to sell a game, they are also stories that provoke social media commentary and debate. In this thesis, I investigate how vigilante video game trailers devote little time to actual gameplay, with instead a greater emphasis being placed on storytelling and narrative aspects of the video game instead. Three video game trailers were selected as case studies for the thesis, because of their recency, location with the vigilante

genre, and popularity, so much so that they were follow-up sequels to established games. They are 1) *Fallout 4*; 2) *Watch Dogs 2*; and 3) *Assassin's Creed: Syndicate*. The research methods I have adopted in this thesis includes: (a) narrative analysis, i.e., textual analysis of comments from YouTube and Facebook, and (b) a survey of video gamers.

The textual analysis of video game trailers raises questions of representation and authenticity, with the incongruity between the representation of the core features of a game and the trailer's promotion being identified as a key theme. Video game trailers will often have fine print openly acknowledging the idea that the images/sounds/narrators/scenes of the video game trailer may not reflect the actual video game. Furthermore, the actual wording, not the actual gameplay, is visible to viewers.

With the increasing capability for real-life simulation, high-definition graphics, and complicated interactive narrativity, video games currently supply a high level of refined engagement for players that contribute considerably to their widespread universal support. As an especially prevailing sub-culture of the new-age media within the potency of social media platforms, researchers additionally provoke philosophy investigations. In this research, therefore, I acknowledge the culturally created nature of playing video games; this helps to explore the normative expectations of audiences, which may be advanced by the narrative structures inherent among the video game trailer itself. Thus, by exploring the three video game trailers among this framework, in this thesis, I ask by which means are often reworked concerning problems with law, morality and power from taking part in these games. By analysing and critiquing the means within each narrative and, therefore, the mechanics of this specific game form our understanding of the connection between power, law, and morality, I tend to argue that disreputability reflects a normative privilege of law.

Action movie trailers are often reminiscent of Hollywood action movies, as most action-oriented movie trailers spend quite a limited amount of time on gameplay instead of concentrating on a cinematic distillation of explosive action. All three case study trailers are exemplars of this. These trailers aim to situate audiences in a bigger story, rather than just taking a quick look at the video game's plot through the trailer. For one thing, a narrative-focused campaign is secondary; when players invest their time in the campaign, it is because they are not told a nuanced story or vividly reminded of the horrors of war, nuclear meltdown, or cyber-terror.

In my narrative analysis of the trailers, I focused on storytelling and emplotment in the trailers. A key theme that emerged from the analysis was the role of vigilantism - a justifiable form of self-administered violence naming - gamers may feel comfortable about the violence used to the right perceived injustices. This theme appears to be an enduring one, given all three trailers entail a victim and perpetrator scenario. There is potential for gamers to consider the moral grey area of vigilante violence and the implications of romanticised vigilantism.

As such, the overall objective of this thesis is to provide an investigation into vigilante video game advertising with a specific emphasis on the role and meanings of narratives and ludic aspects in video game trailers, using *Assassin's Creed; Syndicate, Fallout 4, and Watch Dogs 2* as case studies. The thesis is guided by the following questions:

1. What storytelling techniques are expressed in video game trailers?
2. How do audiences identify with the narrative and storytelling aspects of video game trailers?
3. How do viewers make sense of the storytelling elements of video game trailers?

4. How are promotion and meaning techniques expressed in vigilante video games?

And, how are audiences evoked into embracing vigilantism?

To answer these questions, I adopt a multi-method methodological approach (discussed in detail in Chapter 3). First, a content analysis of video game trailers was conducted via textual analysis of YouTube user comments (Fairclough, 2003; McKee, 2003; Wöllmer et al., 2013). Second, a survey was conducted with gamer participants asking open and closed-ended questions relating to their selections of trailers/video games to identify how they make sense of the trailers and the responses that the video game trailers evoke.

In this thesis, I further discuss video games trailers as artifacts worthy of critical and cultural consideration and the future uses of the medium. I argue that video game advertising is an interactive media concerned with generating uses and gratifications of users, including resonance, escapism, but more notably concerned more with the way these artifacts are created and consumed in the context of narratives and ability to relate to the video game itself.

However, uses and gratifications can be classified into five categories (Katz, Gurevitch, Haas, 1973): 1. Cognitive needs – acquiring information, knowledge, understanding our social environment, curiosity, exploration; 2. Affective needs – aesthetic and emotional experiences, pleasure; 3. Personal identity – self-confidence, personal stability, integrity, social status, the need for self-respect; 4. Integration and social interaction – family relations and friendship, connection with the outside world, the need for affiliation; 5. Escapism – the need to escape, tension release, shifting attention from unpleasant to pleasant.

Furthermore, because games are common as a type of interactive media and as a medium for creative or political expression, we cannot only think about them as hedonistic; we also

need to think about how they maintain and generate power social relationships (Carr, 2013). Therefore, this research builds on the development and progress of critical and cultural approaches to interactive media by combining existing theoretical approaches into a new form of consideration.

Moreover, I argue for further exploration and consideration of such themes and the types of mediums employed, semiotics, and symbols, both on the level of individual game artifacts and in terms of broader community effects. The findings of this research are thus relevant beyond the academic context and have pertinence for the gaming industry. For example, those who work in the video game industry's creative and development field and those who work in the advertising side of trailer design and development. The industry would benefit from considering how games can transmit rhetorical power, and storytelling may or may not be deliberate, and how consumers and players may reverberate with the messages they deliver. This study is also likely relevant for scholarship involved in the study of other forms of media, how these interactive forms can be used in association with their merchandise and promotions.

Background: Video Game

Video game studies are as methodologically diverse as cultural studies (Wolf, 2006), incorporating whichever disciplines are relevant. The video game context contributes to and conditions our understanding of the video game and sheds some light on how the game was produced and received (Fernández-Vara, 2019). Although research into the area of video game advertising has increased in recent years, most literature available has tended to focus on product placement or in-game advertising (Glass, 2007; Lee & Faber, 2007; Mackay et al., 2009; Mau et al., 2008; Poels et al., 2013; Walsh et al., 2013; Yang et al., 2006). The continual advancement of technology has strengthened video games' creative marketing and advertising potential in the twenty-first century (Boone & Kurtz, 2013; Gucer-Ucar & Koch,

2012; Shimp & Andrews, 2013; Smith et al, 2014). As consumers forge online communities (Goh et al., 2013) and continue to seek digital platforms for information and entertainment, digital media tactics are becoming more complex yet abundant across these platforms.

This creative potential is exhibited using narrative elements within advertising messages, which has become a common practice, especially with campaigns placed in traditional media such as television commercials and print advertisements. Extensive research has been conducted to understand better the effects and correlation between video games and violence, learning, communication, addiction, etc. However, existing research investigating the influence of narrative elements of video game advertising has focused principally on behaviour, specifically the interaction with aggressive gameplay and increased aggression through exposure, which are stereotypically youth. As previously stated, research on the effects of video game narratives as conveyed through advertising appears to be overwhelmingly focused on in-advertising or product placement (Acar, 2007; Glass, 2007; Mackay et al., 2009; Nelson et al., 2004; Tina & Buckner, 2006), resulting in limited and mixed results in the available academic literature. The impact of expert game reviews, walkthroughs, trailers, billboards, magazines, TV, and, of course, word-of-mouth about video games is limited by the available depth within the video gaming literature. Although limited contemporary research on video game advertising exists (Dietz, 1998; Ivory, 2006; Scharrer, 2004), the gap in scholarly literature concerning the effects of video game trailers on prospective buyers, and the ultimate purchase of different types of video games suggests that empirical research is required to determine what impacts video game advertisements have on audiences. The research approach was developed from a mixture of theoretical backgrounds and game studies.

Notably, further research is needed to ascertain the degree to which specific video games advertising appeals to certain demographics (Chess et al., 2017; Wesley & Barczak, 2016),

as well as how genres (Apperley, 2006; Wolf, 2002) play a role in shaping the advertisements themselves. Video game advertising is a significant venue for the video game industry to promote its products. As a form of advertising, game advertising reflects national cultural values (Bogost, 2008), as marketing campaigns focus on elements that gamers can identify with. Millions of people, youth, and children are being exposed to game advertising. Hollywood's ability to promote films is challenged by the notion that the video game industry is larger by revenue than the film industry (Berger, 2017). Video game advertising may not only influence audiences to purchase decisions, however, has the potential to influence their attitudes and perceptions of critical societal issues such as gender roles (Chess et al., 2017; Kondrat, 2015), violence and sex (Fox & Tang, 2014; Goldstick et al., 2017).

Few studies, however, have examined the information content and messages of game advertising, namely trailers. This research addresses this lacuna by examining how three bestselling violent video games, *Assassin's Creed: Syndicate*, *Fallout 4*, and *Watch Dogs 2*, deploy trailers to promote and popularise the games. Fundamental promotional and popularisation techniques analysed include creativity, storytelling, narratives, sensory gratification, audio effects, and visual effects that shape and influence consumers' perspectives and thus translate into sales. In addition, this thesis examines what elicits consumers' emotional responses and behaviours through exposure to video game trailers (Zajonc, 1968).

The framework developed in this research might be utilised to analyse and appraise which video game trailer advertising campaigns have the most significant influence. This understanding by such impacts, video game developers and ad agencies may attract broader segments within the marketplace to comprehend the explicit and latent motivations of consumption and how particular features of video games contribute to a successful campaign (Cox, 2014). As will be outlined in Chapter 2, there appears to be limited discourse

within the academic literature concerning video game advertising, specifically trailers; instead, the emphasis is placed on in-game advertising.

Significance of topic

As many critics have observed, the fragmentation of the media landscape and transformations perpetuated by technological convergence have changed the advertising model and industry (McAllister & West, 2013; Powell, 2013). In this project, I examine the ideological and rhetorical characteristics of video game advertising, namely, how audiences make sense of video game trailers' promotional and storytelling aspects. As a medium, video games offer a complete and tangible communication loop between users and content creators; by creating, players can construct their own experiences in virtual worlds using a variety of possibilities. Most games have a storyline and deliver direct authorial messages inspired by worldviews or socioeconomic imperatives (Carr, 2013). Games also encourage interactivity, escapism, and the construction and sharing of identity with other players, which are increasingly being used in place of other forms of media (Castells et al., 2009). However, as explored in later chapters, video game trailers aim to plant predispositions about the protagonists and antagonists. The significance of this research is that it also seeks to explain how plots concerning superheroes vindicate their role as purveyors of violence, specifically through the motif of vigilantism, a justifiable (according to the trailer's narrative) form of self-administered violence. The responses of audiences to violence that is expended to correct supposed injustices will be examined in conjunction with how trailer messages delineate between the villain and the hero.

The video game industry is characterised by rapid development and constant turmoil (Ip, 2008; Johns, 2006; Sotamaa & Karppi, 2010; Williams, 2002). In 2019, the traditional game advertising revenue was estimated to be approximately 65 million Australian dollars, which is a sustained growth from 2015, wherein the market was estimated to be worth approximately

40 million Australian dollars. The industry is on its path towards further proliferation of users, with the Australian consumers accounting for one of the highest per-capita spending's on video games worldwide (Hughes, 2020).

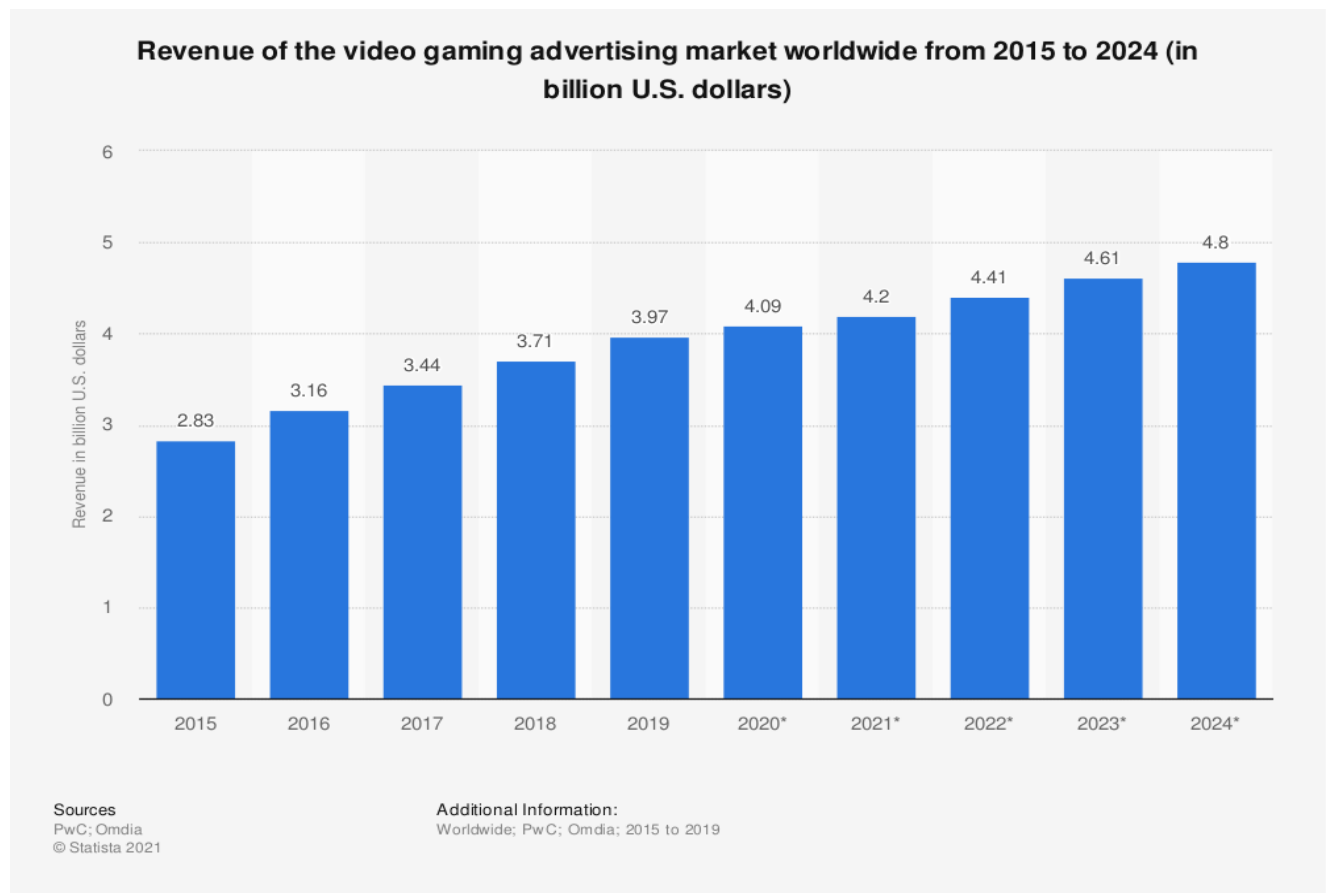


Table 1.1 “Revenue of the video gaming advertising market worldwide from 2015 to 2024”

Table 1.1 presents the revenue of the video games advertising industry worldwide from 2015 to 2019, with a forecast until 2024. In 2021, the global video games advertising market was estimated to be worth just over four billion US dollars and is expected to reach 4.8 billion by 2024. As a result of this growth in the industry and associated advertising, games now seem “to be the fastest growing and most exciting category of mass media for the coming decade” (Marchand & Hennig-Thurau, 2013, p.141).

Advertisers acknowledge that the modern consumer seldom processes advertisements consciously and with the intent to evaluate the brand or product (Weilbacher, 2003). As a result, advertisers adopted visual strategies to appeal to this low-involvement or passive style of processing (Marchand & Hennig-Thurau, 2013). Video games trailers need to be to the point while conveying the key elements of the video game and critically ensuring they do not expose too much, espouse the mystic and enigma. In consideration of consumers' attention limits, contemporary advertisers now rely on increasingly visual marketing techniques. (McQuarrie & Phillips, 2008).

I engage with various theories to inform the thesis's analysis. They include Todorov and Weinstein's (1969) equilibrium theory, which looks at how a narrative starts in a balanced state, then at an event that disturbs that balance, and finally how the story will finish with a new balanced state. Lévi-Strauss (1990) binary opposition theory defines those narratives that transpire when two contrasting ideas, forces, or concepts come into conflict, which thus creates events in the narrative, and the resolution of the opposite ends the narrative. Barthes (1988) explores the relations between units in narrative discourse and the consequences of these relationships for meaning. As such, narratives set up mysteries, which audiences engage with to try to find the answers. Foss (2017) will be used to shape the rhetorical analysis in the later Chapters. Finally, storytelling reflects a significant part of the research, namely its ability to persuade and provoke emotive reactions. Thus, the use of emplotment is critical. The details of a compelling story happen as part of a bigger narrative theme in a process called emplotment, and the various master story plots pertinent to each trailer will be applied (Kent, 2015). Many view any form of entertainment or fun as a means of escapism.

Table 1.2 shows "for fun" as the biggest reason for playing video games.

Reasons for playing video games according to global gaming audiences as of 4th quarter 2020, by device

Reasons for gaming worldwide 2020, by device

	Games console	Handheld gaming device	PC/laptop	Smartphone	VR headset
For fun	70%	60%	67%	65%	61%
For the challenge	36%	38%	34%	31%	48%
For the storlines/narratives	28%	33%	22%	18%	36%
To compete online	23%	28%	22%	19%	41%
To escape reality	30%	30%	26%	23%	37%

Table 1.2 - Reasons for playing video games

Source: Statista: Worldwide; GlobalWebIndex; Q4 2020; 19,488 respondents; 16-64 years

Media texts present a world which is greater, better, brighter, bolder than our own. According to Dyer's (2002) Utopia theory, this world (in this context of video games) offers a form of escapism from our dull reality, and therefore it enables players to go beyond the borders of reality as well as enabling them to become more superior than they are. Advertising seeks to encapsulate this narrative:

offers the image of 'something better' to escape into, or something we want deeply that our day-to-day lives don't provide. Alternatives, hopes, wishes— these are the stuff of utopia, the sense that things could be better, that something other than what is can be imagined and maybe realized (Dyer 2002, P.177).

Uses and Gratifications theory by Katz and Blumler (1974) looks at diversion, personal relationships, surveillance, and personal identity. The theory states that audiences look for media texts, which satisfy their needs. Additionally, these needs can be practical by means (uses) or through emotions (gratifications). The two-step flow theory Katz (1957) will also be applied to this research. The theory states that audience sentiments are shaped by opinion leaders (game reviews). Opinion leaders include the press, experts, walk-throughs, and

blogs. Advertising repeatedly targets opinion leaders (in an apparent or latent manner) for the influence they have on other prospective game buyers, customers and consume.

Overview of Methodology

This research takes a mixed-methods approach in gathering and analysing data through the lens of “critical rhetoric”, as suggested by McKerrow (1989). To collect data about the promotional and popularisation strategies of video games advertising, two methods have been applied to a sample of the top three best-selling games of 2014, *Assassins Creed: Syndicate*, *Fallout 4*, and *Watch Dogs 2*. First, I created a survey via Survey Monkey with 26 questions, including five open-ended to allow for more individual opinions on the trailers. The surveys have three trailer options to choose, and participants had the option of one of three trailers to view and then provide answers. Second, I undertook a textual analysis of the marketing websites for each game, using the various theories outlined in the overview of theory section as the units of analysis to separately look at the pictorial, auditory, music and textual elements of the websites and advertisements. Specifically, a textual analysis was conducted on keywords found in viewers' comments, including words relating to three key themes: Storytelling, justice, and power.

I also undertook a textual analysis (Fairclough, 2003; Pang et al., 2008) of online communities or fan groups related to each game, analysing their comments and ratings (of trailers) on various websites (EB Games, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter). I coded and charted their responses and comments in the threads and tables to ascertain how certain mediums generated more or less favourable criticism and gendered comments. I also established the keywords that represent common responses used to evaluate a video game trailer. This analysis was derived from a collection of the best-selling video games as determined by sales data for 2013/14. To examine how the video games present the ideological issues under display, it is crucial to have some direct experience with the case study games, so auto-ethnographic data about how the games operate on ludic and narrative levels is incorporated into the thesis. Together, these elements are used in this thesis to explore how ideologies of violence, justice, and storytelling are sold to prospective players and employed within video game trailers.

Contributions

This research aims to encourage further exploration and consideration of this theme and the types of media employed, semiotics, and symbols, both at the level of individual game artefacts and in terms of broader community effects. The findings of this research is also relevant beyond the academic context and for the industry, both for those who work in the creative and development fields of the video game industry and those who work on the advertising side of trailer design and development. These constituents would benefit from considering how games can transmit rhetorical power, and how storytelling may or may not be deliberate, and how consumers and players may reverberate with the messages, they deliver. Other experts employed in other media forms may also value acquiring knowledge of

how these interactive forms can be used in association with their merchandise and promotions.

Thesis structure

This work is divided into nine Chapters. Chapter 1, this Chapter, has provided a brief overview of the research and its stakes. Chapter 2 delves more deeply into the literature, proposing a framework for the research supported by previous video game and advertising research. Chapter 3 will elaborate upon the methodology, and research questions introduced early in this Chapter to illustrate data collection and analysis processes. Chapter 4 will discuss the trailers, drawing upon case study analysis theories. Chapter 5 will examine representation and misrepresentation in the trailers. Chapter 6 analyses storytelling and discusses emplotment, engagement, emotion, protagonists, and resonance. Chapter 7 explores how rhetoric and persuasion play out in the trailers and discusses immersion and sound, unique experiences, identification, and agency. Chapter 8 will look at vigilantism and how audiences question authority and the status quo, as well as how the power dynamic between authority and characters is shaped by providing context for how the privileged act. Finally, in Chapter 9, the discussion integrates the research findings and draws several conclusions in response to the research questions presented in the research. A detailed discussion of alternative accounts of the findings is included and acknowledges the research's limitations. This Chapter also provides implications for broader narrative and cultural studies and recommendations for future research on these topics. Video games and advertising for such media, as explained above, are signs of an incredible drive concerning deeper user agency in the correlation between users and media content. As such, game developers and publishers sell the view of interactivity and a sense of emancipation, but those consequences might still be incomplete due to financial and technological strains. This is possibly challenging since the media we consume can often go beyond echoing realism

and have an influence on constructing our perception of it (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2010). The gaming industry is a formidable and sweeping influence regardless of age, whether young or old alike.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to provide information about the role of video game trailers in attracting audiences. As many authors have observed, the fragmentation of the media landscape and the transformations perpetuated by technological convergence have changed the advertising model and industry structure. The significance of this research is that it seeks to explain how plots concerning superheroes vindicate their role as purveyors of violence, specifically through the motif of vigilantism, a justifiable (according to the narrative of the trailer) form of self-administered violence. The responses of audiences to violence that is expended to correct supposed injustices will be examined in the coming Chapters in conjunction with how trailer messages delineate between the villain and the hero. Finally, I will use the research to examine the playful elements that make up the character of video game trailers and explain how a holistic impression of the video game is portrayed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Even those activities, which aim at the immediate satisfaction of vital needs –hunting, for instance – tend, in archaic society, to take on the play-form. Social life is endowed with supra-biological forms, in the shape of play, which enhance its value. It is through playing that society expresses its interpretation of life and the world. By this we do not mean that play turns into culture, rather that in its earliest phases culture has the play-character, that it proceeds in the shape and the mood of play. (Huizinga, 1955; 2014, p. 46).

In this literature review, I develop a conceptual basis for the thesis. This chapter draws on video game trailers, which, according to research, present a compelling story that audiences can develop an intense emotional connection with and identify with. As measured by views, likes, comments, and shares, popular video game trailers have some common attributes; they invite audiences to predict and wonder, while also reaching out through the placement of iconic images that evoke nostalgia. Video game trailers also reveal, conceal, and tease, which incites viewers to peruse the content for hints. The literature reviewed is grouped into distinct and interconnected thematic sections: games and play, video game trailers, marketing, and social impacts to establish the theoretical framework for the current study. Other topics discussed in this chapter include the history and origins of video game development, game study theories, promotion, violence, and culture.

Although trailers are “the most effective tool for movie promotion” (Hixson, 2006, p. 216), explored further in Chapter 4, limited research has been conducted on video game trailers and their effects. Studios spend significant financial resources on basic marketing (Friend,

2009). In 2021, the global video games advertising market was estimated to be worth just over four billion US dollars and is expected to reach 4.8 billion by 2024 (Clement, 2020).

The limited existing video game trailer research (Barczak & Wesley, 2012; Torres, 2012, 2014; Wilson, 2011) confirms the scarcity of study on this theme. Before approaching an answer to the research questions and before engaging with the participant surveys and data analysis, I delve into relevant literature in this Chapter. Due to the nature of the topic, this investigation includes literature from numerous scholarly disciplines, amounting to a rich and inclusive dialogue around a subject that is important and studied in many fields. The literature review contains the following subsections: (a) Games and Play; (b) “Promotion and Storytelling”; (c) “Trailers”; (d) “Violence”; (e) “Social Factors”; and (f) “Culture”. The first section examines what video game trailers and storytelling, as discussed in Chapter 6, mean to audiences and how they are made possible by emerging communication. To answer an essential question in the history of video games - what do they mean to audiences? It is imperative first to consider how significance is generally achieved, how history plays a role in this process, and, of course, what we could do. This study of the dynamics of the psyche includes an updated theory of storytelling and its role in the development of narrative content. A summary of these ideas offers a profound psychological lens that is applied to historical research. Viewing the channels that bridge the experience and facilitate communication gives insight into our significance for narrative content. Other subsections also examine the relationship between the history of video games and their impact on our social, cultural, and contemporary violence. To prepare for the concept of video game storytelling, it is salient first to determine how video game trailer narratives resemble other narrative formats and how they differ. From a general perspective, I examine fiction and fantasy and the relationship between narrative content and the storytelling of video game trailers.

Huizinga (1995) describes play as "a free activity standing quite consciously outside 'ordinary' life as being 'not serious,' but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly" (p. 13). Video games are generally understood as "sites of play and entertainment" (Yee, 2006, p. 68) but also as a form of work (Yee, 2006). Conceptualising video games as sites of play and entertainment is a valuable starting point for exploring the evolution of gaming and the industry. According to Bontchev (2016) "playing computer games is a predominantly emotional rather than rational process" (p.3). Video games do not simply offer entertainment and social interaction, as explained in Chapter 4; they are intrinsically treasured activities reinforced through rules and goals that players willingly accept. This is realised through three key attributes: they display content visually, are interactive, and are typically used for entertainment or have entertainment-like qualities.

Several scholars working with video games have influenced my work (Gee, 2003; Gray, 2010; Jenkins et al., 2018; Wright & Bogost, 2007). My thesis is interested in perspectives that illuminate how video games, namely trailers, can influence audiences through their use of narratives and storytelling, as chapter 6 explores the role of employment.

History/origins of video games development

One of the first reports of video games was filed in a patent and described as a "Cathode-ray tube amusement device" in 1947 by Goldsmith and Ray (Goldsmith & Ray, 1948; Mitra, 2010). Video games give people a greater level of control than they experience in real life, as the characters on the television screen respond to their every command (Vorderer, 2001). In addition, each player may progress to a higher skill level to satisfy their quest for a fulfilling game experience since most video games provide various skill levels (Rouse III, 2010). Herz (1997) described the initial research of video games thus: "Nolan Bushnell, inventor of the first two commercial video games, *Spacewar!* and *Pong*, did all of his initial usability testing in bars" (p.28). Thus, in 1976, the first adventure game was born, and later in the 1980s, strategy games became popular in the wake of the success of such games as *Pirates of the Caribbean* by Microprose (Björk et al., 2001) and *SimCity* by Maxis (Juul, 2004).

Games and Play

Studies of human play commonly take a personal or even psychological approach (Bergen, 2015; Berne, 1968; Britt & Janus, 1941; Carlson et al., 2010; Gray, 2015; Henricks, 2007).

One of the earliest definitions of games stems from Huizinga, who describes the play as a free activity standing quite consciously outside 'ordinary' life as being 'not serious', but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly (Huizinga, 1955). This demonstrates the non-serious and playful characteristics of games while maintaining user engagement and player absorption. Huizinga (1955) served a pioneering role in in-game studies established that play is older than culture and has fashioned a kind of prototype for numerous facets of civilisation. According to Huizinga, philosophy, linguistics, war, law, and art possess a play component at their centre, so he interprets the multidisciplinary relationship between games and play. Frasca (2001, p. 4) offers a descriptive definition of a video game as "any form of

computer-based entertainment software, either textual or image-based, using any electronic platform such as personal computers or consoles and involving one or multiple players in a physical or networked environment". Shubik and Shubik (1964) define a game as involving "decision-makers with different goals or objectives whose fates are intertwined. Individuals are in a situation in which there may be many possible outcomes with different values to them".

Characteristics of video games

According to Berger (2002) comprehensive characteristics of video games:

- Serve as entertainment
- Have rules by which players are bound
- Often take place in certain locations
- Offer a competitive aspect for gamers
- Are seen as artificial or unreal
- Offer many different genres
- Allow the possibility of cheating
- Allow the player to stop when he/she feels like it.

More recent conceptualisations reflect a growing trend of engagement and outcome orientation in games. According to Salen and Zimmerman (2004) who attempt to unify other earlier explanations: "A game is a system in which players engage in an artificial conflict, defined by rules that results in a quantifiable outcome" (Salen & Zimmerman, 2004, p. 80). Juul (2003) extends beyond rules and outcomes in the following definition:

a game is a rule-based formal system with a variable and quantifiable outcome, where different outcomes are assigned different values, the player exerts effort in order to influence the outcome, the player feels attached to the outcome, and the consequences of the activity are optional and negotiable (Juul, 2003, p. 35)

According to Gee (2005a), a fundamental motivation for all game-playing is learning. While Suits (2014), suggests an additional definitional element of challenge: "playing a game is the voluntary attempt to overcome unnecessary obstacles" (Suits, 2014, pp. 54-55). What do these various definitions of games convey about their role and purpose? These definitions underscore how games generally and, more specifically videogames, are designed structures of conflict. Hence games are regulated by their rules. According to some scholars (Caillois & Barash, 1961; Crawford, 1984; Eskelinen, 2001; Huizinga, 2014; Juul, 2011; Koster, 2013), rules govern the game world and are the true heart of the game experience. Bateson (1955) stated that within a magic circle or performance setting of the game, rules afford actions with certain connotations so that players' they interpret movements within the context of the game (Klabbers, 2009; Montola, 2005). In this fashion, comparable to other computational systems, games can be defined by their procedurality (Bogost, 2007; Juul, 2005; Murray, 1997): the rules of a game describe the technique a player networks with experiences in that game. Juul (2011) expands this notion by stating that the "rules of a game add meaning and enable actions by setting up differences between potential moves and events" (p. 19). Salen and Zimmerman (2004) state that playing games is meaningful because of the structure of rules that exist during play.

A key feature of games is learning and overcoming (at times unnecessary) obstacles becomes a defining aspect. Games are particularly structured to produce conflict in their

structure and designs; accordingly, rules are the core of the experience. One's experience while playing games has meaning because of the rules that are established during play. Based on the foregoing conceptualisations, for the purpose of this thesis, a game is viewed as a multi-faceted entertaining experience that engagement and outcome orientation in games are critically significant.

Games study theories

Two early schools of thought within game studies reflect an intense and enduring debate within the field of study (Frasca, 2003; Murray & Murray, 2017; Pearce, 2005; Qin et al., 2009). Beyond defining games, one of the earliest examinations of game studies looked at the relationship between games and other media. The narratology position, described extensively in the Handbook of Narratology (Hühn et al., 2014), strives to link digital games to other forms of media, namely literature, theatre, and film (Aarseth, 1997; Galloway, 2006; Laurel, 1993, 2013; Murray, 1997; Ryan, 2005). Meister et al. (2005) illustrate Narratology as a largely unexplored field, intersecting through media studies.

This view is challenged by ludologists, who note that the difference between games and narratives is that games address "external observers" who apprehend "what has happened," whereas the latter requires "involved players" who care about "what is going to happen" (Frasca, 2003). This position pursues credit for the exceptional features of games, particularly their prescribed components and rules (Bogost, 2007, 2008; Frasca, 1999, 2001; Juul, 2003; 2004; 2005; 2011).

However, other schools of game studies explore games for learning and literacy (Gee, 2005a, 2005b, 2007, 2014; Shaffer et al., 2005; Squire, 2006, 2008, 2011; Squire & Jenkins,

2003) and signify the method in which games nurture skills and understanding, for example, those matched to the information workforce (Aldrich, 2005; Dibbell, 2007; Steinkuehler & Williams, 2006; Yee, 2006). Games engage discussion around how games instil ideals and behaviours, the latter possibly including mutually positive and negative behaviours, such as increased problem-solving ability on the one hand, and addiction and aggression on the other (Cover, 2006; Jenkins et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2005). This vein of game studies has attracted the most controversy and media attention. While most often framed in the context of media effects and potentially detrimental impacts of games, there is an increasing emphasis on how games might be leveraged to promote real-world change (Baranowski et al., 2008; Charsky, 2010; Fogg, 2002; Juul, 2012; McGonigal, 2011; Reeves et al., 2012; Ritterfeld et al., 2009; Schreiner, 2008; Suits, 2014; Swain, 2007; Thompson et al., 2007; Werbach & Hunter, 2012; Whitson & Dormann, 2011).

Another branch of game study examines the production of digital games using a political-economy lens. Chapter 8, about vigilantism, looks closely at the role of the law and power in depth. This work highlights the industry of digital game production, its linkage into a larger "military-entertainment" complex, software labour and development practises (Dyer-Witheford & De Peuter, 2009; Herz, 1997; Huntemann & Payne, 2009; Leonard, 2004), and the shift of players from consumers to co-producers that comes with the popularisation of end-user content (Banks & Potts, 2010; Charsky, 2010; Grimes, 2006; O'hern & Rindfleisch, 2010; Sotamaa, 2007). Related work on the production and business of digital games comes from many fields, including geography (Johns, 2006), sociology (Kerr, 2006), political economy (Nieborg & Hermes, 2008) and management and organisational studies (Bengtsson et al., 2010; Cadin et al., 2006; Readman & Grantham, 2006; Tschang, 2005, 2007; Zackariasson, Styhre, et al., 2006).

Game rules are most understood as the formalised structures found in the instructions or allowed by the computer game engine. "A game designer is responsible for designing gameplay, conceiving and designing rules and structures" (Salen & Zimmerman, 2004, p. 1). However, rules can also be informally established, verbally or nonverbally, through the social contract established by the players agreeing to play (Adams, 2014; Sniderman, 1999; Stenros et al., 2009). For example, players might place limits on what characters or moves are fair to use in a fighting game, such as *Super Smash Bros* (Hung, 2011; Jakobsson, 2007; Soltis, 2008; Taylor, 2009), or even design their own games and rules within an existing system. A complex mix of rules generally structures games as they are written down, with the rules as the players understand them as they are enacted by the players (Zackariasson & Wilson, 2012). The designed rules of a game shape and influence how players play a game, but players can also choose which rules are followed. This may allow greater flexibility or perhaps a sense of empowerment for players. Cheating can also be used to influence gameplay and subvert rules (Consalvo, 2005a, 2005b, 2007, Davidson & Consalvo, 2005, Vázquez & Consalvo, 2013).

Rules define the confines of a game, and players must, therefore, adhere to these rules within the context of the game. According to Salen and Zimmerman (2004), this concept has been widespread with game designers given the pioneering and often cited design book, *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals*, to talk about how to theorise the space of a game and in what manner players approach games as unique artefacts with distinct guidelines for engagement. As Salen and Zimmerman (2004) explain, "the magic circle of a game is the space within which a game takes place. Whereas more informal forms of play do not have a distinct boundary, the formalised nature of games makes the magic circle explicit" (p. 99).

Understanding the importance of rules and their application in video game trailer analysis is critical. Although, before becoming players, they are the audience or onlookers, a video game trailer serves to broadly condition the viewers to the rudimentary characteristics of the video game and deliver hints on some of the rules expected. Upholding the rules, consequently, to interact with fundamental rules while imagining a fictional world, and a video game is a set of rules as well as a fictional world. Audiences understand the role of rules within games, which is explained in Chapters 4 and 5 on how audiences have certain expectations games must pose. While most often framed in the context of media effects and potentially detrimental impacts of games, there is an increasing emphasis on how games might be leveraged to promote real-world change. This chapter has importantly explained the two major schools of thought of narratology and ludology. Narratology strives to link digital games to other forms of media, namely literature, theatre, and film. And, ludology, looking at the difference between games and narratives, is that games address external observers.

Promotion

“The point is not only that interactive games are now a crucial node in a web of synergistic advertising, branding, and licensing practices that spread throughout contemporary popular culture. It is also that these promotional practices work their way back into game content – so that considerations of market segmentation, branding, franchising, licensing, and media spin-offs are now present at the very inception of game characters, scenarios, and plotlines” (Kline & Dyer-Witheford, 2003, p. 21).

Advertising is becoming increasingly crucial to the video game industry. Video games are dependent on advertising to build product awareness and compete for users' engagement.

Game advertising is increasingly becoming a vital link in attracting game recognition and sales (Gallardo-Echenique, 2021). The game market is highly competitive, with an extensive range of titles for the consumer to choose from. The quality of a game does not necessarily guarantee success, given that retail space is limited, and the game market is overcrowded (Borg et al., 2019). The video game business is "hit" driven, thus requiring vast expenditures on advertising products. Not all video game developers disclose specific funds allocated to marketing and branding. Electronic Arts (EA), one of the world's most established and most prominent video game companies (Taylor, 2009), nevertheless does. According to Statista, EA spent US \$702 million on sales and marketing in 2019.

Within the framework of an integrative marketing approach, today's marketers must work closely with various marketing partners when it comes to creating customer lifetime value and building strong customer relationships (Bickhoff et al., 2014). Video game marketing aims to ultimately communicate key elements succinctly, particularly the storytelling facets of games. Stories have caught people's attention since the beginning of time. According to Miller (2013), unlike earlier forms of advertising, which adopted one-way or passive forms of media promotion, storytelling in interactive digital media encourages audiences to become more actively involved with the content. Chapter 6 provides content on this critical topic. The topics explored relate to this aspect of the literature review, which includes engagement through identification, audience emotion, and the audience part of the narrative.

People want to believe in myths and stories (Jensen, 1999; Kelley & Littman, 2006), while brands communicate myths (Belk & Costa, 1998; Holt, 2004; Holt & Thompson, 2004; Megehee & Woodside, 2010; Randazzo, 1995; Roberts, 2005; Woodside et al., 2008). Brands also play an essential role in consumers' life stories (Fournier, 1998; Gabriel & Lang, 2006, 2008; Woodside, 2010; Woodside et al., 2008). Furthermore, Fog (2010) states how companies can tell their own stories to communicate the brand values and what the company espouses. From a video game perspective, storytelling serves to sustain their

pursuit of achieving consumer awareness (Fog et al., 2005; Nitsche, 2008; Scolari, 2009). Whether real or fictional, stories provide meaning to brands (Denning, 2006; Leventhal & Papadatos, 2006; Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård, 2004).

Indeed, video game buyers and players are looking for experiences that appeal to their passions and dreams, and stories can help them achieve this (Fog et al., 2005; Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). Video game stories have protagonists, and marketers can turn the brand, the employees, or the customers into heroes with positive effects on internal and external brand perceptions (Barker & Gower, 2010; Kelley & Littman, 2006). This is explored further in Chapter 6 in the section 'Protagonists and resonance.'

In theory, the tale has a filtering effect, affecting people's perceptions of the brand and so increasing its value. As shown in Table 2.1 customers in the non-exposed group made all of their brand associations based simply on the packaging, whereas those who heard the story made all of their associations based entirely on the story.

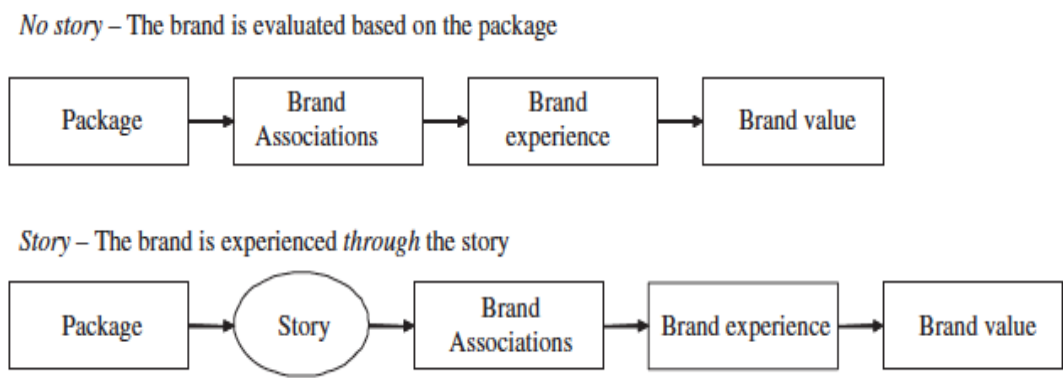


Table 2.0 No Story vs. Story

Source: (Lundqvist et al., 2013, p. 293)

Video games are a cyclical business (Liu, 2010). The designation of game titles is contingent on the technical capabilities of the hardware for which they are designed, which,

of course, has advanced critically in recent years. Dovey and Kennedy (2006) state that video games have historically been marketed to one primary demographic: males. The main audience for games is understood to be older teens. However, as Carstens and Beck (2004) noted, the generation that grew up with games in the 1970s has now grown up. There is also sufficient evidence that this generation continued playing games, only now recognised as video games (Allaire et al., 2013; De Schutter, 2010; Pearce, 2008; Quandt et al., 2008; Suominen, 2008). This means that the average age of gamers is increasing (Rice et al., 2011; Tapscott, 2009), the first generation is ageing, and subsequent generations will also embrace this medium. Meanwhile, the average age of gamers is now 31 years old (Alonso-Diaz et al., 2019). Another major shift in the stereotypical gamer is gender, with the rise of serious female gamers (Dunlop, 2014; Hayes, 2005; Royse et al., 2007; Rutter & Bryce, 2006). With the penetration of video game arcade machines, in-game parlours (Griffiths, 1991; Raessens & Goldstein, 2011) and the introduction of the home computer (Campbell-Kelly & Aspray, 2009; Subrahmanyam et al., 2000), adolescents (also branded as 'Generation G' (Beck & Wade, 2013; Carstens & Beck, 2004) reached adulthood playing video games. Additionally, every generation that has adopted playing games, including Generation G, has continued to play video games. The rising average age (Association, 2014) and changing buying behaviour have elevated purchasing power. Zichermann and Linder (2010) caution that this generation is somewhat savvy, given their history and experience in gaming, so they are unlikely to be as accessible to or vulnerable to traditional advertising messages as their predecessors. In this instance, word-of-mouth plays a significant role in shaping perception. This shift has added unique challenges for video game marketing; the target market is no longer predominantly males. With gender differences come diverse appeals, prefaces, and identification with game characters (Dickey, 2006; Gorriz & Medina, 2000; Greenberg et al., 2010; Juul, 2012; Kaikati & Kaikati, 2004).

This section explores the roles and value of informing prospective buyers of video games and their associated media in helping to build the video games resonance with audiences through promotions.

Advertising scholar Nixon's (1937) five principles for promotion:

1. To attract attention
2. To direct attention
3. To hold the reader's interest
4. To create a pleasant feeling
5. To assist in conveying the advertiser's message

Notwithstanding that the video game industry is widely regarded as a highly creative industry (Cohendet & Simon, 2007; Johns, 2006; King, 2002; Teipen, 2008; Tschang, 2007; Zackariasson, Styhre, et al., 2006), although this perspective has been challenged (Scolari, 2009; Zackariasson & Wilson, 2012). Newman (2002) wrote of the need for video games advertising to be more targeted and ensure more significant filtering of prospective audiences. Much of the literature concerning video game advertisements emphasises forging a bond between video games advertising and violence, acutely towards children (Anderson et al., 2007; Eastin, 2006; Grossman & DeGaetano 2009; Robinson et al., 2001; Scharrer, 2004). However, there is limited evidence to support the idea that video games or video game advertisements promote violence (Gunter, 1998; Kühn et al., 2018; Shaw, 2010). However, Chapter 8 on vigilantism provides an additional understanding of violence and justice.

There are abundant opportunities for the promotion of video games, presented by the creative potential of the product. These opportunities and advances in marketing reflect how developers must dynamically position their game titles and adapt to the ever-evolving

advertising environment and archetypes (Corts & Lederman, 2009; Kirby, 2012; Payne, 2012; Therrien & Picard, 2015). Such environments offer innovative and exciting techniques for both the video game industry and other industries to interconnect with prospective consumers (Kaye & Johnson, 2011).

Video game promotions need to be developed in accordance with market research (Hunicke et al., 2004) on consumer predispositions for the intended target market (Pinelle et al., 2008). The rise of consumer engagement (Pinelle et al., 2008) in the design and development process (Dickey, 2005, 2007; Rieber, 1996) reflects their prominence and ensures a marketing methodology that undeniably reflects their value structure and overall expectations.

In this discussion, it is worth exploring how audiences are engaged with many of the stages of development. Additionally, they impact how video game production works and, in turn, how video game production works. Based on Miège (1989), the table below explains how national culture and regulation might result in distinctions within an industry and elaborates

on the range of decisions made at an industrial and product level.

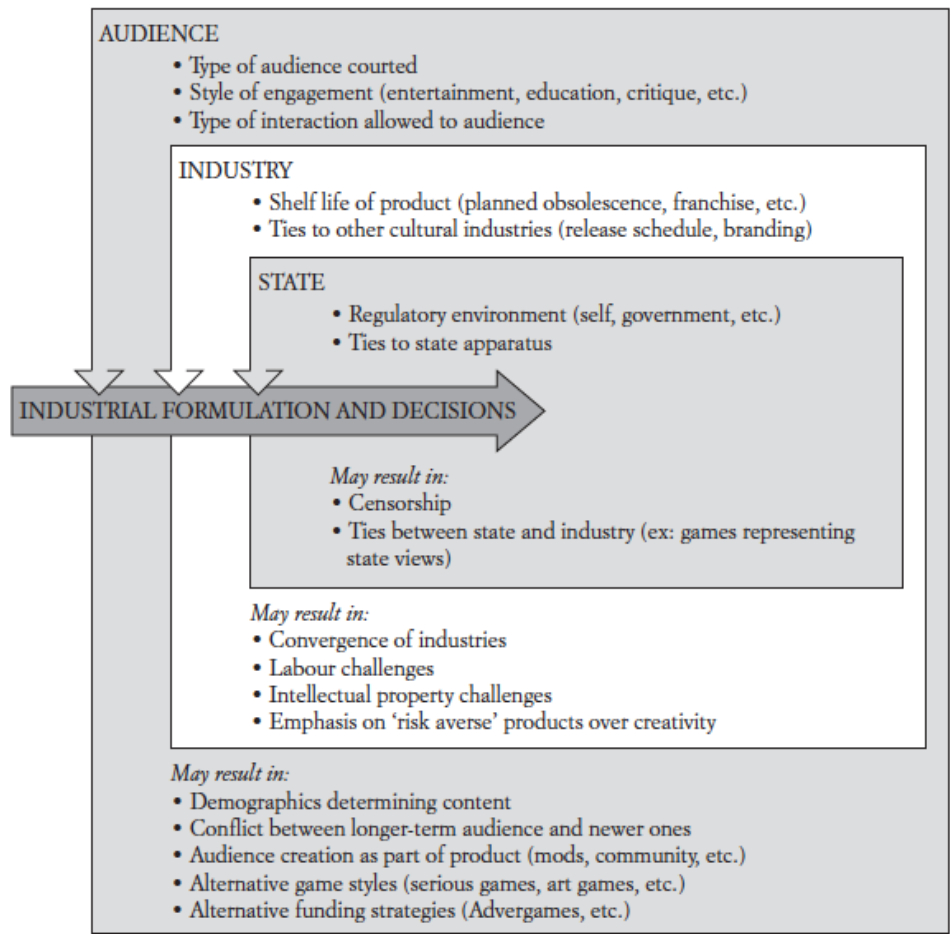


Table 2.1 - The Video Game Business.

Source: Nichols 2014, p. 5

What it suggests is that several different factors – audiences, how to engage with them, and the role and location of state control on the industry – impact how video game promotion works and, in turn, how video game production (Nichols, 2012) itself can change how it relates to those factors in the future. In other words, a different set of choices produces a different sort of production and industry (Balland et al., 2013). Colbert (2009) argues that compared to traditional products in culture and the arts, conventional marketing methods cannot sufficiently echo the existence of the artistic environment. The significance is that marketing culture (Colbert et al., 1994; Costa-Sánchez & Baró, 2019; Daniel & Garry, 2018; Seabrook, 2000) has a more in-depth focus on the product itself, and thus consumers are

direct participants in the development at the latter stages. Moreover, as video games should be deemed cultural products (Kerr, 2006; Kline & Dyer-Witheford, 2003), there may be a conceivable incongruity between traditional marketing and video games.

Video games are mass-marketed (Anderson, 2019; Lucas & Sherry, 2004; Mandiberg, 2021; Shankar & Bayus, 2003; Williams, 2002). Specifically, they tended to be introduced into the marketplace based on what developers assumed would be attractive to serious gamers. Williams (2002) identifies the key players in getting a game to market as publishers, developers, and hardware manufacturers. Williams (2002) also notes the importance of retail and advertising in the economics of the industry. Dymek (2010) contends that games are still developed for hardcore gamers. Only recently have video game developers engaged in a segmentation approach (Ramírez-Correa et al., 2020; Scott, 2013; Toh, 2018) and now aim to meet segment expectations. At the same time, the rise of social media (Asur & Huberman, 2010; Gilbert & Karahalios, 2009; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Kietzmann et al., 2011) has generated a new segment that now embraces game-play on a casual level. Bosser and Nakatsu (2006) discussed a shift in reaching out to casual and hardcore gamers and messaging that embraces otherwise marginal segments and users. Video game advertising has traditionally been geared towards keen enthusiasts; their shift is clear and understanding the diverse types of gamers is critical in shaping a message to a much wider audience, consequently moving away from just focusing on the stereotypical gamers. This is part of the future research explained in Chapter 3 to consider diverse audiences, not stereotypical segments.

Advertising and promotion strategies employed by other products fail to mirror the artistic environment. Thus, missing the diverse layers originally romanticised for the video game. Furthermore, as cultural products, there is a potential incongruity between traditional marketing and video games. The games industry has several key players, including

developers, publishers, and hardware manufacturers, note the industry's important roles of retail and advertising. Traditionally, video games appeared to be overwhelmingly for hardcore gamers. Only recently have video developers sought to segment the market; simultaneously, the rise of social media and internet usage has challenged traditional and somewhat stereotypical gamers. Kultima (2009) coins the notion of "the normalization of digital play":

The expansion of the player basis as well as the instrumental and functional approaches to games concurs with the transformations of other digital environments. As digital environments have become more accessible to large populations and are increasingly part of everyday lives, the ways and means of using them are becoming multifaceted and part of wider experiences (p. 1).

Sutton-Smith (1986) identifies video games as a highly remarkable technical triumph and that the individuals that engage in gaming view themselves as artists (Borowiecki & Prieto-Rodriguez, 2017; Muriel & Crawford, 2018). This viewpoint is deliberately leveraged to produce and market video games that appeal to prospective consumers - video games are portrayed as a form of creative expression. Akrich (1992) supports this argument and states that all designers of new products attempt to anticipate and exemplify the envisioned consumer. However, Zackariasson, Walfisz, et al. (2006) go further by stating that Akrich (1992), the designers of video games, ultimately create the users because elements present in any development process anticipate expected needs and wants. Many games are not informal products. Regardless of dreams harboured by wistful would-be-developers, computer games are not commonly made in someone's basement. They are made by genuine people - highly skilled and trained people working within big companies with real manufacturing structures. It is imperative to consider the mass production of video games and the commercial process that makes their manufacturing possible because both their

aesthetics and consumption are affected by this overarching framework. Existing hardware, system ownership, the worldwide economic climate, competition between authors, and the good reputation of venture capitalists all affect the readily available games on the market.

Table 2.2 below provides an insight into the channels involved in the production of video games, from the manufacturers through to consumers, which play an important role in the promotion and distribution process.

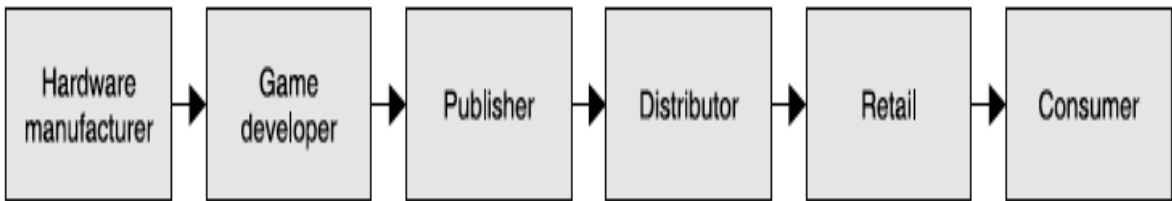


Table 2.2 production of video games

Source Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al., 2013, p. 16

Adding on to Gray (2019) concept of 'speculative consumption', wherein audience create an idea of what pleasures any one text will provide, the next section of this Chapter is imperative in this research. Video game trailers refer to this textual construction and affective sensation as speculative nostalgia, asserting that it constitutes contemporary video game culture. When situated into the contexts, video game trailers prove to be rich sites for examining an old but new medium to promote audience interest and appeal. Kernan (2009) considers trailers’ unique temporal status as, paradoxically, nostalgic structures of feeling for a film we haven't seen yet” (p.15–16).

This Chapter has highlighted some significant factors that support the direction and central themes of this thesis. Undeniably, video games are a striking technological achievement, with gamers often considering themselves performers. This outlook is used to create and sell video games that cater to potential customers - video games are portrayed as a means of artistic expression, as explored in Chapter 6. In this Chapter, I will discuss why storytelling

is a significant element in affecting audiences." This idea is important to note, given that all contemporary product designers seek to predict and exemplify the imagined user. Still, and as mentioned, some consider video game designers to be consumers because elements are present in every creation phase and predict anticipated needs and wants. Video game trailers are the primary means of evoking the interest manufactured by real people. Since this overarching context influences both the aesthetics and the consumption of video games, it is critical to understand their mass production and the commercial process that enables their production. This chapter has explained the role of market research on consumer predispositions for the chosen target market to build video game promotions in the design and development process, reflects their significance, and ensures a marketing methodology that unmistakably reflects their value structure and overall expectations.

	Author(s)	Topic(s) / Title
1	Gallardo-Echenique, 2021	Players Attitudes Towards In-Game Advertising
2	Borg et al., 2019	Video Game Development in a Rush: A Survey of the Global Game Jam Participants
3	Bickhoff et al., 2014	Marketing and Marketing Management: A First Basic Understanding
4	Jensen, 1999	Myths and mythologies
5	Belk & Costa, 1998	The Mountain Man Myth: A Contemporary Consuming Fantasy
6	Holt & Thompson, 2004;	Man-of-action heroes: The pursuit of heroic masculinity in everyday consumption
7	Megehee & Woodside, 2010	Creating visual narrative art for decoding stories that consumers and brands tell
8	Gabriel & Lang, 2006	The unmanageable consumer
9	Fog, 2005	Storytelling within the advertising industry
10	Barker & Gower, 2010	Strategic application of storytelling in organizations: Toward effective communication in a diverse world
11	Lundqvist et al., 2013	The impact of storytelling on the consumer brand experience: The case of a firm-originated story
12	Dovey & Kennedy, 2006	Game cultures
13	Zichermann & Linder, 2010	Game-based marketing: inspire customer loyalty through rewards, challenges, and contests
14	Dickey, 2005, 2007	Engaging by design: How engagement strategies in popular computer and video games can inform instructional design
15	Nichols, 2014	The video game business

Table 2.3 – Key authors concerning promotions

	Key themes
1	Users are actively protesting against invasive digital ads by downloading adblocking software. Recent games developers introduce dynamic and interactive advertising into virtual worlds
2	Approaches to the development and face-to-face communication, and recommend some complementary practices with limited overhead
3	Marketing must be understood not in the old sense of making a sale but in a contemporary and holistic sense of satisfying customer needs
4	Myths live on, in art, literature and not least in the entertainment industry where myths are the materials and templates upon which many new tales are spun
5	Participation in this fantasy world offers a special opportunity for transformative play, while reinforcing a romanticized set of belief
6	American mass culture idealizes the man-of-action hero—an idealized model of manhood that resolves the inherent weaknesses in two other prominent models
7	Creating visual narrative art of stories that consumers and brands tell - revises and deepens sense making of the meaning of events in the story and what the complete story implies about oneself and others
8	Consumerism is more fragile and unmanageable than is assumed by its proponents. Consumerism has been both stretched and undermined by globalisation
9	Storytelling and the value of the core story. The core story in itself-and the authentic stories that support it-has a far greater potential that goes beyond the borders of branding and marketing
10	Narrative paradigm theory has been proffered as an effective cross-cultural communication tool, but storytelling goes beyond that and fills the diverse communication
11	Stories fascinate and are often more easily remembered than facts. Much has been written about the power of stories in branding, but very little empirical evidence exists of their effects on consumer responses.
12	Exploring games in the context of cultural studies and media studies, it analyses computer games as the most popular contemporary form of new media production and consumption
13	Harness the power of games to create extraordinary customer engagement with game-based Marketing. Discusses the role and power of gamification
14	Video games are a prevalent form of entertainment in which the purpose of the design is to engage players. Game designers use number of strategies for engaging players in gameplay
15	The video game industry emergence, culture, structure, production processes and relationship with audiences and other cultural industries

Table 2.4 – Summary of key authors concerning promotions

Trailers

Trailers, or previews of forthcoming video games and films, are short clips usually 1–3 min in length that show specific features of the game, display images, symbols, protagonists, and may play appealing music as a backdrop (Collins, 2008). This next section builds on Gray's (2019) definition of "speculative consumption," in which viewers "create an idea of what pleasures any one text can offer." This textual creation and affective sensation are appeared to reflect to as theoretical nostalgia in video game trailers, asserting that it is a part of current culture. Video game trailers prove to be rich places for exploring an old but modern medium to encourage viewer curiosity and appeal when placed in context. Trailers' have a unique temporal position as, paradoxically, nostalgic constructs of feeling for a film we have not seen yet (Hartmann & Brunk, 2019).

Trailers are scheduled to run anywhere from weeks to months before the actual video games release, often coined as 'teasers' (Tolson, 2010), noticeably showing very little in terms of detail. They are either shown before other films or are presented via web streaming. Currently, the movie trailer is a central tool to introduce the new movie or video game to the public with the purpose of building expectations about the new movie or video game by providing actual scenes (Hughes et al., 2005). Although many forms of traditional promotion have experienced a decline, cinema advertising still can retain viewer attention before movie commencement (Yuan, 2018). The purpose is to influence decision-making so that consumers share, create discourse, and eventually buy the game. Thus, it is common to promote video game trailers with a short fade-in of a successfully released game title. This current study aims to find out what video game trailers do to prospective audiences via stories and narratives.

Critical questions arise at this stage: how do people evaluate, choose, and evaluate trailers, and what are the central aspects consumers consider? Which elements make a video game trailer attractive? Some insights are available from film-related studies. Finsterwalder et al. (2012) investigated the effectiveness of movie trailers by evaluating audience expectations and identified the following elements: people (actors and director), style, story (plot, dialogue, and exposure), music, and genre. Finsterwalder et al. (2012) found that if the participants know the actors, they rely more on previous experiences, while participants with less knowledge of directors and producers form impressions based on the trailers.

The view that consumers lack time to do many things or are simply time poor (Silayoi & Speece, 2004) echoes the present reality of advertising and branding challenges. Humans, therefore, commonly streamline routine choices and judgments (Han et al., 2007). Due to time constraints, limited knowledge, and limited cognitive processing power (Gigerenzer &

Goldstein, 1996; Pachur & Hertwig, 2006), we frequently rely on heuristic judgements.

The following section in this Chapter is devoted to discussing trailers' history, types of trailers and how video game trailers impact audiences. The focus is on the influence that video game trailers have on prospective consumers and how the fluid, interactive design elicits a positive effect. Although considered by many as a traditional form of media (Cooper-Martin, 1992; Faber & O'Guinn, 1983), video game trailers are still a popular way for potential buyers to get a sneak-peak into the key elements of the game before purchasing.

Successful trailers present a compelling story that audiences can develop an intense emotional connection with, identify with, and subsequently purchase.

As measured by views, likes, comments, and shares, popular video game trailers have some common attributes; they invite audiences to predict and wonder, while also reaching out through the placement of iconic images that evoke nostalgia. Video game trailers also reveal, conceal, and tease, which incites viewers to peruse the content for hints.

The power of video games to narrate a story creates deep and fond associations and attachments for audiences, connecting them to almost anything associated with that entertainment franchise brand. According to Kernan (2009), trailers provide rare and explicit rhetorical structures that fold visual and auditory evidence of the film production industry's evaluation of its perspective and actual audience into a few-minute cinematic experience. Finsterwalder et al. (2012) mention that while some trailers will be effective in arousing consumers' attention and thus encouraging them to view the film or acquire the video game in this context, others may disappoint. More recently, Sauer (2014) examined whether the participants considered movie trailers to be more successful and pleasant when connected with a well-known movie title and therefore made choices based on this cue. Accordingly, Sauer (2014) demonstrated that people in this set habitually revert to this recognition cue.

The principal purpose of advertising is to increase the attractiveness and awareness level of brands, and as trailers are a form of advertising, the objective is no different; the target is to make brands more recognisable. Horsky and Simon (1983) state that advertising communicates the existence and value of the new product. Consumers are indeed influenced by brand names (Maheswaran et al., 1992; Wänke et al., 2007), thus the role of familiarity and loyalty, ultimately impacting consumption decision-making. A great deal of advertising assumes a strong link between brand recognition and consumer preferences (Hauser, 2011).

In many ways, a video game trailer ought to evoke a form of resonance (themes they relate to and the characters' plight) with the audience, and Felser (2007) mentions that efforts are made to create assimilation. brand awareness by promoting a new product as a brand extension or product line extension rather than creating a new brand. Luan and Sudhir (2010) note that compared to films, video games have short product life cycles because of constant technological transformations, audience tastes, and market dynamics (Landsman & Stremersch, 2011). Promoting video games requires a well-designed advertising schedule and several effective game promotional techniques (other than ratings, timing, franchise loyalty, and console compatibility) that embrace buzz generation, word of mouth promotion, player-created content, and advertising (i.e., trailers) (Rosen, 2009). Compared to these promotional methods, trailers are considered an ideal advertising method because they are visual media like movies and video games (Rigby & Ryan, 2011). Vollans (2015), for example, discusses how the video game industry has adopted this promotional tool, essentially from the film industry but also print media, thus demonstrating how much present-day diversified video game advertising draws from past and traditional mediums. Literature and research were also explored and extended into other texts and their meanings (Genette, 1997). More recently, researchers have revised Genette's model,

commonly questioning the embedded structures of his typology (Gray, 2010; Jones, 2008; Lunenfeld, 1999).

This section has discussed how the video game industry has embraced numerous promotional tactics, typically from the film industry and print media, showing to what level modern diversified video game advertisement is influenced by past and conventional mediums. Literature and study have also delved into and expanded on the interpretation of other texts. This is relevant in the context of the thesis, particularly found in Chapter 7, which looks at how violence through the rhetoric is a dominant theme and in ways violence is justified and then deemed vigilantism.

The following section of this Chapter explores how trailers evoke play to affiliate with motivation and propagate the idea that such activity is entertaining and ultimately fun, which, according to table 1.2, is one of the main reasons individuals play games.

Play

Because people embrace what they create, any engagement marketing initiative must allow for two-way information and communication flows (Peters, 2012). Video game advertising attempts to convey crucial elements in a concise manner that appeals to prospective video gamers. Turkle (2011) and Castells (2010) note the importance of interactive media in allowing for audience participation and entrepreneurship. They argue that there is a sound justification for interactivity. Namely, interactive media permit what Castells (2011) refers to as mass-self communication. An individual can present themselves to a broad audience, engaging in communication that is at once profoundly tied to their individuality and targeted at the masses. In a virtual environment, users can theoretically be whomever they want and say what they please, taking control of the reins from traditional media gatekeepers

(Holtzhausen & Zerfass, 2014; Suler, 2004; Turkle, 1995). Such benefits do not come without a cost. Castells (2013) suggests that interactive media, like other forms of media, is highly influenced by the profit motive. Horkheimer and Adorno (2001, 2010) explore the relationship between profit and social values through the concept of cultural industries.

Culture industries are media practices that promote specific societal behaviours while marginalising alternative perspectives; they are developed and passed down by elites to a passive audience (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2010). In this arrangement, Culture industries warp the public's perspective of reality by repeatedly replicating particular and false views of the world, portraying individuals who do not share these ideas as economic and social outcasts (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2001).

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Elements that are often perceived as "game-like" (that is, elements that may signal an activity's status-as-game to a user) such as points, high scores, and other specified achievements (Hamari and Eranti, 2011) can act as extrinsic rewards, offering some value outside that of the game activity itself. Such rewards can potentially "crowd-out" the intrinsic value of the activity, causing what is nominally a game to become a "work"-like grind (Jakobsson, 2011) instead. The line between work and play, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, is often permeable: work can sometimes be fun, and games can sometimes feel like work. Indeed, Yee (2006) suggests that many games (and online multiplayer games in

particular) make the line between work and play indistinguishable. However, the point remains that video games are inherently work platforms that train us to become better workers. Further, the work being performed in video games is increasingly like actual work in business corporations (Yee, 2006). The fact that video games are still perceived as enjoyable (and as games) despite the "grind" (Rettberg, 2008) and keep us coming back for more indicates the strength of the social framing that positions them as games: by calling an activity a game, players, continue to approach it as such even if the activity feels like work. Despite the often work-like activities involved in video games, they still exist within the socially signalled (and thus perceived as non-serious) "separate" space of the magic circle, where actions take on game-based meanings that help make them intrinsically motivating (Francisco-Aparicio et al., 2013).

Nevertheless, establishing and maintaining this social framing (the magic circle) can be difficult for games with goals beyond simple entertainment, such as a game, to assess causal understanding. As a result, such games may run the risk of breaking the magic circle and becoming perceived and interacted with as work rather than the motivating and engaging play of video games (Copier, 2005).

Moreover, this engagement with video games also drives engagement in other activities. For example, players may write highly detailed descriptions and walkthroughs for their favourite games, which "often run to 70 or more single-spaced pages" (Gee, 2003). In addition, gamers write blog posts and produce machinima (Lowood, 2007) and otherwise use games as a springboard to engage in participatory culture forms (Jenkins, 2006, 2009). All this time spent playing and producing media (Pearce, 2006) about games points to games' holding power, their ability to draw in and engage people, keep players involved, and participate in activities that may be only loosely related to the game.

Violence

One enduring theme discussed in the latter part of the thesis involves vigilantism. Indeed, some content in the prevailing literature around violence is pertinent and essential. The trailers explored in this research do have a familiar narrative: violence. Whether this is framed as vigilantism, free-fighting, superheroes, and so on, is a matter of audience debate and individual perspective.

Some of the initial research on games that has been extensively covered within mainstream media is the effects-driven approach to studying players of violent video games. Anderson and Ford (1986) conducted experiments to establish how video games considered highly and mildly aggressive affected players. The experiments demonstrated that "hostility was increased in... game conditions" (Anderson and Ford, 1986, p. 390); it is likewise significant in this context to state that they classified the hit 1982 arcade game Zaxxon as "highly aggressive" (p. 395), despite no blood or lifelike images. This had significant implications for what constituted "aggressiveness" in the study of video games and highlighted the difficulty of developing a template for historical research in this area. Video game violence from an "effects model" raises numerous dilemmas about how research has been shaped and influenced in many ways by this preliminary exploration of games and their violence. Subsequent research has been structured on considerations of whether violent content in games can lead to increased aggression and provoke the prospect of violence in players (Anderson & Bushman, 2001; Anderson & Dill, 2000; Anderson & Ford, 1986; Hartmann & Vorderer, 2010). This is unlike a movie or other medium that builds a simple experience of lawful motifs.

The role of vigilantism (see Chapter 8) is apparent and fits into the gamer's mental toolset. According to Vander Ende (2014), vigilantism consists of those acts taken by individuals

attempting to enact their own rule of law or sense of morality, in essence taking the law into their own hands. Video games develop an energetic experience, surpassing everyday awareness and making the gamer take part in the building of stories (narratives) and in-game decision-making (open-worlds). Where styles of justice are concerned (Moffett et al., 2017), the gamer is assigned the role of the moderator of justice, frequently trusted with choosing the culture or individual personalities to attain retaliation (Newbery-Jones, 2015). These communications with a video game are ever-increasingly ending up being a component of our everyday experience, as well as where legal problems and styles of justice take place, they enter our frameworks of awareness, thus raising concerns on whether video gameplay and trailers galvanise violence prospectively perpetrated by the gamer as legitimate. The individual is likewise able to involve with such ideas of violence within the world of the video game trailer, can evaluate as well as reconceptualised jurisprudential motifs within their very own world of experience, ultimately enabling them to create perceptions of justice in their very own reality (Tripp et al., 2007).

Creators or designers imagined and conceptualised these themes in video games. Suppose video game trailers supply audiences with experience and a chance to re-conceptualise justice after that phenomenology. In that case, this approach permits us to examine and analyse this experience exactly how specific communications with styles of justice in video games construct intimate understandings of jurisprudential styles within our lifeworld. The danger here is whether actions or choices within the video game may spill into real-life actions (Barnett & Sharp, 2015).

Other studies have called for players to be accountable for in-game war crimes; the Red Cross has told the BBC that it wants military-themed video games to adhere to real-life international laws (Stuart, 2013). Although some meta-analyses have probed such a linkage and its statistical importance in terms of the game of violence (Sherry, 2007), some

advocates maintain their claim of measurable effects, which they rely on the idea of becoming resilient as games develop more lifelike and immersive experiences (Anderson & Bushman, 2001). However, questions have been raised about the validity of these studies, including the impact of the findings on the researchers themselves (Sherry, 2007). A central unease concerns duration, more specifically the shortness of exposure to violence and the overall gaming experience in the studies, many of which last less than 30 minutes in length.

Research has been conducted to determine whether longer duration would elicit varied outcomes; Williams (2006) conducted a study of Asheron's Call 2: Fallen Kings (a fantasy MMORPG) players, concluding varied outcomes, including family relationships, were unaffected, but prior friendships eroded; news media use was unaffected, but other entertainment media were "displaced" by online play (p. 651).

Anderson and Bushman (2001) catalogued school shootings and declared, "the shooters were students who habitually played violent video games," making the link very clear (p. 363). Accordingly, Anderson and Bushman's research provides little particulars on how they addressed numerous fundamental concerns. For instance, it is vague how they handled circumstances in which multiple independent or dependent measures of the same construct were reported in a study, such as in Anderson & Dill (2000). Bobko and Stone-Romero (1998) contended that meta-analysis is an imperfect procedure and that decisions regarding how data will be handled are critical. Sherry (2001) meta-analysis found more uncertain outcomes for the association between violent video game playing and hostility. It provided a more significant explanation when compared to Anderson and Bushman (2001) about how problems related to multiple measures for the same construct (with differing outcomes) were handled. Ferguson (2008) argued that researchers are more fixated on generating a sense of moral terror instead of seeking core reasons for violence as witnessed within school shootings. Additional scholars have discussed alternative issues, for example, DeCamp et

al. (2017) subjects and proposed that "family violence and innate aggression as predictors of violent crime were a better fit to the data than was exposure to video game violence" (Ferguson et al., 2008, p. 311).

Other researchers query the conventions that support effect theories and experimental research. For example, scholars including Murray (1997), Gee (2007), and Jenkins et al. (2018) have maintained that we ought to consider how individuals use video games and the inclinations and frustrations that might be a part of that play, instead of merely pursuing quantifiable impacts on players. For instance, Schott (2009) states that a specific game, *Dead Rising*, "offers players an opportunity to resist the forces that control social spaces" (Schott, 2009, p. 22). Consequently, more discussion exists instead of just engaging an unreceptive view about violence, suggesting slight resistance from an individual's perspective.

Not all forms of play are equivalent, and exploring this aspect supports how video games are undeniably more prolific than conventional play varieties. Burghardt (2005) has proposed five criteria that help to distinguish play from other kinds of activities and states that each of the criteria "must be met in at least one respect before the play label can be confidentially attached to any specific instance of behavior" (p.79). Based on the Burghardt concept, play exists when:

- "the performance of the behaviour is not fully functional" (p.71)
- the behaviour is voluntary, intentional, pleasurable, rewarding, reinforcing, or autotelic (possessing a purpose in and not apart from itself);
- "it differs from the 'serious' performance of ethotypic behaviour structurally or temporally in at least one respect: it is incomplete, exaggerated, awkward, or

precocious; or it involves behaviour patterns with modified form, sequencing or targeting” (p.74); “

- the behaviour is performed repeatedly” (p.75);
- and it is initiated when participants find themselves in a “relaxed field” (p.78).

This demonstrates that players may confuse play and in which context it remains just play.

The regulation of games constitutes a form of moral classification that is ineradicably linked to moral panics concerning the influence and impact of games. In setting out to address the subject of the impression left by games, one is immediately plunged into a complex state of affairs fraught with assumptions as to the nature of games, coupled with ambiguity as to the precise experiences they offer and the meaning and constitution of violence. Indeed, the notion of reassessing the impression left by games first requires a belief that there is something within games that either accurately depicts or can be experienced as violence. (Schott, 2016, p. 34).

This quote is critical to understanding the impact of regulation of video games, which continuously incurs a moral panic. When we speak of the influence of games, it is important to define our terms: They are complex and multifaceted when it comes to the perception of games, but they have one thing in common: they are violent and ambiguous when it comes to their source of influence. To sum up, a belief is required that games have the capacity to correctly portray or that they can recreate violence.

Provenzo (1991;1992) has been another important researcher in the field of video games and violence who condemned the choice of images and excessive dependence on violence, which he considered as a fundamental feature of gameplay. However, Kinder (1991), in *Playing with Power*, offered an alternative viewpoint by looking at children’s entertainment

through a psychoanalytic lens, forged via structural analysis, and in what way video games were intertwining and becoming an imperious facet within the entertainment industry, thus becoming more mainstream and embedded with everyday media consumption.

Kinder's conclusions were from being partial and undeniably offered an alternate argument which further enhanced her credibility and stake in this debate. Kinder (1996) deliberated that video games might be a productive technique for children to resolve many issues through the early stages of development, particularly and adulthood thereafter.

Interestingly, she did not use the classic gender categorisation argument and its connection to violence. Video games' impact on behaviour towards others, namely women, has received limited attention. Games are played but play or virtual worlds can collide with reality. For example, a study by Gabbiadini et al. (2016) investigates how exposure to sexist video games can decrease empathy for female violence victims. Video games also have had a long and problematic history of objectifying women. For example, Ansari et al. (2019) discuss video games where female characters are objectified and hyper-sexualised, dressed scantily, and submissive to male characters. However, chapter 6 demonstrates the female protagonist as a leader with reason and understanding.

Even with the idea that online gaming creates communities (Trepte et al., 2012), online video games afford co-play and social interaction, often anonymous, among players from around the world. However, Tang and Fox (2016) state that “undesirable behaviour is not uncommon in online gaming environments, and online harassment has become a pervasive issue in the gaming community. Social dominance orientation and hostile sexism predicted higher levels of both sexual harassment and general harassment in online games” (Fox & Tang, 2016, p.513).

In response, more recent researchers have started studying players as active participants in the gameplay process, constructing, and negotiating the meanings that games offer to them. They have also taken new research approaches to investigate games, trying to establish how the diverse components of the video game - narratives, representations, and gameplay mechanics - are all key in understanding individual games as well as genres and other types of video games. A recent project investigated how players interact with the narrative in video games, specifically in *Witcher 3*, a popular video game (and now Netflix series). The research showed passive interaction, active interaction, and dialogue choices were shaped by the narrative; consequently, identified interactions also represent the narrative as a gameplay element given how players describe interacting with story elements even when completing other activities (Vickery et al., 2018). How that research has evolved and how it has impacted both the field of game studies and new media studies generally is detailed in the next section in terms of learning.

Squire (2006) explains that in the learning environment, namely within the context of video games offer a range of options relating to learning styles within a complex decision-making environment. With the rise and popularity of technology that is accustomed to user are adept at such circumstances and use relevant situations (Spires, 2008). As stated by Spires, Rowe, Mott, and Lester (2011), this aspect may well refer to modern skills essential for achievement in a global economy. With the rising consensus that teaching and assessment within current civilisation "frequently requires exposing learners to well-designed complex tasks, affording them the ability to interact with other learners and trained professionals, and providing them with appropriate diagnostic feedback that is seamlessly integrated into the learning experience" (Rupp et al., 2010, p. 4).

According to Johnson and Mislin (2011), video games are constructive, who state that games nurture collaboration, problem-solving, and procedural thinking. Video games seldom need to be a solitary function to elicit learning; the rise of multi-player games may well endorse problem-based learning on a collaborative basis and permits players to grasp results of their actions far sooner than they could in real-time (Khoo & Gentile, 2008) and therefore allowing them to directly experience situations rather than merely reading descriptions (Shaffer, 2004). According to Gee (2007), high-quality immersive games require players to think systemically and consider relationships instead of isolated events or facts. The large quantity of choices and probable decision points inside games directs players to avoid simply applying their understanding of their overall awareness to, at times, unpredictable circumstances. Players must, therefore, be thinking conceptually because they are playing in such an immense environment. By understanding this meaning within games, Johnson et al. (2011) suggest that games support the development of players' skills in decision-making, innovation, and problem-solving. While the gameplay, as mentioned, may be able to deliver learning of such essential modern-day skills, educators may perhaps be less inclined in consuming them in a classroom setting because such skills are not at this time tested or unequivocally valued in educational systems (McFarlane et al., 2002).

Nonetheless, various sections of society view video games simply as a form of entertainment; some even observe video games as purveyors of violent behaviour, as outlined earlier. Within the last decades, a variety of studies have focused on serious games (see: Abt, 1987; Bergeron, 2006; Connolly et al., 2012; Ratan & Ritterfeld, 2009) and derivatives such as "games for change" (Games for Change Festival from 2004 to present). Ratan and Ritterfeld (2009) note that serious games are games that have been established with the purpose of being more than just entertainment. Games have a duty to be fun provided that some value to the public is achieved, namely community engagement, collaboration, learning, and well-being. However, as Halter (2006) explains, games have also

been associated with non-entertainment roles for thousands of years. With the onset of the mid-1960s, the importance of the development and design of games for the purpose of education and encouraging social cohesion was recognised and encouraged. Digital technologies have grown considerably, and the general popularity of video games over the past decade (Aarseth, 2001) has invigorated and shaped research directions towards how to utilise games as educational engagement systems. Researchers sometimes explore ways to harness the concept of engagement within games for an all-inclusive purpose. McGonigal, for example, asserted that serious games could assist humanity in solving major social challenges such as hunger, economic collapse, and environmental sustainability (McGonigal, 2011). Such claims, that may, on the surface, present much promise and tend to exemplify an idealistic outlook grounded on the hypothesis that one's skills to conquer video game encounters parallel one's aptitude to conquer possibly impenetrable complications that materialise within everyday life. On the other hand, it is possible that such instances of engagement within the context of games may perhaps be undertaken in more narrow settings, mainly instances where interactive systems can be shaped to arouse the essential state of flow outlined beforehand.

Huizinga (1950) argued that gameplay advanced culture and applied to various institutions and practices. Based on many facets explored in this literature review, the trend of games being incorporated into formal structural contexts is a growing and potent phenomenon. Notwithstanding the vigorous debate on how games can shape behaviour and how worthwhile they can be for educating complex concepts and skills, limited research has been performed on the relationship between games and behaviour. To appraise the efficacy of games, further research needs to deliberate, more nuanced structures such as the length of gameplay, the role of gamification, and the content, structure, and mechanics of the games are critical to the research of this field (Khoo & Gentile, 2008). Perhaps what is most distinctive concerning video games contrasted with several other behavioural changes

innovations, is the mixture of engagement, motivation, adaptiveness, simulation, cooperation, data gathering, and of course, the fun factor that seldom can be attained by any other means. Therefore, merely determining surges in uniform test scores or similar traditional measures of attainment after introducing digital games may omit aspects of the broader learning opportunities that games present (Shaffer, Squire, Halverson, & Gee, 2005).

This section of the Chapter has established that a game is just played, and virtual worlds can collide with reality in their processes, rather than as spectators. They have also conducted a lot of new research looking at individual games and game design to see how narratives, representations, game mechanics, and gameplay contribute to understanding all games as different genres, as discussed in Chapter 1. This Chapter discusses the comprehensive characteristics of video games that offer many different genres. The concluding Chapter in the thesis explained how future research would expand the number of trailers evaluated to cover more titles and genres.

Various sections of society believe that video games are simply for entertainment. However, video games and other types of games are increasingly being evaluated and used for their potential to shed light on societal issues. Therefore, people are responsible for enjoying games if they benefit society, regardless of how they do that. Alternatively, the actual state of engagement may be much more likely to occur within games where it can be determined beforehand.

Despite all the debate over the educational capabilities of games, very little research has been done on the link between games and attitudes, values, and aptitudes. Absolute structures such as gameplay duration, role, and game mechanics are required to study the efficacy of games in this field. Video games may be most distinctive among the different

behavioural innovations in that they bring together different mental aspects of reward, motivation, data gathering, cognition, and learning, which relate to the next section of the Chapter concerning social factors.

Social Factors

As discussed previously, the idea that games reflect a socially engaging process is not new, and thus this sense of voluntary engagement embodies the intrinsic motivation factor. Indeed, video games make evident extraordinary stages of interaction in what Turkle (1997) described as attaining power such that people volunteer to engage with these activities for hours consecutively.

For example, Ducheneaut et al. (2006) carried out an empirical study and established that World of Warcraft players (online game) spent an average of 10.2 hours a week playing this game, whereas Yee (2006) estimated that an average of 22 hours per week was spent playing the game. Even the lower estimate suggests that in the first eight months the game was available, 15% of players had each reached "an accumulated playtime of 15.5 days - a total of 47 eight-hour workdays, or roughly two full months of workdays" (Ducheneaut et al., 2006). The single game of World of Warcraft currently has more than 10 million subscribers worldwide, demonstrating the pervasiveness of this level of engagement. Overall, consumer research group NDP estimates that top gamers spend 16 to 18 hours a week playing games (NDP Group, 2011), while McGonigal (2011) suggests that the average young American spends as much time playing video games (around 10,000 hours before age 21) as they do attend school.

Flow

Educators may ask how to get pupils as engaged in mastering school subjects as in video game systems, since the level of engagement and participation found in games may be very desirable for other activities or interactive systems. To take advantage of game involvement for other objectives, we must first consider what makes games interesting. Is it the game's formal system's interaction structure, the social framing of the system as a game (perhaps established by including game-like components that signify a system's "gameness"), or a mix of the two that causes this engagement?

One of the most prevalent explanations for why games are so engrossing and enjoyable to play is that they are very good at inducing a feeling of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991; Chen, 2007; Salen and Zimmerman, 2003; Schell, 2008). Flow is defined as "a sensation of total and energetic focus on a task, with a high level of satisfaction and fulfillment," according to Csikszentmihalyi (1997).

The importance of engagement was discussed in this section of the chapter; in fact, trailers use this approach to hook audiences on the narrative and overall storyline. Such engagement, as discussed, shows the role of using fun to play in prompting a state of flow, which, comparatively, is the reason games are highly effective. Additionally, the level of engagement and participation found in games may be highly desirable for other activities or interactive systems. For example, educators may wonder how to get students as engaged in mastering school content as they are in mastering video game systems. Video games are often particularly good at keeping players in the flow channel by increasing the game's difficulty (such as with more challenging levels or opponents) as a player's skill at playing the game grows.

Remaining in the state of flow, players are essentially expected to regularly evolve their skills to meet the video games' increasing difficulty correspondingly. Juul (2003) discusses how immersing oneself in gameplay is likely to advance skills to overcome challenges and thus result in a process essentially encouraging learning. Gameplay allows learning to cooperate with the instructions of a game with the intention of, of course, succeeding. In games like Half-Life, and Portal, the player learns to interact with the game's unique simulation of physics and teleportation. Furthermore, this feeling of learning, this sense of mastery and accomplishment, is the source of enjoyment and "fun" of being in a state of flow. Building on this, Koster (2013) explains that fun from games arises out of mastery. It arises out of comprehension. It is the act of solving puzzles that makes games fun. With games, learning is the drug. Games offer an endless opportunity to learn multifaceted game structures and decipher the puzzle of how to play and win. Indeed, this is the reason that Schell defines a game as a problem-solving activity, approached with a positive outlook (Schell, 2008). Video games can be viewed as non-serious but playful environments for continual learning, facilitated by the continuous demonstration and astute skill-building that transpires in a lasting flow-like state.

"They use actual learning as the basis for assessment. They test not only current knowledge and skills, but also preparation for future learning. They measure 21st Century skills like collaboration, innovation, production, and design by tracking many different kinds of information about a student, over time" (Schraw et al., 2012, p. 3)

This Chapter topic has illustrated that video games can be viewed as non-serious but undoubtedly entertaining environments for continuous learning, encouraged by the constant demonstration and astute skill-building that occurs in a continuous flow-like state. Additionally, the level of involvement and interaction found in games may be highly

appropriate for other events or interactive systems, as explained in Chapters 6 and 7. Educators may wonder, for example, how to get students as invested in learning school content as they are in learning video game systems. To understand how to use game interaction for other purposes, it was discussed that we must first understand what makes games engaging in the first place. Perhaps the video game is a structured system's interaction structure, the social framing of the system as a game or a combination of the two, that causes this engagement. One of the most common explanations for why games are so entertaining and enjoyable to play is that they are very good at eliciting a state of flow.

Culture

Crawford (2012) argues that games are cultural artefacts that can convey meaning. This is an essential hypothesis in the research of games and narratives (Berger, 2002), since it assumes that games go beyond the challenges or mysteries that players must vanquish. It accepts, to some extent, that video games are commodities of the culture(s) in which they are produced, advanced by people involved in experiential contexts. The personal stories and experiences of game characters embody fundamental cultural elements (Shaw, 2010) to create more profound empathy and rapport with game players, driving game interest and need. Video games are a uniquely interactive medium that gives rise to game culture (Taylor, 2009). As national cultural values are reflected in the content of advertisements, game advertising is a mirror that reflects the values of the game culture while at the same time shaping it (Alloway & Gilbert, 1998; Kline et al., 2003).

Advertising messages incorporate cultural values that are manifested, endorsed, and glamorised in advertising (Pollay, 2000; Cheng, 1997). Advertising reflects and reinforces cultural values as campaigns often embody current politics and social trends (Cheng & Schweitzer, 1996; Ji & McNeal, 2001; Scott, 1994). Scholars have suggested that

comparative international advertising research generates insight into one's own culture and social values (Albers-Miller & Gelb, 1996; Franke et al., 1991). In addition to reflecting national cultural values, to persuade buyers to purchase video games, game advertisers need to reinforce values that are most reliably responded to by consumers (Pollay, 1990). Game advertising, therefore, reflects not only national cultural values but also displays appealing concepts that match game cultures (Zhang & Gelb, 1996). Thus, game advertising manifests and reinforces the values of game culture, which gamers can identify with. By analysing video game advertising, important national and game cultural values can be inferred. In Chapter 4, for example, Sheehan (2013) will discuss how certain video game advertisements were banned in specific countries due to legal and cultural concerns.

Furthermore, the messages of video game advertisements are easily accessible to anyone, whether they play the game or not. Video game advertisements, in general, receive less social scrutiny and restrictions than the video games themselves (Robinson et al., 2008). For instance, younger audiences and even children can view the advertisements for games rated for mature audiences. Children are exposed to M-Rated games' ad messages even if they are only shopping for E-rated games. Attiya et al. (2001) discussed the significant amount of violence in some E-rated video games. M-rated video games are drastically more likely to include blood, profanity, and substances, and they depict more severe injuries to human and nonhuman characters (Thompson et al., 2006).

Additionally, advocate the importance of information to parents and its use concerning video game rating; with millions of people being exposed to game advertising, youth, and children it is essential to examine the message content being presented in video game ads (Miller & Summers, 2007).

Conclusion

This literature review aims to provide a conceptual basis for the arguments put forward in this thesis. To establish the framework for the current study, the literature reviewed was grouped into four distinct and interconnected thematic sections, games and play, video game trailers, marketing, and social impacts. This literature illustrated that video game trailers' principal purpose was advertising to increase video game titles' attractiveness and awareness level. Beyond defining games, this Chapter explained the earliest examinations of game studies and examined the relationship between games and other media. Unlike earlier forms of advertising, which adopted one-way or passive forms of media promotion, interactive digital storytelling encourages audiences to become more involved with the content and message.

Compared to movie trailers, video game trailers offer a wide variety of languages and forms to explore, and they offer the possibility of short promotional videos that can take you into live-action and immersion. While video game trailers are mainly viewed on the Internet, the length has a broader range of content. This possibility is closely linked to the multilayered and interactive nature of the medium, which allows the trailers to refer to both the narrative worlds themselves and the narrative worlds they are talking about. This kind of long-term coherence seems to emerge in trailers because it is easy to repeat and demonstrates the transmedia breadth in its condensed focus. When topics like narrative, storytelling, violence, and promotion exist, the trailers offer audiences a unique, self-contained story. Further discussion on such perspectives is explored in coming Chapters. Nevertheless, this research remains an essential step in addressing issues that are still overlooked and aim to provide a framework to better understand transmedia breath via video game trailers and its impact on viewers.

What is strongly represented in literature is that the impulse trailers must tell stories, which is very human, and audiences can resonate. A wide range of writings shows that people look at history and are shaped by history and that history shapes people. Additionally, the question of my dissertation has continuously been whether literature analysis uncovers a way in which video game trailers might be insufficient for a place of meaning or whether it is an inadequate place for meaning itself. It is not that audiences who engage in video game narratives satisfy the impulse of narrative, only that they are potentially using the format for this purpose in a sense. What is possible is that the prospects for literature seem to be uncertain. This literature review illustrates that the role of the game's developer is mysteriously vague or opaque, and the storytelling and other layers found in video game trailers are multilayered. It is necessary to examine how such themes shape video game trailers narrative and storytelling. I have explained before that our awareness is dynamic and generates interacting elements.

However, there is the potential to explore the potential for building how video game trailers seek to engage and emerge audiences via empowerment and perhaps wish-fulfilment (e.g., vigilantism). It would be worthwhile to investigate how designers are involved in the interactive storytelling process and how they strongly influence narratives in open systems. The narratives, both overt and hidden in video game trailers, is an additional crucial element of the primarily ignored experience that contributes to the nature and quality of video game interaction. This way, different aspects of an experience are created together - and thus, narrative design influences the story.

This Chapter draws on video game trailers, which, according to research, present a compelling story that audiences can develop an intense emotional connection with and identify with. As measured by views, likes, comments, and shares, popular video game

trailers have some common attributes; they invite audiences to predict and wonder while also reaching out through the placement of iconic images that evoke nostalgia.

The literature review has also explored what video game trailers reveal, conceal, and tease, allowing viewers to peruse the content for hints. The literature reviewed is grouped into distinct and interconnected thematic sections: games and play, video game trailers, marketing, and social impacts to establish the theoretical framework for the current study. Other topics discussed in this Chapter include the history and origins of video game development, game study theories, promotion, violence, and culture.

The literature review began to explain the concepts around video game storytelling, which is salient in determining how video game trailer narratives resemble other narrative formats and how they differ. This Chapter also draws on various scholars' works of fiction and fantasy to explore the relationship between narrative content and the storytelling of video game trailers.

The literature review further examined the numerous characteristics of video games. This was connected to a discussion on the role of rules. Consequently, the rules of a game describe the technique a player uses to network with experience in that game. Moreover, game rules are implicit in the formalised structures found in the instructions or allowed by the computer game engine.

This Chapter defined games and one of the original investigations into game studies and the relationship between games and other media. This included debates about schools, such as the narratology position, which is defined as an attempt to connect digital games to other forms of media, specifically literature, theatre, and film. Media studies intersect with narratology, a largely unexplored field.

This Chapter also explored how games instil ideals and behaviours, perhaps including mutually positive and negative behaviours, such as increased problem-solving ability on the one hand, and addiction and aggression on the other. A large part of the literature review was devoted to promotion, and many tables and figures were used to support this theme. Video games are dependent on advertising to build product awareness and compete for users' engagement. As a result, video game advertising is increasingly becoming a vital link in attracting game recognition and sales. Within the framework of an integrative marketing approach, today's marketers must work closely with various marketing partners to create customer lifetime value and build strong customer relationships. Unfortunately, the advertising and promotion strategies employed by other products fail to mirror the artistic environment. Accordingly, they miss the diverse layers romanticised initially for the video game. Also, there is a potential incongruity between traditional marketing and video games as cultural products. One enduring theme discussed in this Chapter and the latter part of the thesis involves vigilantism. Indeed, some of the content in the prevailing literature on violence is pertinent and essential. The trailers explored in this research do have a familiar narrative: violence. Whether this is framed as vigilantism or free-fighting, superheroes are a matter of audience debate and individual perspective.

According to those who state that games nurture collaboration, problem-solving, and procedural thinking, video games are constructive. Video games rarely need to be a solitary function to elicit learning; the rise of multi-player games may support collaborative problem-based learning and allow players to grasp the outcomes of their actions much sooner than they could in real-time.

The Chapter also explored the role of culture in gaming; the personal stories and experiences of game characters embody fundamental cultural elements (Shaw, 2010) to create more profound empathy and rapport with game players, driving game interest and need. Advertising messages incorporate cultural values that are manifested, endorsed, and glamorised in advertising.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Introduction

This Chapter outlines the research methodology adopted in this study to gather data and obtain results using survey and social media data. In the Chapter, I explain my methodological approach and motivation for this research and how they relate to its research objectives. I then discuss the methods adopted to analyse and gather the data through rhetorical, narrative, and textual analysis of the chosen trailers and YouTube comments.

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This research had the central objective of understanding the impact of video game trailers on audiences. It was designed to be based on qualitative and quantitative data collected from participants who viewed one of three video game trailers. Because narratives play an important role in structuring video game trailers via identification and resonance (Berger, 2017), this project first analysed the constituent parts to uncover what audience identification or resonance means. As stated in the thesis's introduction, this study aims to demonstrate reasonable cause to pursue research on the given topic through a larger, more expansive methodological design. The research topics centred around how storytelling within video game trailers is used to create identification and appeal with audiences.

Therefore, to investigate and gain a more detailed study, online surveys were selected as the primary method to investigate participants' perceptions of video game trailers via SurveyMonkey. YouTube comments based on the chosen video game trailers was another method. I used a Python script and other tools that use the authorised YouTube API (*Application Programming Interface*), which offers substantial data extraction and extrapolation, allowing me to collect thousands of individual YouTube comments. For this analysis, I decided to download and examine comments that refer to a set of keywords and themes around *storytelling, justice, and power*.

Even though user and viewers comments are an essential part of the YouTube community, the comments section is also notorious as a home for trolls, pessimism, and abuse. One challenging aspect of data analysis in the research was making sense of comments with sarcasm. Data were drawn from two key sources and labelled accordingly:

YouTube video game trailer comments.

- a. Comments drawn from this source are labelled and abbreviated as **YT** for in-text citation in this thesis.

SurveyMonkey.

- b. Comments drawn from this source are labelled and abbreviated as **SM** for in-text citation in this thesis.

This Chapter briefly outlines the reasons for selecting the mixed methods approach and discusses the conduct, benefits and shortcomings or challenges of the design along with the method for aggregating and tabulating survey data.

Research Objective(s)

The research aimed to look at how video game trailers storytelling is applied to create identification and appeal with audiences. Throughout this research, the importance of storytelling demonstrates that video games are not about showing gameplay but more focused on presenting an appealing and enthralling story.

Methodological Approaches and Research Questions

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to examine the research questions:

1. What storytelling techniques are expressed in video game trailers?
2. How do audiences identify with the narrative and storytelling aspects of video game trailers?
3. How do viewers make sense of the storytelling elements of video game trailers?
4. How are promotion and meaning techniques expressed in vigilante video games?

And, how are audiences evoked into embracing vigilantism?

Research into the effects of video game trailers is often derived from interdisciplinary models of how human behaviours are moulded and transformed over time. However, Burak (2011) states that this is still a challenging time for designing games due to the pressure of civic and social issues. In particular, he states, exaggerated claims about the impacts have hindered these efforts. These complications guide the principal motivation for the current research to enhance understanding of these different perspectives.

The Motivation for this Research Topic

I explore how viewers make sense of video game trailers' advertising and storytelling features. In this thesis, employing vigilante games and *Assassin's Creed: Syndicate* as case studies, I look at how video game trailers may elicit emotions and intrigue in viewers before they even start the game. Trailers give you an idea of what to expect from the game, not just in gameplay but also in plot and characters (protagonists and antagonists). In addition, they introduce viewers to the video game genre and provide a visual and audio tools to inspire interaction. This thesis delves deeper into these issues, demonstrating how vigilante video game trailers have a theatrical aspect and spend little time showcasing actual gameplay. Instead, there is a clear parallel with movie trailers, which tease the game's events and leave the player guessing what will happen next.

Research that explains the direct impact of video game trailer viewing on video game selection is limited. Therefore, I rely on research relating to Hollywood trailers to provide some methodological guidance, although there are crucial distinctions. For example, audiences watch movies, whereas video gamers are immersed, shifting from viewers to proactively engaged in texts (Berger, 2017).

Movie trailers also can shape decision-making, although they function as a traditional medium and are more passive when compared to video game trailers which are more active and engaging (Devlin et al., 2011; Finsterwalder et al., 2012; Hixson & Marketing, 2006).

Video game trailers also convey the genre for audiences to consume and assist when making choices. Mittell (2004) provides an understanding of the genre as a cultural category; the genre-defining elements cannot just be reduced to textual components but "exist only through the creation, circulation, and consumption of texts within cultural contexts" (p.11). It is, therefore, necessary to examine the inherent qualities of video genres, namely narratives, to understand how these videos are produced, distributed, and consumed and how these factors shape the formal conventions and expressive potential of these trailers.

Traditionally, trailers, whether for video games or films, serve as form advertisements for future releases. Now, there are trailers for multiple media ranging from television shows to video games. Trailers are designed to give the audience an idea of the game in question to persuade people to buy the game and trigger online discussion, downloading trials or free editions (Cheng & Liu, 2012; Dey et al., 2013).

As playing a game is a subjective experience (Brockmyer et al., 2009), the enjoyment of the purchased product cannot be guaranteed. Therefore, trailers tend to create an accurate impression of what is expected in. To avoid customer dissatisfaction and increase word-of-mouth promotion, video games and theatres are highly creative with their message. While most trailers feature video game content, they are advertisements; the formal framework used to convey it has evolved and is continually updated to market conditions.

My analysis of trailers was also informed by the idea that video games could impact a societal level. For example, Burak (2011) argues that more deliberations regarding the use of games in the civic sphere-grounded in discussions of limits and challenges could assist in

bridging the gap between the gaming community, not-for-profit organisations, and government agencies.

The reasoning for implementing the mixed methods methodology is followed by a succinct framework of the research questions; subsequently, a description of the settings of the study is presented and a description of the participants selected for the study and the participant selection process. This is followed by a discussion of the materials, data collection procedures, measures in the study, and data analysis. The convergence of the concurrent mixed methods research methodology allows for both quantitative and qualitative data to simultaneously be collected and integrated during the interpretation and analysis phase (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007).

The method of performing case study research, according to Goffin, Hlström et al. (2019), is complex, iterative, and entails the problematic effort of writing up the analysis and outcomes. The underlying premise behind this study was that case study research would be ideal for examining video game trailers. However, the proportion and quality of case study research are significant in and of itself.

I have adopted the viewpoint that research methodologies like case studies should look into the content of existing research in the literature (as discussed in the next section of this chapter) and how it was conducted. Researchers can learn from past case study designs if case study research has already been undertaken in video game trailer analysis.

Despite its widespread use, case study research has been criticised by Yin (2003) as "being a weak sibling among social science methodologies" (p. 13). I looked at the work of Ellinger, Watkins, and colleagues (2005), who claim that case studies are less rigorous and systematic than other types of research. Another issue with case study research has been

researchers' failure to accomplish scientific generalisation. Finally, case study research is frequently seen as a time-consuming and resource-costing method of investigation. The purpose of this chapter's discussion is to answer these critiques by reaffirming case study research as a powerful research technique for addressing how what, and why questions and illuminating these questions as they are rooted in their specific settings.

This chapter has integrated the use of mixed methods techniques that further strengthen case study research as a rigorous research strategy and a theory-building tool by giving a systematic framework for conducting case study research that has been taken from a variety of scholars.

Finally, the results can hopefully stimulate an active debate among game studies and marketing researchers regarding their methods. Furthermore, this debate should be broader than the discussion of case study research presented in Goffin, Åhlström et al. (2019).

Rhetorical analysis

Rhetoric is naturally multimodal. It does not confine itself to verbal language(s). It is eclectic in its relationship to modes and media. It assumes that in the act of communication a number of modes will be at play and that their interrelationship is crucial to understanding how communication works. The aesthetic dimension of rhetoric is also an aspect of multimodality that is important to consider. The combination of modes is a conscious decision, driven by design (Andrews, 2013).

In a critical approach to rhetoric, discourse does not exist in a vacuum (Biesecker, 1989;

McKerrow, 1989). The study of rhetoric and immersion serves a meaningful role in understanding video game advertising and, thus, as a mediated experience, academics, critics, and game creators. The relationship between video games and rhetoric is well documented and extensive (Bogost, 2007; Harper, 2011, 2013; Holmes, 2017; Paul, 2012; Voorhees, 2009). Rhetorical analyses of video games will be looked at in the coming Chapters and will examine how they express social, cultural, or ideological values, intentionally or not. One mutual challenge of rhetoric, semiotics, and game design are that regardless of a speaker's finest determinations, a given artefact's actual reception or connotation seldom be entirely foreknown. Hawreliak (2019) stated that since meaning is material and historic, it is not possible to speak of a singular, objective meaning of an artefact, so complexity is a challenge for any semiotic analysis in any medium.

Somewhat, each fragment of discourse is itself a microsystem within a mesosystem within a macrosystem, with power manifesting across various disciplines and practices in society (i.e., media) rather than from an overarching state system (Foucault, 1980). This has led to conflicting conceptualisations of immersion regarding how it functions and how to cultivate it. If we are to address rhetoric critically, we must consider all those practices that constitute every day and analyse them to calculate their conditions of possibility and effects (Biesecker, 1992). At the same time, however, McKerrow (1989) points out that "influence is not causality" – just because a symbol exists does not mean that it has a particular effect. Instead, it simply has the potential to have that effect (p. 106).

However, it is an essential concept for understanding how people experience mediated texts. Careful manipulation of desire and the control of emotions is necessary to create and sustain an immersive experience (Murray, 1997). Immersion means to be wholly absorbed in a make-believe world (Schmidt, 2007). Grau (2003) writes, "immersion is undoubtedly key to understanding the development of media, even though the concept appears somewhat

opaque and contradictory" (p. 13). Unfortunately, there seems to be a minimal consensus as to how to describe it. Mediated experiences are complex, and they frequently emphasise what the message says and how it delivers it rather than what the message does. This study approaches the immersive experience of video games from the standpoint that immersion is a rhetorical function of the media. This is not a rugged stance to take, even though rhetoric has not been applied to the study of immersion. Many other disciplines (Calleja & Cultural, 2007; Ermi & Mäyrä, 2005; McMahan, 2003) have sought to describe immersion and explain how media texts can improve or impede the experience using rhetorical concepts such as presence, style, and metaphor.

The concept of immersion in the video game business is now founded on Aristotelian logic, according to gaming expert Frasca (2001). Game designers hold up immersion as the ultimate entertainment experience, synonymous with pleasure and one that all video games should strive to achieve. Both gaming scholars, Salen and Zimmerman (2004), argue the usefulness of immersion while also proposing immersion frameworks for investigation and evaluation. Game producers use immersion as a marketing strategy to attract new players. On immersion in video games, McMahan (2003) has attempted to either refine its definition and define how it works or conceptualise how it fits into play and games (Ermi & Mäyrä, 2007). Murray (1997) highlights four critical characteristics of emerging digital settings, which she categorises into two groups: interactive and immersive. These two characteristics are described by Ryan and Thon (2014) as the "cornerstone of a broad theory of representation and communication" (p. 4). Examples from video games are used to support the ideas of both researchers. However, we must first unravel the enigma of immersion to comprehend how people interact with digital representation, what it means to communicate through interactive media and the desired experiences of digital text. It refers to the bond that develops when a human interacts with a digital environment and incorporates that environment into their sense of self and behaviour. I have used and will discuss the mixed-

methods methodology was applied to answer the research questions, followed by a discussion of the materials, data collection procedures, measures in the study, and data analysis.

Narrative analysis

All the above-cited simulation-like games are considered as games comparatively due to their storyline surroundings. Nevertheless, the narrative is considered a significant factor, suggesting that action is a game. Countless game narratives embrace far-fetched features that support setting the game uniquely from the world and, in that way, found a magic circle (Vossen, 2018). The use of game narratives is a practical approach for gamification because they can encourage the creation of the magic circle and a playful approach to the game. In addition, game narratives can be employed to disguise the abstract environment of activity, supporting furtiveness assessment like games. Murray (1997) writes, "Traditional narratives have clear conventions for regulating arousal so that it is strong enough to make a story compelling but not so strong as to render the viewer uncomfortable" (p. 119).

Together with a game narrative, a designer unequivocally labelling an activity as gameplay opens the social progression of building experience into a game. Indeed, an extensive selection of game patterns based on Holopainen and Björk (2005) and genres studies according to Apperley (2006), from action to brainteasers to roleplaying games, have been employed within the context of serious games and gamification to attain engagement outside just entertainment. However, while processes of fun or engagement or participation perhaps are endorsed (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 1990, 2014; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009, 2014) (also see flow theory image), utilising engagement as a somewhat intermediary for a greater purpose of participation poses a challenge to maintain the state of flow on a long-term scale.

According to Prensky (2001), a game can be made to be engaging. However, participation requires continual engagement-game dynamics that produce engagement in the short term (e.g., during testing or development) and may not sufficiently encourage participation in the long. Indeed, fun and engaging is not necessarily the same thing. "Video games are cultural commodities – the products of a cultural industry organised through the capitalist exchange of goods. As with most media commodities, they have the potential for considerable ideological influence" (Nichols, 2014, p. 6).

Despite the depth and range of academic video game studies, the game studies literature has gaps. Most of the social science and humanities study focuses on game participants and content. Researchers rarely discuss the method of creating these games. Why are they made, who makes them, and how are they made remain unanswered? In addition, developers' importance, and influence on how we play is often neglected (Whitson, 2013). The field of gaming has evolved, and so has the stereotypically view that gamers are predominantly male, lazy, inclined to violence and lacking social skills (Kowert et al., 2014; Williams et al., 2008). Notwithstanding the rise of female gamers, who make a faster-growing user rate, they are also primarily marginalised (Kaye et al., 2017; Kaye & Pennington, 2016; Paaßen et al., 2017). In this manner, research in trailers presents a rigorous argument that video games are part of the social fabric, and consequently, the gameplay is essential to understanding society.

Rationale/justification for Mixed Methods

"Quantitative research is based on observations that are converted into discrete units that can be compared to other units by using statistical analysis.... Qualitative

research, on the other hand, generally examines people's worlds and actions in narrative or descriptive ways more closely representing the situation as experienced by the participants.... These two paradigms are based on two different and competing ways of understanding the world. [which] are related in the way research data is collected (words versus numbers) and the perspective of the researcher (perspectival versus objective) [and] discovery versus proof" (Maykut & Morehouse, 2002).

This research project has adopted a mixed-methods approach, and from a qualitative view, the research question(s) are process-oriented (Creswell, 2009). This is explored through close examination and analysis around how users express and are consequently shaped by gameplay in the outside world, and not restricted to inner gameplay. The research is qualitative as its purpose is to describe what is occurring to players, their overall outlook after gameplay. The descriptions that shape the outcome of this investigation may be used to enlighten practice through training or other learning solutions. According to Creswell and Clark (2007), mixed methods research is a technique and a method. It has philosophical assumptions as a methodology that governs the direction of data collecting while analysing a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches. It focuses on gathering, analysing, and combining quantitative and qualitative data as a method. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses are possible using the research topics in this study. This study takes a pragmatic perspective and uses a mixed-methods technique to find out "what works" (Smith, 2006). When quantitative and qualitative studies are merged, the resulting triangulation of data aids in generating a deeper understanding of the data set and analysing the impact of video game trailers (Mayer et al., 2014). According to Hernandez and Minor (2011), triangulation is an attempt to characterise a study by combining data from other studies or approaches to capture a social structure or notion. As a result, in this mixed-methods approach, both sets

of results are used to answer the study questions in ways that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods could do alone.

While quantitative and qualitative techniques for data collection are necessary, they are insufficient for solving research situations where a mixed methodologies approach would be preferable (Creswell & Clark, 2017). The quantitative or qualitative methods may not reveal the whole story. The quantitative method may overlook the researcher's influence in the study and the in-depth interpretive analysis. Qualitative approaches do not provide statistical conclusions and generalising the findings is challenging (Green et al., 2012).

Through pre and post-tests, incremental scenario tests, and motivational assessments, I used quantitative data in this study to provide statistical responses concerning participants' attitudes. In addition, the qualitative data gathered through background surveys aim to aid in interpreting how and why learning occurs.

It also helps create qualitative categories that are then quantitatively analysed to determine learning in these categories.

Participant observation was part of my design thinking through focus groups (Poels et al., 2007), which appeared to be an ideal fit when researching video games trailer user experience and further validity to the research findings. However, this approach was difficult to arrange, and as three trailers were studied, participants having their own space, hence the need to have a mixed-methods approach. The justification for the mixed methods helps understand contradictions between quantitative results and qualitative findings. Thus, I believe it reflects the participants' point of view. Mixed methods give a voice to participants and ensure these study findings are grounded in participants' experiences and opinions. The advantage of sending an electronic survey was the flexibility from a time and

location perspective (some participants were overseas).

According to Fassett & Warren (2006), "no method can answer all questions, which is why we need ... multiple methods and ways of asking and answering questions(p. 103). A purely qualitative approach was considered, but presented its own set of challenges and would have the likelihood of influencing other participants when discussing their views in a focus group setting (Lunt & Livingstone, 1996). Therefore, this research adopted two methods to gain data. One method was sending a survey (SurveyMonkey) with both open and closed-ended questions. Participants were given the option of choosing which video game trailer to watch, the questions adjusted according to the trailer he/she had chosen. The following method was extrapolating data from YouTube. This data was essentially user comments about the same video game trailers. The data was then imported into NVivo for further coding, namely textual and sentiment analysis. According to Hilal and Alabri (2013), qualitative data is characterised by subjectivity, offering richness and wide-ranging text-based data. Furthermore, NVivo helped with analysing qualitative data, which can be cluttered, ambiguous and laborious at times (Armat et al., 2018).

The survey is an essential part of my research approach, namely the indication that participants have flexibility. Having options when and where they are engaging with the survey provides a close association that a researcher has with the process, and people come across through research (Alessi & Martin, 2010; Dominelli, 2003; Magee et al., 2001; Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006). The level of detail this method provides illustrates this approach's genuine and valued nature (Sue & Ritter, 2012). To further validate the research, a video game being researched needs to be played by the researcher to comprehend its mechanics accurately. Autoethnography was initially proposed and appeared to offer the ability to depict and systematically analyse personal experience to understand cultural experience (Anderson, 2006). Similarly, this process aids researchers understand what the participant is experiencing through a rhetorical lens (Adams, 2018). However, my thoughts

and feelings towards a video game or trailer do not reflect the broader communities' impact from watching trailers. Researcher journals have long been an accepted source of qualitative data for health research (Toms et al., 2002). This technique can be a valuable data source for qualitative research, mainly when extended periods of participant observation are not possible. These include the unstructured daily diary, the log, or the time budget (Plummer, 2001). Another approach considered was maintaining a solicited diary, encouraging the participant to focus on daily activities and facilitating reflections (Filep et al., 2018). Although diaries might lack the nuances present in verbal communication (Altrichter & Holly, 2005), the researcher can gather information about the day-to-day activities of participants and then explore those activities during a subsequent interview (Alaszewski, 2006).

Accessing data from YouTube through user comments was a valuable and central contribution to the research. NVivo for coding, namely textual and sentiment analysis. NVivo helped with analysing qualitative data a help navigate through, at times, a tangled and equivocal process.

Ethics approval was obtained before any data was gathered. The ethics approval process and subsequent approval, after a second submission, offered sound research practices and benefits research design (Morgans & Allen, 2015). Once gained, the open and closed-ended questions (below) relating to the four chosen video game trailers were sent as a URL to participants. The impetus behind using SurveyMonkey was using skip logic, real-time results, custom reporting, textual analysis, and the capacity to export to NVivo (for data analysis), Excel and PowerPoint (Waclawski, 2012).

The motivation for performing an online survey was the relative ease of recruitment of participants (n 27), predominantly University students. Online surveys appeal to young people in contrast to paper form, focus groups, and interviews (Flores, 2007). Participants

received a URL of the survey via direct email or LMS (UTSONLINE or Blackboard). The privacy of participants was essential and explained to all participants. The online survey represents a feasible approach in accessing participants, usually hard to reach and time-poor (Sue & Ritter, 2012). The online survey posed several challenges; ethics approval notwithstanding, participant response rate at the earlier stages seemed low, even with gentle reminders. Three challenges threatened the response rate: (1) survey completion at a convenient time for them; (2) survey commenced then abandoned; or (3) survey ignored altogether (Evans & Mathur, 2005). The free version of SurveyMonkey had limitations, namely the inability to export the findings for analysis. Accordingly, upon contacting SurveyMonkey directly, they offered a version for \$150.00 upon verification that I was a tertiary student. This upgraded account facilitated a deeper insight into the findings through the capacity for unlimited respondents, skip logic, custom feedback, A/B testing, export to NVivo, embed videos (trailers). Even with the many limitations, namely lack of responses and perception as junk mail, the survey method had more benefits and was a better fit for this project.

Textual analysis

Textual analysis of video games represented the qualitative dimension of the research in video game trailers. Bisht et al. (2019), states that the level of interaction between content creators and their viewers is the central dimension of popularity on YouTube (Arthurs et al., 2018; Burgess & Green, 2018; Van Dijck, 2009). This method was invaluable in analysing YouTube user comments on the chosen video game trailers. The goal was to code the comments into three key areas: storytelling, justice, and power. The rationale for using these three terms was common themes from respondents (survey open-ended), and the YouTube comments data extraction. These three keyword themes (as shown in table 3.1) were searched within the user comments. However, this presented many limitations. The assumption was that viewers described trailers only by three key terms, which was far too

restrictive. The solution was to introduce a series of synonyms that allowed for greater targeting of users' comments based on the original three key themes and reflected other related, meaningful characteristics.

Storytelling	Justice	Power
narrative	fairness	control
narration	equity	authority
stories	integrity	influence
tale	honesty	command
story	decency	sovereignty
fairy	impartiality	sway
plot		dominance
fairy-tale		domination
legend		supremacy
myth		mastery
protagonist		dominion
		ascendancy

Table 3.1 - Key terms themes/phrases for data analysis

The objective here was to add qualitative depth to the analysis, to identify the audience's sentiment on the chosen video game trailers. Methods of extracting user comments have undergone numerous transformations in recent years, including, more recently, YouTube disabling comments on videos with minors after advertisers withdraw over abuse (Tang & Dalzell, 2019). I undertook a workshop to help augment my programming skills for customising data extractions and other data analysis tools. Although this research project was moving into unfamiliar territories, I felt I was becoming more programming and software focused as I read more Engineering and Information Technology journals.

Programming was indeed a worthwhile process, facilitating deep and meaningful insights. Having learned some aspects (pertinent to the project) and the importance of API (Application Programming Interface) critically boosted the future of this project in terms of data extrapolation (Cheng et al., 2008; Schultes et al., 2013a). This API software was known as Python, an interpretive, interactive, object-oriented programming language (Sanner, 1999). Python assists in manipulating, processing, cleaning, and crunching data (McKinney, 2012). Another tool for a data programming language to use for analysis was R (Matloff, 2011). Having tried both, R seemed aesthetically simpler to use, but again this required a deeper understanding of how the data extracted from other sources can be fused and then visualised via this programme. Other options were explored that made data extraction from YouTube trailers more straightforward. User comments involved using the unique video code or 'video id' which was the information (alphabetical and numeral at the end) details after <https://www.youtube.com/watch>. YouTube Data Tools (YTDT) (Rieder, 2016) was used to extract user comments and a tool for extracting data from the YouTube platform for coding and analysis (Halvey & Keane, 2007; Schultes et al., 2013b). The following reflects an example (*Watch Dogs 2*) in Table 3.2 shows how the software extracted the data from YouTube in terms of user's comments (Rieder et al., 2018).

```
getting comments: 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1000 1100 1200 1300 1400 1500 1555

digging into thread structure: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68
69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130
131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183
184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236
237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 280 281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289
290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321 322 323 324 325 326 327 328 329 330 331 332 333 334 335 336 337 338 339 340 341 342
343 344 345 346 347 348 349 350 351 352 353 354 355 356 357 358 359 360 361 362 363 364 365 366 367 368 369 370 371 372 373 374 375 376 377 378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387 388 389 390 391 392 393 394 395
396 397 398 399 400 401 402 403 404 405 406 407 408 409 410 411 412 413 414 415 416 417 418 419 420 421 422 423 424 425 426 427 428 429 430 431 432 433 434 435 436 437 438 439 440 441 442 443 444 445 446 447 448
449 450 451 452 453 454 455 456 457 458 459 460 461 462 463 464 465 466 467 468 469 470 471 472 473 474 475 476 477 478 479 480 481 482 483 484 485 486 487 488 489 490 491 492 493 494 495 496 497 498 499 500 501
502 503 504 505 506 507 508 509 510 511 512 513 514 515 516 517 518 519 520 521 522 523 524 525 526 527 528 529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536 537 538 539 540 541 542 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554
555 556 557 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573 574 575 576 577 578 579 580 581 582 583 584 585 586 587 588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600 601 602 603 604 605 606 607
608 609 610 611 612 613 614 615 616 617 618 619 620 621 622 623 624 625 626 627 628 629 630 631 632 633 634 635 636 637 638 639 640 641 642 643 644 645 646 647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660
661 662 663 664 665 666 667 668 669 670 671 672 673 674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681 682 683 684 685 686 687 688 689 690 691 692 693 694 695 696 697 698 699 700 701 702 703 704 705 706 707 708 709 710 711 712 713
714 715 716 717 718 719 720 721 722 723 724 725 726 727 728 729 730 731 732 733 734 735 736 737 738 739 740 741 742 743 744 745 746 747 748 749 750 751 752 753 754 755 756 757 758 759 760 761 762 763 764 765 766
767 768 769 770 771 772 773 774 775 776 777 778 779 780 781 782 783 784 785 786 787 788 789 790 791 792 793 794 795 796 797 798 799 800 801 802 803 804 805 806 807 808 809 810 811 812 813 814 815 816 817 818 819
820 821 822 823 824 825 826 827 828 829 830 831 832 833 834 835 836 837 838 839 840 841 842 843 844 845 846 847 848 849 850 851 852 853 854 855 856 857 858 859 860 861 862 863 864 865 866 867 868 869 870 871 872
873 874 875 876 877 878 879 880 881 882 883 884 885 886 887 888 889 890 891 892 893 894 895 896 897 898 899 900 901 902 903 904 905 906 907 908 909 910 911 912 913 914 915 916 917 918 919 920 921 922 923 924 925
926 927 928 929 930 931 932 933 934 935 936 937 938 939 940 941 942 943 944 945 946 947 948 949 950 951 952 953 954 955 956 957 958 959 960 961 962 963 964 965 966 967 968 969 970 971 972 973 974 975 976 977 978
979 980 981 982 983 984 985 986 987 988 989 990 991 992 993 994 995 996 997 998 999 1000 1001 1002 1003 1004 1005 1006 1007 1008 1009 1010 1011 1012 1013 1014 1015 1016 1017 1018 1019 1020 1021 1022 1023 1024
1025 1026 1027 1028 1029 1030 1031 1032 1033 1034 1035 1036 1037 1038 1039 1040 1041 1042 1043 1044 1045 1046 1047 1048 1049 1050 1051 1052 1053 1054 1055 1056 1057 1058 1059 1060 1061 1062 1063 1064 1065
1066 1067 1068 1069 1070 1071 1072 1073 1074 1075 1076 1077 1078 1079 1080 1081 1082 1083 1084 1085 1086 1087 1088 1089 1090 1091 1092 1093 1094 1095 1096 1097 1098 1099 1100 1101 1102 1103 1104 1105 1106
1107 1108 1109 1110 1111 1112 1113 1114 1115 1116 1117 1118 1119 1120 1121 1122 1123 1124 1125 1126 1127 1128 1129 1130 1131 1132 1133 1134 1135 1136 1137 1138 1139 1140 1141 1142 1143 1144 1145 1146 1147 1148 1149
1150 1151 1152 1153 1154 1155 1156 1157 1158 1159 1160 1161 1162 1163 1164 1165 1166 1167 1168 1169 1170 1171 1172 1173 1174 1175 1176 1177 1178 1179 1180 1181 1182 1183 1184 1185 1186 1187 1188 1189 1190 1191 1192
1193 1194 1195 1196 1197 1198 1199 1200 1201 1202 1203 1204 1205 1206 1207 1208 1209 1210 1211 1212 1213 1214 1215 1216 1217 1218 1219 1220 1221 1222 1223 1224 1225 1226 1227 1228 1229 1230 1231 1232 1233
1234 1235 1236 1237 1238 1239 1240 1241 1242 1243 1244 1245 1246 1247 1248 1249 1250 1251 1252 1253 1254 1255 1256 1257 1258 1259 1260 1261 1262 1263 1264 1265 1266 1267 1268 1269 1270 1271 1272 1273 1274
1275 1276 1277 1278 1279 1280 1281 1282 1283 1284 1285 1286 1287 1288 1289 1290 1291 1292 1293 1294 1295 1296 1297 1298 1299 1300 1301 1302 1303 1304 1305 1306 1307 1308 1309 1310 1311 1312 1313 1314 1315
1316 1317 1318 1319 1320 1321 1322 1323 1324 1325 1326 1327 1328 1329 1330 1331 1332 1333 1334 1335 1336 1337 1338 1339 1340 1341 1342 1343 1344 1345 1346 1347 1348 1349 1350 1351 1352 1353 1354 1355 1356
1357 1358 1359 1360 1361 1362 1363 1364 1365 1366 1367 1368 1369 1370 1371 1372 1373 1374 1375 1376 1377 1378 1379 1380 1381 1382 1383 1384 1385 1386 1387 1388 1389 1390 1391 1392 1393 1394 1395 1396 1397
1398 1399 1400 1401 1402 1403 1404 1405 1406 1407 1408 1409 1410 1411 1412 1413 1414 1415 1416 1417 1418 1419 1420 1421 1422 1423 1424 1425 1426 1427 1428 1429 1430 1431 1432 1433 1434 1435 1436 1437 1438
1439 1440 1441 1442 1443 1444 1445 1446 1447 1448 1449 1450 1451 1452 1453 1454 1455 1456 1457 1458 1459 1460 1461 1462 1463 1464 1465 1466 1467 1468 1469 1470 1471 1472 1473 1474 1475 1476 1477 1478 1479
1480 1481 1482 1483 1484 1485 1486 1487 1488 1489 1490 1491 1492 1493 1494 1495 1496 1497 1498 1499 1500 1501 1502 1503 1504 1505 1506 1507 1508 1509 1510 1511 1512 1513 1514 1515 1516 1517 1518 1519 1520
1521 1522 1523 1524 1525 1526 1527 1528 1529 1530 1531 1532 1533 1534 1535 1536 1537 1538 1539 1540 1541 1542 1543 1544 1545 1546 1547 1548 1549 1550 1551 1552 1553 1554
```


Table 3.2 - YouTube in terms of user's comments analysis

Each of these are comments from a unique YouTube user. The extraction from this YouTube video game trailer, is symbolised as the raw data. The software then produces the following output to summarise simple statistics and whether any errors occurred.

The script retrieved 2841 comments from 1555 top level comments.

The following files have been generated:

videoinfo_7hamZRt3gFE_2019_03_30-20_25_20_basicinfo.tab

videoinfo_7hamZRt3gFE_2019_03_30-20_25_20_comments.tab

videoinfo_7hamZRt3gFE_2019_03_30-20_25_20_authors.tab

videoinfo_7hamZRt3gFE_2019_03_30-20_25_20_commentnetwork.gdf

Table 3.3 - YouTube Comments extracted

The output has confirmed (in table 3.3) the YouTube video game trailer has 2841 comments from 1555 top-level comments. The 2841 total includes users replies to an existing comment or thread, while 1555 are actual comments from unique users, again not including any reply from users.

1. videoinfo_7hamZRt3gFE_2019_03_30-20_25_20_basicinfo.tab (**simple statistics on the YouTube clip, i.e., date of upload, author, clip length, views.**)
2. videoinfo_7hamZRt3gFE_2019_03_30-20_25_20_comments.tab (**Shows all users comments**)
3. videoinfo_7hamZRt3gFE_2019_03_30-20_25_20_authors.tab (**Shows authors or usernames of commenters**)
4. videoinfo_7hamZRt3gFE_2019_03_30-20_25_20_commentnetwork.gdf (**Number of comments a specific username has made**)

Table 3.3- YouTube Comments extracted

The table (3.3) here shows what type of data will be extrapolated once the query is run. The main data sought here is point 2, Shows all users comments.

NVivo

After attending a workshop, watching numerous videos, speaking to current and past students, and just continuous experimentation with various programmes, NVivo was selected. Nevertheless, most appropriately, well before any experiment with data coding software, I bought several books to build my foundation of qualitative research. I drew upon Silverman's work as a guide for my data analysis (Silverman, 2013). This book provided current and transdisciplinary knowledge of a variety of qualitative approaches. The textbook examined the theoretical basis of these methodologies before walking readers through the process of each approach. It helped build my skills to conduct this type of research independently and confidently.

I then worked with a program called 'Parallels Desktop' that mimics and creates a "virtual machine" within a Mac IOS, which imitates a Windows PC, thus allowing specific applications (i.e., NVivo) to function on a Mac but with Windows operating system (Carlton, 2008). Below is an illustration that is expanded in further depth in the findings Chapter.

Here is an example of API data extracted from YouTube user comments on the *Watch Dogs 2* trailer shown in table 3.4. There are 2841 user comments to analyse and then code. Unfortunately, many user comments have no real value or meaning. This is also the case with sarcasm which again is difficult to code and apply sentiment analysis on.

1	Comments
2	2019 still remember the moment spend on this damn good game
3	What song is this??
4	It's great !!!
5	I love the ending at 2:10
6	Man I love this game and the first one
7	t bone downgraded tf
8	Wrench is the second evolved form from jordi in watchdogs 3 we will see the final evolution
9	Wait, but Jordi is the worst character in both games
10	Best game trailer ever
11	Some hacks are truth in this game
12	My favorite game of all time 🍷
13	Rip Horatio
14	what's that song in the background music trailer?
15	2018?
16	fact dec secc is anonymous
17	1:47 Is that Chell?
18	https://youtu.be/7hamZRT3gFE?list=PLpwykZha0Z60yyVzKrGcfXyHKyiqN0f7&t=107 Is that Chell?
19	I came here for the music
20	Music name?
21	0:28 "this weirdo's wrench" madam that right there is a sledgehammer
22	One Of The Best Games Ever Made Thank You Ubisoft I Still Don't Know How This Game Wasn't Game Of The Year
23	music title?
24	music title
25	Really a GREAT game.. for those who were disappointed with the first one, believe me. This is so good, you really feel like a hacker this time. It remind me of the movie hackers with a bit gta in the mix
26	This is Wrench he is your puppy have fun
27	I love this game
28	sad to admit but, this game actually reflects today's society..
29	Sooo i guess no Aiden?
30	Anyone can hack this game?
31	Google + Microsoft + Apple = Blume 🍷🍷
32	ride motorbike not even touch de clutch
33	I WANTED THE HERO TO BE MORE BADASS
34	Anime Stain he couldn't be more badass

Table 3.4- key comments from YouTube Trailer

The data has been imported into NVivo as .xls file format. Converting to .xls from a .txt file allows for prior filtering of unrelated data. Below shows (on the right) the user comments in a large column in table 3.5.

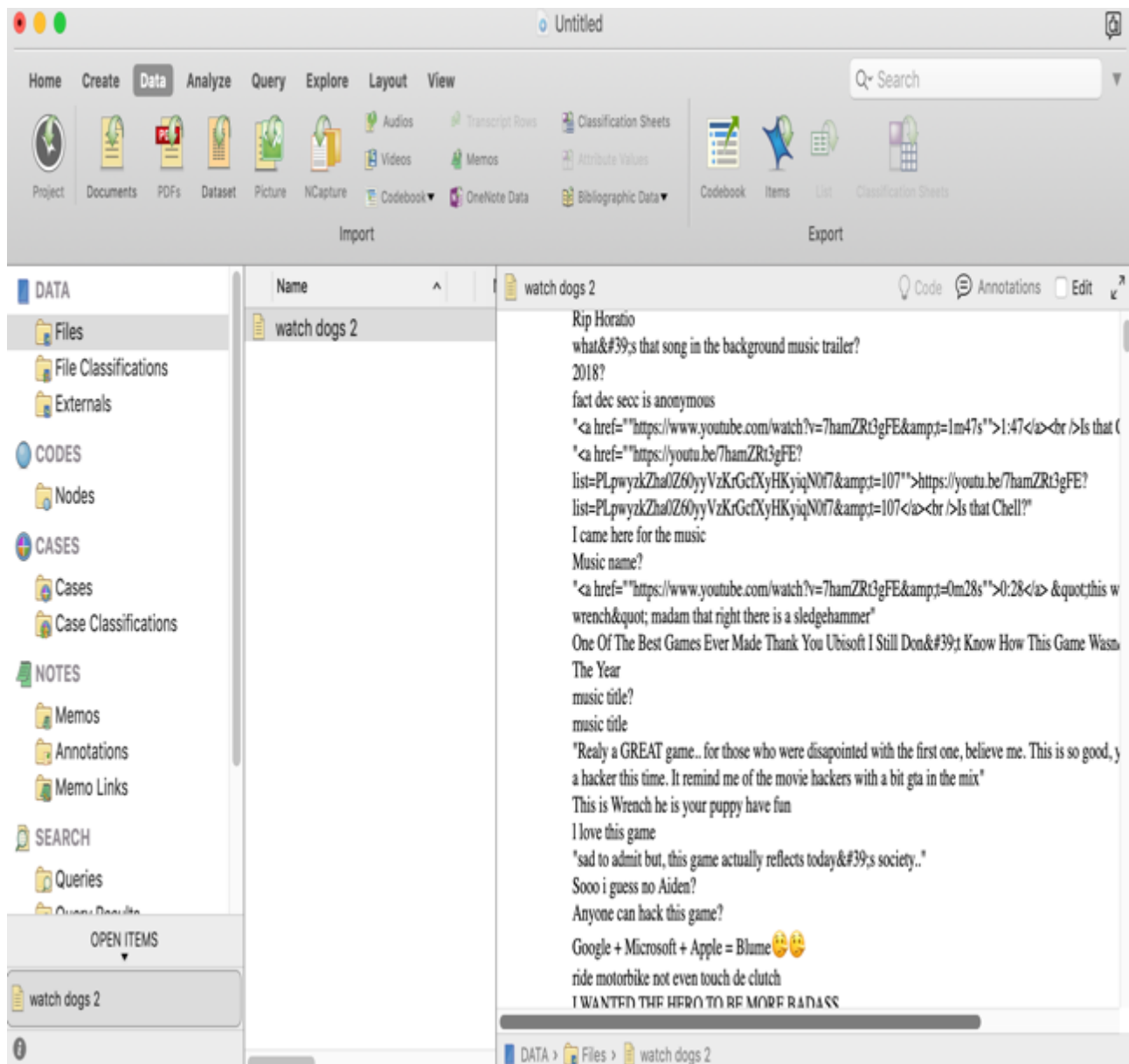


Table 3.5 - YouTube. Comments extracted in NVivo (*Watch Dogs 2*)

After user comments have been imported, the coding can commence. Below in table 3.6 shows a new tab/section know as Query. In this section, the data is coded and sorted based on certain commands. In this instance, I am looking for keywords or themes as illustrated in the user choice of words in his/her YouTube comments. Therefore, the commands are for ‘Word Frequency’, but various criteria must first be established.

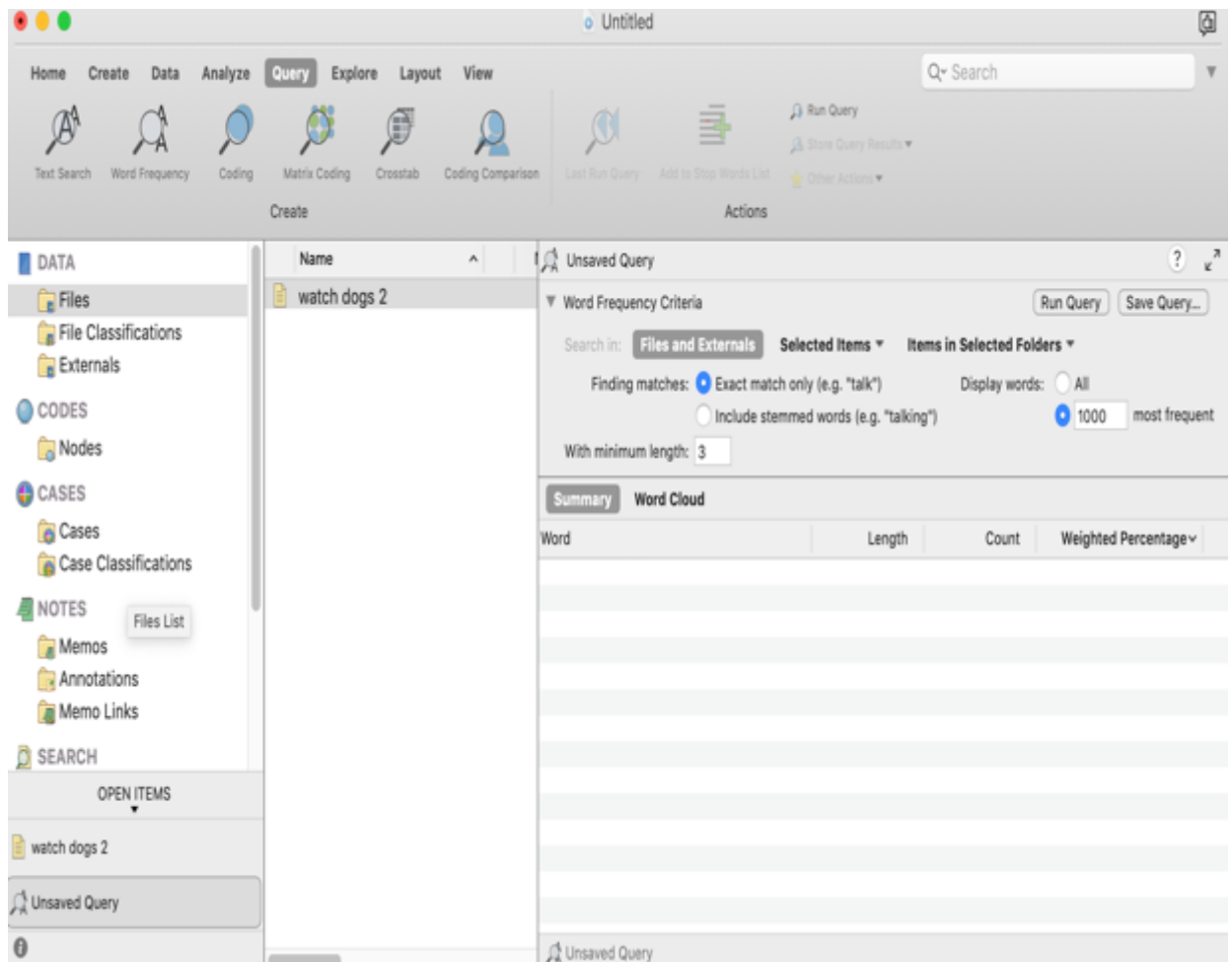


Table 3.6 – Screenshot of Word Frequency

The ‘Word Frequency’ as shown in table 3.7 command via a Query has been run and has produced a *summary of words, count, and percentage*. Likewise, the *similar word* column is also critical as it widens the net for synonyms.

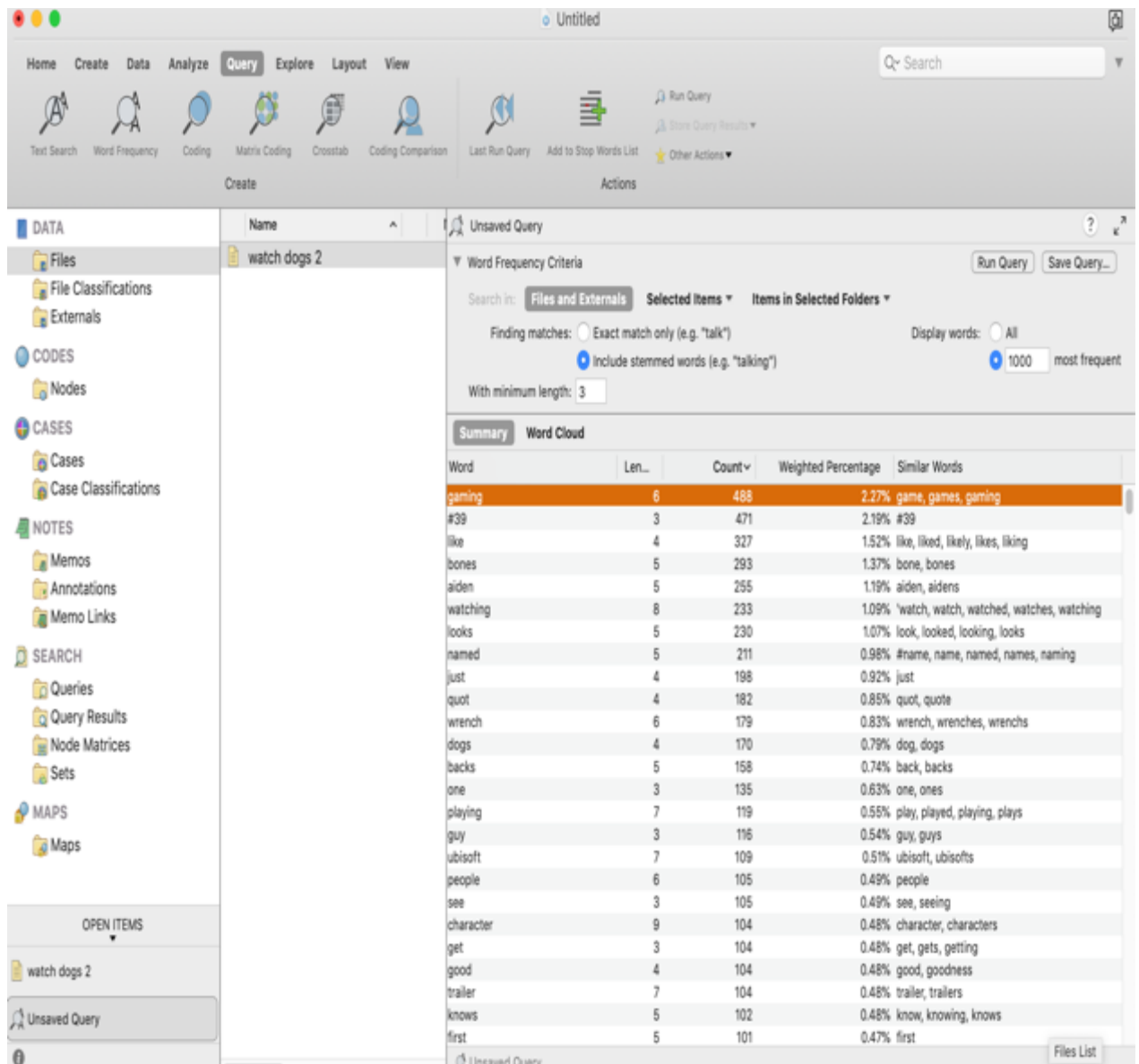


Table 3.7 - Word Frequency – most commonly used words from user comments

The data can then be exported in a visual summary or collage of keywords shown in table 3.8. This is known as ‘Word Cloud’ and is illustrated below. According to Lohmann et al. (2015), word clouds deliver a simple and effective means to visually demonstrate the most common words of text documents.

the Word Frequency/Cloud query.

The survey questions can be found in Chapter three. The survey participants were diverse in terms of gender and predominantly University students or graduates. A 25-item Likert-scale questionnaire was designed and sent via 'Survey Monkey' to participants in a customised Intrinsic Motivational Inventory (IMI) devised to evaluate participants' individual experience (Deci et al., 1994). The survey gave participants direct access to the video game trailers that were embedded within the survey questions. The survey questions would adjust (skip logic) when a participant chooses a certain video game trailer. The research was designed to be replicable. Two distinct research methods were deployed: surveys and content/textual analysis. The selected approach was intended to reveal the barriers to and enablers of video game trailer design and create a theoretical understanding of how video game trailers can be optimised.

Limitations and future research

This research presents a collection of case studies as well as a broader framework for the study that allows scholars to investigate, among other things, new forms of industrial communication, game representation in popular culture, and how the entertainment industries view games themselves. Given the tendency in existing games literature to disregard promotion as a subject of study, this research significantly advances game promotion scholarship. I hope it will serve as a springboard for future studies presenting both relevant literature and possibilities for future research.

The current study's findings are constrained for a variety of reasons. Insufficient sample size or measures may have skewed the results. Future researchers who wish to build on the findings of this study are advised to incorporate a larger sample of individuals to enhance the richness. Future research should also broaden their gender inclusion criteria,

including diverse ages of participants, to better understand potential age influences on video game trailers. Furthermore, because participants choose to engage voluntarily, such self-selection may have resulted in study results that may not reflect a wider population. Individuals who play video games based on their trailer observation are also an exciting area for future research. If participants are unconscious of their levels of engagement in the trailers and the amount of time spent playing video games, results may be influenced. Observational data would also be valuable to observe and document participants' reactions upon watching a video game trailer to supplement findings. As mentioned in this research, the power of social in the content of video game trailers is astonishing. Conversely, excessive video gameplay may lead to less time spent on social media and less time watching, commenting, liking/disliking, and sharing video game trailers. Furthermore, gameplay growth lies more in hand-held devices (mobile); games downloaded via google play or apple store have a far broader appeal due to their simplicity and ability to play anytime and anywhere.

The researchers' dependence on self-report measurements of study variables was another drawback of the current investigation. Respondents may have over or under-reported or overestimated the amount of time spent playing video games, thus marginalising participants who viewed the trailers as a promotional tool and nothing more. Any of these reasons could have biased the results. Promotions in the past have been designed to be one-way and have little concern for engagement. Today's marketing appears centred on instant gratification and alluring to audiences' aspirations. The rules require promotions to keep content short and instil storytelling. I have referred to video game trailers as both old and new-age media; further, research needs to explore how audiences interpret and absorb the content. According to a study by Comscore, millennials' average commercial attention span is 5-6 seconds (Castillo, 2017). Given that trailers span from 1 minute to a whopping 6 mins, do audiences have the vigour to remain attentive to the messages?

Future research could closely examine the threshold and explore how audiences disproportionately multitask in an era of multiple screens and have short attention spans.

Conclusion

This research into the role of video game trailers offers a rich insight into audience engagement. This ability to expand the research by looking at social media platforms allow for depth and diversity in the data collection. As such, YouTube supports a participatory culture; YouTube audiences can comment, like/dislike, rate, and reply to videos. Of particular focus is that comments (although some videos may have this disabled) signify a conduit between developers and their audience of video game trailers. As a result, after viewing a clip, comments allow viewers to state their opinions, contribute to lively dialogues with other viewers, and pose questions or even suggestions to content authors. From the video game trailer authors perspective, comments deliver a valued insight of reaction to appreciate prospective gamers needs and adjust accordingly. In addition, the feedback allows game developers to think about game design and make some modifications before a significant release.

This study can support advertisers and developers better comprehend the relevance of convincing in video game advertising, specifically video game trailers. Video game trailers are increasing in attention from the industry. Accordingly, there is a demand for additional research on different types of video game trailers to show their persuasive attributes as promotional tools.

The next Chapter on video game trailers specifically will explore how trailers promote rather than sell. Further showcasing video game trailers as promotional tools, it explores explicitly how these may be encountered by audiences and the kinds of text(s), symbols, and

narratives considered the video game trailer. This Chapter investigates what is already known about the video game trailer and why there should be an examination not just of trailers explicitly, but the types of video game trailers correspondingly.

It was important to take note of potentially problematic methodological trends in the existing literature in order to identify any gaps and ensure the current study did not follow existing, inappropriate methodological protocols. The topic of video games was continuously evolving and ranging in perceptiveness, as it was published by many credible authors.

Chapter 4: Video game trailers

“These seemingly unruly texts also become part of a larger marketing chain, in which audiences become involved in the very processes of production for the studios themselves” (Tryon, 2009, p. 154).

“It’s amazing – though taken for granted – that the century-old marketing tool that is the film video game trailer has emerged as the most potent marketing tool for movies in cyberspace” (Marich, 2013, p. 125).

“Genre, stories and stars, constitute the three principal rhetorical appeals of video game trailers” (Kernan, 2004, p. 41).

This Chapter aims to explore video game trailers more specifically, given that much of the literature concentrated on trailers has been centered around films.

Three broad standpoints were explored: a deliberation of relevant research on video game trailers, promotion, and marketing from a modern-day perspective (social media) and the types of trailers and exploring video game trailers through a rhetorical narrative textual analysis. This Chapter has two divergent sections. The first is the introduction of trailers, which provide background and thus a more profound understanding. The case studies form the core body of this Chapter with three video game trailers: *Fallout 4*, *Watch Dogs 2*, and

Assassin's Creed Syndicate. Exploring video game trailers through rhetorical, narrative, and textual analysis (Bollen et al., 2011; Cambria et al., 2013; Hu & Liu, 2012; Kavoori, 2011; Morency et al., 2011) applied to structured tables and thus forming the central body of work in this Chapter. Chapter 4 is particularly pertinent for informing later analysis in the thesis in Chapters 7 and 8. It provides a deeper understanding of each of the three trailers' specific themes, genres, and stories. This Chapter aims to explore video game trailers more specifically, given that much of the literature concentrating trailer has been centred around films.

This Chapter considers the video game trailer as it resides overwhelmingly on the Internet. As a result, most video game trailers are posted and ultimately watched on the Internet with only a small volume, never making it to any cinema or TV transmission, making the Internet a remarkably effective resource and site of industry communication. According to Statista (2021), the total number of social media users is expected to reach over 4.4 billion individuals by 2025, approximately half of the world population. As a form of involvement and engagement, with the status of video game trailers in research, and to appreciate the change in marketing practices (Evans, 2012; Laroche et al., 2012; Mangold & Faulds, 2009) that has led to other industries using video game trailers, this Chapter considers the use of video game trailers for industries, not just film and television, but: video games. It views the video game trailer as a short film that promotes rather than sells (Johnston et al., 2016; Torkut & Ponomarenko, 2020; Zorkóczy, 2018) and employs a large number of video game trailers generated from online video sharing sites. This notion goes further by showcasing the trailer as a promotional tool to "share between friends as an embodiment of enthusiasm and anticipation" (Williams, 2012). It does this to explore precisely how other industries use the video game trailer, what form these other video game trailers take, how audiences may encounter them, and the kinds of text(s), symbols, and narratives considered in the trailer.

Johnston (2009) argues that the Internet has increased the profile of the video game trailer within marketing departments, highlighting the attraction of all forms of trailers to audiences as 'unique short films in their own right' (p. 143). Video game trailers are often sought out, circulated, dissected, and appropriated by fans (Booth, 2010); all processes facilitated by digitalization (Tryon 2010). Video game trailers have potential for '*spreadability*' (Jenkins et al., 2013). As inherently open and unfinished texts, they provide glimpses into a more significant film world and offer resources for shared discussion, gossip and speculation about films that might be (or have been) watched. The continued value of the video game trailer with the rise and rise of social media shows this traditional form of advertising still has prodigious application, thus allowing media to be "copied and circulated, repositioned and recontextualized every day" (Meikle, 2016, p. 12). Most of the promotional content is created through cooperation with media and design agencies. Media agencies are accountable for obtaining the advertising space for video games and concocting a media strategy grounded on evaluation of the target market and the overall media advertising setting.

Types of video game trailers

Game developers/designers have shown a great interest in film-style video game trailers (Voigt, 2013; Walker, 2012). Much has been made of industries other than film using texts identified as video game trailers. Texts identified as "video game trailers" (Becker, 2008; Brookey, 2010) exist for numerous industries, like online videos, popups on websites, or pre-roll clips shown before online videos. They have been used to promote cinema, television, live-action theatre, recorded theatre, books, theatre, and a whole host of assorted and interrelated products that compete for an individual's relaxation time, and in many instances, wealth. In addition to this is the recent trend of re-mix or mash-up video game trailers, which promote hypothetical products and deliberately subvert the codes of promotional video game

trailers for comedic rather than economic effect. As discussed later in this Chapter, the various types of video game trailers, how they change, and their impact on viewers diverges based on their meaning and structure.

Therefore, trailers have a crucial role in the gaming industry. Unfortunately, despite their omnipresence, just a few academic works are willing to explain their semiotic status. There are many types of trailers, as shown below, and all of them have a unique purpose, but this thesis has focused on the story trailer version.

1. Parodic Trailer

2. Gameplay Trailer

3. Theatrical Trailer

4. A Teaser Trailer

5. Story Trailer

(Caldwell, 2008; Gray, 2010a, 2010b; Hartwig, 2012; Hesford, 2013; Jenkins, 2009; Johnston, 2008, 2009; Klinger, 2006; Ortega, 2014; Ross, 2011; Russo, 2009)

Almost exclusively inhabiting online, this broader phenomenon poses great questions; what do viewers make of video game trailers? What stories and narratives do trailers create? As this sensation is evolving, and as this incidence is largely contained within the Internet, namely social media (Asur & Huberman, 2010; Kent, 2010; Oghina et al., 2012; Ortega, 2014; Russo, 2009) how these video game trailers are gathered for this study forms a central underpinning for the entire research. This is partly because this spectacle spans multiple industries. Still, it is also because such a methodology that explicitly shows video game trailer analysis approaches impacts studying the contemporary video game trailer.

Video game trailer investigation draws on a background of industry context where appropriate to explore specifically when the video game trailer was used, placing this within a

historical trajectory. In contrast, each video game trailer analysis provides a chronological insight largely via contextualising along a historical path before discussing the aesthetics of the video game trailers identified as part of this existence. Though each trailer analysis is positioned unaccompanied, the procedure part of a broader comprehension of the video game trailer phenomenon is to be part of the data analysis. Before beginning into any video game trailer analysis, it is essential to appreciate that the other forms of video game trailers are not just praiseworthy of study but a precondition. Examination of these other forms of video game trailers is needed because despite their value, ubiquity, mixed reception, use in numerous industries, and increasing scholarly enthusiasm for video game trailers; the academic community has given very little consideration to the video game trailer as a media medium. As such, the whole field of study is skewed towards analyses of film trailers. Furthermore, despite the pervasiveness of the video game trailer as a mechanical instrument, few studies consider the computer game trailer as the sole centre of examination, less still that question what the video game trailer is or could be outside of a particular connection silver screen advancement. Nevertheless, fewer studies have considered the video game trailer as an element that may change and create, and without a doubt have wherever outside the film industry.

Video game trailers exist spatially and transiently isolate from and work towards their different objectives by highlighting and discarding qualities of this distinctive element. Notwithstanding the viability of these individual video game trailers for financial gain, all types of item advancement offer a one of a kind understanding of how an industry, through the innovative choices of substance makers, desire its items and itself to be seen. In doing as such, the video game trailer shapes a one-of-a-kind asset, tastefully spoken to on-screen (Ortiz et al., 2013; Stapleton & Hughes, 2005).

This stylish representation, or lack of, as explored in Chapter 5, offers a type of visual discourse upon the conceivable outcomes of the mechanical yield being advanced; conversationally, this could be communicated as a traditional medium embracing new-age technology (Bruns, 2008; Jenkins, 2006, 2012; Manovich, 2001). Because of this representation, investigating the different video game trailers at work in contemporary media and, subsequently, contemporary culture better encourages a comprehension of trailers as both individual representations of industry items and an aggregate type of industry correspondence, representation, and memory.

Trailers form a unique resource, a site of convergence where products and industries are aesthetically represented on screen (Finsterwalder et al., 2012; Iida et al., 2012). This aesthetic representation offers a visual commentary upon the possibilities of the industrial output being promoted; colloquially, this could be expressed as a rapid representation of a game's key features, even if the trailer itself evades actual gameplay because of this representation, exploring the various video game trailers at work in contemporary media. Thus, contemporary culture better facilitates an understanding of video game trailers as both individual representations of industry products and a collective form of industry communication, representation, and memory.

It is critical to consider the settings of this framework concerning the pertinent works that have omitted types or forms of video game trailers relative to the analysis of the film trailers. Understanding the prevailing literature lets us investigate what is already known about the video game trailer and why there should be an examination not just of trailers explicitly but the types of video game trailers correspondingly. Furthermore, this examination delivers the possibility of expanding upon the outlined approaches used to consider the video game trailer as an object of study and discussing the premise for this logic.

A discussion of video game trailer theory draws upon the known studies of the film trailers (Boksem, 2015; Karray & Debernitz, 2015; Suckfüll & Moellering, 2015) that illustrate the central working understanding inside academia, offering a managing basis and cerebral experiences for this scholarship. This provides an open discussion of the trailer lexicon before outlining the present-day trends in promotional practices that offer an impression of the advent of marketing video culture and sketches the imperative for study - defining how the video game trailers will be recognised and organised for purposes of analysis.

Subsequently, discussion of video game trailer studies from three broad standpoints; a deliberation of relevant research on video game trailers, promotion, and marketing from a modern-day perspective (social media) and the types of trailers.

Video game trailer legacy

Video game trailers came to be a recognisable visual form, initially emerging during the instability in industrial practices (De Vany, 2004; Scott, 2005) that occurred with the establishment of the film industry (Grainge, 2007; Kernan, 2009; Kerrigan, 2010). The emergence of the trailer has been charted by movie historians throughout the numerous suggestions to it in writing and through movie trailers remaining on traditional film reels. Based on such evidence, historians have been able to track the changing forms of the film trailer from its beginnings as projected still images promoting forthcoming attractions (Hediger, 2005; Hesford, 2013). Hamel (2012) notes that the expression '*trailer*' occurred to differentiate between ends of the film reel. Following, the phrase was applied to short films found on the short-reel regardless of aesthetic form, then principally the term was applied to explicit forms of promotion and advertising for films in the years around 1915 (Jensen, 2014; Staiger, 1990). Early on, and perhaps not intended, Staiger's (1990) opinion has largely circumscribed the academic grasp of the trailer. This understanding in trailer research has come to unequivocally explain the video game trailer, essentially overseeing the transformations in a contemporary media society, and thus, in general, analytical rationality.. Through the application and development of Staiger's work, Hamel (2012) classifies two trends that enlighten the expansion of the trailer, the use of '*the propaganda film*' that traded imageries of the studios to the community and *the 'commercial film'* that sold products "such as soap, concrete, clothing, chocolate, and firearms" (Hamel, 2012, p. 270). Though Hamel claims that propaganda films 'sold the image of the studio to the public, but since they did not focus on a particular film, they cannot be defined as video file/movie trailers. This interpretation by Hamel exhibits the tenacious, nostalgic understanding that its bond to a product defines the trailer and that product is customarily a single movie. Lieu (2018) refers to states that a trailer generally follows (Figure 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6), and devised, as one of three structures; traditional line of rising action is a narrative concept where a story's dramatic tension starts low, then rises until it

reaches a climax, then falls into the denouement and conclusion.

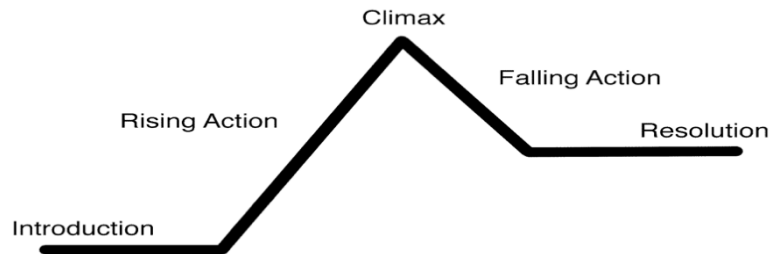


Figure 4.1 - Narrative concept where a story's dramatic tension starts low

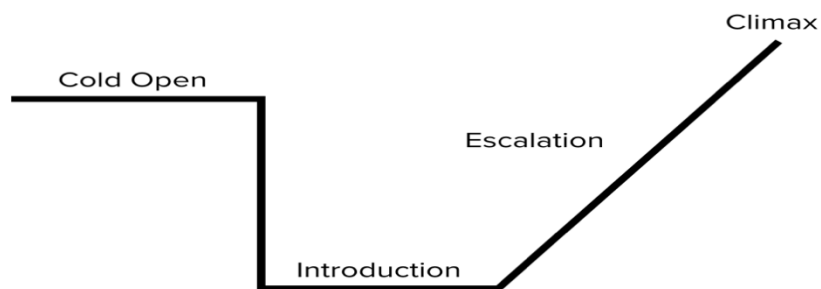


Figure 4.2 - Narrative concept where a story's dramatic tension starts cold and ends with a climax

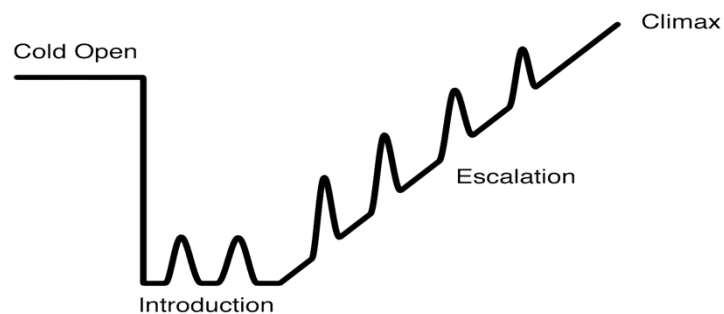


Figure 4.3 - Narrative concept where a story's dramatic tension starts cold, then escalation and ends with climax



Figure 4.4 - *Assassin Creed Syndicate* – Trailer

Source: <https://www.keengamer.com/articles/features/opinion-pieces/assassins-creed-syndicate-is-underrated/>

The trailer is evident in the era and has worked to meticulously produce *Syndicate's* London with the look and behaviour of authentic 1868 London. Political implications centred around the exploitation of lower classes and the marginal existence of the middle class. This political context reflects an era where plutocracy, private affluence merge and show an almost void in democratic environment exists. This implies the economic foundations, the elite dominates the commercial enterprise, and the less privileged are recourse to marginalised. Technology is in its infancy, and the rise of Britain is well demonstrated in the trailer, namely: subways constructed, streets paved, and ongoing buildings being erected. In many ways, the trailers aim to demonstrate two worlds within one society, similarly to the Dickens (1859) *A Tale of Two Cities*: *It was the best of times, it was the worst of times*.

London in 1868 was a prosperous era of realised ideas, but at the same time, it was a phase of discontent, bitterness, and distress. This plays a function in shaping the emplotment and thus to the rise of organised crime the life the protagonists will lead. The *Assassin's Creed* trailer has a series of plotlines: adventure, discovery, revenge, and underdog.

These emplotments are crucial to moulding the audience's perspective on who is the antagonist and protagonist. However, in general, the extent of society's exploitations allows for a zealous observation, unmistakably biased against the antagonist(s). The audience is seeing the misgivings of the elite and their wide-ranging tentacles, which aim to empower and awaken perspective players to take up arms. The overarching objectives seem to make players feel like liberators or rebels, which certainly validates violence to help the oppressed (Crozier, 1960). Chapter 8 explores how vigilantism exemplifies a technique for shaping the audience's view of violence, thus aiming to justify its presence in video game trailers. As a result, hook audiences on the narrative; this technique for developing audience identification with game heroes and heroines so that the audience (then player) can engage in heroism via vigilantism without fear of legal repercussions.

Power is a significant theme instilled in this trailer. Perhaps more notably, the concentration of power and lack of organised opposition. This power produces an environment that gives rise to the need for rebellion, and "where there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault, 1998, p. 95). This resistance is reflected in rival gangs that are part of the protagonists, but their behaviour seems to be considered legitimate and even praiseworthy by the audiences. However, the trailer also delivers inspiration in the form of female empowerment when woman subordination was universal (Fletcher, 1995). This is two-fold: the antagonist and protagonist are both females: the twin Evie Frye and the 'Bloody Nora' an influential crime lord.

The female protagonist has a leadership role and represents in the trailer and being more rational than her male twin. The trailers' goal is quite just a romanticised rendition of 1860's London. This straightforwardness in the plot of a bad guy with his henchmen poised in positions of power works well to streamline the narrative approach, which gives perspective gamers a reason for inflicting their brand of violence. The trailers certainly play on modern-day themes, the

rich exploiting the poor, the weak voiceless and powerful, whether government or business is setting the rules.



Figure 4.5 - FALLOUT 4 Trailer

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XW7Of3g2JME&ab_channel=GameSpot

The trailer reflects an ordinary world, one we can relate to, then shifted to a world that post-apocalyptic. After the bombs of the Great War fell, the sole survivors need to pick up the pieces their now shattered society. Forced to rebuild or learn how to manage with the wreckage and resource scarcity that remains.

Politically, the trailer conveys the profound vulnerability of nuclear energy, weapons, and its fallout after that. The catastrophic nuclear devastation throughout the United States caused by corporations and government sanction explicit knowledge of a looming disaster, thus the creation of many underground nuclear fallout shelters. At this stage, society has come together, and no social class exists, namely as private wealth is non-existent. Perhaps a reminder of how disasters can bring out the best in people concerning his/her heroism and selflessness (Brenner & Clarke, 2005). The trailers also aim to rekindle the risk of nuclear energy in a post-Japan (Shadrina, 2012). Other objectives also involve the environment itself, specific resources, or resource depletion (Diederer, 2010)

The trailer gives some insight into this use of scarcity of resources, explicitly the ability to develop and manage settlements, and a far-reaching crafting structure where materials scavenged from the environment. Apparently, the impact of the disaster has created collectivism within society, a far cry from humanity's present fragmentation. "So we march on, following our leaders, toward an Armageddon of our own making." (Chomsky, 2007, p. 14). The collapse of government has created individual ownership, accountability in the absence of global democracy (Grant & Keohane, 2005).

The plot/s sacrifice, rescue, and transformation within the trailer intertwine well with the central narrative. These emplotments are about the combined effort of civilisation for existence. An ominous effort is made in the trailer to reach out to societies in their slumber on environmental issues, concern for others, and valuing/sharing resources. The role of power here is about ensuring its even distribution and avoiding today's constant abuses of power. In this context, society is shaped by an individual's actions and collaboration with others.

In all, the trailers inform audiences of choices today will impact civilisation tomorrow. Palpable support for anti-nuclear movement narratives, and indeed the use of fear and annihilation to enlighten audiences of modern-day dangers of our naivety towards the environment.



Figure 4.6 - *Watch Dogs 2* – Trailer

Source: <https://www.epicgames.com/store/en-US/p/watch-dogs-2>

The *Watch Dogs 2* trailer is quite open about its central theme, ensuring little room for confusion from audiences. In this context, society is crippling with the joys of technology, and other parties are accessing the likelihood of their personal information. What makes this trailer potent is its ability to enlighten and resonate with audiences. The narrative is reflective of present-day corporations. The idea that privacy is violated by the hostile actions of scrupulous wrongdoers (Solove, 2004). Politically, the trailer demonstrates the role of corporate power, its impunity, and influence on governments (Korten, 1998). Corporations are having far-reaching influence on facilitating and monitoring of citizens without discernible consent. This impacts the economics aspects too, namely the heavy reliance on technology and its vulnerability to exploitation. The notion of misuse of private data (Brenner & Clarke, 2005) is mainly centred around the corporations in this trailer. What is somewhat marginalised from the audience is the fact that the protagonists are hackers. A significant issue which governments grapple with solving and the public seems mainly uneasy about (Taylor, 2012).

The trailer rubber-stamps the use of hacking to advance the protagonist agenda and attach the corporations. Violence via hacking seems to be an acceptable perspective and audiences will seldom reflect on the devastation hacking has caused individuals globally. The trailers give glimpses into some of the acts: disrupt city traffic and interfere with electricity, hack mobile devices, and tamper with timed explosives.

More recently hackers have been labelled as cyber-terrorists (Hua & Bapna, 2013) indicating the dangers of their actions, the information being in the wrong hands, and other impacts of civil society infrastructures (Gorman, 2009)

The emplotments in this trailer again interconnected well with the narrative: wretched excess, rivalry, and revenge. The objective here is to show an enemy as formidable that conventional means of rebellion or uprising will not work. Fighting the antagonists with comparable weapons (but with a twist), again endorses the use of force, even where collateral damage is highly likely. Corporations notwithstanding, the trailer is encouraging anarchy, and seeks to challenge laws that if broken constitute 'domestic terrorism'. Moreover, "federal crime of terrorism is calculated to influence or affect the conduct of government by intimidation or coercion, or to retaliate against government conduct" (Hardy, 2011). The narrative in this trailer is protagonists are a form of resistance steadfast in securing a free public, liberated by a system intended to subjugate the weak. Audiences may well view the protagonists as a political movement or cause. Marcus and other protagonists are defending for what they believe is a threat to societies freedom and will engage in violence to vindicate this ethos.

Conclusion

The notion of video game trailers reflects gameplay is perhaps an over-simplification of its true purpose. Conceivably socially constructed and influenced by paratextual clues to the nature of the trailer content – its undeniably a promotional tool, and marketing is not always precise in its portrayals. The special framing of trailers appeals to the player and does not lead to a consensus on the actual game of a video game trailer, but it reinforces the connection between possible expectations of gameplay by emphasising that the viewer is watching the actual gameplay material.

Video game trailers are likely to trigger a strong emotional response of excitement, regardless of whether the material is used in the context of an actual game or just as a metaphor for the game itself (Plothe, 2017). We separate trailers according to their content, the content itself and the

audience's reaction to it. However, not all viewers seem to trust the audio-visual form in which the game is delivered in the trailer, and not only in terms of the content itself.

The resulting discussion between video game trailer enthusiasts and their cynics explicitly addresses the concept of representativeness which is critically explored in Chapter 5. The resulting popular typology of the trailer revolves around two categories: non-gameplay trailers and original content. While the first category potentially makes a strong claim to real gameplay illustration(s); some players argue that the trailer, without gameplay, is also capable of conveying various ludic characteristics faithfully (Švelch, 2015). This argument, which points to a potentially misleading trailer, can be refreshed by using different types of footage.

The term trailer has proven to be an important discussion point for designers, and undoubtedly audiences, more specifically, prospective players, watching in game material to learn more about what the end product might mean to them. This knowledge does not prevent players from approaching the trailer by other means, such as using audio-visual effects. Other viewers can still read and interpret the audio-visual text, spreading a certain amount of trailer competence within the player community, with some members actively educating their colleagues about the notable cases of disillusionment with trailers. Therefore, it shows a lack of understanding of the game's core mechanics and some of its most important aspects. As discussed, video game trailers have varying degrees of cinematic expression (Johnston et al., 2020; Roh, 2017; Twidale & Rennick-Egglestone, 2018). Creating appealing narratives and enthralling storytelling are essential ingredients for video game trailers. Video game trailers are a form of narrative material (as discussed in Chapter 6) and deliver a cinematic experience for audiences.

This Chapter has presented behind video game trailers and cinematic by shedding light on a burgeoning industry that is often praised yet rarely studied. The significance of this Chapter for upcoming discussion is by showing how audiences are shaped and affected by video game

trailers. By gaining a better understanding of video game trailers, including how they work, has developed into a distinct sub-genre and why the future appears to be propelling this form of work beyond the confines of the video game trailers and into new territories. Each video game trailer chosen represents this sub-genre. They each have different genres and how audiences may/may not identify with the images, sounds, graphics, and characters themselves. This Chapter connects with the subsequent Chapter by showing the various attributes trailers contain with the aim to persuade audiences of their prominence and indeed authenticity.

Chapter 5 provides context on how audiences react to these specific trailer framings, however there is limited harmony about whether video game trailers reflect actual gameplay. This subsequent Chapter shows how video game trailers could produce strong emotional reactions of excitement regardless of the footage used. Equally, not all audiences seem to place the same conviction in a trailer's audio-visual capacity of a video game. Consequently, video game trailers may be misrepresentative.

Chapter 5 – Representation & Misrepresentation

“Fictional worlds of many games are contradictory and incoherent, but the player may not experience this as such since the rules of the game can provide a sense of direction even when the fictional world has little credibility” (Juul, 2011, p. 6).

We can consider trailers for video games as part of a larger textual structure, with paratextual manifestations common. Trailers have qualities such as enlightening a video game's socio-historical dimensions. Officially, video game trailers are defined as purposefully created videos with varying degrees of cinematic expression for promotional purposes, a collection of functions aimed at promoting a video game(s). This Chapter aims to explore the (dis)connection with actual gameplay vs. marketing. Participants' comments in this Chapter express how occasionally the actual gameplay is lost in all the hysteria. However, they are currently one of the most often used and influential video game hype and marketing instruments. Despite this, because of the little reflection of the video game product, video game trailers appear to cause deception. The concept of a representative trailer is discussed in this thesis by examining online users' comments (via YouTube) on three chosen trailers

With the introduction of social networks, audiences are often encouraged to participate (comments/likes/dislikes/shares via YouTube trailers). Participates in spreading the word about the game through their action, creations, likes/dislikes, views. Within film culture, trailers are intricately linked to the text that they aim to market to viewers. From the 1910s and 1920s, trailers and their makers repurposed actual footage from a film initially without the permission of movie studios (Ecenbarger, 2016; Johnston, Vollans, & Greene, 2016). Thus, the phrase 'Illustration' will reflect whether trailers depict actual gameplay or lack of. Because of this link between a movie and a preview, a significant amount of illustration could be maintained or at least understood and translated by their audiences. Here, the expression illustration stands for the assumed or attempted accurate representation of a text (video game) employing a trailer deploying audio-visual and semiotic resources.

This representation can be idiosyncratic, predisposed, and even gender concentrated (Ivory, 2006). These specific terminological choices are motivated by the industry practice and the movie game vernacular, which employs the expression "representative" or even "not representative" of actual video game experience regularly. Unlike the advertising viewers experience in other mediums, trailers and promotions for video games can often display little from the actual product (video game) developers are promoting. Though a movie trailer is assumed to establish plot and protagonists/antagonists while teasing basic properties of the experience, video game trailers are often entirely unrepresentative of the finished product (Tolson, 2010). Moreover, this expression highlights the process of representation, and this is regarded as occurring between a trailer and a video game (Gandolfi & Semprebene, 2017; Kwon, 2015). This significant relationship stays the norm for most current film trailers and the various symbolic accuracy frequently discussed by audiences (Johnston et al., 2016). Still, this

material relationship does not create the emblematic process entirely straightforward, not least due to the comparably brief form of a trailer. For example, Kernan (2009) identifies three broad types of focus -- *stories, genre, and stars* -- that any film trailer might embrace to convince a potential audience. The assortment of different interpretations of cinematic texts offered through promotions that potentially challenged a unified accurate representation of a movie has been researched by (Klinger 1989, 2006):

Semiotic and mass culture theories then, both treat modes of textual divergence, though as a result of the activities of intertextuality and commodification, respectively. While these formulations otherwise share little common ground, taken together, they suggest an analysis of one of the major social dimensions of reception: how certain types of textual response are motivated by forms directly associated with defining the text as a product (p.5).

Another aspect hindering complete illustration is the self-censorship within trailers adopted to avoid spoiling the whole story (Preece, 2011; Zanger, 1998). Moreover, the enterprise of a trailer is chiefly linear, while video games are often regarded as ergodic or open and dynamic (Aarseth, 1997, 2004, 2012).

As a result, even moments presented in trailers using gameplay footage shows only one of many future performances of a video game, containing cut scenes and other non-interactive elements of the game. This gap between a text and its performance (Fernández-Vara, 2009, 2011; Vara, 2009) causes a certain level of symbolic tolerance in promotional materials. Many video game trailers employ various sorts of imagery, such as Computer-Generated Imagery (CGI), to create a trailer, animation, or live-action that further removes them from the game depicted.

Differentiating between different footage is critical for deciphering artwork in a video game trailer, but it is not always obvious to the spectator without additional paratextual signals

In aesthetic contexts, the role of paratexts, while often serving a traditional marketing function (Venkatesh & Meamber, 2006), also include a substantial impact on the overall cultural experience (i.e., a proposition of how it can be understood, interpreted, and received). Genette's (1997) landmark exposition *paratexts* address the fundamental questions: *who, how, where, what, and why*, in evaluating how paratexts impact and relate to the original text.

Thus, the usage of non-gameplay vision is possibly confusing for audiences and is now addressed by explicit disclaimers regarding the nature of the trailer material, which also provide leeway for adjustments during development.

Video game trailers convey representational limitations of the film precursors and deliver new qualities under consideration. The promise of illustration is a consequence of negotiations of different stakeholders inside video game society to an even greater extent than in more conventional cultural sectors. Rather than searching for possible objective standards by which one may assess the amount of illustration, I have analysed the way the claim of illustration through promotional text is established and preserved through player discussions. After all, video game audiences will be the principal target collection of trailers and their reception, reactions, and economic behaviour influence the promotional custom (Brookey, 2010).

On the other hand, the aim is not to give an exhausting breakdown of the genuine content of player talks. Since past controversies concerning misleading trailers (i.e., *Lair*, *Prototype 2*, *Brink*, *The Order: 1886*, *Aliens: Colonial Marines*, *Homefront: The Revolution*, *Assassin's Creed: Unity*, *Dead Island*, *Call of Duty: Ghosts*) (Rathod, 2017); problems of illustration are usually mentioned in player talks and demand intricate and sometimes contradictory combinations of disagreements. Video game trailers have been closely publicised, and gamers appear to differentiate between various kinds - they mainly focus on the characters of the utilised footage and build dichotomies of gameplay compared to non-gameplay trailers.

Beware of Hysteria

Beginning with conversations prior to a video game's release, one can observe two opposing first reactions to a trailer: (1) enthusiasm and (2) scepticism, both of which are linked to issues of illustration, i.e., basing a game's expectations on a video game trailer (Švelch, 2017). Gray (2010) suggested in the context of potential tension towards the excessive paratextual presence of a cultural object that the excitement built up by video game trailers leaves many fans feeling both sceptical and eager about a forthcoming video game. Audiences take on the role of video game critics depending on the trailer, determining a variety of outcomes (Švelch, 2017). According to Carr (2019), the player critiquing position is about partiality and embodied interpretation.

By way of example, pre-order incentives are intended to boost the importance and lure of promotional materials (including trailers) and convince fans to create their buying decision based on these controlled streams of information. Such strategy does not necessarily need to be grounded in an idea of illustration in the strict sense; nevertheless, within an implicit level, it still determines a connection, albeit emotional, between a trailer and positive expectations of the last item. For this reason, it acts as an appropriate representation of a game to a few gamers.

Some participants in this research project reflected clear resonance with the trailers they viewed but questioned the user interface. For example, as one survey respondent noted:

Storyline appears great, but what came out to me personally was that the graphics do not appear as great as I would expect of the games (or perhaps some of those previous assassin's creed games). However, the plot left me

think[ing] it would be intriguing.... The images looked outdated, especially with close-ups of their characters speaking. ... The graphics could have been better. It didn't show what the gaming experience would be like at all (SM1).

Such a respondent's comments in general open many further questions about how the quality of the graphics (or lack thereof) can shape the audience's perception of a video game trailer. The participant here is encouraging video game trailer designers to ensure high resolution, along with a narrative and function interconnectedly, and researchers to consider developing a more strategic connection between the video game trailer and the finished product (i.e., the video game). Another illustration here shows how the imagery quality impacts the viewers' impression of the gameplay: "You will find segments which were just unexplained killing that has been boring after a time" (SM2). These participants question the marketing spin, noting how video game trailers lack actual gameplay representations. This argument is essential to note, specifically that a video game is a novel, and how then would a viewer know whether they are looking at actual gameplay.

This video game trailer commenter makes an interesting point, and this reflects what this Chapter is aiming to achieve and explore:

"I believed it would be in a different era. - not enough gameplay footage" (YT1).

Like this comment above, audiences have expectations, and such anticipations are not just about fancy images and a captivating plot. Instead, audiences seek insight(s) into the actual video game before making a verdict.

The enthusiasm sometimes directly translates into an economic choice. In the case of an upcoming game that indicates typically pre-ordering, and consequently, Duman and Ozkara (2019) see an impact of social identity, with the fear of missing out and

the need to belong. From the context of online conversations, some enthusiasts affirm their purchasing verdict, possibly in expressive ways that proper popular Internet memes or a more straightforward method.

However, careful players who stage the reality of advertising and mistrust any guarantees offered by video game trailers penalise players who demonstrate these comparatively spontaneous reactions (Švelch, 2017). Because it is based on professionally arranged and edited clips rather than genuine gameplay experience, such enthusiasm could lead to disappointment. Some fans even feel obligated to scare others away from trailers, advising their fellow gamers to wait for more extensive footage or until the launch, when reviews are available (Švelch, 2017).

Demystifying Expressivity

Even the proponents of the most typical broad stance think that all trailers are not representative of the final item. Such arguments are often compelling and developed in more detail throughout talks among fans, even though they possess some merit on their own since they address the possible problems of game development and the chance of reliably representing an imperfect game. Nevertheless, some participants found difficulty in supporting the video game trailers' attempt to convey representative depictions of quality and gameplay:

“The graphics looks a bit cartoonish, and maybe they did give away slightly too much of

the story. A bit of mystery to hook you is sometimes more” (YT2).

“It was a bit boring, not something i would be interested in playing” (YT3).

“The graphics looked outdated, particularly with closeups of the game” (YT4).

“Didn't show what it is actually like to play the game” (YT5).

Despite only revealing a small portion of the actual gameplay, video game trailers could easily be mistaken for a teaser using existing video game marketing jargon. However, this general argument intensifies when faced with general scepticism towards non-gameplay trailers, at least regarding possible illustration. The distinction between certain kinds of the trailer is critical for understanding illustration since it generates an opportunity to compare different ideal forms of trailers regarding the declaration of present illustration. As an example (Carlson, 2009; Nieborg & Sihvonen, 2009) some researchers have distinguished between two broader categories of video game trailers: (1) teasers, or teaser trailers, reveal a game before its release and usually feature content that has been following conventional trailers, which can be distributed closer to a game's release, include gameplay video, and are longer, more informational, and possibly more representative. Trailers, according to Hesford (2013), are a type of cinematic performance that channels the trailer's movie lineage and applies it to other cultural artefacts like video games and political propaganda. However, rather than viewing cinematic functioning (or expression) as a binary, one should think of it as a continuum with degrees and breaking points (Švelch, 2017).

Non-gameplay footage (CGI, live-action) trailers come out on top in this figurative competition because they emanate comic emotion at the expense of factual representation of a video game of accurate representation of a video game. Some video games have endured legal implications of promoting aspects of their games as untrue and not reflective of the final video produced. This

was illustrated when No Man's Sky was investigated for misleading players about the differences between the advertised nature of the experience and the reality of the final game (Kuchera, 2016). The impact of a video game trailer appears to be a subjective topic of debate.

Similarly, the earlier factors discussed, time also appears to have an adverse connotation, and viewers dislike lengthy trailers. Perhaps a reflection of how society is selective with what media it consumes and in what quantities (McNally & Harrington, 2017). Several participants noted the mismatched nature of the video game trailers and perplexing narrative/storytelling:

"It took too long to get to the point i.e. what is this game about?" (SM3).

"i thought it would be in a different era. - not enough gameplay footage" (SM4).

These participants' comments show that indexical relationship remains the norm for many current video game trailers, and viewers often discuss the respective representational accuracy in a frustrated manner:

"Repeated violence, it's the same thing over and over. Clearly targeting a different audience than me" (SM5)

"There were sections that were just unexplained killing that was boring after a while" (SM6).

Although violence is often a popular theme and genre in video games; some participants' comments show the over-use of such narratives reflects a lack of original thinking, design, and predictability.

"The actual gameplay that was shown did not seem to be that fun or exciting" (SM7).

“I (sic) didn’t (sic) provide a background story as to why the war has occurred. I need a sense of origin so I understand why the characters exist and what they are fighting for”
(SM8).

Other comments (as shown above) indicate the need to include fun elements in the trailer and make clear the character story, i.e., who is the protagonist and what are they fighting for.

Some gamers are defending cinematic trailers asserting they can represent evident aspects of a video game, such as its themes, narrative, or general tone (Zorkóczy, 2018). These disagreements downplay the requirement of a direct indexical relationship between a game and a trailer, which could otherwise be established by gameplay, and consider even cinematic trailers effective at capturing the gist of a forthcoming game. However, propagating this kind of cinematic adaptation of a gameplay experience demands an extensive understanding of video game titles, particular forms, and contemporary video game production tendencies. Accordingly, this viewpoint is reserved only for deeply involved video game audiences.

Members of video game communities can be considered outspoken with their opposition or general distrust for all trailers. However, no matter the arguments against the promise of actual gameplay, suspicion is still shared amongst experienced gamers and their awareness of trailers as simply promotional tools.

The notion of illustration of video game trailers paratextual cues about the character of trailer content influence presents challenging perspectives. Several disclaimers influence any potential reading of a trailer text, either by copying the trailer from the game over a foundation of alpha footage or non-gameplay scenes, or even by strengthening the connections of illustration by emphasising that a viewer is watching actual gameplay footage. Gamers deal with these framings of trailers, but they do not lead to any consensus concerning the illustration of video game trailers. Trailers can evoke convincing emotional reactions of delight

regardless of the footage utilised or the timing of a trailer in a video game production cycle. All gamers, however, appear to be as trusting of a game delivered with the audio-visual type of a preview (trailers). The resulting discussions via survey results involving the enthusiasts and the cynics explicitly engage with the concept of illustration. Arguments about indicative or possibly misleading trailers are sophisticated based on the differentiation between different types of footage utilised. The consequent syntactical typology of trailers revolves around the dichotomy of gameplay enclosing non-gameplay footage. Though the former category has possibly more substantial claims for illustration, a few players assert that non-gameplay trailers effectively communicate various ludic features. Despite their more privileged place, gameplay trailers tend to be accused of being (potentially) misleading, especially given the controversies concerning *No Man's Sky* regarding accuracy in advertising (Botwin, 2019).

Despite this, many players demand gaming in order to learn more about what the final product might have in store for them, particularly in response to cinematic trailers, as detailed in Chapter 4. The debate over deceptive trailers continues after a game's release when it comes up in retrospective trailer viewing, which allows for a quick comparison between the trailer and the game.

Fans aren't only interested in one game; they're also interested in other trailer disputes as evidence of a larger problem. Even gameplay trailers should not be reflective in this context. Its proponents use examples of disappointment in the past to back up their claims.

The conversations on real vs. fake video game trailers are abundant, as demonstrated in Chapter 5, with participants' points on the role of the story and less on the graphics or gameplay. The associated issues of build-up, expectations or potential trickery are unequivocally dismembered on specific cases from late video game history. As a result, the challenged claim of illustration of video game trailers energises exchanges into numerous different strands. One of the more evident divisions is conformed to the refinement between specific sorts of trailers,

which proposes that players themselves may have different desires of a trailer given, for instance, the recording utilised, or the time separate from the real discharge. Another factor is the general dependability of a specific video game engineer.

The idea of video game representation is by all accounts comprehended in various terms and identifies with different highlights of a diversion, including its amusement mechanics, story, subjects, or environment. This talk about specific parts of illustration of trailers spins around a more extensive inquiry of the reason and part of a video game trailer which is explored in the next part of this chapter. Diverse comprehension of this central issue at that point shapes different conclusions and positions based on it.

The Aim of Video Game Trailers

The underlying issue that impacts the gathering of trailers and the discourse on their representation is that they are a discernible part of video game culture. Champions of this arbitrary position consider the claim of illustration outlandish when connected to realistic trailers. Different characteristics, such as true-to-life execution or movement quality, come to the fore. Some players even recognise how many CGI and cutting-edge trailers are outsourced to specific movement studios. An organisation's prophecy cases are discounted in such light, as these trailers may be comprehended as adjustments.

The opposite side of the contention in terms of video game trailers' authenticity have scrutinised the status of the recordings, dismissing to call them trailers and somewhat has turned to terms, for example, "secret" or "feature reel", recommending that a video game trailer ought to be illustrative of a diversion. Through this perspective, non-gameplay trailers are esteemed less and regularly viewed as unessential regarding educating around an up-and-coming diversion. According to numerous fans, the part of a trailer is not static; through the improvement procedure, it changes. As a game approaches its release date, gameplay trailers are expected, and their absence may be interpreted as a sign of delayed advancement or discharge.

Beginning with uncovering trailers, which may be more artistic in their concentration, and proceeding with more gameplay recordings as the diversion nears its dispatch.

We may get early gameplay trailers mindful of sustaining an apparent symmetry with authentic gameplay and promotions, while they comprehended more recent trailers as futile or even as a sign that there is no good gameplay film to appear at a specific minute. The interest in an exact portrayal of a video game is more unforeseen than in film trailer crowds,

which centre around the enlightening estimation (Johnston, Vollans and Greene, 2016). The aim of the video trailer is to hook audiences on the narrative (i.e., vigilantism) a technique used for building audience identification with game heroes and heroines so that the player can engage in heroism.

Are video game trailers unrealistic?

Ostensibly, the thought of illustration of video game trailers is socially built and impacted by paratextual signals about the idea of trailer content. Players tend to specific framings of trailers. However, they do not prompt any accord regarding the depiction(s) of video game trailers. Trailers are fit for summoning forceful, passionate responses of fervour, paying little heed to the recording utilised or the planning of a trailer inside a video game life-cycle. In any case, not all players appear to trust a guarantee of an amusement conveyed by the diverse media type of a trailer. The subsequent exchanges between the aficionados and the critics expressly draw in with the idea of illustration. Contentions about characteristic or possibly deceptive trailers are refined based on qualification between various kinds of film utilised. The subsequent semantic typology of trailers spins around the polarity of gameplay versus non-gameplay film. While the previous classification has conceivably more grounded claims for illustration, a few players contend that additionally non-gameplay trailers are equipped for dependably passing on different ludic included. Despite their more peculiar position, gameplay trailers are frequently blamed for being (possibly) deceptive, particularly given the current debates around *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* or *No Man's Sky*. Stobing (2016), explored many instances of this, more recently: *Overwatch* and *The Division*. This framework echoing this growing phenomenon branded as: "In-Game" vs. "In-Engine" vs. CGI Trailers. In any case, numerous players call for gameplay film, trusting that they would take in more about what the last item may hold for them, particularly in response to true to life trailers. The general inquiry of illustration also identifies with the moderately long-standing

routine regarding frame-by-frame trailer research. Video game fans likewise embraced this cautious information mining process and connected it to video game trailers. In a general sense, it depends on a start that players can separate valuable data, see past promoting procedures and make reliable forecasts about the last amusement. Such taught speculating is available in the exchanges and stands against the reservations that more mindful players hold against limited-time gameplay films utilised as trailers. Nonetheless, in the meantime, these expectations are introduced as discerning readings contrary to more passionate responses of fervour or pre-requesting revelations.

The qualification among gameplay and realistic trailers also reveals diverse inclinations among players regarding their desire for this varying media type of video game advancement and culture when all is said and done. Those requesting delegate showcasing regularly request more gameplay scenes and censure true to life trailers as a misuse of cash that could have been better spent on real advancement or post-dispatch bolster if there should arise an occurrence of relentless web-based recreations. These illustration-searchers centre around gameplay mechanics, specialised points of interest and in addition illustrations and expect (if not request) trailers to be characteristic of such diversion highlights. The opposite side of the range is confined to players who evade spoilers, like to keep some secret about the amusement they inevitably anticipate purchasing and value-adding trailers, which pass on merely the fundamental subjects and show a solid feeling of self-control (Kelly, 2017). One could consider them valid to life specialists who welcome the transmedia narrating potential outcomes of non-gameplay trailers, which are not obliged by the points of confinement of gameplay film and can investigate the identical anecdotal universes utilising distinctive methodologies. These two perfect points of view are, in all actuality, occasionally unrelated. Players change their inclinations and desires of video game trailers considering the planning inside the creation cycle.

Additionally, trailers do not exist in a vacuum – usually, a somewhat substantial number of trailers advances one amusement and together sets up the entire trailer surroundings of a video game. Be that as it may, the predominance of true to life trailers may prompt pessimistic guesses about the condition of advancement of a given diversion. The superior abilities of trailers are constrained with regards to video games, and a few players know about it, mainly because of late discussions of misdirecting trailers, which at times brought about authority protestations to administrative foundations. Be that as it may, such learning does not prevent players from moving toward trailers as a wellspring of essential data while utilising their experience and information about the video game industry, its types, and structures. While a specific level of something that may be called 'trailer adeptness' is spreading through player communities, and a few individuals effectively instruct their companions about remarkable instances of disappointment over trailers, different watchers still read and decipher these varying media messages rather innocently. The ambiguous significance of the term trailer itself is a critical purpose of players' discourses and shows an initial absence of definitive typology. Video game trailers show diverse degrees of realistic articulation, which impact the claim of illustration and even meddle with it. In outcome, two comprehensively stroked positions towards video game trailers can be distinguished, which either stress the realistic style or the ideal exactness of video game trailers, thus proposing a repudiating view of trailers in video game culture.

Conclusion

This Chapter has explored the notion that video game trailers showing actual gameplay or creative marketing is arguably socially constructed and informed by paratextual cues about trailer material. Various disclaimers condition any potential interpretation of a video game trailer text in both ways, either by separating the trailer from the game based on footage or

non-gameplay scenes or by reinforcing the ties of actuality by stressing that a viewer is indeed viewing actual gameplay footage.

Audiences react to these specific trailer framings, but there is no consensus about whether video game trailers reflect actual gameplay. Regardless of the footage used, video game trailers can elicit strong emotional reactions of excitement. However, not all audiences seem to place the same faith in a trailer's audio-visual promise of a video game. As shown in many participants' comments, the subsequent debates between enthusiasts and cynics directly address the idea of whether actual gameplay exists - the distinction between various types of the footage used to refine arguments regarding indicative or potentially misleading video game trailers. The dichotomy of gameplay and non-gameplay footage has resulted in a vernacular typology of trailers. While the former has potentially stronger arguments for actual gameplay depictions, some audiences (participants) argued that non-gameplay trailers could also accurately express various ludic (play/playful) features. Despite their elevated status, gameplay trailers are frequently accused of being (potentially) deceptive, as mentioned in many participants' comments.

Despite this, many audiences request gameplay footage in the hopes of learning more about what the final product would have in store for them, especially in response to cinematic trailers. The general issue of actual gameplay is also linked to the relatively long-standing tradition of frame-by-frame trailer analysis. Video game audiences followed this method of meticulous data mining and applied it to video game trailers. It is fundamentally based on the assumption that players can extract valuable knowledge, observe past marketing campaigns, and make accurate predictions about the final video game. This form of informed guessing is prevalent in debates, and it contrasts with the reservations that more conservative players have about promotional gameplay footage used in video game trailers.

However, in contrast to more emotional enthusiasm or pre-ordering announcements, these forecasts are viewed as logical readings. The difference between gameplay and cinematic trailers reveals different expectations among players for this audio-visual type of video game promotion and video game culture in general. Those who demand more gameplay scenes often dismiss cinematic trailers as a waste of resources that could have been better spent on actual production. These audiences seeking more actual images/sounds/graphics from the video game want gameplay mechanics, technical information, and visuals. They expect trailers to reflect these aspects of the video game.

On the other hand, some audiences appreciate the transmedia storytelling possibilities of non-gameplay trailers, which are not limited by gameplay footage and can explore the same fictional worlds in various ways. Of course, these two ideal viewpoints are rarely mutually exclusive. Audiences tastes and expectations for video games vary depending on past perceptions. Furthermore, video game trailers do not exist in a vacuum; typically, many trailers advertise one game and, when combined, create the entire trailer environment of a video game. However, the prevalence of cinematic trailers (as mentioned throughout this research) can lead to pessimistic predictions about a video game's state and representation of the gameplay.

Then, the question remains, are video game trailers regarded as representative of actual gameplay? When it comes to symbolic capabilities, video game trailers are limited. Some audiences are aware of this regarding video games, particularly considering participants comments regarding misleading trailers. Such awareness, however, does not prevent players from approaching trailers as a source of helpful information, drawing on their prior experience and knowledge of the video game industry, its genres, and types. Although a degree of "trailer literacy" is spreading through audiences/player groups, with some

participants actively educating their peers about notable cases of trailer disillusionment, other audiences continue to read and interpret these audio-visual texts in a naive manner. The ambiguous definition of the term trailer becomes a live topic among audiences/players, demonstrating both a lack of authoritative typology and fluid industry activity. Furthermore, video game trailers exhibit varying degrees of cinematic language, influencing and even interfering with the claim of representativity. As a result, two broad perspectives on video game trailers can be discerned, emphasising either the cinematic flair or the representational accuracy of video game trailers, implying nearly opposing views on the role of trailers in video game culture.

Chapter 6 – Storytelling

One influencing factor, making digital narratives so compelling for players as a storytelling medium lies in the inherent role each player takes in the unfolding of the story (Green & Kapell, 2017, p. 9)

Video games are increasingly telling powerful, culturally pertinent stories.

This Chapter on storytelling is a critical aspect of promoting video game trailers and underscores the importance of video games as narratives by offering a framework for analysing the many-ended stories that often redefine real and virtual lives.

Storytelling illustrates the dynamic mechanisms required to generate passionately multifaceted stories mindful of gaming's principal relationship between player actions and video game trailer aesthetics. This Chapter advances the discussion mentioned in Chapter 5 concerning representation and misrepresentation by demonstrating the impact storytelling presents for developers of video games and filmmakers, audiences, and all observers experiencing resonant and meaningful interactive stories.

In this Chapter, I look at the purpose of stories and how the video game trailers commonly tell stories that create interest, encourage identification with, and communicate the game-play potential. This Chapter also explains the role of emplotment to create engaging stories. Additionally, as explained in the previous Chapter, audiences seek actual images/sounds/graphics from the 'actual' video game. Therefore, they expect trailers to reflect these aspects of the video game. However, storytelling is also a powerful method to attract audiences to the trailer's key themes and not focus on the game-play elements.

Research published by the National Literacy Trust for World Book Day 2019 found that just over half (52.5 per cent) of eight to 18-year-olds read for pleasure, compared to nearly 59 per cent in 2016. Furthermore, only a quarter (25.7 per cent) read every day, compared to 43 per cent in 2015 (Picton, 2019). Perhaps this sombre shift toward written storytelling accentuates digital stories' importance and contribution to the narrative. Based on an analysis of the three trailer examples, this Chapter will demonstrate how certain types of stories function and the role of emplotment applies. According to Kent (2015), emplotment is telling all the details of a compelling story as part of a broader narrative theme in a process. Emplotment is fundamentally the association of a series of events into a narrative with a plot.

The first step in the subsequent Chapter is to decide on the meaning of the story and the kind of story via the plot. This section of this Chapter explores all three video game trailers and looks at case study analysis narratives. Each Chapter key narratives are explained, and relevant emplotment is explored to determine what kind of story each of these three video game trailers tells.

Case study analysis of three video game trailers narratives.

Case Study: *Assassin's Creed: Syndicate*

Developer: Ubisoft Quebec Publisher(s)

Publisher: Ubisoft

Writers: Corey May, Jeffrey Yohalem

System: PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Microsoft Windows

Release Date: October 2015

Genre: Stealth Action

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_GXqBOw-8n8



The trailer begins in 1868 London, close to the era's end at the height of the Industrial Revolution. At this time, England has built the greatest empire humanity has ever known, spurred by its role as the epicentre of technological evolution. According to Creative director Marc-Alexis Cote, developer Ubisoft Quebec chose this era because not only was it an age of marvels in which our world drastically changed for the better, it was an age in which it changed for the worse. The strife of London's people, the poverty and oppression in which the lower classes lived compared to the comfort and power of the rich, sets the perfect stage for another great battle between the assassins and Templars. The trailer introduces the main

antagonist of the game, the ruthless Templar Grandmaster Starrick. Starrick, is disturbed when a staff member knocks on his office door; he screams out, saying: “I told you not to disturb me,” and shoots the staff member dead. As shown in the image below. His seven henchmen rule over every aspect of London society from the factories to transportation to the criminal underworld.



Figure 6.1 - Staff member shot for disturbing Mr Starrick, Screenshot from YouTube



Figure 6.2 Mr Starrick shooting the man that disturbed him, Screenshot from YouTube

Under firm Templar control for nearly a century, it will be up to twin Assassins Jacob and Evie Frye to take down each of the pillars of Templar control one by one before taking on

Starrick himself. Jacob, the younger and more reckless of the two, proposes that the best way to get to Starrick and his underlings is to take over the gangs of London, which leads to the eventual creation of the Rooks gang. At one point in the trailer, Jacob and Evie talk about working together “once more for old time’s sake,” and then being “finished,” which may suggest a falling out between the twins as they disagree on how to free London from Templar control. The option to control two different protagonists with two ways of doing things and two ways of seeing the world offers diverse plot challenges.



Figure 6.3 The two protagonists and siblings agreeing to “free the city”, Screenshot from YouTube

In the context of the plot, the world of the elite and privileged is not the world gamers are part of, so in this respect, the antagonists are rapidly portrayed as individual audiences cannot identify with, namely the social classes found in *Assassin's Creed Syndicate*.

Impoverished twins Jacob and Evie Frye, players will get to know the seedy underbelly of London. During the Industrial Revolution, people moved out of the countryside into London in masses, seeking work (Williamson, 2002). They went to work as young as four years old, and many kept 12-hour workdays; the average lifespan of workers was 30 years old, and the infant mortality rate was so high, some did not bother to name their children. Moreover, a

large part of the population was not eligible to vote (Cannon, 1987), leaving their fate in the hands of the upper-class or ruling class (Booth, 1902).

The trailer also shows the open world of London and some of the combat strategies and tactics that Jacob and Evie will practice. The environment looks thriving and crisp, with Ubisoft taking advantage of the power of current-generation consoles. A concern that gamers might have been that some of the character animations and shadings, mainly in the faces, do not look fully finished, as explained in Chapter 5 concerning the representation and, in this example, misrepresentation of video game trailers. They are raising the ongoing issue of whether the trailers' depictions are actual gameplay. However, because the trailers may use footage from earlier versions of the game, it is not easy to judge the quality of the authentic game imagery.

This trailer introduces gamers to the villain right at the beginning, with a straightforward layout of the big names in London they will have to eliminate to defeat Starrick while at the same time also helping to improve the lives of current and future generations of London's citizens. The Brotherhood of Assassins may have their job cut out for them as they do not appear to have much of a foothold from London itself merely because they had to bring in Jacob and Evie from the countryside to help deal with the Templars. One aspect to reflect upon concerning the narrative of this game would be the results of the Assassins' plans. However, the people of London suffer from the Templar principle. Nevertheless, the Templars have held the city in an iron grasp for nearly a hundred years, which aims to provoke, *Assassin's Creed* mantra: nothing is true; everything is permitted.

Kent (2015), plotment model in this trailer embraces multiple plots as part of its storytelling. "Although some stories contain elements of several plot types, each of the

narrative plots are mutually exclusive and unique. Moreover, the narrative plots are genre or context independent." (Kent, 2015, p. 484).

The *Assassin's Creed* trailer entails many plots; the more prominent is an adventure from the emplotment model.



Figure 6.4 Protagonist jumping from a moving train/locomotive, Screenshot from YouTube

The trailer's use of adventure is a central element which takes the characters to dangerous and unexpected places (Kent, 2015) in Victorian London during the industrial revolution. What adds further to this expedition is the sibling rivalry and different gender perspectives.



Figure 6.5 Protagonist moving from building to another via a rope, Screenshot from YouTube

The trailer provides a glimpse and explores its contrasting regions; viewers gather a sense of what powered the city in the 19th century and how the exploitation of the lower class was common. The second plot storyline, discovery, is a character-based plot. “Discovery is a plot about people and their quest to understand who they are and the world” (Kent, 2015, p. 485). The mismatch between what the trailer promotes, and the actual gameplay is that it makes viewers feel they can switch between characters, Evie, and Jacob Frye, within campaign missions, but this is not the case. Characters in the actual game change dress based on themes, for example, dressing as Sherlock Holmes, which, from the viewers perspective, relates to resonance and identification. The third emplotment is escape and is literal; “someone is being held against his/her will, and wants to escape” (Kent, 2015, p. 485).



**Figure 6.6 Child being beaten and people watching on with horror and despair,
Screenshot from YouTube**

The trailers provide enough information to demonstrate how the impoverished society is held hostage by the powerful, and little can be done to change this because the powerful use fear and other forms of duress. The protagonists justify their actions, mainly violence, to challenge the system and garner support from the public. The trailer does well to show the protagonists are justified in their actions, even though paradoxical at times, by selecting scenes that show abuse, manipulation, and excess wealth. Principally used to sanction the use of forcefulness, escapism aims to offer a better world once the plutocrats are removed and substituted by ones embodying the mainstream of society, and consequently to bring about a form of utopia.

Another emplotment example is found in this trailer is revenge, which is described as:

“The revenge story is about taking the law into one’s own hands when those in power fail to do what is right. The protagonist does not want to have to break the law but is forced into it by circumstances. The protagonist of the revenge story is generally a good person forced to take vengeance into his/her own hands. The revenge story

often pits the little guy against the big corporation or a corrupt governmental agency or police department“ (Kent, 2015, p. 485).

There is a clear connection in the trailers' plot here with escape. Evie's and Jacob's struggle to free the city from the formidable, group known as Templars, who control the city, accomplished by gradually building up a mob. The trailer shows an actual hierarchy of the elite or antagonists (*see image below*), referring to the seven henchmen, each controlling the pillars of London.



Figure 6.7 - Map of powerful characters (antagonists), Screenshot from YouTube

Revenge here is shaped by showcasing the elite, their level of ownership, power, and wealth, and brutal physical force towards those who resist. The motivation and use of "freeing the city" are not a new plot or argument to justify action. Such a premise is all too familiar and used to warrant the 2002 Iraq war, namely under the auspices of "regime change" (Chomsky, 2003).

This image below is reinforced by the protagonists and narrator (Evie), showing the wealth accumulation through corruption, as shown in the image below.



Figure 6.8 - Politician (antagonists), Screenshot from YouTube

And the narrator (protagonist) going on to say: “*crippled the masses to grow their fortunes*”



Figure 6.9 - Map of powerful characters (antagonists), Screenshot from YouTube

Another emplotment is found in this trailer is around revenge by the underdog. “The difficult part of this plot is making the underdog appear motivated and realistic. So often the underdog is an-over-the top personality, but there is the reluctant underdog who struggles against the tyranny of powerful elites” (Kent, 2015, p. 487).

The synergy between siblings in this trailer is stimulating, showing how different genders unite for a common purpose and how both are conveyed as equally resilient and spirited.

The female protagonist, Evie, is an Assassin and determined to prevent the privileged and the Templars. The male Jacob, the protagonist, however, is conveyed as an idealist, seeking social reform. The trailer aims to make both characters particularly likeable, well-drawn protagonists quickly, and the interaction between the siblings and rivalry brings light-heartedness and, at times, dark humour. Nevertheless, both protagonists' differing world views have the highest constructive impact on the plot structure, which is displayed in both an enchanting and expressive manner.

Case study analysis of three video game trailers narratives.

Case Study: *Fallout 4*

Developer: Bethesda Game Studios

Publisher: Bethesda Softworks

Writers: Emil Pagliarulo

System: PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Microsoft Windows

Release Date: November 2015

Genre: Role-playing game

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XW7Of3g2JME&t=1s>

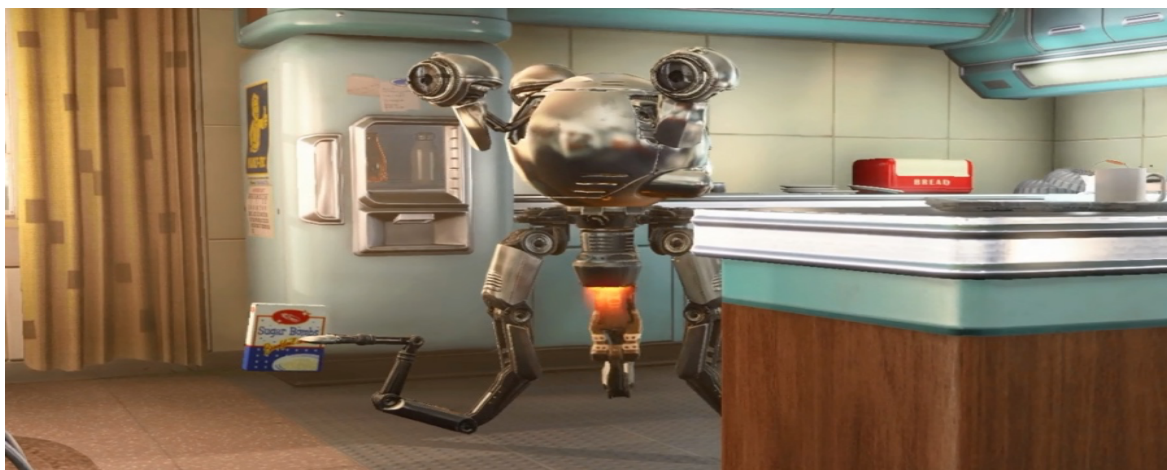


Genre: Role-playing game Figure 6.10 - Main character, Screenshot from YouTube

Fallout 4 is set in a post-apocalyptic environment, with survivors and mutations centred around an individual and collective survivor story. The storytelling elements in this trailer create ambiguity; they're not trying to follow a clear path but leave audiences with gaps to hypothetically fill. The cliché of the sole survivor is the game's genre (Jenkins & Maier-Katkin, 1991; Kosiski, 2018; Wills, 2019). Most intended protagonists in choice-based characters are nice to people who want to go back in time. The male/female survivor

narrative makes the opening monologue about war and how he was once a soldier who fought against past enemies, consequently creating a logic of reassurance that he/she is talented with the struggles of war—thus reassuring the audience to trust the protagonists. After the events of the prologue, another truism shows his wife is killed, and a shadowy group steals his son.

The player is the sole survivor of Vault 111, who emerges 210 years to the time and day after the Great War (McCready, 2019). Ahead of this, there is a short period of gameplay trailer throughout the pre-War era showing that the player is residing with their partner and child. The trailer set includes mountains, coastal regions, the outskirts of town, and the downtown Boston area. A vast and inhospitable nuclear blast site called the Glowing Sea is to the southwest. For *Fallout 4*, it seems that every participant will have a pet companion at their side, given that the dog features prominently at the trailer's start and end. The audience assumed that the German Shepard breed would likely be together for the bulk of the *Fallout 4* journey, possibly as an excess set of paws in battle or perhaps as a kind of reconnaissance. As discussed in earlier chapters, the trailer is quite vague on this, but accurately so. Giving added enigmatically should be a central aim of any video game trailer. The trailer gives audiences a first look at Mister (see Figure 6.11): an understandable robot before the nukes went off, showing the pristine metal chassis of this multi-armed service bot.



Video game trailers:

how storytelling is used to create identification and appeal with audiences

Figure 6.11 – Main Robot/Character, YouTube

Constructed as nuclear fallout shelters for the population, these Vaults are what inevitably keep our most essential protagonists alive for their post-apocalyptic adventure. In cases like this, the Vault that saves our hero is number 111, one of the last Vaults ever built, some background on this aspect of the video game and indeed trailer. In Fallout lore, Vault-Tec Corporation (and afterwards RobCo Industries) has been hired to construct 122 Vaults across the US, but they just ended up building 112. Vault-Tec and the authorities never really believed the Vaults would be necessary, so many were set up as experimental testing centres.

So, considering Boston's Vault 111 was among the last built, it is safe to assume that it had been just a fallout shelter. Game producer Bethesda offers *Fallout 4* fans brief looks in the reimagined post-apocalyptic Boston landmarks throughout the trailer. Boston was always a rumoured location for the game, but Bethesda only confirmed this with the trailers' overt imagery distinctly depicting the US city. In the Bunker Hill monument into the Paul Revere statue, many of Boston's iconic landmarks are shown repurposed, employing a society constructed to survive and thus affirming the post-apocalyptic narrative throughout the trailer, thus using icons and landmarks that seek to resonate with audiences.



Figure 6.12, Post-apocalyptic Boston, YouTube

People who live in or know Boston, for example, will find plenty of little and subtle details scattered throughout the game. However, this trailer concentrates on the more recognisable ones. Many creatures and possible enemy kinds were scattered throughout the *Fallout 4* preview, but the most eye-catching was arguably the lumbering brute seen traversing the wasteland above. Even though the monster is shadowed and without detail, this ambiguity seeks to tactfully create speculation that this may be *Fallout 4*'s brand new layout for the Deathclaw, a massive horned creature made by genetic engineering. According to Kent (2015), a plot is more than a single episode or passage but a sequence of interdependent and logical actions.

Therefore, certain plots apply to this trailer and exhibit multiple plots that occur in this trailer. Primarily, emplotments, according to White (2005), represent elements of a compelling story reflected as part of a more significant narrative theme.

The *Fallout 4* trailer emplotment entails sacrifice.

The *Fallout 4* trailer emplotments' necessitate sacrifice. Sacrifice often takes the form of one person making a sacrifice out of character for them and comes with a stiff price tag. The story needs to lead up to the point where they are ready and willing to make the sacrifice, but this process needs to be built up to be believable. The trailer places a significant emphasis on altruism, the female narrator and protagonist in very early on states of the trailer (Figure 6.12): "I have a question, the only question that matters; would you risk your life for your fellow man [sic]".



Figure 6.13 - Protagonist, YouTube

The aim here is to show that civilisation can no longer be consumed by self-interest and callous behaviour. This plot does relate to the transformation below. This reflects an attempt by the trailer to instil collective effort for the sake of the greater community. This role-play aims to promote the actual game function of being one that creates identification, belonging, and cohesion through concern for others and teamwork. Again, the trailers reinforce this notion by stating: "protect the people at a minute's notice and decide our own future."

But perhaps one of the most thought-provoking quotes in the trailer aims to show that human actions are essentially to blame for the nuclear fallout, and maybe there is a message here in how the environment is treated as a political spectacle.

"This campaign will be costly, and many lives will be lost, but, in the end, we will be saving humankind from it's worst enemy..... itself." [Fallout 4 trailer, YouTube]

The importance of emplotment shows how shared experiences, language, and symbolic behaviour help humans make sense of their surroundings. Every hero and villain in the universe exists, thus creating resonance with audiences. Video game trailers have cleverly adopted many aspects emplotment, which creates a structure and flow for the narratives, thus guiding the audiences to understand the overarching themes being portrayed. For example, another *Fallout 4* trailer emplotment involves a rescue. Rescue: In most rescue plots, the hero(ine) must venture out into the cruel world searching for someone or something. "Rescue is a physical plot, dependent heavily on action" (Kent, 2015, p. 485). Society is under threat from the institute, and the only way to survive is through collectivism. Fear is used in the trailer to instil fear of an unknown and largely elusive antagonist (the institute), and their plan is not openly stated in this short space.

The narrator does give some insight on this by saying: "*beneath the Commonwealth there is cancer known as the Institute, a malignant growth that needs to be cut before it infects the surface, they're the real enemy not the Raiders, not the super mutants*" (YouTube, *Fallout 4* trailer).

Here, the narrator guides the audience that action is required to deal with the ever-present antagonists, thus creating a platform for mobilisation, motivation, and violence.

Another *Fallout 4* trailer emplotment involves transformation. This occurs when someone experiences a life-changing event (Kent, 2015). Again, the early images show a typical home, both parents in their newborn child's room; everything here seems prevailing.



Figure 6.14 - Pre-apocalyptic, the main family and protagonists, YouTube

However, the narrator's tone and expression transform within the plot very rapidly. She states: "everything can change in an instant, whether or not you're ready". The following image requires little commentary from the narrator. The audience will know this represents; a cataclysmic event, known as a 'mushroom cloud' (Rosenthal, 1991).



Figure 6.15 - pre-apocalyptic and mushroom cloud/explosion, YouTube

This image is noteworthy; there has been a notable development and tranquillity gone. However, looking carefully, it is the same protagonists (husband and wife) that were depicted in the early scene in their child's room, much has transpired; this time baby in her arms overlooking the devastation before them, and not in their cot.



Case study analysis of three video game trailers narratives.

Case Study: *Watch Dogs 2*

Developer: Ubisoft Montreal

Publisher: Ubisoft

Writers: Jonathan Morin; Patrick Plourde; Danny Bélanger

System: PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Microsoft Windows

Release Date: November 2016

Genre: Action-adventure

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7hamZRt3gFE>



Figure 6.16 - *Watch Dogs 2* trailer promotion screenshot, YouTube]

Case study analysis of three video game trailers narratives.

Case Study: *Watch Dogs 2*

From the very outset, the trailer is action-packed and fast-paced. In this story trailer, we see Marcus Holloway in action alongside the remainder of the Dedsec crew (hacker group) as they use San Francisco to topple “*systemic injustice*.” The trailer storytelling is reinforced by the music from Artist called *Boys Noize* and the song called: *Overthrow*, a buoyant genre of dance/electronic.



Figure 6.17 - Protagonist armed and running on roof-top, YouTube

Watch Dogs 2 features a protagonist called Marcus Holloway who is brought to the fold of the hacking activist group (see below), DeadSec. Disturbed by ctOS' ability to peer into anybody's private life, DeadSec struggles off them in close cyber-terroristic ways.



Figure 6.18 - Meeting of all protagonists to plan, YouTube

Much like the original game, part one, the overarching storyline of *Watch Dogs 2* revolves around just how big businesses and even governments utilise the personal data of the public for their benefit. The antagonists are presented to convince the audience that they are dangerous to society and need to be stopped.



Figure 6.19 - (ctOS office) - antagonists head office, YouTube



Figure 6.20 -, (ctOS office) - antagonists head office, YouTube

With the narrator and a character in the trailer outlining the antagonists by stating:

- *ctOS is like a giant spider web, endlessly gather data;*
- *They're making backroom deals to trade our private information;*
- *We're talking data manipulation on a massive scale -- rigged elections, weapons programs, spying into people's homes;*

That's like the world's most powerful monopoly and; This is systemic injustice at its highest

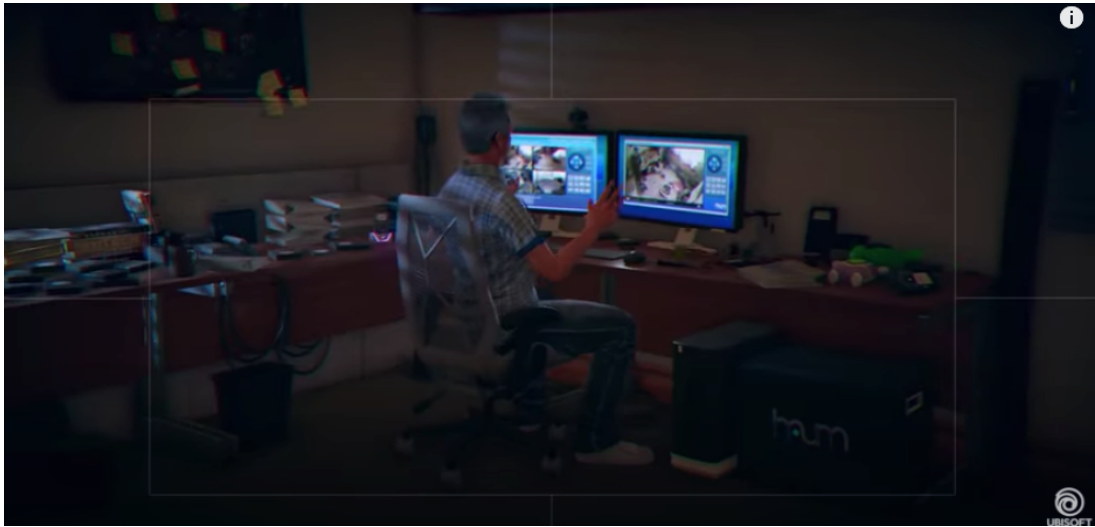


Figure 6.21, Showing spying into people's home, YouTube



**Figure 6.22 - Another image from the trailer showing spying into people's home,
YouTube**

Indeed, many of these themes are contemporary (Goidel et al., 2019; Houser & Voss, 2018; Jørgensen & Desai, 2017; Miller, 2018; Sheppard, 2020), and will resonate with viewers, with an overarching aim to muster and vindicate the use of violence (as discussed in Chapter 8 on vigilantism).

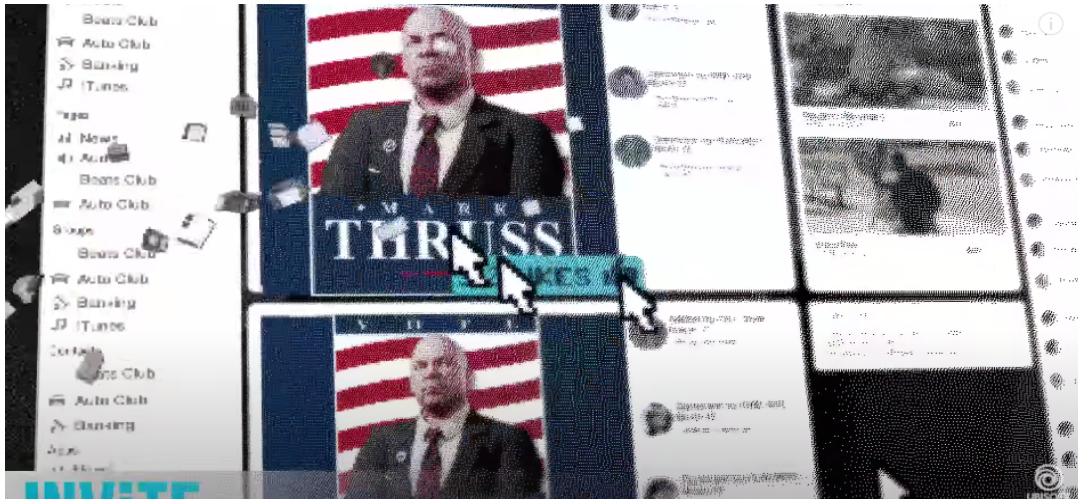


Figure 6.23, Image depicting corruption and rigged elections, YouTube

After his first essential brush with this idea, Marcus begins to do the job with a hacking group called DeadSec, an even more light-hearted and playful variant of Anonymous's real life. Over the whole period of this game, the team evolves into sets from smart houses and homes to corrupt police officials into cults. Nevertheless, in virtually every case, the objective remains to expose those they believe harness and exploit people with their personal information.

The overall storyline of *Watch Dogs 2* can be bewildering and ultra-fast paced for some, and audiences watching the trailer may have a hard time monitoring all the different literary technology. Having said that, while it is not always easy to observe how they fit together, the unique pieces that comprise the story are enthralling in a few short minutes.

San Francisco backdrop ensures that the *Watch Dogs 2 trailer*, allows audiences' to carefully examine the controversial elements of Silicon Valley and perhaps their role in the abuse of personal data. A theme in a not-so-fictional setting concerning hacking and personal privacy. The first *Watch Dogs* trailer was a straightforward revenge narrative, a gloomy and frequently miserable quest for an angry person to avenge his niece's

passing. *Watch Dogs 2* is a continuous collection of quests to expose the hardest of all Silicon Valley; this change to create a video game trailer theme that not only does not take itself too seriously but borders on parody at times.

It appears the intention in this trailer's storytelling is to create empowerment - how satisfying it can casually stroll to the construction site or street and take anything you want (weapons and cars).

The *Watch Dogs 2* trailer employment entails *wretched excess*.

"The wretched excess plot usually revolves around a single person" (Kent, 2015, p. 488), and this trailer emphasises that Blume Corporation is a communications technology corporation responsible for implementing ctOS and ctOS CTO Dušan Nemec is the principal antagonist. This plot, wretched excess, looks at financial excess, clearly illustrated in the trailer nonetheless, in this instance, excessive power and access to private personal data reflect this plot. One of the protagonists says: "world's most powerful monopoly this is, systemic injustice at its highest level." (YouTube trailer). The trailer is specific on what the antagonists are engaging in, and it undeniably aims to make the audience clear on which side they are on and why the prevailing violence is warranted. The essentials are mentioned as: "data manipulation on a massive scale, rigged elections, weapons programs, spying into people's homes all of it controlled by one-man bloom CTO Dušan Nemec." This aspect of the trailer is quite compelling in connecting its narrative with contemporary and actual events occurring in society presently. The rise of 'big tech' plays into the hands of this trailer's designers, and the public and government growing concerned about corporations' influences have become more and more of a mainstream debate.

The *Watch Dogs 2* trailer emplotment involves *rivalry*.

Rivalry pits two competing characters working for the same goal against each other (Kent, 2015, p. 485). As mentioned earlier, the protagonists and antagonists are plainly set out, devoting about half of the trailers' time. The plot here ensures that the audience is clear about the aspirations and motivations of each character. There are explicit signs of internal conflict within the protagonists, based on personality types, but this is quashed when the antagonist's evil nature is further explained, and they seem to have moral agency in their actions and duty. Essentially, the collective good is the aim here, and working together to achieve this while leaving small apathy aside is pivotal here.

The *Watch Dogs 2* trailer emplotment involves *revenge*.

The revenge story is about taking the law into one's own hands when the powers fail to do what is right. An important theme in this thesis and further explained in chapter 8 on vigilantism. The protagonist does not want to break the law but is forced into it by circumstances (Kent, 2015). The early part of the trailer explains each character's areas of expertise; the second part of the plot now shows these attributes being actioned into physical violence and indeed destruction. The antagonist is presented as being concerned with the corporation's interests and little for society: casualties are the cost you must pay for the betterment of the world. Again, this feeds the coming scenes of the protagonist's actions, namely violence. The plot is, after the mid-section, emphasised by the high-energy music, the hacking, and other actions of the characters. These activities in the trailers flow in an almost vindicated way; the evil corporations had this coming, so the means justify the ends.

Choosing the real significance of humour, the arguments and contradictory definitions could be puzzling; this should be looked at logically. First, the terms "interactive storytelling" and

"interactive stories" imply you can somehow interact with the narrative. Second, to be interactive, a story does not need to provide the player with complete and total control over how everything starts or ends. Instead, players need to be able to directly engage with the story somehow, noting that their interactions considerably affect the overall story.

As previously discussed in Chapters 1 and 4, trailers are promotional tools tasked with conveying content within a narrow timeframe. Therefore, trailers need a story with which the viewers can associate. Pulizzi (2012) explains that engaging the audience is a critical role of storytelling; it is vital to attract and maintain consumers. However, the ability to effectively label forms of storytelling is the objective of this Chapter. Using Kent's (2015) model of emplotment has meaningfully supported the structure of understanding each trailer's theme and, therefore, ensuring the trailers fall into one or another more of his plot framework.

Trailers' storytelling enhances audience engagement and is increasingly employed in the social media context (Alexander, 2017). Across these digital settings, storytelling is engaged in shaping content towards the audience and confirming that the audience evokes the content. The remainder of this Chapter will offer analysis on storytelling found in three trailers via survey to recognise the importance of this.

Trailers and Storytelling

Video game trailers aim to empower and encourage person-to-person collaborations. Like different intelligent stories, the standards and structures bolster the activities of players and viewers (Lebowitz & Klug, 2011). However, unlike other types of engaging narratives (Meadows, 2002), the reactions do not come from the game mechanics displayed in the trailer. Still, from the actions of the other participants and, equally important, the story

audiences can (or cannot) identify with. Therefore, a primary concern when designing storytelling video games is creating the rules/structures so that storytelling actions and interactions result in the ongoing invention of stories by the participants (Mitchell & McGee, 2009). Such configurations embodied in the plot, if well designed, encourage players to 'provoke' each other to invent/tell stories that engage the audiences.

This idea of engagement differs significantly from those involving, say, systems that can adapt or respond to the choices of players-as-sleuths or players-as-choosers. Instead, a crucial characteristic of collaborative video games trailer storytelling is or should be audience engagement as part of the narrative.

Attracting interest through design

The design of storytelling in video game trailers is comparable to and different from the design thinking that goes into video games, cooperative work environments, narratives, or even other interactive narratives (Ryan, 2001). For example, similar to designing a video game trailer, the designer of a trailer is not creating a specific story but a universe of rules and constraints in which viewers repeatedly create and experience different stories (Menache, 2000). However, unlike the design of most video games, the design of storytelling game trailers involves creating rules and materials to facilitate the trailer's storytelling rather than just the video games themselves, so that players can win strategically by, say, successfully discarding all their pieces before their opponents.

According to Finsterwalder et al. (2012), video games trailers have also been, by nature, a medium primarily focusing on audience interaction. Whether it is attacking aliens, building communities, speaking to townspeople, or hacking corporate networks, video games trailers have been marketed and thus designed around allowing the participant(s) to identify with

their characters, narrative, and the storyline. Of course, the kinds of interactions enabled, and their impact on the remainder of the game differ. However, some amount of interactivity is there - conventional storytelling in video games trailers is typically absent.

There are few efforts to produce video game trailers that use entirely conventional stories; video game trailers aim to convey themes from the actual video game itself. As discussed in Chapter 5, the trailer must be authentic to what it shows and actual gameplay. However, that does not show they have marvellous stories with their unique benefits or features; however, they are not conventional video games. Familiar, engaging stories are the most straightforward kind of video game narrative to make (Bateman, 2007).

With traditional storytelling, one need not be anxious about what the protagonist decides. With traditional narrative, one can control the storyline and thus always understand precisely how, when, and in which all the essential scenes may be performed and will be tweaked to precisely produce the effect and psychological response one desires. In contrast, a trailer audience cannot alter the storyline; it is static. Composing a conventionally engaging narrative is like writing a book or a film script. How it works: consider an idea, the underlying narrative, the structure, and the characters; then write the narrative as one envisions it., there are some vital differences: unlike when using a book or film script, you do not need to compose everything that occurs. Even though a fantasy book may explain the hero's struggle with evil corporations (as themed in *Watch Dogs 2*) or their trip around the apocalyptic landscape (*Fallout 4*), or even a video game where the player is going to be the one doing the fighting in an ancient era and scaling castles (*Assassin's Creed: Syndicate*). A trailer should merely mention those components and allow the designers and participants to manage the rest of them.

A video game trailer is the first insight into the actual end-product. Trailers need to make sure the storyline offers many places to allow audiences to engage while that item is battling, exploring, puzzle-solving, or any mix of those three (Shen & Mazalek, 2010). That does not only mean leaving a distance between the narrative scenes for those things to occur besides, but one should also contemplate how gameplay could be worked to the narrative scenes (Schneider et al., 2004). If a story requires a tense showdown or even a bold escape, the trailer might lend itself to this spectacle.

Engagement with a clear or ambiguous narrative

A possible blurring of the lines between physical and virtual spaces, Taylor et al. (2014) ascribed game-space to other types of social networking. It is the sandbox game of video gaming civilisation (Squire, 2008); games supply tools and components that gamers may construct to produce their articles and produce their meanings. I suggest that we cannot distinguish this action from what happens within the video game trailer itself. Gamer's creation of the preferred, chosen media has expanded into frames previously not intended accessible to amateurs. Amateur and professional gamers have access to video game trailers, but viewership and video game purchases vary. As mentioned in the introduction, trailers that join game footage together with live-action material blur the borders between the virtual and the actual. Some video game trailers give cinematic scenes that do not exist in the video game itself (see Chapter 5), aiming instead to signify the feeling or other emotions that the participant could experience if playing the video game. Other video game trailers use individual actors to dramatise especially cinematic facets of the game, or they have celebrities (i.e., Ron Perlman, Kiefer Sutherland, Gary Oldman, Christopher Walken, Sean Bean, Liam Neeson, Seth Green, Martin Sheen, Samuel L. Jackson, Haley Joel Osment, Emma Stone, and Mark Hamill), represent the most critical characters inside the game.

Using celebrities supports audience resonance; they have watched a movie for this actor, and perhaps it evokes memories or nostalgia. *Assassin's Creed*, will be used to help rebuild as part of the building's restoration. A fire caused significant damage to the cathedral in 2019.

These trailers cram video games into a concise time frame and use Hollywood film terminology; they also include amusing shots such as landscapes, camera movement, or what is known as "pans," as well as close-ups. By filming individual celebrities in video game scenarios, video game makers try to take out game production and the gaming console as intermediaries for the expertise and the viewer right inside the game universe. For example, street scenes, conflicts, and interactions with other game characters come back to life so that the viewer can experience life inside the world of this game. When video game trailers proceed out of live-action picture components to reveal actual gameplay, the preview gets hyper-mediated: standing, guns and moves are displayed from the first-person shot, or else they tell gamers playing in-game activities. The game trailers are equally instantaneous and hyper-mediated (Farman, 2010).

Readers subsequently experience adventure gameplay throughout the trailers, both as participants and as guests inside the game itself. Thus, the borders between the actual and the digital blur and this differentiation becomes essential, as video game trailers are all significant artefacts inside their eco-environment.

Why Storytelling is a significant element in affecting audiences

Unlike books and films, which can be considered mature forms of media, video games are relatively novel, with the first arcade machines appearing in the early 1970s and are still

growing and developing in nearly every way. However, this is what makes video game trailers so interesting to research, and not from a longitudinal study perspective; assimilation of mature and new-age media pertains to video game trailers. Therefore, they are still an active ingredient in promoting some element of a forthcoming video game, albeit teasing.

What started as a retelling of searches and stories of the ancestors shortly expanded, developing into legends and myths (Cotterell & Storm, 2012). Some tales sought to instruct others to frighten them; some tried to address the divine mysteries of this planet; others tried only to amuse. While some tales have gradually faded away, others are told and retold for centuries, informing our ideas, rituals, religions, and on the view of the world itself. Looking back at our history, it is not easy to see anything so persuasive and having had as much effect on individual evolution and culture as storytelling. It has pushed society to research, combat, trust, and fantasy. It has become the inspiration for music, art, engineering, and more tales. Now, because of the potency of media, TVs, along with the Internet, and imaginably this convergence of past with new media (Jenkins, 2006), we have got access to a virtually infinite source of stories covering every topic and genre possible. Unsurprisingly, having numerous distinct stories at our disposal has left most people quite finicky. If a story is not well written and contains characters or scenarios that we do not enjoy, why should we invest some time studying, seeing, or enjoying? Because of this overabundance of tales, contemporary authors need to work hard to entice an audience (Freeman, 2014). Others work hard to perfect their inventing and learn the nuances of speech, pacing, and personality growth. Some only write the things they like and expect it will discover the right audience. Then there are the courageous few who attempt to make new kinds of stories and storytelling procedures. They push ahead with novel websites and fresh notions, which challenge the very basis of storytelling.

According to Squire (2002), video games are, characteristically, a medium dedicated to interaction, allowing the participant to interact with their characters and story. This idea of empowerment through engagement or participation is not new (Chen, 2007). For example, 'Choose Your Own Adventure', is a series of children's gamebooks where the reader could decide where the journey proceeds by making a choice (Vicary & Fraley, 2007). In today's video game framework, this is referred to as 'sandbox games' or 'open-world' (Squire, 2008). The interactions enabled, and the influence on the rest of the video game differ noticeably, but some level of engagement is precise. Entirely conventional storytelling within video games is limited and yields little charm. There have been some attempts to create video games that use completely traditional tales, but without interaction, it is a remarkably laborious task given it is so pivotal in the design. In various ways, conventional interactive stories are the most straightforward kind of video game narrative to create.

Audience in control: empowerment and ownership

As the following survey and social media comments results show, producing stories with more highly participatory styles requires a significant amount of additional effort and creativity to captivate the audiences. When writing conventionally compelling stories, we think about what may happen if the protagonist becomes a villain or takes up fishing instead of following the storyline as planned (Lebowitz & Klug, 2011). I present similar discussions in Chapter 8 on vigilantism. Designers don't have to draw out whole scenarios, plot variations, or battles to balance personality consistency and player choice and freedom.

Designers develop an idea, lay out the fundamental storyline, construction, and personalities (or are assigned each one by the boss), and then write the story as they imagine it (Lebowitz & Klug, 2011). Naturally, there are a few key distinctions. Unlike a book or movie script, you do not have to write about everything that occurs. Though fantasy literature may go into great detail about the hero's struggle with the wicked magician's army or their journey across the perilous hills, the player will be the one doing the battling and climbing (Lebowitz & Klug, 2011).

As a result, designers should only state that those elements exist and leave the rest to the designers and participants. When designing interesting traditional storylines (or any narrative) for games, trailer designers must keep in mind that they are writing for a game, not a novel or a film. Trailer creators must ensure that your plot provides plenty of opportunities for the audience to learn and immerse themselves in the story. That doesn't simply mean allowing space between story sequences for those things to happen; it also

requires thinking about how games could be incorporated into those scenes. For example, if the plot calls for a suspenseful showdown or a daring escape, trailer creators consider the gameplay and whether it lends itself to the spectacle.

The sandbox game of digital gaming culture; digital games supply tools and components upon which gamers can construct, to create their content and make their meanings (Conole, 2012). As a result, we cannot distinguish this action from that which occurs within the video game. This audience interaction is a play that takes place in a discursive environment outside the confines of the video game, in this case, the trailer. Fan production of their favourite properties and media has grown into areas that were previously out of reach for amateurs (Švelch, 2017). Amateurs and pros alike now have access to movie editing software that was previously only available to industry specialists. Trailers include not just fan-created press such as trailers, teasers, and walkthroughs, but also studio-created press such as trailers, teasers, and walkthroughs, additional debate-worthy stuff relating to video games (Švelch, 2017). This context or setting is created by separating gaming's cultural approaches, which range from interactive media that uses game content to game trailers. It's a physical and virtual network that pits players against one another in terms of drama and materiality to create a civilisation altered by video games (Švelch, 2017).

Every year, new video games, rich in detail, are released promising more realistic graphics, higher-quality sound, and a gathering of new features. Interestingly, gaming hardware is not evolving as much as other technologies. Take, for example, the PlayStation, since its inception in 1994; only five models have been manufactured in the marketplace. With the generation console, Sony PlayStation 5 (Mattioli & Lahtiranta, 2020), having only been recently released (November 2020). Video games themselves are developing far more

rapidly, and thus the reliance and potency of promoting them amid extensive choice for consumers and intense rivalry.

Telling tales and persuading the audience

Like the rest of the aspects of video games, their tales have a state of change. Game tales have developed in the humble Mario series: rescuing Princess Peach from the villain to the elaborate novel-length tales of modern survival in a post-apocalyptic society. Similarly, the player's capacity to cooperate with and influence the story has made many new and diverse sorts of stories that are troublesome if easy to depict in different media. Perhaps the principal difference with all other media is that video games allow audiences to become more than mere spectators or critics; they allow for genuine immersion, even if virtual (Frasca, 2001). Although video games trailers are a fantastic medium for narrating, their intelligence makes them far unique concerning more common media, such as books and film. The challenge in the video game trailer is how to convey a story, gameplay, interface layers, themes, narratives, and genre in such a short timeframe is problematic. Engaging stories themselves have many unique and challenging issues that aren't encountered when writing a more traditionally structured tale. Video game trailer designers likewise need to consider several different elements, for example, the union between the story and gameplay and how to keep up a legitimate pace when the story's movement is, to a specific degree, controlled by the player.

According to Pizzi et al. (2007), one sign of a worthy story is how it influences the player or spectator to feel. The aim in the short space of the trailer toward the prospective player(s) is to feel awe when the heroes are at risk, succeed when they triumph, and sorrow when they

fall. Naturally, some audiences are more easily affected than others. In the end, a sound designer/writer can reasonably expect most of the viewers to sense specific emotions at explicit points in the narrative.

So, emotions are so important when considering the design and impact of the trailer. It is not merely a story to convey using clever design, but the entire point of storytelling in trailers is to allow us to experience other places and other lifestyles. When we feel a sense of sympathy for a hurt, courageous woman, or profound contempt for a miscreant, it shows precisely how much a piece of the narrative we have become (Tobón, 2019). We are no longer just observing a fictional event; the place and characters have become alive and accurate to the audience. They are not strangers on a page; they are our friends, companions, and enemies, and therefore, we genuinely care what happens to them. Of course, not all stories achieve this level of involvement. Some never even try, instead of striving to be merely enjoyable, forming no complicated emotional attachment. So, there's nothing wrong with that, as there's room in the trailers for a wide range of stories.

Overwhelming passionate stories are significant; however, occasionally, individuals want to sit back and be entertained.

The next part of this Chapter shows the survey and YouTube comments based on the three trailers. As explained in Chapter 3, the research aimed to look at how video game trailers storytelling is applied to create identification and appeal with audiences. Throughout this research, the importance of storytelling demonstrates that video games are not about showing gameplay but more focused on presenting an appealing and enthralling story. The following will aim to show the importance of storytelling based on the research questions and indeed participant responses.

Survey results based on:

What are the aspects that you liked most about the trailer?

Respondents added the importance of a story:

“Informative and truthful in the way gameplay and narratives are developed” (SM8).

This quote is testament to how the trailers generate attention less on actual game-play and more on the story. Chapter 5 explained how the trailer is assumed to establish plot and protagonists/antagonists while teasing basic properties of the experience; video game trailers are often entirely unrepresentative of the finished product.

“ The fact that they made it seem more about the story rather than what technical aspects the game has (such as the regular upgrades)” (SM9).

This quote demonstrates the potential perils in too much emphasises on the plot and story. Chapter 6 on storytelling explained the importance of narrative for audiences. However, some viewers really want more specific on technical game-play elements and not looking at the narratives. Game-play seems extraneous, and awareness of promotional techniques conveyed in video game trailers is quite discernible according to the participants.

Nevertheless, they have consciousness of whether storytelling trailer vs. actual game is the same. Consequently, the trailer’s perceptual assessments are of crucial concern.

“ I thought the story line and narration were really intriguing and I was brought into the story of the game. I don't like games where the purpose is just to kill or ruin property but I enjoyed how the trailer showed this game as retro-futuristic and political” (SM10).

This quote (SM10) shows how challenges exist in designing trailers and how viewers will have varied perceptions on what the trailers’ objectives are or accomplish. This quote

challenges the importance of using sensationalised elements and how violence and destruction (although justified by the narrator and plenty of scenes). Some viewers will not buy this and find destruction and other cinematic action cuts may not fulfil aims, instead trivialise a potentially impactful narrative.

One participant summarises the reason for an efficient stylistic approach to a trailer when he/she says: *"I thought the story line and narration were really intriguing and I was brought into the story of the game. I don't like games where the purpose is just to kill or ruin property but I enjoyed how the trailer showed this game as retro-futuristic and political."* (SM11).

Regarding the video game trailers using more cinematics effects and trying to mimic movies; one participant made his/her views clear by stating: *"It was quite boring to be honest. The whole story line didn't have any appeal for me because I knew it was a video game & not a movie."* (SM12).

The responses of the participants indicate that a clear storyline/narrative, whilst being highly engaging, plays an important role in generating interest relating to the content of a video game. As further illustrated by one participant: *"it was entertaining and engaging, makes me want to see more"* (SM13). And another participant, the overlap with how video game trailers should be more Hollywood-like to persuade and entice audiences: *"I thought it was impressive. It was like watching a trailer for a movie and I can understand why people would want to play the game. The graphics and story in the game are of high quality."* And Another participant said: *"The movie feel of the trailer. The story style of the trailer"* (SM14).

When participants were asked in the survey "Rank in order which aspect(s) of the trailers' narratives were most appealing to you?" The majority of the respondents agreed with

Opening: establishes setting and introduces character(s). Perhaps more captivating was one participant explain how he/she finds the trailers' story more appealing than actual future game-play: *"The trailer was exciting and presented the game as one with a really engaging storyline and likeable characters. I love watching Assassin's Creed trailers for their entertainment value but have never actually played one of the games (or many non-sporting games more broadly)"* (SM15). One survey participant expanded on this by stating that: *"Storyline was engaging. Like the main character made you feel you were a passenger alongside hos [has] journal of growth and discovery"* (SM16).

This is also evident from the surveys, when one participant stresses, for example, that he/she will: *"It wasn't very engaging. I didn't connect with the trailer"* (SM17). This was also further emphasised by another participant in terms of how (un)realistic the trailer was: *"unrealistic graphics"* (SM18). And another participant mentioned how the plot is unclear and thus resulted in confusion on its theme and narrative: *"I didnt provide a background story as to why the war has occurred. I need a sense of origin so I understand why the characters exist and what they are fighting for"* (SM19).

Therefore, a video game trailer needs to handle the expectations it creates so audiences are not disappointed. This includes proven movie trailer examples to structure the storyline and not confusing the audience with complex rhetoric, but also leaving mystic and mysteriousness to set up a sense of fervour to know more. The same storytelling elements and techniques that engage audiences in films also show up in overarching and enchanting parts. Again, this seems to work if the ending is left out to ensure the audience is left with something to reflect and ideally talk about. One participant highlighted this by saying: *"It was good, it had a good emphasis on story without spoiling the plot of the game"* (SM20).

Engagement through identification

As the research has demonstrated through participants' comments above, video game trailers may be particularly able to be meaningful when the story is compelling and engaging (Dickey, 2005; Oliver et al., 2016; Prensky, 2001).

Multiple-ending and branching path stories were rather popular, though highly player-driven forms of storytelling, such as open-ended and entirely player-driven stories, were not. Although respondents' actual preferences (as deemed by the games they viewed to have sound storylines), traditional engaging stories dominated by a considerable margin, as did traditional and engaging stories. These findings unequivocally demonstrate that, while gamers are interested in player-driven narrating, they strongly prefer stories in games that employ traditional, engaging storytelling (Green, 2017; Kudlá, 2019; Zeman, 2017). The survey results support the idea that storytelling is an essential consideration for many people purchasing video games (and before). However, because of the difficulty of establishing the exact value of a game's story before buying, many gamers focus on games created by well-known developers or those with particularly unique-sounding plots, having resonance (played the previous version of a franchise) or other settings to help them decide. Thus, highly player-driven storytelling attracts the interest of a relatively large number of gamers and rarely drives potential buyers away (Stapleton & Hughes, 2003). This assumption is further supported by the respondents' buying habits, as games using conventional, engaging storytelling are purchased primarily for their story much more frequently than those using any other storytelling style (Pêgas et al., 2018). Whatever many in the game industry say, what players seem to need and love most in-game stories is a well-told story, regardless of how much freedom (sandbox games) and control they are given. Traditional interactive storytelling (Cavazza et al., 2002) is the most popular style by far. It offers writers and

designers free rein to control and fine-tune the pacing, characters, and plot progression to create the best experience for the players.

Immersion and Sound

Immersion is also a sensual and multidimensional experience. Large-scale media endeavours, such as games console games or Hollywood movies, can easily be thought of as examples of how those standards are enforced. Small-scale video games (indie games) also followed these, albeit with fewer media and computational resources. For example, in *elements vs. Monsters* (2016), something meticulously established the physical scene as a suburban yard. Visual textures are rarely interesting, even though they are not high quality, artificial, and lushly mapped. The game's point of view pans horizontally with the lawn at each level, setting its size for that scene's action. The music has an ominous tone to it. When zombies attack, the sound of their groans and shambling footsteps grows louder and louder. Defensive plants make current sounds as well (popping, squishing, crunching). The players' defences are based on closely related elements: fire, water, air, and earth. Once planted, their physical presence remains; they remain and perform their varied roles. One of the most potent contributions gaming can make to digital storytelling is a sense of spatial immersion.

A mastered and unchanging video game becomes a pointless endeavour, and a researched distance offers little more investigation. We mock characters that do not change as flat and undeveloped; the desire for character development presupposes an arc. As a result, successful immersion requires more than simply reinforcing Przybylski et al. (2012) awareness of enchantment and engagement. Instead, game designers, and in this case, trailer creators, strive to painstakingly calibrate ever-increasing play challenges to introduce an appealing set of ratcheted up challenges.

Sound is a critical component in allowing casual games to draw us into their worlds. Musical compositions can be symphonic in large-scale games, yet even a basic track allows us to listen to a game's feeling of the environment. Such a theme or ambient sound in the trailer aids storytelling and can show the genre on its own or by referencing other forms of media (see Cheng, 2014; Collins, 2013; Donnelly et al., 2014; Sweet, 2014).

Sound effects in video game trailers evoke a sense of the game's purpose by adding a meaningful layer to actions. These effects are essential for establishing the world's material nature and grounding a user's actions in immediate feedback. The voices of characters (actor Ron Perlman, *Fallout 4*) represent still another level of sound-generating game immersion. Here it should be noted that the objective nature of sound helps characters establish their actual presence. Like physical items or important occasions, characters' aural follow-up extends the most easy-going world. The content of the diversion is also essential in shaping the client's involvement in the game and story. Content labels are the leading names connected to articles and occasions, particularly on small or swarmed screens typical of casual games and mobile devices.

Audience Emotion

The emotional impact of casual games' mini cinematics is partially driven by the psychology of the immediately preceding gameplay, which invests players more deeply in the video that follows. At last, a cutscene can finish up a little diversion, wrapping up the story, finishing off occasions. Mangiron (2013) recognises the estimation of a cutscene, putting them in parallel with rising gameplay. From one perspective, amusements display story content in foreordained, relatively static ways, including cutscenes: Players can experience a game narrative as a crafted story interactively told (Ryan, 2009). On the other, players win different

story experiences from each game, based on the operations of play: “Players can engage with narrative as an emergent experience that happens while the game is played (Perlin, 2004).

Two storytelling components come into play when a game requires the audience to scan and interact with space. Foremost, the video game trailer conveys a sense of place. The more time spent scrutinising individual pixels and the deeper a player plumbs a static or constrained space, the more presence that space might create. Second, enticing a player to engage in “identify the concealed object” behaviour might help to create a sense of mystery. After all, the desired item is hidden, and the player expects a reward if they can successfully expose it. A typical method of promoting market involvement is to create a sense of mystery that lures a trailer audience into striving to answer the enigma. Given the allure of the puzzle, it is maybe not surprising that some casual games have been addictive (See: Griffiths et al., 2012; van Rooij et al., 2012; Weinstein, 2010).

Casual games occasionally have characters in the sense of classical storytelling. Individuals and anthropomorphic entities (creatures, robots, aliens) one-dimensional appear as targets, antagonists, or onlookers. Their visual and auditory qualities can elicit our engagement. In these little entities, appearance and action combine to trigger our incomplete storytelling reaction of character recognition. The tension between the limits that second-person addresses impose on the spectator and the vast world of detail-grounded potential that the rest of the story adds to the story’s storytelling power (Simmons, 2006). Our entire range of motion is severely limited, which is then contrasted by the apparent suppleness of other characters. A distance between our desire and the character opens and closes, establishing a cross-psychological dialogue. We develop a sense of “our” progress as the protagonist and our embedded reactions because of the dual narrative. This structure has the potential

to cause conflict between the storylines. In video games, we take on the role of a second-person narrator in this way.

On the one hand, we are severely limited in our activities, pinned at the bottom of a screen, unable to exactly exit the weapons, only departing to a degree when the game is satisfying, and we have perfectly completed its requirements. On the other hand, we have an internal feeling of linear advancement, at least in incremental gameplay progress or, as Juul (2009) puts it, losing. You react to objects and minor characters, rejoice in victories, and bemoan mistakes. You are free to pay no more attention to world features or any subjectivity derived from game entities than a pinball player is to the scene portrayed on the cabinet of that arcade machine. You also exist in dual-track time structurally comparably: that of the game and that of real-world play. Offscreen, in the player's body and psyche, those dual consciousnesses that character development arc happens. As a result, the most accomplished storytelling effect of casual gaming is hidden.

Protagonists and Resonance

Because storytelling causes unique content, it should not surprise us to see large-scale games brimming with characters (Cavazza et al., 2002). It prominently featured characters on box covers, websites, social media, trailers, and product merchandising for PC and console games. In addition, it presented characters in considerable detail in video game trailers, while the trailer has a short timeframe to convey an interesting case for an enthralling story (Brookey, 2010). The *Fallout 4* trailer is an impressive example of game characterisation. It takes place in a vastly desolate land, but it is well-populated with minor characters. To name a few, we can interact with a sheriff, a general store manager and amateur scientist, a priest, a salesperson, locals, a very disturbing unknown being, a childhood friend, a militia leader, and a mad scientist. The main characters, who serve as a

lurking presence for the main plot, dominate the game's tutorial prologue. In addition, we can meet the radio announcer face-to-face and work through several plots in which he is a player for most of the game.

It appears players are unlikely to invest emotionally in this swarm of historical figures populating the game world, which may be stereotypical. It is also worth noting that a simulation would necessitate player interactions with many people. Perhaps this design strategy echoes the historical pedagogy of humanising complex scenarios by latching procedures into individual human forms, providing us with more intimacy with which to connect. Regardless, this insistence on representing unique human characters occurs in the popular *Assassins Creed* series and, to varying degrees, in other planned games. These large-scale games covering the fates of nations contain storytelling if they choose to reflect individuals. These games also rely on personalities outside of their respective worlds. As mentioned earlier in this Chapter, social connections are required for many casual games and can be found in large-scale gaming. Like most digital storytelling, these games are set in a world shaped in part by social media. For starters, multiplayer play is still a highly valued *feature in many games. Interlayer combat options have contributed to games such as Battlefield, Gears of War, and the Call of Duty series, among others. Although multiplayer functionality is frequently cited in game reviews as one of the most important aspects of a game, people make up most large-scale gaming.*

As previously stated, a secondary wave of content is published via social media, and this framework around the trailer typically surrounds each game. Along with supplemental material designed to help other players, there is also a different level of fan productions in which players share their game triumphs and experiences. The *Fallout 4* YouTube trailer has 77,000 comments, indicating that it was a highly successful trailer eliciting such

engagement. They marketed video game trailers in the same way that movies are, emphasising audience reaction. Large-scale games appear to us in this way because of a social media matrix, at the very least contextualised by commentary and documentation. As players, we can contribute to this matrix in as small a way as commenting on a trailer, whether positive/negative or influenced by other comments. We can reduce our gaming experience to player versus console. We experience games as stories if we spread that experience across multiple sites, platforms, and mediums.

The *Fallout 4* trailer, too, addresses the player, albeit in a non-physical, slightly ironic manner. Your character carries a Pip-Boy; a personal digital assistant that provides information about your health and abilities, as well as a map, a radio, and an inventory of your belongings. Its design is inspired by the game's hybrid of 1950s consumerism and 1980s computers, with a monochrome display and thick buttons, while also resembling the size, shape, and significance of the handheld controller used to play the game. The Pip-Boy is a game controller within the game and a multitool for interacting with the game's world. Despite its indestructibility, at least one character makes fun of it for being out of date. The audience part of the narrative

The audience part of the narrative

One influencing factor making digital narratives so compelling for players as a storytelling medium lies in the inherent role each player takes in unfolding the story. Jenkins (2004) asserts this fundamental role of the player, but we choose what happens to the characters in playing a game. We can be encouraged to examine our values in the right circumstances by seeing how we behave within virtual space. Jenkins (2007) evokes complex and wide-ranging applications in studying the relationships among players, stories, and the virtual world. The complexity in the study of video game trailers and digital storytelling lies with the

myriad forms these narratives may take. No one set formula of analysis or approach can reasonably be applied in every instance. Jenkins (2007) explicitly references those games that allow the player a broad range of choices within the narrative, which can then have varying degrees of impact on the story. However, not all digital narratives offer players this degree of specific influence, nor is it necessary for a compelling, relevant narrative that otherwise meets the overall idea of considering one's values, culture, and the like when measured against what happens in the digital story. Allowing player choice, however, can deepen the impact of a given digital narrative in unexpected ways. Of particular importance is that narratives have the peculiar quality of making readers (players, viewers, interactors) care a great deal about the events they represent (Domsch, 2013). Upon closer inspection, this hallmark of narratives is perhaps not so peculiar after all but is instead an inherent part of the human experience of the world. Cron (2012) argues, "ignite readers' brains and captivate them through each plot element (p.9)". It is how we make strategic sense of the otherwise overwhelming world around us. Rather than recording everything on a first-come, first-served basis, our brain casts us as 'the protagonist' and then edits our experience with cinema-like precision, creating logical interrelations, mapping connections between memories, ideas, and events for future reference. Although Cron (2012) explicitly discusses written stories, her ideas prove relevant to the study and understanding of digital narrative. The human brain wants to perceive the world around it as organised around storytelling, albeit a world in which each exists as the star of their own story. Accordingly, take, for example, a typical conversation when people are asked about their day; most will respond by pulling together some events, perhaps polishing some or omitting others, presenting to the inquirer a story-like account, as opposed to a bullet-point list of otherwise dry facts. Video game storytelling provides a similar fictional experience to the one for which the human brain already has a predilection, an experience made more powerful and visceral as technology continues to push the boundaries of the virtual and the real.

When storytelling is storytelling

Examining digital storytelling by considering all its constituent pieces forms a compelling line of inquiry. One of the challenges already considered involves how those pieces are contemplated and how they may fit together to further understand a video game trailer(s) as text. According to Alexander (2017), another concern centres on how to frame a discussion of a digital narrative as a bounded object. Fundamentally, all games, even open-world games with randomly generated quests, are bounded, meaning that they do not merely continue infinitely with no end, even if the repetition or appearance of side quests might allow the game to function in a type of perpetuity. This means that no game possesses perpetual locations or types of quests or plot points. For instance, in a video game trailer such as *Uncharted 4: A Thief's End*, the player(s) will eventually be sent on a side mission that happens in a location he or she has already visited. The trailer undeniably is clear on this, showing flashbacks of childhoods memories and locations. Alternatively, the player may receive a quest like a previous one, for example, a type of quest. Technology is not at the point, nor is it likely to be, in which quest types and locations are endless. Such an outcome may not prove desirable in a more extensive study of storytelling, given that it would allow for no real resolution of tension or plot, offering the protagonist no chance to resolve his or her story. An ever-unfolding story may well lose its centre, becoming less of what might be deemed appropriately a story and more of a series of events related along with the commonalities of location, possibly character, but in a way disconnected from having a more significant impact. Besides, a core text and narrative (Aarseth, 2012) can be ordered in even the most broadly constructed open-world game. In most instances, the open world is organised around some set of quests or goals that move the player to different locations before they even begin. Receiving side quests is this set of main narrative points that complicate the plot, introduce the protagonist and his or her struggle, and help acclimate the

player to the particular themes and plot beats critical to the unfolding of the story (Steinkuehler, 2010).

Retaux (2003) refers to artefacts in the world that may also form stories. So, while it may be accurate to say that one static and fixed chronological text may not exist in some open-world video games or explicitly in trailers, constructing a text is possible and would be static in that sure plot beats would remain at fixed points. For example, in the narrative structure of *Watch Dogs 2*, the player must, of all things, view a trailer, the stage called 'Cyberdriver'. This requires players, go to *Hackerspace* (community-operated places, where individuals share their concern in mending with technology) film trailer and must be fulfilled before moving to the next stage.

The story's broad range allows the player to become intimately connected not just to this ancient planet or the post-apocalyptic setting but also to the competing human cultures dwelling on its surface. Take, for example, *Watch Dogs 2*; players will see customary regular people approach their daily lives doing genuinely regular exercises, for example, using their telephones or walking their dog. Every so often, the homeless can be seen along the outskirts of boulevards. Regular people can likewise be seen accomplishing more recreational exercises, such as yoga, playing games, or football/soccer.

While Anderson (1991) here considers speech as it relates explicitly to national identity, his thoughts have a more significant bearing on the construction of languages in storytelling:" If every language is acquirable, its acquisition requires a real portion of a person's life: each new conquest is measured against shortening days (Anderson, 1991, p. 48). The player is present as a cultural outsider since language always stays a barrier to complete comprehension.

Unique experiences

As a prefacing debate now, how a participant invests in an electronic story also bears consideration. There is no universal, straightforward answer that addresses this issue due to the range of video games available. On the other hand, the various means by which a player can satisfy the aim of a well-placed game can be considered. One of the chief task's gamers are called on to complete in any video game, but that often acquires more profound importance in those games focusing on storytelling is to invest in more than just the set of tasks, or quests, required to reach the game's ending. A primary example of this is located from the settlement option offered in the Fallout 4 trailer. The player is given a chance to spend time building settlements during the ruined remains of this Commonwealth, which is centred primarily in Boston, Massachusetts, even though the game's mythology encircles other eastern states in the USA, including New England, as part of this entire group. The game begins in October 2077 with global nuclear annihilation and the player that embodies a part of his or her creation, 25, fleeing to an underground bunker. Then, 210 decades after, the player wakes from a night of cryogenic sleep and exits the bunker only to locate a ruined wasteland filled with mutated insect and animal life and toxic water and plant life, not to mention ghouls, dangerous zombie-like humans who have been mutated by radiation. However, because the participant investigates, he or she discovers that although conflict is rife among competing groups of survivors, some want to initiate the process of rebuilding. The player can choose to internalise and mirror this expectation, via their embodied avatar, by agreeing to create a succession of settlements for the suffering individual populace. Fallout 4 trailer inserts the payoff system into the game's larger narrative by making the first settlement structure an inherent part of an early set of missions. The player must complete a string of early quests for a set of survivors known as the Minutemen, who picture themselves as a force for peace and law and order and work themselves with helping find survivors and

providing them with safe places to live. The quests walk the participant through creating a settlement, an involved procedure where the player must clear a suitable place of enemies, establish a radio beacon to inform nearby survivors of its presence and provide resources. At a minimum, settlements demand sources of water, food supplies, and beds for survivors. Each of those requirements requires the player to collect the raw materials required to make them. For example, the player can scavenge the world for vegetables and fruits, irradiated since they are accessible, then replant those resources in the settlement. The participant will likely have to invest in extra upgrades along with the bare minimum resources required to start a settlement into survivors for habitation. The Fallout 4 trailer only gives a small glimpse into the battles and hostility, settlements are subject to raids by hostile groups of humans or creatures, like the ghouls, and the player can attempt to discourage these raids by strengthening the settlement with guards, from machine gun turrets to staffed guard stations. The trailer does well by avoiding depth, which may impact a critical aspect of video game purchase, creating a sense of enigma.

As is the case with beds, each thing placed in the settlement requires quite a few raw materials, some of which are rare and challenging to scavenge. As a result, the game, not including its downloadable content (DLC), enables the player to construct around 30 settlements, even though its primary missions require the player to prepare the sites for only two of these. Indeed, the complexity and depth of this settlement system serve as its semi-narrative, one focusing on security, collaboration, and the division of tasks needed to conduct a community, and one to expect.

The main storyline acquires profound meaning for the player who invests the additional time to establish more settlements, not necessarily all 30, but at least several more beyond what is required by the initial story. The player will devote many hours completing the main and

side quests, exploring a planet that stays dangerous and mostly uninhabitable even some decades later due to the atomic fallout. After the player readies a settlement and activates its radio beacon, survivors will slowly find their way into the settlement. In most cases, this means that the player may revisit a settlement that was previously inhabited by only a couple of people to detect the start of a flourishing, albeit small, community.

Personalising Audience Experience

By investing time and in-game tools, the participant can reshape the game's world (thus, the story can be shaped) via the creation of safe spaces that emerge into communities. The degree to which the player invests in settlements can, by itself, take several hours. The participant can construct more elaborate buildings, such as homes, and establish trade routes between settlements. Buildings can be further decorated with furnishings, so a settlement could start to resemble not just a ramshackle gathering of survivors but a real community. While the settlements are not required, and the participant does not have to upgrade the game's required settlements beyond the bare minimum, the player who takes extra time to do this more completely meets the notion of his or her playthrough being well-played.

Undoubtedly, video games require an investment by their players, who find those players ready to commit to occasionally long hours of gameplay and close attention to details linked to the narrative. In return, video games can provide players with a unique sense of accomplishment. Gee (2005) asserts that video games offer players a feeling of achievement in many ways. In a video game, you press some buttons in the real world, and a whole interactive virtual world comes to life (Wang & Sun, 2011b). Gee's evaluation of the kind of instruction provides the scaffolding for a more in-depth discussion of digital

storytelling. Unlike other types of storytelling, video games need and forge a connection between the player and game. Thus, the importance of a trailer in being enticing and garnering curiosity. As the player makes choices, explores the environment, or interacts with other characters, the game rewards the player with another set of measures, the next piece of narrative, or even just the opportunity to enjoy a beautifully rendered in-game world. Hence, through technology, the player has much more motivation than not to fulfil the criteria of a well-played game. Video games are a focus for these positive achievements.

Agency

Achievement is a sophisticated psychological sense that probably does not apply to other kinds of storytelling and especially not to the detail created employing a feedback loop wherein the player's engagement with the game moves and rewards the player on several levels' activity. At length, the trailers are the first insight into the elements of the video game. Consequently, all-digital narratives progress since the player relates with the video game and devotes the period essential for the unfolding.

However, should the player or spectator not have enough motivation to consider your choices because they can preserve the game and attempt each of those options until they find the one, they enjoy avoiding the consequences of their picks. It is also likely that the player does not understand the context or have sufficient information regarding the effects of the decisions. Therefore, a few of the main prerequisites for each engaging story should be to offer the consumer all the impression of achieving agency.

For audiences, the agency is the satisfying realisation they may have in terms of purposeful activity and see the outcomes of their decisions when this is scrutinised, and it could be reasoned that for the gamer to experience agency, the consumer must be extended a range

(Przybylski et al., 2010). Additionally, the consumer must intend to pursue a particular course of action over the following and thus seek a form of gratification (Sherry et al., 2006). Though, permitting an individual to select one of the different choices does not guarantee that they shall experience fulfilment. This sometimes happens in situations where every time the player is allowed to select between different classes of activities, they will always choose randomly without even giving some thought to this decision. The basis for this behaviour might be that the player or viewer of this preview, more specifically, does not know the difference between your picks or that the player is uninterested in the story (Dickey, 2005). In that scenario, the preview comes with difficulty in empowerment here; even though the player's actions form the development of the narrative, they will appear random to the participant as the consumer did not have any expectations at the right time of producing the decision (Nogueira et al., 2013). Accordingly, having enough time before building a particular choice is as critical for the player as the choice to achieve the feeling of fulfilment. When the player forms expectations, even if they have been rewarded, it will bring about the gamer's attaining agency with their choice (Ramirez et al., 2013; Thue et al., 2011). For the participant to accomplish service, they must be able and motivated to understand and assess the circumstances and the message inside the video game trailer, which is relevant to the decision that the player must make. Hence, they are unable to decide which option to pick. Compared to the actual gameplay, the trailer has fewer emotional attachments and thus fewer consequences of choices. You will find video games that allow one auto-save, therefore, preventing a player from evading the impacts of the options. However, it remains unclear if these artificial boundaries and limitations alienate the audience from the story or support the player to achieve agency. The foremost aim of video game trailers is always to provoke audiences' curiosity and expectations without revealing too much.

The Anchor and Hook

The concept of service is unique to digital rather than other storytelling forms since the player should actively participate in the video game. The game proceeds to unfold, and the concept serves here as a significant beginning point for understanding how a cinematic video game trailer comes together to tell a story. Immersion and world construction are considered in the following section of this Chapter. Brown and Cairns (2004) are dramatically intertwined and interact, with world-building supplying a primary means for the participant to become involved and immersed in the video game story.

Video games and the narratives they promote necessarily exist in a space away from the realm of everyday human experience, as all stories do. However, in their most potent iterations, they find anchoring points by linking players to elements of the human experience (past and present), regardless of setting or spectacle, associated with what is concrete and dwelt in the actual world. Since it is no longer enveloped by imagery, it is conceivably no longer real at all. According to Romero and Correia (2003), in this rendering, the concept of the (tangibly) imaginary world created by video games surfaces as hyperreal. This does not have to be interpreted as a negative context, as if the occurrence of one would lessen the impact. While the stories contained within video game trailers engage the participant in a way that is not physically real, requiring them to move through simulations of worlds rather than the one around them, these stories nonetheless transcend the digital border to influence the trailer audience.

Further, there is no stable formulation where a video game trailer can create agency and immersion, resulting in a wide variety of forms all these essential elements of the story may require. Therefore, the examples presented in this Chapter do not function as the only forms

these theories can and do take. Instead, the examples could be considered categories of experiences that a player may have with trailers stories and may be used to construct a set of guidelines and characteristics against which other gaming narratives might be gauged.

The feature that all digital narratives via video trailers aim to achieve is to become players. This may appear at first glance to be a specific, throwaway revelation, but the underlying significance of play, discussed at length in this Chapter and previous, cannot be dismissed. Therefore, the agency works well on successively complex levels to describe the engaging relationship between a video game trailer and a player. At the most superficial level, the participant has the agency to watch (or not) the trailer and give feedback via comments on what they think. This is a dominant form of agency, admittedly, as viewers may well read other comments and consequently be impacted by what they read. Quite noticeably, some developers purposefully removed the ability to leave comments in launch trailers, which is conceivably a sign that negative comments alarm and impact sales and awareness.

The underlining challenge trailers have

Regarding gameplay, audiences must elect to play the video game and then continue to opt to complete the mechanical actions to create the video game to perform to its ending. However, this concept of agency proves much too limiting when thinking about the video game and audience relationship. Indeed, the player should consistently execute some mechanical action to allow a game to last. However, the concept of agency entrenched within storytelling often proves far more complicated. Though the idea has merit, it demonstrates far too limiting and fails to account for a broader comprehension of agency as it is different between the actual player(s) and the trailers. Indeed, video games using a high amount of player preference could enable a player inside that fictive world. The trailers have

little time to provide audiences with storytelling nuances; the agency is also, at its core, a descriptor used to denote empowerment. That said, throughout the playing of any video game, the player always can shape the story, which can intensify in a game with high levels of player participation, even if actions or choices have been arbitrarily made at a specified moment in gameplay. The trailer lacks in many ways the ability to take the agency to a quantifiable level and evoke agency via an imaginative storyline. However, the gameplay has this ability, although the varying level of intensity which also requires the participant's emotional reactions to some game and its proffered choices, is not a helpful characteristic by which to exude some activities "engaging" and others signals of "agency." Video game trailers start with agency and use that as an inception point to build increasing layers of intricacy. According to Kernan (2009), trailers are a form of promotion and an exclusive form of narrative film exhibition, wherein advertising discourse and narrative pleasure are adjoined. Gaming creates meaning and agency through semiotic online (virtual) communities (Tardini & Cantoni, 2005). In effect, video games are narrative spaces from the ongoing debates with ludology (Frasca, 1999) the participant inscribes with his or her intent.

At the heart of the digital story in trailers, then, lies the participant, instead of other storytelling mediums that may instead highlight their stories' characters. In more recent times, the rise of the female protagonist is worth noting (Grimes, 2003; Jansz & Martis, 2007; Jenkins, 1998; Ray, 2004). The video game concept is a story space and, as explored, immersive to articulate the complexities of the digital storytelling form (Alexander, 2017). Through their agency, the player advances through that negotiated space to both glean and help create narrative meaning. The counterexamples to the type of agency required of the player lie in comparing video game and film studies and their respective iterations.

The storytelling will proceed even with no expectations. The game narrative, by comparison, is just developed by the player's active involvement. Indeed, the act of reading a book is an active one, but the reader can read inattentively, skip entire sections of the book, and otherwise participate at a level less than complete. Nevertheless, this is the case with trailers, too; it is the first few seconds that may or may not allure a friend's recommendation. In some cases, the player can skip past full-motion video events, thereby frequently missing essential plot developments, but he or she cannot skip, comprehensively, through more prominent sections of the game; there are rules and perquisites as explained earlier.

Trailers allow the viewer even more latitude in this regard. The viewer can get up and move away from the story, leaving it to play on for a few seconds or a few minutes with no participant attention whatsoever. Grodal (2013) asserts that the interaction between player and digital text can grant players a sense of agency within the story of the video game world and its systems. Theoretical models need to account for players' actions in creating their own experiences. This is a fascinating point that takes trailer productions from the realms of film and literature. Indeed, audiences connect to characters with whom they share adventures, and each reader with such a favourite could likely extrapolate with astonishing detail about the nature of that connection.

Similarly, audiences can connect to movie characters in precisely the same manner. In digital storytelling, the player embodies a personality. On the other hand, the player may also experience a game where their character gender with an ambiguous identity, as is the case of the first-person standpoint found in *Watch Dogs 2*, or even one where they can spend a great deal of care and time crafting an avatar, like in the game *Fallout 4*. If agency denotes the player's willingness, their choice, to play a game and to perform all the steps

necessary to complete the game subsequently, then immersion speaks to the digital story's ability to draw in that player and to invest him or her in the story of the trailer.

Immersion and Storytelling Merging

Immersion and storytelling might appear inherently tied to each other, but it is better to think of them as interrelated components that create the digital trailer story (Kim et al., 2009; Waern et al., 2009). Immersion need not be limited as a reference only to story-related elements of the video game trailer. A player may become immersed in the environment of the trailer, its fictional, constructed world, and that immersion can function separately from being invested in the plot, although the two elements frequently merge to form a story borne from both narrative and environmental elements. Jennett et al. (2008), describe immersion in this way; the player is consumed within the domain of the game's story, nonetheless, similarly denotes the player's affection of the game and the level of detail in the actual design and mechanics applied. Here, world and story need to be separated to denote that each element plot and place function as separate parts of an interrelated whole and may create immersion in differing ways for different players during the trailer viewing.

Although one can pinpoint a strict set of guidelines by which to understand it, immersion is not necessarily so merely defined, rooted as it is in the singular experience of each gamer when seeing a trailer. The more temporary immersion aspect lies in the player's capacity to become empowered red in the video game trailer. Concerning narrative-driven or narrative-centric video games, they require a lot of design focus and detail. That means that something about the story embedded in the trailer must capture the player's attention at a very early point in viewing. Unfortunately, studies of storytelling are increasingly turning away from that which cannot be categorised and defined. Such is the case with a great deal of current video game studies. However, the attempt to strictly organise, name, and then create a theory about forms of engagement with a text, whatever the form, suffers the

proverbial sound of the music. Storytelling resonates with the very heart of what it means for us to be human. Therefore no one system of categorisation will ever be wholly satisfactory, even with the trailer medium.

While this proves true in some cases, perhaps especially so in open-world and sandbox video games, that should not be taken to imply that no “text” can exist for a game. In *Fallout 4* and *Uncharted 4: A Thief's End*, there are a set number of possible outcomes about how many permutations the game offers the player story-wise. The idea of individual experiences proves fascinating and frustratingly transient. Video game trailers storytelling produces varied reactions in gamers in the same way that other storytelling forms do. The survey results are undoubtedly challenging to gauge regarding how compelling the storytelling is in the short time frame of viewing the promotional aspects, namely the trailer.

The critical difference lies in the shifts of experience. Films and books, for example, are inherently static forms. They are not different upon subsequent viewings or readings, instead of changing based on a viewer's or reader's perceptions of the materials at given times. Flagging attention may cause a missed detail; intense focus may unearth new avenues of interpretation. Trailers that possess elements that deduce viral interest may then allow the more profound discourse, and how it plays on parody, humour, and celebrity endorsement (i.e., narrator). The text is, necessarily, always the same. A trailer's digital narrative invariably begins, and ends focused on the audience and player's agency as that story is approached, whether for the first time or after many views or comments. Even in the absence of numerous story permutations, the prospective player still exists in an intimate relationship with the story. Also, the choices related to traversing its environment, whether the differences are as significant as ones that can be changed in a choice-based narrative. While structurally the same, the trailer story splinters into different experiences, immersion

takes on an added dimension in video games such as *Fallout 4* and *Uncharted 4: A Thief's End*, as the trailer's story becomes inherently twined with a place. In these games, players use the open world (with extensive maps and terrain to explore) as their primary means of navigating each particular video game's setting.

Everything is permitted, gets at the core of this contradiction. However, freedom comes with a high price, as it allows each person to encode their moral tendencies on the world.

Perhaps this has been highlighted dramatically by a popular TV series *Westworld* (Jefferies & Blackwood, 2017). In theme parks, narratives are large scale, meticulously developed storylines that determine the behaviour of hosts and drive the overall guest experience within the park. From the high-level meta-narrative outlining the primary tale arc that sets the entire park's environment down to the minute definition of an individual host's speech and motivation, a Narrative encompasses a tremendous spectrum of complexity. Narratives possess two core characteristics; first, an external, superficial layer, and the second is an internal, deeper layer. They determine how hosts interact with visitors based on the actions and decisions of the guests and the adventures the guests will take part in, such as a train heist, showdown, saloon carousing, romance, or a bounty hunt posse (westworld.wikia.com, 2018).

Video games contain, analogous to their written narrative counterparts, what that is, interlocking plot events and "catalysers" or complementary events. While Barthes (1966) related this term to literature, it also serves many concepts related to the study of literature, the study of digital storytelling. In video games, the forms of these foundational storytelling elements are analogous but not identical. In digital storytelling, these elements can take narration, dialogue, or even found objects within the environment. Elements that may be either wholly irrelevant or not mentioned in other forms of storytelling emerge as being of

utmost importance in a digital story. For example, in all of *Watch Dogs 2*, the background material, anti-establishment, propaganda, found objects, such as audio recordings, and encounters with non-player characters all provide the “catalysers” critical to the full development of the cardinal functions. *Watch Dogs 2* complex narrative proves especially true of the need for these elements to be given closer consideration, and its opening half-hour or so of gameplay serves as an insightful iteration of these concepts.

Conclusion

This Chapter has shown why digital narratives are so appealing to audiences as a storytelling medium; the audience plays an inherent role in the story’s unfolding themes. Video games are increasingly being used to communicate dramatic and culturally relevant stories. This Chapter on storytelling showed the critical part of advertising video game trailers. It emphasises the relevance of video games as narratives by providing a framework for analysing the many-ended storylines that frequently blur the lines between real and virtual life.

The dynamic mechanics required to create passionately multifaceted stories, conscious of gaming’s primary interaction between player actions and video game trailer aesthetics, are illustrated in storytelling. This Chapter builds on the debate in Chapter 5 about representation and misrepresentation by demonstrating the impact narrative has on video game developers, filmmakers, audiences, and any other observers exposed to evocative and meaningful interactive stories.

In this Chapter, I examined the purpose of tales and how video game trailers frequently use stories to pique curiosity, foster identification and express the game’s potential. This Chapter also discusses the importance of emplotment in the creation of interesting stories.

As mentioned in the preceding Chapter, audiences are also looking for accurate sights, sounds, and graphics from the 'real' video game. They expect trailers will reflect these characteristics of the game. However, storytelling can be an effective way to draw attention to the trailer's dominant themes rather than the gaming components.

This Chapter illustrates how various sorts of storylines work and how emplotment applies based on an analysis of the three trailer examples, namely through emplotment Kent (2015), as explained, a process in which all the specifics of a fascinating story are told as part of a more significant narrative theme. Emplotment is about connecting a set of occurrences into a story with a plot. Nevertheless, the power of storytelling to form immersion with the audience showed the result of a powerful story to enchant the audiences.

Correspondingly this Chapter explored the three trailers in a case study analysis. I have explained critical narratives concerning each trailer, and I investigated how significant emplotment is to establish what kind of story each of these three video game trailers is presenting.

Chapter 7 – Rhetoric and Persuasion

“Rhetoric is often equated with a type of smokescreen; it is language used to occlude, confuse, or manipulate the listener.” (Bogost, 2010, p. 15)

The amount and quality of content that can be incorporated into video games has provided those who want to study them with a wealth of information that can be analysed. What was once a relatively straightforward medium has become one of the most popular forms of entertainment available while offering players the opportunity to customise their own gaming experience (Muriel & Crawford, 2018). The text of a video game one plays is even more complicated, as it increasingly depends on the player’s choices (Stang, 2019). As explored in previous Chapters, video game trailers provide a pre-play insight or sneak-peak into the video game, and whether it is the actual game or clever marketing is debatable. Although the player was offered almost unlimited opportunities, many players kept the game alive, controlled their agent, and played it as if they were playing a game themselves.

They unveiled the story behind the games during the video game and won the game when victory was possible. If we can try to understand how the content of video games at the grassroots level encourages players to interact with their agents in a certain way within the video game, then I suggest we consider this the preferred mode of play for the power of the story behind the games is critical.

In this Chapter, I propose that the components of the video game trailer base often combine in such a way as to present audiences with configurations, embedded narratives, and social systems. Video game trailers are pervasive and require gamers to define their player-

controlled agents within the world of the video game in relationship to these systems. In the Chapter, I build on theorising around the connection between the rhetoric of video games trailers and the communication of ideological frameworks to audiences.

Why Rhetoric Matters

While the rhetoric is often conceptualised as the art of persuasion, Burke's account of rhetoric, which theorises how individuals come to identify with various parochial groups and simultaneously take part in a "larger unit of action," is additionally helpful for understanding video games trailers as a rhetorical medium (Burke, 1969). Through the sharing of "common sensations, concepts, images, ideas, attitudes", individuals can become "consubstantial" with one another, audiences can come to identify with one another (Hawhee, 2015). Identification, a vital element, and the next Chapter on vigilantism (Chapter 8) explores how video game trailers use this to resonate with audiences, protagonists (or antagonists), enduring themes, and a call for action (Smallridge & Wagner, 2020).

In the 1980s and 1990s, as video games advanced technologically, a medium that was initially relatively simple became complex and then multifaceted (Keogh, 2018). Changes in the amount and quality of content that could be integrated into a video game over the years presented those who wanted to study video games with large quantities of new content to be studied. Simultaneously, video gamers were faced with increasing possibilities to customise their individual gaming experiences (Cuthbert et al., 2019), and the text of the played video game was further complicated as video games increasingly relied on the choices made by gamers. Due to the almost infinite interactivity possibilities, discussing a pre-played video game can only show what a player may see or hear. At the same time, while players are faced with almost unlimited possibilities, many video gamers somehow manage to uncover the embedded narrative inside a video game when playing or watching, win the game if

winning is feasible, and manage to keep player-controlled agents alive and play the game themselves. The existence of these expected outcomes indicates that we should try to understand how players are motivated to engage within a video game in specific ways through the video game base material (Prensky, 2001). In this Chapter, I propose that video game base components frequently combine to provide gamers embedded narratives and social frameworks; I refer to these schemes as positioning rhetorical structures. These rhetorical structures are omnipresent in video game trailers and enable players to identify their player-controlled agents concerning these systems in the video game environment. At the end of this Chapter, I suggest that these structures be the rhetorical resources of video games. I also focus on theorising the relationship between the rhetoric of video games and the communication of ideological frameworks to gamers. At the same time, underpinning the influence of the video game story and not so much the actual gameplay, as discussed in Chapter 5.

Some theorists (Hodent, 2017; Phillips et al., 2018; Wang & Sun, 2011a) propose that gamers' contact with the video gameplay may be directed through a reward and punishment scheme that attempts to control a gamer's commonly depicted interaction. According to Wolf (2001, 2008; Wolf & Perron, 2003, 2014), unlike other forms of media, in the video game, the player is called upon not just to watch but to act. According to Wolf (2001), such behaviour, which we have already addressed as commonly portrayed interactions, is not haphazardly initiated. When gamers notice "how actions are followed by outcomes and consequences, what Wolf states as 'an inherent worldview' is transmitted, which is essentially about how outcomes follow actions, game performance is determined by a player's willingness to connect with the worldview and become attuned to the design of the game and the algorithms by which it operates. In early video games, regulatory configurations were easy.

Rhetoric and Rules

It introduced players to regulatory structures in contemporary games through a narrative and sophisticated social context, and regulatory configurations alone do not appear to be sufficient for clarifying players' motivations. At the same time, the absence of punishment serves as a powerful intrinsic motivator. To put it another way, the discovery of embedded narrative results from the interaction of agents in scenes with one another, with the surrounding environment, and with the starting object, as well as the pre-programmed responses or outcomes of this interaction. Examples include how the Fallout 4 trailer depicts sacrifice, rescue, and transformation with the significant plot I explored in Chapter 4. In Chapter 6 I went on to apply various emplotments to the three chosen video game trailers, which in this case looked at civilisations' struggle for survival. In Chapter 7 I continued this investigation in further detail. Such an embedded story appears to be part of a coordinated effort to promote narratives that are not directly related to the video game itself, such as environmental issues, compassion, and sustainability.

While gamers can often guide player-controlled agents to interact differently, not all commonly portrayed interactions disclose this interaction. Consequently, players are also told explicitly through the game's programmed responses to unravel the embedded plot or any combination of this narrative. This is also cleverly conveyed through ideological state apparatuses. Althusser (2014) conceptualised that ideological state apparatuses are entities such as households, churches, media outlets, and educational systems that directly interpellated individuals as subjects and seek to impart a specific ideology (Garite, 2003). In video games, these ideological state devices also consist of carefully designed worlds, suitable non-player-controlled agents, knowledge objects, and programmed responses that connect player-controlled agents by expressly informing gamers how player-controlled

agents should interact in the game world. For example, in the *Fallout 4* trailer, home life, family, pets, community, and society show how players can participate in the game world. If gamers have questions, they may guide their agents to consult a school-wide intranet through knowledge objects in the form of computer terminals or direct their agents to the faculty that players do not manage. If gamers are not told explicitly how to disclose the narrative through an ideological state apparatus, the form of interaction required to reveal narrative may also be revealed through the authoritarian state apparatus. According to Althusser (2014), authoritarian state apparatuses, such as military, police, or other state agents, underwrite ideological state apparatuses and seek to ensure conformity among those who disagree with the orders of ideological state apparatuses (Rancière, 2011). Such concepts manifest in the trailer for *Watch Dogs 2*.

Furthermore, given the over-reliance on technology and the public's vulnerability to exploitation, misuse of their private data, and ultimately the role of corporations, the protagonists are indeed hackers. However, governments seem mainly uneasy about solving a significant issue, and the public appears doubtful about it. Like controlling processes, we learn what not to do, which will teach gamers what to do.

In the trailer, if a gamer directs a player-controlled agent to commit a crime in the interest of society against the antagonist, the player is portrayed as achieving something virtuous, even if the action itself is a crime. The larger the attack (scale), the more legitimising and even praiseworthy the protagonists are framed in the trailer. Indeed, motivation for the audience is based on the idea that an exaggerated evil presents an incentive. This can be gleaned from how oppressive state apparatuses are used to coerce or suppress those who refuse to agree. Committing such actions through crimes, as presented in the trailer, thwarts particulars concerning the narrative revelation. Video game trailers give audiences hints,

often, and are expected to weigh this brief but at times compelling glimpse, and thus consider what they have not been given, predict how the story will advance, and then deduce accordingly (Johansen, 2013). Thus, if the narrative formulation of an audience is accurate, more of the narrative is revealed through predetermined reactions.

Rhetoric and Narrative

The material from which players render the reality of a video game is given by the video game's foundation. Gamers are encouraged to communicate within a game in specific ways, particularly to reveal narrative, to ensure audiences remain uncertain and eager to watch on, using a framework of what is provided and what is not provided within this material. For example, in the *Assassins Creed* trailer, audiences will discover that the player experience helps to immerse the player in the world by configuring the spatial environment to how interiors would look or making the assets and buildings appear natural for the period, thus assisting in creating a historically truthful playground for the player to explore, inherently retaining the audience longer (Gilbert, 2017). Additionally, the lack of any other directions and the existence of this very particular request may allow the audience to disclose the narrative to guide the princess to save his/her player-controlled agents; this commonly depicted interaction exposes another plot point in the narrative.

The urge to uncover an embedded narrative may account for some of the motivation of a gamer when present, but the narratives in contemporary video games place a great deal of emphasis on the narratives in a video game and not just the trailer. There also appears to be some apparent overlap between guiding configurations and narrative, particularly in their ability to cause gamers to communicate with their player-controlled agents. After all, narrative revelation through the rhetoric can be seen as a reward for unique types of

interaction typically portrayed, and narrative withholding as a punishment for not performing the correct interaction (Ruberg, 2020).

Audience Agency

As part of the research themes of the thesis, video game trailers are an effective promotional form of intermediation that enable audiences to navigate and engage with old and new media. As explained in Chapter 3, the research methods I have adopted in this thesis include narrative analysis, textual analysis of comments from YouTube, Facebook, and a survey of video gamers.

Although video game trailers function as advertisements designed to sell a game, they are also stories that provoke social media commentary and debate. Traditionally, trailers for movies were viewed before the movie started at the cinemas; since then, audiences' consumption is far more self-directed; they watch, process, and decide how valuable the content is and ultimately decide whether to watch the film (based on the trailer) or not. However, the current environment is far different, and audiences are more emboldened to engage with the content through social media to express their views. Therefore, there is an added and unique element of pressure on the trailer producers and developers as audiences may form positive or negative opinions about the video game before its release.

As indicated in Chapters 3, 4, and 5, audiences' exposure to video trailers is, of course, via some of these social media outlets, typically YouTube and Facebook. This section of the chapter focuses more on the audience's agency, which is, of course, conveyed in the social media engagement (comments). As Jenkins (1998) points out, gamers engage video games as new places for play in a world that has converted conventional children's play spaces into subdivisions. According to Jenkins (1998) "video games constitute virtual playing spaces,"

which allow children to explore," (p.263) "combat," and "struggle" (p.263) without significant consequences. From a video gaming perspective, play is not restricted to childhood manifestation but something that can be evoked at any point in one's life, regardless of age.

At the same time, video games offer the idea of the existence of repercussions. Similarly, gamers want to do more than play; as Klevjer (2002) craftily points they also want to play make-believe. Klevjer (2002) states that this is the "contradiction" of video games-gamers confronted with the myth of independence and can engage with and complete a particular story of life simultaneously. Thus, a video game trailer can provide audiences with a complete cultural configuration of a world - as much as it offers a specific ludic challenge to encourage this play. This discovery may not seem alarming, as video game psychological studies have noted that video games teach gamers different social scripts. In mythologies, as discussed in Chapter 2, Barthes (1993, 2010) pointed out that toys are typically heavy with adult world stories, such as military or medical establishments, and are prepared to join this world in the play of children as soldiers, doctors, firefighters, police, mothers, or whatever else they play. Therefore, I suggest that many video game trailers are inscribed with social structures that shape how we interact with media.

The most prominent of these social systems in video games are society, politics, and economics. Although there are many definitions of culture, the one that is used here is the social definition of Williams (1998), which calls culture "a description of a particular way of life which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour" (p.41). In video games trailers, social culture involves the parameters and portrayal of objects, agents wear the clothes, the modes of communication and programmed responses, and the complete combination of all items in the video game world and the "meanings and values" expressed on each of these pages.

The culture of a video game trailer provides the conditions for a cultural economy by pricing particular objects and achievements and devaluing others. Suppose audiences wish to engage with and inside the video game community through comments, likes, dislikes, or sharing. In that case, they are somewhat compelled to accept or suffer the repercussions of not contributing to that culture, the ideals of which they want to participate. For instance, and as shown in Chapter 5 of the popular game *Watch Dogs 2*, the audience must condone the idea of crime (via cyber terrorism) to support the supposed protagonists; even if it means physical harm to others or damage to the public property via collateral damage (Leonard, 2020).

Political communities of citizens organised to support a common cause quite frequently manifest the different cultural commitments in video games. Although political allegiances do not inherently represent political parties or power structures in video games, such as ideological state apparatuses and authoritarian state apparatuses, these may be examples in video games of political organisations (Innocent, 2020). Politics is also manifested as collectives of agents united for the greater good and collectives of agents united to perpetrate different types of self-serving evil in its most fundamental form in video games. In the various environments and agents, political lines sometimes fall along cultural religious, economic, ethnic, or gender similarities or different variations of these, and these same distinctions almost always denote and determine who is an ally and who is an enemy within the world of a game. There may be several different political alignments, often overlapping, in some video game trailers like *Watch Dogs 2* and in *Fallout 4* where supporting militarisation is essential for survival.

As in the real world, the politics and territory of video game trailer are closely related to each other with various political parties either fighting for space ownership or being appointed to

defend or take control of a certain space. More simply, the representation of an agent and the involvement of an agent in a specific territory may frequently indicate political affiliation, and in relations with this outside other, agents are encouraged to behave in the interests of their political grouping.

Not unexpectedly, the economics inside a game is often related to much of the culture and politics portrayed in a video game; indeed, the advancement of production, distribution, consumption, and labour is smoothed by many of the cultural values and political groupings. Video games trailers also provide players with familiar economic structures to deal with and economic systems can be the most complicated of all video game orientation systems.

Economics, in its most fundamental sense, includes the production, distribution, and consumption of products. Notably, in many video games, one or more of these components are present, and players are always confronted with an ideal market. As a result, there are often ample items created and almost no resource limits. For example, agents can buy ambient objects to decorate their virtual houses in the recent *Fallout 4* trailer, which shows critical interactions within the game world. These ambient objects are inexhaustibly accessible if there is ample money via scavenging and even appropriation.

Since certain facilitating items are consumable and players depend on the consumption of these objects, markets or acquisition opportunities nestle everywhere in the games released in the mid-eighties, the ability to buy objects was present and has been increasingly present since then.

Of course, then, audiences can observe how to acquire items and use or consume them. In the video game trailer *Assassins Creed* for example, items appear randomly throughout the

battle arena, and to possess them, players can only manoeuvre over the objects. Normally, it is also the case that the more costly the item, the better it performs. The player's happiness is partly dependent on the ability of a player to obtain the best items for his or her house or yard/house in the Fallout 4 trailer.

This section of the Chapter explores the role of the audience and their agency. More expressly, video game trailers are disseminated via social media and indeed this thesis has used the comments of viewers from social media as an important contribution to the analysis of this topic. Although trailers via popular social media are largely mass produced and abundantly accessible, in the world of a video game, this does not preclude them from being potent and highly creative. Indeed, in certain video game trailers, the message can be as simple as players labour for the status of having collected them to gain money or capture items. For instance, players can collect unassuming objects such as scrap metal in Fallout 4 as they advance throughout the game and barter such item as the apocalyptic events have made fiat money immaterial. Although all these facilitating items need not be obtained, particularly because some are obviously inferior to others the vanity of owning a complete collection provides incentives to engage in this scheme.

In general, some form of competitive or violent interactivity is involved, but mundane gathering, escorting, or repetitive assembly activities may also be included. Fallout 4 and *Watch Dogs 2*, for example, reward players who explore the video game world and conquer others by allowing them to take the properties of those they defeat, especially physical/material items/objects. Thus, audiences, being pushed to take the noble route and facilitate moral agency, may find themselves willingly or unknowingly in a state of cognitive dissonance. Audiences will participate in the game's capitalist system by selling/buying guns/cars/gold/coins/clothing and products that help them become stronger and more

powerful, thus contradicting the moral agency perspective (Hartmann & Vorderer, 2010; Švelch, 2010; Weaver & Lewis, 2012). The trailer present choices with ample incentives to consume, as is the worker who needs to work to survive and is given enough incentives to sustain his/her life.

In the three trailers, audiences' players are presented with capitalist utopias, Stallabrass (1996), points out where work is always available and... opportunity can always be grasped. It is an ideal, nostalgic vision of the marketplace in which all players start from the same point and with the same resources and trailer guides audiences to work for or trade money for items or other physical or mental skills. This ideal market encourages audiences in the trailers to continue to progress and allows them to perform alternative types of work, take on more powerful enemies, or engage in more lucrative labour.

It is the way a dominant power leads by obtaining consent and controls those who do not consent by coercive force. The existence of social culture in games, such as the *Assassin's Creed*, for instance, encourages trailer audiences to recognise and participate in the game culture, where the reward can belong or excel. Political membership in a party allows players to consider the options associated with the group of agents, as in *Assassin's Creed*. Such association denotes not only membership, but also the strength, protection, and capacity that comes with membership. The economic structure inside a video game trailer is perhaps the most ubiquitous venue for exercising hegemonic control. Economic hegemony induces audiences to engage in this structure in a game such as *Watch Dogs 2*, to challenge the stability of the existing capitalist order to give audiences something to be zealously angry about through the display of overt oppression and abuse of power, this seeks to motivate and advance the narrative. Although gamers are provided with hegemonic instructions and encouraged to agree to these orders by their player-controlled agents, they may refuse to

play the game following the hegemonic guidelines. After all, gamers are not automatons but complicated, evolving beings, and they may react in unpredictable ways. The possible punishment for such rejection is a coercive force in any hegemony, which some gamers may find reasonable. However, the capacity of agents to dissent within a video game's hegemonic orders may not be immediately evident and is rarely stated in any studies of video games. Maybe this is because video games' hegemonic mechanisms are so successful at inducing players to understand and behave that a gamer is unaware of other possibilities for interaction.

This Chapter has explored the role of social media in distributing video game trailers. Nevertheless, this section has shown the power of propagating the video game trailer to a vast audience, advocating narratives like capitalism, cyber-crime, and corporate power. With this aim of audiences something to be zealously angry about through the display of overt oppression and abuse of power, this seeks to motivate and advance the narrative.

Rhetorical Systems

Although rhetoric is often conceptualised as the art of persuasion, the account of rhetoric by Burke (1969) theorises how people come to associate with different parties. For video game studies, there are at least two ways in which Burke's concept of rhetoric can be adapted; the discrepancies between these two applications of the meaning of Burke (1969) emerge from the ontological uncertainty of whether the aim of video games as a rhetorical tool is to achieve consubstantiality with player-controlled agents, gamers, or both.

In this first implementation of Burke's concept of rhetoric, we can presume that agency is the audience of video game trailers (Burke, 1969, 1970). As with individuals, recognising a player and a game is not automatic if there is no need for structure or if the game will be played independently. Structures are also present in video games because Burke says the rhetoric is current in society: a divide between individuals must be overcome. This division in video game trailers is between the audience and the game. Such structures are the rhetorical tools of a video game, and these systems are made up of objects, agents, text, and voice, trying to induce audiences to identify with the video game trailer.

Granted, this formulation is somewhat ideal since there is, of course, a person outside the video game who controls the player-controlled agent. However, recognising this rhetorical relationship is vital for video game studies since it indicates that video game trailers are not always designed for audiences to identify with through their rhetorical frameworks (Bogost, 2008). Instead, video game trailers can only be programmed to help audiences (and eventually players) understand the degree to which agency can support more depth in terms of immersion. For example, a player may associate themselves with a pacifist outlook in everyday life. Yet, such video games as *Assassin's Creed*, *Fallout 4*, and *Watch Dogs 2* seek to push, as mentioned, create cognitive dissonance, thus challenging the audience's belief structure (Griffiths et al., 2012). With violence through the rhetoric of a video game trailer is a central theme and, in ways, violence to deal with violence (Gentile & Anderson, 2003). This does not mean the audience condones violence. Still, when instructed and triggered by the images, text, and sound, the audience can identify with violence, and its application becomes more conventional.

Conversely, a video game trailer may be used to answer the player rhetorically. In this second formulation, there is also a division between two individuals, except that the

individuals are the players and the gamers. The structures offered by the video game trailer base are still the game's rhetorical resources; however, they are also used to consent audiences to accept their identity with the video game. When we think of video game trailers as rhetorical, we can see that players often simultaneously associate or disassociate with the events and narratives portrayed. The rhetorical nature of video game trailers often uses the overlap and conflicts between images and messages to enable audiences to be identified and associated with more specialised meanings, perhaps elements that may manifest or have a stronger resonance later.

To others, this second formulation of video games trailers as rhetorical is particularly disturbing. Indeed, several individuals have cautioned against the risks of identifying video gamers who may (or not) manifest into actual crimes.

Perhaps when audiences (then player) figure out the rules of the game and start responding as automatically as the computer, processing information as quickly, replacing sentient consciousness with the blank hum of computation," audiences are not only communicating with the computer but blending with it" (Friedman & Kahn Jr, 1992, 2017).

The effect of the rhetorical design of a video game trailer is that if audiences join the *"cybernetic loop"*, as Manovich (1996) stated, they can unknowingly ingest the same ideological material as their agents themselves. Perhaps this creates a real danger, where the audience can be shaped and perhaps even manipulated, concerning this new approach of influence on them (Manovich, 1996).

Conclusion

While audiences are often given multiple options as to how they process complex video game content through an ultra-simple version (via a trailer), gamers are induced to interact in specific ways using symbolic means, through text, visual audio, and other semiotics. Although this identification method can be viewed as rhetorical, as discussed in this Chapter, such structures can be considered the rhetorical tools of video game trailers.

This Chapter revealed that while rhetoric is commonly thought of as the art of persuasion, Burke's account of rhetoric showed how people learn to identify with different local groups, which is also crucial for understanding video game trailers as a rhetorical medium. Rhetoric seeks to discover shared experiences, thoughts, images, ideas, and attitudes, and audiences can identify with one another by sharing shared experiences, thoughts, images, ideas, and attitudes. Identification is a crucial component, and the Chapter on vigilantism (Chapter 8) delves into how video game trailers use it to connect with audiences, protagonists (or antagonists), recurring themes, and a call to action.

This Chapter has additionally revealed how video games were cultivated technologically in the 1980s and 1990s. Moreover, as video games became more reliant on the choices made by players, the text, more significantly, rhetoric, of video games became more intricate. Despite having nearly limitless options, many video gamers can uncover the game's inherent story while playing or watching it. The prevalence of these typical results suggests that we should investigate how players are encouraged to engage in specific ways within a video game by looking at the game's underlying material. In this Chapter, I argued that video game foundation components regularly combine to provide gamers with control configurations, embedded narratives, and social frameworks. These rhetorical structures abound in video

game trailers, allowing viewers to recognise their player-controlled agents in the game environment concerning these systems and, at the same time, supporting the story's effect rather than the gameplay itself.

Video game trailer rhetoric will address the audience and impact eventual players, leaving it up to the gamer to determine who is being discussed, and in the next Chapter this will be further examined in terms of vigilantism. I further illustrate the relationship between rhetoric and storytelling with the next Chapter, vigilantism.

Chapter 8: Vigilantism

“The Superman formula is essentially lynching Legal process is completely discounted and contemptuously by-passed. No trial is necessary, no stupid policeman hog all the funSuperman glorifies the ‘right’ of the individual to take the law into his own hands (Heer & Worcester, 2009, pp. 117-118).

Introduction

This Chapter explores vigilantism and its role in fomenting audience identification with the narrative and protagonists shown in video game trailers' case study. *Vigilantism* is an understudied concept critical to understanding how injustice, inequality and abuse of power are conveyed and justified within video game trailers. Vigilantism exemplifies a technique for shaping the audience's view of violence, thus aiming to justify its presence in video games trailers. The purpose is to hook audiences on the narrative - vigilantism is a technique for building audience identification with game heroes and heroines so that the player can engage in heroism via vigilantism and not experience any ramifications from the law. An additional theme explored in the Chapter looks at whether vigilantism is propagating revenge or justice.

This Chapter aims to reflect on ongoing themes presented in previous chapters, specifically how the central theme of vigilantism is threaded throughout Chapter 6's storytelling. Also, this Chapter aligns with and expands on the idea that video game trailers at times convey a message quite distant from the actual gameplay, as discussed in Chapter 5. At the same time, evoking audiences into believing the themes of fictional representation are authentic. Chapter 5's argument addressed the notion of hook and immersion; it is also essential,

however, to examine the role of vigilantism. The purpose of such a Chapter is to demonstrate how audiences are induced into the narrative through vigilantism. This is a technique for building audience identification with video game heroes and heroines. The player can engage in heroism via vigilantism and not experience any ramifications from the law. Another significant theme explored in this Chapter is whether vigilantism propagates revenge or justice.

Vigilantism & Superhero / Superheroine

According to Johnston (1996), vigilantism is an enigmatic concept. There are many versions of what vigilantism is defined as (Moncada, 2017). Broadly, however, a vigilante is an individual who may join a group displaying similar logic, who takes the law into their own hands without permission from legal or governmental authorities, because those authorities are allegedly inadequate. This thus prompts the individual, or group, to fight, prevent and punish crime, ultimately representing an alternate, ambiguous form of justice (Bateson, 2020; Rosenbaum & Sederberg, 1974; Trottier, 2017).

There is considerable debate about vigilantism's distinct character: whether it is fundamentally violent, conservative, extra-legal, organised, and directed only towards crime. Also, whether it can be undertaken by agents acting on behalf of the state (such as the police) as well as by private citizens; and whether it is a genuine social movement or a mere social reaction (Burrows, 1976; Culberson, 1990; Rosenbaum & Sederberg, 1974; Sederberg, 1978). More recently and a theme discussed in this Chapter is cyber-vigilantism (Smallridge et al., 2016). Perceptions and expectations that society has about privacy, personal security, and abuse of power are pivotal in shaping vigilantism; individuals and communities' outline security and the conditions for maintaining it are worth exploring.

Finally, from a video game perspective, there is an unrelenting requirement to discover the connections between security and over-reach, explicitly the disparity amid the rising number of security sensationalists either in the media or government.

Additionally, there is the question of how security relates to justice or injustice. Conflating the concepts of vigilantism and superhero will fulfil little as the links but are context-specific and influenced by audiences' outlook, social status, and other things. Superheroes are considered a perpetuation and addition of the hero myth in modern-day culture. According to Girling (1993), "the inspirational character of myths evident in turbulent times" (p.160), that not only come to provide meaning to identity but also call into question the "reality of powerful, impersonal forces at work in society.

Law and justice themes have always existed in cultural texts (Barker, 2003), but changes in technology in the last two decades have seen these themes permeate culture more ubiquitously (Hudson & Ugelvik, 2012). It is, therefore, inevitable that themes of justice and related narratives have permeated all modern cultural texts, including video games. While it cannot be argued that law, lawyers, or legal procedure have been a focus of video games, legal themes and justice-based narratives have emerged in-game culture due to this proliferation of the legal through cultural texts. Another critical implication of law and justice themes is retributive justice, restorative justice, social justice, and broader ethical and moral questions, as discussed in the next part of this Chapter.

Symbols

Individuals and audiences watching video game trailers can engage with abstract concepts because cultural texts express and conceptualise justice, morality, and ethical theories in the text's content, allowing them to engage with abstract concepts (Brunsdon, 1989). Video game trailers feature themes developed and conceptualised through the eyes of creators or designers and, on a surface level, represent the cultural producers' interpretations of justice that are mirrored in the user's experience (Combs, 2010).

Throughout Chapters 6 and 7, it is demonstrated that video game trailers are increasingly being written and designed with an ever-increasing focus on the story, with background and narrative construction in order to allow users to gain a greater degree of a cinematic experience while playing, while still allowing the narrative to contextualise the player's actions within the life-world of the video game (Combs, 2010; Ecenbarger, 2016; Velch, 2016). It is not entirely surprising given that these narrative methods also stimulate phenomenological engagement with themes and concerns that arise in these life-worlds, whether positive or negative. Also, according to Pearce (2004), video games in the current day go beyond the individual passive experience of narrative found in film, literature, and television and instead establish a phenomenological medium through which to experience this narrative phenomenologically. A depiction of how storytelling has progressed from being only static experiences to being immersive ones.

The reason that narrative games have gained such widespread acceptance, according to Pearce (2004), "is that they take the elements that are engaging about other forms of narrative and use them to enhance the play experience" (p.8), successfully placing the

player in a play context rather than within a framework of storytelling. This allows the player to become more thoroughly immersed within the game's life-world, which is especially important given the increase in the quality and sophistication of games over the last decade.

This research emphasises the importance of the experiential user in narrative production because it immerses the user in the game's life-world and allows them to take part as an active commentator in the story's development, decisions, and overall direction. Video games have always focused on achieving objectives, passing stages, or completing tasks that propel the story ahead until it reaches its conclusion (see Charsky, 2010; Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al., 2019; Federoff, 2002; Juul, 2011; Newman, 2013). The player is ultimately accountable for their development during the game; however, this has grown increasingly important in current video games as they place more decisions in the player's possession. As a result, the increase of video game trailers that demonstrate play flexibility, characteristic of open-world games, is on the rise (Min et al., 2017). According to Spring (2015), open-world games allow the protagonists to roam freely, which all three trailers in this thesis convey in their trailers.

In contrast to linear gameplay and unchanging level structure, more open-world individualistic interactions have been implemented, allowing the player to create customised experiences and make decisions that influence the game's progression (Dale & Green, 2017). Individuals can develop their story within the game's life-world because of the fluid framework, which fosters a more comprehensive engagement with issues that emerge from the augment. Individuals can conceptualise complex concepts and cognitively engage with such subjects because of the player's requirement to consider their options and the probable implications before deciding how to proceed (Bartholow et al., 2005). This is especially true

for concepts of justice, such as retributive justice, restorative justice, social justice, and broader ethical and moral concerns, as well as for views of justice (Schulzke, 2013).

Indeed, while the basic elements of most video game trailers remain unchanged irrespective of whether the player opts for the 'Good' or the 'Evil' (Rauch, 2007). Some critical parts of the story regarding the absence or presence and recognition or rejection of the law will change depending on the player's choices. Viewers of video game trailers are presented with a simplistic choice; superhero or antagonist – good or evil – there is a hasty yet painstaking attempt to nuance the central characters, and viewers can not slide between the two choices.

With many people uniting in their enjoyment of video games (Bowman et al., 2013; Holbrook et al., 1984; Klimmt et al., 2007; Sherry, 2004; Vorderer et al., 2003), it is essential to explore and critique the stories and perspectives that are represented through them.

Although there exists a wealth of research concerning the impact of video games on the players themselves (Ecenbarger, 2014; Funk, 1993; Granic et al., 2014; Ritterfeld & Weber, 2006), research into ethical gameplay is much more limited. Ordinarily, such research focuses on the player's activity in making choices for the character and the impact gameplay might have on the player's capacity for ethical reflection (Hartmann & Vorderer, 2010).

Nevertheless, In reality, only a small amount of research has been conducted to address what the games themselves may depict about ethical behaviour, precisely what the game itself considers a specific and distinct morality (Barnett & Sharp, 2015).

Justice or injustice are critical themes throughout all the chosen trailers; therefore, I will now consider the function of vigilantism more specifically. The following sections of the Chapter will examine the role of vigilantism on the three chosen video game trailer *Assassin's Creed*, *Fallout 4*, and *Watch Dogs 2*.

Watch Dogs 2

The video game trailer *Watch Dogs 2* deals with justice themes, specifically concepts of retribution, and creates a working experience of justice to encourage a deeper conceptualisation of such ideas. Unfortunately, the result is a conception of justice that is distinctly focused on retribution and vengeance, not restorative or rehabilitative justice. This can be deeply problematic for widespread conceptions of justice and the function of law in the home-world of those engaging with video game trailers.

The need to elicit public opinion about predefined topics, in this case, predefined video game trailers, shows how traditional survey-based methods are being partly replaced by social media data mining (Thelwall, 2018). The purpose of examining YouTube data and their comments is to encourage interaction between its users via the provision of a user comments facility (Madden et al., 2013). This was originally envisaged as a way for viewers of the various video game trailers to provide information concerning their reactions. The following are examples for comments via YouTube of viewers of the video game trailer *Watch Dogs 2* on themes of vigilantism:

One commentator noted that protagonists may be interpreted differently and that not all are seen as hero's – they may be: “A terrorist or someone fighting for freedom” (YT17). This suggests that how we understand vigilantism depends on the context and individual beliefs and value systems. Similarly, another commentator (Ded Sec is the corporation's name) asked: “So, has Ded Sec gone borderline terrorist group?”. They identify a fine line between vigilantism and terrorism given sweeping law changes in a post-9/11 world (see Abu-Ras & Abu-Bader, 2008; Lyon, 2003; Poynting & Mason, 2006). *Watch Dogs 2* openly advocates

vengeance towards the antagonists, but more recently, many nations may interpret hacking, cyber-attacks, commandeering systems/networks as a form of cyber-terrorism (Dawson et al., 2015; Janczewski & Colarik, 2007; Kenney, 2015). Al-Rawi's (2018) research, titled *Video games, terrorism, and ISIS's Jihad 3.0*, explored the connection between groups using more new-age and sophisticated attack methods and targeting young people with an actual video game called *Salil al-Sawareem* (The Clanging of the Swords). Indeed, video games can serve to shape attitude, perception and entice viewers/players to act.

Via a YouTube comment, a commentator mentioned that the protagonists in the trailer might be interpreted as menaces: *"So are you an anti-hero still or just a punk kid anarchist now..?"* (YT18). This raises an interesting viewpoint of whether the protagonists' actions are deemed as hero-like or juvenile anarchy. Another commentator mentioned the video games courage to take on such issues and bring contemporary social and political themes into the trailer: *"game of the digital age, tastefully influenced by modern day issues. Props to Ubisoft for making a game like this that no other company would even have the guts to attempt!!"* (YT19). Again, the goal with most trailers is to create identification; themes and views can resonate with and instil enthusiasm to act. One commentator notes how the trailer seeks to demonise the antagonists as a terror group, consequently another comparable. YouTube comment: *"Why does this game give me the impression that Deadsac is going down the road of becoming a world wide terrorist group"* (YT20). This also delivers viewers' perceptions by understanding their sentiment after viewing the trailer (Cunha et al., 2019).

Such a characterisation for the corporation in the trailer is a powerful statement, perhaps testament to how large organisations (social media companies) harbour such immense power, information, and are legitimised by being labelled as innovative, trend-setters, and integral part of contemporary culture (Janczewski & Colarik, 2007; Kirkpatrick, 2011; Steyer,

2020). The term terrorism appears many times within the YouTube comments. Perhaps this reflects how prevalent the term is in American culture in particular, and the audience may be conditioned to regard challenging corporations, or big brother, as a form of terrorism. (Casebeer & Russell, 2005; Cettl, 2009; Jackson, 2018; Maan, 2014). As noted by a commentator's comments:

"Ubisoft [Watch Dogs 2 developer] now supports cyberterrorism ok....." (YT21).

"Okay I love the game but I hate the story. Dedsec treats CTOS as if it's some facist dictator. Like they go around killing people just to get rid of it. They're just a couple of edgy kids. Like they border on domestic terrorism" (YT22).

This commentator clearly departs from the protagonists' approach to antagonists as justified action(s) and characterises them as unlawful rather than vigilante or freedom-fighting. A direct reply to this comment from another commentator again illustrates that the narrative of each viewer will vary, perhaps middle ground or perplexed with the plot: "A terrorist or someone fighting for freedom." (YT23). Others seem more convinced on the video game trailer's narrative: "Time for some more cyber terrorism gents." (YT24). Another commentator, in all too simple terms defining the protagonist's central undertaking: "so, in short, you are a terrorist in this game" (YT25).

The following section expands on this factor by discussing developing narratives based on retribution, punishing a traitor or privileged elite for their betrayal, excess, and brutal nature. This emotional motivation deliberately deepens the viewers on justice and retribution to produce personal emotion attached to the drive of the audience.

Revenge or Justice

Revenge is more likely to apply to vigilantes or anarchists rather than superheroes – superheroes *help* others, whereas vigilantes and anarchists are fighting for themselves, their ideologies, their notions of justice. However, for example, as the Marvel series demonstrates, there can be complications with these distinctions. In the Marvel Franchise, many superheroes cross boundaries into vigilantism and anarchy (Allen, 2014; Marazi, 2015; McSweeney, 2018).

While this concept of retributivism is a principal motivation for the player, this is exacerbated further in video game trailers when insufficient or unclear context is provided and the role of protagonist and antagonist are swiftly established. These designers and the story's development heighten the experiential viewer and emergent narrative of justice, shifting from a contextual to personal paradigm within the life-world of character, and therefore, the player. The emergent narrative is based around achieving a sense of retribution, punishing a traitor or privileged elite for their betrayal, excess, and callous nature, thus specific, personal retribution for the murder of a protagonist's father/mother as demonstrated on the *Assassin's Creed* trailer.

As explored in Chapter 6, the immersion of the audience in the narrative and the experiential characteristics of video games play an essential role in shaping audience feelings, which means that this personal motivation is replicated in the psychology and life-world of the player (Calleja, 2011). This emotional stimulus deliberately deepens the sense of justice and retribution and intensifies the personal emotion attached to the player's motivation about this theme of justice. This is also highly relatable to an individual audience, allowing them to sympathise with the character and motivate them to draw upon their own emotions.

The immersion that the audience experience within the life-world of video games can also elicit emotional responses of the audiences' life-world, thus influencing individual conceptions of justice (Therrien, 2014). These texts link conceptions of justice to emotional subjects, which remove the inherent objectivity in the function of judicial systems, and personal emotions often cloud individual conceptions. *For example, the Watch Dogs 2* video game trailer constructs this clear understanding of justice as retributive, using emotion as the principal motivation (Muriel & Crawford, 2018). This is particularly important when issues around jurisprudential themes in contemporary society are often based around highly emotive subjects, such as the public depiction and press reporting of crime and punishment.

The audience of the video game trailers is forced to consider themes of personal sacrifice alongside more collective ethical jurisprudential values in the name of the public good. The conflict created in the context of the game inevitably causes the audience (then player) to evaluate their own beliefs around these ethical issues. The audience (then player) is pressed to consider the paramount importance of social justice and concepts of justice as fairness above issues of personal sacrifice. The player is mostly asked to consider the age-old legal dilemma of necessity and morality of the trolley problem (Navarrete et al., 2012). The trolley dilemma allows us to analyse the repercussions of a decision and whether the outcome exclusively determines its moral worth.

The trolley problem has proven to be a wonderfully adaptable instrument for testing our moral intuitions, and this chapter shows how the perpetrator justifies violent actions through vigilantism. Which states that player must consider sacrificing one person, namely a friend or love interest, to restore some global security and stability, and is asked to put the greater good above their sacrifice. This is important, and themes within the phenomenological

medium of video game trailers encourage players to reconceptualise their understanding of the real world and their role.

In *Watch Dogs 2*, the trailer narrative attempts to make a statement, but is overshadowed by contradictory themes at times. The protagonist is Dedsec, a group of hackers who use their astute computer skills (hacking) to overthrow somebody who misuses technology for wealth and control. When exposing shady corporations, the audience is meant to feel like a contemporary Robin Hood (Seal, 2009) – a man or woman of the people. The protagonist, Marcus, distrusts corporations and CEOs of large, secretive companies, but is somewhat hypocritical as he abuses the same powers that they exact. From one mission to the next, players steal personal data and infiltrate private properties, which is at odds with Marcus's values.

As a result, viewers of the video game trailer are compelled to accept concepts of personal sacrifice and more collective ethical jurisprudential principles in the name of the greater good. Essentially, the game's conflict forces the spectator (then player) to determine his or her views on these ethical issues. The viewer (then the player) is pressed to prioritise social justice and principles of justice as fairness over issues of personal sacrifice.

Does justice prevail?

Game trailers in video games get players ready to experiment with the ideas in the real-world of the game and take the more passive roles of viewers of film, television, and literature to more active participation in legal ideas. People can make their theories of justice out of abstract notions; they can do so in the real world. They also connected this conceptualisation process to the psychological idea of play as a mechanism to learn what is not being taught and create a more thorough understanding of established subjects creatively.

The definition of justice changes when considering video game narrative; justice is conceptualised through participation in the real-world setting of the game. As a result, it involves things like making hard choices and considering choices. These military and dystopian elements are notably evident in the games discussed above. For instance, killing one's enemies is appropriate, even necessary, but killing one's neighbours is repulsive and merits punishment.

Furthermore, these games give an incorrect view of justice that makes the individual and the groups they represent in the actual world appear worse. Video games' teaching of the meaning of justice, together with their procedural elements, present a warning that should be considered. A lack of vengeful retribution, vigilantism, and inequality should be encouraged, while freedom, social justice, and equality should be supported. Because the idea of justice is abstract, citizens and communities do not regard the law when it comes to justice, and they equate punishment with justice because of the influence of video games. As a result, those who are not afraid of penalty mete out heavy punishment, thinking that this is the only way to be correct.

This section of the chapter described the forms of violent acts that are repugnant and merit punishment, such as individual or group murders. Nevertheless, to do justice, vigilantism actively encourages violence. Moreover, video game trailers seem to misrepresent justice; the following section will describe how superhero/heroine activities, including violence, are portrayed to restore justice and how audiences are encouraged to view violence as just.

Superhero or?

Vigilantism is a recurrent trend in superhero narratives in video game trailers, and most superheroes are vigilantes or have remarkably similar characteristics, according to YouTube comments. The theme of vigilantism associated with hero or heroine is used in video game trailers to show the oscillating power struggle between person and community, between the private corporate sector and government power.

Reynolds (1992) analyses the vigilante theme on a nationalistic level, describing, for example, ‘Superman’s ability and inclination to act clandestinely and even illegally if he believes national interests are at stake; yet he is ‘capable of considerable patriotism and moral loyalty to the state, though not necessarily the letter of its laws. Video game trailers tap into such themes to evoke nationalist zeal and capitalise on individual’s frustration, particularly perspectives on societal matters with the governments at the axis of dilemmas.

One commentator noted that manipulation and exploitation were present in the *Assassin’s Creed Syndicate* trailer, perhaps indicating the purpose of a hero given the pessimism and loss of hope in the present structure:

The Assassin's seek a better future as well. They believe to have your freedom taken away from the Templars is where tyranny and manipulation can run throughout the land and society will become even more ignorant and raped without even knowing. And the ones who notice and try to stand up for what's truly happening will be put down. They seek a free humanity with harmony through knowledge and wisdom. They want us to be self-aware and move on to a better future where we live in equal rights and peace (YT21).

Survey participants quoted anarchy, which shows how they identify the true human nature and its consequences, with a glaring reminder concerning the generation's views as shown, how we can understand conflicts, religions, and war. The commentator (as described below) states an understanding of the burden on both sides and comprehends their ambitions. However, the commentator makes a strong case for being undetermined and be powerless to influence one's destiny. The commentator is clear about the inherent perils of power and goes further by stating this has two possible outcomes; world peace or enslaving the people they were meant to serve.

Other commentators observed that as superheroes, the protagonist's side with goodness and pursue justice: for example:

"you guys [referring to the protagonists] should be real superheroes" (YT22).

"They should be super heroes !!!!!!! "; "They are real life heroes.... Amazing love u guys" (YT23).

These viewer comments also suggest that the characters in the trailer are unrecognised superheroes; their actions are those of a superhero rather than a vigilante.

The assumption is that these trailers may educate the typical viewer about areas of society with which they may be unfamiliar (i.e., criminality). It is unknown how these portrayals of crime and justice alter more significant perceptions about the system or system actors; yet, given research demonstrates that legitimacy is a prerequisite for citizen compliance. This research supports the idea that audience attitudes and perceptions can have significant consequences when the video game trailers produce themes with resonance. Apart from their superhuman abilities, audiences observed how the characters possessed vulnerability. One was poorly educated, orphaned, and part of a minority, while the other was confined to a wheelchair. Perhaps they will exploit the audience's insecurities by creating superheroes who face real-world problems (idealistic).

Other commentators explained the role of power, law, and government present in the trailer: *"So they get permission to do this, they just do it without asking permission from the government or whatever"* (YT24). This indicates a shift towards vigilantism – the idea that authority can be ignored. At the very least, the average citizen understands what they believe to be justice. Irrespective of how an individual's conception of justice falls into legal frameworks, the reason for that view is largely focused on morality, which is shaped by social and family influences. In this context, audiences conceptualise justice as *'personal justice'* because of these external forces, believing that justice for me is justice for all. Further expanded by a commentator:

“The Templars never wanted freedom. They want peace that is achieved through order and control. This is not essentially a bad thing, in fact, it is basically what happens in our society today. We have government, laws and authority figures whose job is to ensure our lives are "in order". The Assassins in the times of Altair used to fight for peace as well but chose a different way to achieve it. They believed it is powerful individuals and organizations like the Templars themselves who are the real threat to peace, and so they sought to remove such organizations. Hence, the rivalry between Assassins and Templars. I agree with you that the Templars are the good guys ideologically. But in practice, due to them holding so much power and control, many of them tend to give in to the temptation and ended abusing it for their own personal gains” (YT25).

Such comments on vigilantism present a recurring theme in superhero narratives within video game trailers; based on YouTube comments, most superheroes are either vigilantes or have strikingly similar attributes. The video game trailers use superheroes to display identity and resonance, thus the theme of vigilantism in connection with hero or heroine, to display the oscillating power struggle between the individual and the collective, between the private corporate sector and government power.

In this sense, the Assassins were right all along. Over the years, however, the Assassins' beliefs evolved, and by the time we see Connor in AC3, the Assassins no longer fight for peace but for freedom:

“This is a naive and unrealistic ideology to uphold. Unrestrained peace without order breeds only chaos. Give the people power to do whatever they want and they'll tear each other apart. In the end the Assassin's were no better than the Templars” (YT26).

Terrorism was a prevailing theme and created a global adjustment to freedom of speech and allowed for the swift enactment of various laws. However, this is where the opacity exists; if viewers share such ideals of the video games trailers protagonists within the video games context, this is somewhat acceptable.

Commentator's mention: "*in real Assassins is a terrorists*" (YT27); "Still better than terrorists" (YT28); "*Jailed for terrorism. Jailed for terrorism*" (YT29). The moment any aspect(s) of the protagonist's actions are shifted from gaming context to real-life, this presents a significant shift, constituting possible persecution and incarceration. In addition, this draws attention to government agencies as audiences convey anticipatory and subconscious thoughts and beliefs on themes that may concern observers.

Conclusion

As explored in Chapters 6 and 7, video game trailers are being written and designed with an ever-increasing focus on storytelling, with backdrops and narratives to permit users to gain more of a movielike experience while watching trailers. This Chapter adds to this by considering vigilantism and its role within video game trailers. A popular theme that exists throughout all three trailers is justice as a central narrative within the storytelling. The protagonist in video game trailers is presented as a superhero; within a short space, they are dedicated to fighting crime and restoring order in society. This Chapter has shown how the storyline provides peril and conflict that underpins the emergent narrative. However, the protagonist's motivation and the likelihood of the audience's resonance (or not) is the core attraction. Vigilantism is a straightforward tool to empower the audience to engage in the narrative and empathise with the protagonist's plight.

It is difficult to ignore the vigilantes while debating the idea of personal justice. Our culture's understanding of the contradictions inherent in even the most robust governance structures is exemplified by the enduring combination of an unshakeable sense of justice, superheroic self-reliance, and human flaw. In recent years, the notion of a person taking the law into their own hands has grown in popularity. The diligent citizen motif can be seen in various modern vehicles and is demonstrated in the three video game trailers analysed.

Chapter 9 – Conclusion

In this thesis, I examined three video game trailers and argued that they are an effective promotional form of intermediation that enables audiences to navigate and engage with old and new media. Though video game trailers function as advertisements designed to sell a game, they also comprise stories and rhetoric that provoke audience interest and debate. In this thesis, I have investigated how video game trailers, *Assassin's Creed*, *Fallout 4*, and *Watch Dogs 2*, offer little time to actual gameplay; a greater emphasis is placed on storytelling and narrative aspects of the video game instead. This analysis was realised with research methods including narrative analysis, textual analysis of comments from YouTube and Facebook, and a survey via SurveyMonkey sent to participants.

This concluding Chapter is divided into four sections:

1. I provide a short overview of each of the thesis' Chapter, articulating their core contributions.
2. I provide direct responses to each of the project's research questions, explaining how it is addressed throughout the thesis.
3. I outline the thesis' overview of core academic contributions.
4. I conclude with suggestions on how future research might build on this thesis.

Chapter Overview

Chapter 1, Introduction. In this Chapter, I introduced the thesis's objectives, overall purpose, and significance in exploring the impact storytelling, narratives, and rhetoric have on video game trailer audiences. This included discussing the importance of audiences and how their views are shaped by the video game trailers storytelling, narrative, and rhetoric. This Chapter also explains the significance of viewers' comments once data is extrapolated while providing valuable background to understand their viewers' needs and alter their content accordingly. Through comments, the Chapter explored how viewers can express their feelings toward certain content, participate in active discussions with other viewers, and direct questions to content creators. In the above discussion, which introduced the key objectives of this thesis, it was also essential to examine the overall impact of video game literature on shaping this thesis and how it helped structure this novel project based on the past and present discussion on this topic. Therefore, the following Chapter explained the earliest examinations of game studies and observed the relationship between games and other media beyond defining games.

Chapter 2, Literature Review. In this Chapter, I delved into relevant literature, past, present, and overall impact of video game literature on shaping this thesis. This literature review aimed to provide a conceptual basis for the research questions put forward in this thesis. In addition, to establish the theoretical framework for the current study. Due to the nature of the topic, the investigation included literature from many scholarly disciplines and included subsections on: (a) Games and Play; (b) "Promotion and Storytelling"; (c) "Trailers"; (d) "Violence"; (e) "Social Factors"; and (f) "Culture". The main section of the Chapter examined what video game trailers and storytelling mean to us and how emerging

communication made them possible. In terms of the question/s of my dissertation, this Chapter has continually been whether literature uncovers a way in which video game trailers might be insufficient for a place of meaning or whether it is an insufficient place for meaning itself. It is not that audiences who engage in video game narratives satisfy the impulse of narrative, only that they are potentially using the format for this purpose in a sense. The gaming literature seems boundless and given that video games are such a developing and advancing field of study, the literature appears perpetual in its theme, concepts, and analysis.

Chapter 3, Research Methodology, outlined the methods adopted in this study to gather data and obtain results using survey and social media data. First, the Chapter explained my methodological approach and motivation for this research and how they relate to its research objectives. I then discussed the methods adopted to analyse and gather the data through rhetorical, narrative, and textual analysis from the chosen trailers and YouTube comments. Finally, the survey questions (open and closed-ended) regarding *Fallout 4*, *Assassin's Creed Syndicate*, and *Watch Dogs 2* trailers are presented and analysed.

As a result, after viewing a trailer, comments allow audiences to state their opinions, contribute to lively dialogues with other audiences, and pose questions or even suggestions to content authors. This Chapter also explored the limitations and future research needs of this topic. I explained how self-reporting measurements, a shortcoming of the research, marginalised participants who viewed the trailers as a promotional tool and nothing more. The results could have been biased for any of these reasons. The following Chapter explored the three video game trailers: *Fallout 4*, *Watch Dogs 2*, and *Assassin's Creed Syndicate*.

Chapter 4, Video Game Trailers.

This Chapter explored the current debates around video game trailers, distinguishing from the broad literature analyses that favoured film trailers in their analyses. In the Chapter, I explored three broad standpoints: 1) a deliberation of relevant research on video game trailers, promotion, 2) marketing from a modern-day perspective (social media), and 3) the types of trailers. Furthermore, I have explored video game trailers through a rhetorical narrative and textual analysis. The Chapter provided valuable insights and supported the overarching thesis purpose, thus having two divergent sections. The first introduces trailers, a background and, therefore, provides a more profound understanding and context. Second, case studies formed the core body of this Chapter with three video game trailers: *Fallout 4*, *Watch Dogs 2*, and *Assassin's Creed Syndicate*. Furthermore, this Chapter explored video game trailers through a rhetorical, narrative, and textual analysis and applied to structured tables and thus forming the central body of work.

This chapter provided the foundation to which Chapters 5 and 6 advanced. This included the first discussion on how audiences may encounter trailers and the kinds of text(s), symbols, and narratives considered in the video game trailer.

This chapter presented trailers as inherently open and unfinished texts; they provide glimpses into a larger video game world and offer resources for shared discussion, gossip and speculation about games. As explained in this Chapter, the continued value of the video game trailer shows the influence of social media coupled with trailers; this traditional form of advertising still has prodigious application.

Chapter 5, Representation & Misrepresentation. This Chapter explored the idea that video game trailers showing actual gameplay or creative marketing is arguably socially constructed and informed by paratextual cues about trailer material. Various disclaimers show the potential interpretation of a video game trailer text in both ways, either by separating the trailer from the game based on footage or non-gameplay scenes or by reinforcing the authenticity ties by stressing that a viewer is indeed viewing actual gameplay footage. This Chapter provided context on how audiences react to these specific trailer framings, but there is limited consensus about whether video game trailers reflect actual gameplay. It showed how video game trailers could elicit solid emotional reactions of excitement regardless of the footage used. Conversely, not all audiences seem to place the same faith in a trailer's audio-visual promise of a video game; therefore, video game trailers may be misrepresentative. The dichotomy of gameplay and non-gameplay footage has resulted in a vernacular typology of trailers.

Chapter 6, Storytelling. This is the most extensive of all Chapters in this thesis and shows how video games are increasingly telling powerful and culturally pertinent stories. This Chapter explored how audiences connect to characters with whom they share adventures. The Chapter provides images based on the three trailers and connected each image with the employment model, which is to create engaging stories. According to Kent (2015), emplotment is telling all the details of a compelling story as part of a broader narrative theme in a process called emplotment. Thus, emplotment is fundamentally the association of a series of events into a narrative with a plot.

The Chapter on storytelling is a critical aspect of promoting video game trailers and underscores the importance of video games as narratives by offering a framework for analysing the many-ended stories that often redefine real and virtual lives. The significance

of the Chapter to the thesis lies in the purpose of tales and how video game trailers frequently use stories to pique curiosity, foster identification and express the video game's possibilities. This Chapter also discusses the significance of emplotment in the creation of exciting stories.

Storytelling illustrates the dynamic mechanisms required to generate passionately multifaceted stories mindful of gaming's principal relationship between player actions and video game trailer aesthetics. Finally, this Chapter advances the discussion mentioned in Chapter 5 concerning representation and misrepresentation and showing the impact storytelling presents for developers of video games and filmmakers, audiences, and all observers experiencing resonant and meaningful interactive stories. Having examined storytelling, the thesis shifts to a pertinent topic; it is now necessary to discuss the role of rhetoric and persuasion in the following Chapter. This Chapter has discovered that while rhetoric is commonly thought of as the art of persuasion, audiences learn to identify that video game trailers as a rhetorical medium. This identification is a crucial component, and the Chapter on vigilantism (Chapter 8) delves into how video game trailers use it to connect with audiences.

Chapter 7, Rhetoric, and Persuasion. In this Chapter, I proposed that the components of the video game trailer base often combine in such a way as to present audiences with configurations, embedded narratives, and social systems. Video game trailers are pervasive and require gamers to define their player-controlled agents within the world of the video game in relationship to these systems. In the Chapter, I built on theorising around the connection between the rhetoric of video games trailers and the communication of ideological frameworks to audiences. This Chapter reveals that while rhetoric is commonly thought of as the art of persuasion, Burke's (1969) account of rhetoric showed how people

(in this case, audiences) learn to identify with different local groups, also crucial for understanding video game trailers as a rhetorical medium. Rhetoric seeks to discover shared experiences, thoughts, images, ideas, and attitudes, and audiences can identify with one another by sharing shared experiences, thoughts, images, ideas, and attitudes.

Identification is a crucial component, and the Chapter on vigilantism and how video game trailers use it to connect with audiences, protagonists (or antagonists), recurring themes, and a call to action. Another critical implication of rhetoric, and persuasion, discussed in the next Chapter, provides the meaning the audience's make of this element, namely the role of vigilantism. This Chapter reflects the functional aspects of the hypothesis and aims to show the audience's identification with video game heroes and heroines; thus, the player can engage in courageousness through vigilantism and not experience any ramifications from the law.

Chapter 8, Vigilantism. Chapter 8, Vigilantism. This Chapter explores vigilantism and its role in fomenting audience identification with the narrative and protagonists shown in the case study/s of video game trailers. This Chapter advanced the key points presented in Chapter 6 on storytelling, explored vigilantism and its role within video game trailers, and connected with Chapter 5 by showing how the underlying storytelling is about vigilantism. This Chapter investigated vigilantism and its role within video game trailers, a popular theme that exists throughout all three trailers is justice as a central narrative within the storytelling. This Chapter aims to reflect ongoing themes presented in previous Chapters, namely how this Chapter's principal theme concerning vigilantism is threaded throughout storytelling in Chapter 6. Also, this Chapter aligned with and indeed expands on the idea that video game trailers convey a message quite distant from the actual gameplay, as discussed in Chapter 5, whilst evoking audiences into believing the themes of fictional representation are

authentic. Chapter 5 challenged the idea that video game trailers are a true reflection of the actual game. This Chapter presented such topics through sections like beware of hysteria, demystifying expressivity, and unrealistic video game trailers? The overarching purpose of such a Chapter is to show how audiences are hooked on the narrative through vigilantism and not really on the gameplay.

This is noticeable in the surveys, as the survey participants frequently refer to imagery and the quality (or lack of). This effect has positive and negative repercussions; some participants suggest that because of the previous experience, they will have higher expectations of a video game (mainly if it is part of the sequel, as all three video game trailers *Assassin's Creed Fallout 4* and *Watch Dogs 2*. The congruency between the genre of the games previous promotions and the latest video game aims to persuade an audience of how enhanced this version is compared with its previous. A significant factor among the participants is the realistic emotional representation of the plot, and they feel that protagonists appear in a video game trailer. As I explored in this thesis, Kent (2015) model was applied to explain the role of emplotment, where stories have the power to inform, persuade, elicit emotional responses. Audiences needed to identify with the protagonist(s) or antagonists(s) to be immersed in the story and narrative.

Thesis Research Questions

Collectively, the Chapters have addressed the four core research questions of the thesis; in the following section, I provide a detailed account of how each of them has been addressed:

1, What storytelling techniques are expressed in video game trailers?

This research question was a blend of many topics explored throughout the thesis. Audiences with various levels of expertise base their product and service preferences on perceptual decisions versus previous experience. The surveys showed that the participants have high gameplay awareness of promotional techniques conveyed in video game trailers, so previous experience is essential. Still, they are mindful of whether the actual trailer vs. actual play is the same. Consequently, the trailer's perceptual assessments are of crucial concern. The trailer (s) set the audience's tone while not convincing others of its authenticity. Chapter 4 showed how video game trailers are an effective promotional form of intermediation that enables audiences to navigate and engage with old and new media. Though video game trailers function as a promotional technique to sell a video game, other stories spur social media commentary and debate. Chapter 6 explored essential topics such as engagement through identification, immersion through sound, and audience emotion. I investigated how video game trailers devote modest time to the actual gameplay, as discussed in Chapter 5, representation, and misrepresentation. However, greater prominence is placed on the storytelling and narrative aspects of the video game in its place, as discussed at great length in Chapter 6 on storytelling. In this thesis, Chapters 5 and 6 discussed fundamental promotional and popularisation techniques that included creativity, storytelling, narratives, gratification, audio effects, and visual effects that shape and influence audience perspectives and subsequently transform them into interest.

In Chapters 4,5, and 6, I examined what elicits audiences' emotional responses and behaviours through exposure to video game trailers, as shown in the survey results and social media comments in Chapter 4. They were further demonstrated by the participant's responses in Chapter 6 from two key data sources: the survey and YouTube comments. A key question was posed: what aspects of the trailer did you enjoy the most? The

respondents supported the unique research contribution that identification with the trailers was through storytelling, not the graphics or actual gameplay.

2. How do audiences identify with the narrative and storytelling aspects of video game trailers?

This thesis question advances the discussion mentioned in Chapter 5 regarding representation and misrepresentation by determining the influence storytelling presents on designers and developers of video games, audiences, and all observers experiencing resonant and meaningful interactive stories. Throughout the thesis, I looked at the purpose of stories and how video game trailers frequently tell stories that create interest, encourage identification, and communicate the gameplay potential to audiences in Chapter 6. I explained this with the role of emplotment, as discussed in Chapter 6, to create engaging stories. Storytelling is also a powerful method to attract audiences to the trailer's key themes and not focus on the gameplay elements. I have further shown the case study analysis of the three video game trailer narratives. Case study analysis provided a better understanding of video game trailers, including how they work, their themes, and genres. Each video game trailer represents this sub-genre; they each have different genres, and audiences may or may not identify with the images, sounds, graphics, and characters themselves.

3. How do viewers make sense of the storytelling elements of video game trailers?

Kent's (2015) model supported this research question as a guiding concept. The emplotment model applied in Chapter 6 to the three video game trailers showed how they embrace multiple plots as part of their storytelling. The trailers provide sufficient insight to show how the audience makes sense of the narrative based on the many plots explored in this thesis. I advanced this in Chapter 8 (vigilantism) to show how the protagonists justify their actions,

mainly violence, to challenge the system and garner support from the public, in this instance, the audience. More particularly, emplotments, according to White (2005), represent elements of an exciting story reflected as part of a more significant narrative theme. Chapter 7 showed how video game trailer storytelling enhances audience engagement and is increasingly employed in the social media context to be persuasive. In such digital settings, storytelling shapes content towards the audience and confirms that the audience arouses the content. Recognising the importance of this, Chapter 6 offered an in-depth analysis of the storytelling found in three trailers via surveys and social media commentary. Storytelling video games create the rules so that storytelling actions and interactions result in the participants' ongoing invention of stories. Such configurations embodied in the plot appeared to encourage audiences and evoke each other to invent/tell stories that engage the audience and create conversations.

4. How are promotion and meaning techniques expressed in vigilante video games?

And, how are audiences evoked into embracing vigilantism?

Video game trailers are being written and designed with an ever-increasing focus on storytelling, with backdrops and narratives to permit users to gain more of a movielike experience while watching trailers. This Chapter adds to this by considering vigilantism and its role within video game trailers. A popular theme that exists throughout all three trailers is justice as a central narrative within the storytelling. The protagonist in video game trailers is presented as a superhero; within a short space, they are dedicated to fighting crime and restoring order in society. This Chapter has shown how the storyline provides peril and conflict that underpins the emergent narrative.

As presented in the participants' comments in Chapter 6, this thesis question exposes the somewhat ambiguous aspects of the genuineness of video game trailers, as demonstrated by the participant's responses to the role of vigilantism in the trailers. The actual gameplay is lost in all the hysteria and clever promotional allure. Despite this, they remain the most potent illustration of the future game that audiences flock to. The concept of vigilantism in trailers is discussed in Chapter 8 by examining online users' comments (via YouTube) on three chosen trailers. This can be idiosyncratic, predisposed, and even gender concentrated. Contrasting the promotions and the viewers' experience via other media Thus, video game trailers can often display little of the actual product (video game) developers are promoting, with little scrutiny regarding laws and regulations in terms of the actual or promotional aspects of the video game trailer.

In comparison, we assume that a movie trailer aims to establish the plot, protagonists, and antagonists while teasing the basic properties of the experience; video game trailers, on the other hand, are frequently entirely unrepresentative of the finished product. In Chapter 6, I explored how even the scenes depicted in video game trailers using gameplay footage reveal just one of several future elements of a particular video game, establishing extravagant high-resolution scenes along with other non-interactive segments of a game demonstrated through the use of actual images from each of the three trailers, then applied the emplotment model in Chapter 6 to each of these images with various discussions. This ambiguity must logically impose a certain tolerance of symbolic difference in the extent of promotional materials. Chapters 6 and 8 showed how respondents' comments show how the quality of the graphics (or lack thereof) shapes the audience's perception of a video game trailer. But also show the impact more, especially in showing the evilness of the anthropologists that promote vigilante furore in audiences. The participant comments show video game trailer designers using storytelling and narrative to promote justified violence via vigilantism.

As discussed in depth in Chapter 4, the profound significance of the term "trailer" is a critical purpose of the players' discourses. It shows an initial absence of absolute typology. Video game trailers express diverse degrees of realistic articulation, which affect the claim of illustration and even meddle with it. As an outcome, the thesis has shown two comprehensively influential positions towards video game trailers, which can be distinguished as those that either stress the realistic style or the ideal exactness of video game trailers, thus denying the view of trailers in video game culture.

Thesis Contribution

This thesis has made three significant contributions to academic scholarship in video games, storytelling, and vigilantism. First, to build a nuanced critical media literacy of video game trailers, I argue that we need to understand that audiences make the reality of a video game from their interpretation or perception of what they see. Second, working in this context, I propose that this basis provides the material for frameworks that guide the interactivity of the audience within the game world and often facilitate the completion of the narrative, thus organising a complex game environment effectively. Third, I argue that comparative study between the storytelling, rhetorical frameworks, and the video game trailer text watched will inform us about some identifications as an individual game is played and conveys the world view. This is quite applicable when considering how trailers motivate audiences to engage in a vindicated brand of violence, using vigilantism to create events and actions that audiences can resonate with.

Finally, the study's findings show that audiences interested in a video game significantly influence how consumers shape video game quality expectations through the trailers; however, they do not affect how audiences shape the games' material expectations. This is predominantly because audiences are far savvier than video game developers recognise,

and thus audiences deem trailers a promotional tool with the limited actual or real gameplay they present. Audiences with various levels of expertise base their product and service preferences on perceptual decisions versus previous experience. The surveys (appendices) showed that the participants have high levels of gameplay awareness, so previous experience is essential, but they have low levels of whether the actual trailer vs. real play is the same, so the trailer's perceptual assessments are of crucial concern. The trailers set the audience's tone, while others were unconvinced of their authenticity.

From the surveys and textual analysis, it was clear that the video game trailer seldom affected the participants' perceptions. It appears eager gamers did not require the release and creativity of a video game trailer to motivate their opinion of the game. The trailers may not have been as genuine a promotional tool as initially thought, but they were still essential for the research. They assist me in understanding how people perceive video games through trailers and what I need to do to make a better one.

Most of the participants believe they know enough about video games in terms of characters, genres, and core features to make informed decisions about the content of video games. Although this result is incongruent with other research showing that promotions significantly influence audience preferences, it illustrates the need for video game marketers to address this limitation in their trailers. Customers also have higher expectations of a product or service than what a company can deliver, and a company needs to uphold any commitments it makes. I will discuss this in more detail in the latter part of this closing chapter.

The most effective way for video game trailers to handle audience expectations is through the trailer format since it should encapsulate the overall format of the video game. One

participant adds: "the actual gameplay that was shown did not seem to be that fun or exciting" (SM26). The findings show we use the format and message to directly predict the participants' perceived content of a video game. Kernan (2009) maintains that a trailer's style comprises different narrative elements that should all be synergistically related. Most participants accept that while catching one's attention, setting the tempo of the video game, and drawing the audience into the plot, a trailer needs to reflect the overall narrative of the video game.

Survey participants suggest three essential elements that stand out for them: storyline, theme, and pulling the audience into the trailer's plot without being aware of it consciously. One of the survey questions confirmed what I have stated throughout this research and how audiences identify with the trailer: After viewing the trailer, was there anything you could identify with? Most respondents stated that characters were the most important, meaning the protagonists or antagonists in the video game trailers.

For two factors, the video game trailer literature suggests that storytelling is a significant influence on audiences. First, storytelling representation means that audiences establish reasonable video game standards and second, storytelling is of great significance because audiences are more likely to pay attention to something personal to them, and they can see the value of entertainment in it (Dahlstrom, 2014; Green, 2017; Lebowitz & Klug, 2011; Paterson et al., 2019; Sangalang et al., 2013; Somerdin, 2016).

Many participants note they would not willingly want to watch a video game trailer if the story is ambiguous; thus, a more defined representation of themes in video game trailers seems of great concern. However, as mentioned in Chapter 4, trailers come in various forms, and

the teaser is perhaps the most impactful given that the audience needs to remain intrigued and mystified instead of knowing the entire story from the trailer.

In a matter of seconds, audiences can grasp an enormous amount of data inside a video game trailer and catch the essence of the trailer. Likewise, audiences make their assumptions about the video games plot based on the trailers in seconds.

I found that the plot element of a video game trailer has a dual impact on audience expectations; it outlines the video game potential content and the video games' potential quality. I can summarise that those three distinct elements are part of the story: 1) plot, 2) dialogue, and 3) exposure to the narrative. The results show that the exposure of the narrative only impacts audience views of video games' content, while the plot and dialogue have a dual effect on video games' quality and expectations. The participants' responses show that the storytelling elements of the video game itself are the most emotionally influential feature of a video game trailer, and when you watch a trailer, something must evoke audiences to either continue to watch and perhaps buy or both/none.

Perhaps one of the most compelling aspects of the thesis was the discovery of the video game trailer not being as authentic as earlier thought. In Chapter 5, the thesis explored a critical aspect of video game trailers concerning their authenticity. The idea of the authenticity of video game trailers is arguably socially constructed and informed by paratextual references to the meaning of video game trailer material(s). Typically, various disclaimers (in the fine print) influence any potential interpretation of a video game trailer in many ways, either by disconnecting the trailer from the game based on important footage or non-gameplay scenes or by reinforcing representative links by stressing that a viewer is viewing genuine footage of the gameplay (Botwin, 2019; Johnston et al., 2016).

Audiences (and ultimately players) discuss these basic framings of video game trailers; however, they do not contribute to any agreement about their authenticity. One participant alluded to this in modest yet convincing terms: *“unrealistic graphics.”*; *“colour scheme was a bit meh.”*; *“the graphics looked outdated, particularly with closeups of the characters speaking”* (SM22).

As shown throughout this research, video game trailers can elicit powerful emotional reactions of enjoyment. However, not all fans seem to be as secure in the promise of a video game delivered via the trailer medium. Debate exists between the enthusiasts, and the cynics are specifically interested in the authenticity of the video game trailer (s). Based on the distinction between the footage used, claims about indicative or potentially misleading trailers have been refined. The resultant vernacular trailer typology revolves around the gameplay and non-gameplay video dichotomy. As a result, they often accuse video game trailers of being (possibly) deceptive, despite their more privileged status, especially given the many participants signalling this in their responses (Oja, 2019).

Audiences are calling for gameplay footage, hoping to learn more about what the final product could hold for them, especially in response to video game trailers.

Video game enthusiasts have also embraced this careful data mining process and applied it to video game trailers. Regarding their perceptions of video game promotion and culture, the distinction between gameplay and cinematic trailers also uncovers different tastes among players. Such symbol seekers concentrate on gameplay strategies, technical specifics, and graphics and expect trailers to represent such game features (if not demanded).

It builds the other side of the continuum around players who avoid spoilers, which preserve some suspense about the game that they eventually intend to purchase and enjoy teasing trailers, which convey only the fundamental themes and manifest a strong sense of self-censorship. Finally, as illustrated in this research, hard-core gamers negate video game trailers as a genuine influence and instead perceive experiences and word of mouth as far more potent.

We can see such viewers as cinematic aficionados who embrace the possibilities of non-gameplay trailers for transmedia storytelling (Jenkins, 2010; Ryan, 2015; Sangalang et al., 2013; Scolari, 2009), which are not limited by the limitations of gameplay footage and can use various methods to explore the same fictional worlds. These two ideal viewpoints, of course, are rarely mutually exclusive. Depending on the timing, players alter their tastes and perceptions of video game trailers in the development cycle. Furthermore, there are often no trailers in a vacuum, typically a reasonably large number of trailers advertising one game and forming the entire trailer world of a video game together.

The vague sense of the word trailer itself proves to be an essential point in the discussions between players and shows a lack of authoritative typology first and a fluid practice in the industry second (Finsterwalder et al., 2012; Hamel, 2012; Johnston, 2008, 2009; Kernan, 2009; Maier, 2009; Williams, 2009). Furthermore, this research shows that video game trailers manifest various degrees of cinematic speech, which impact and, to some extent, even conflict with the assertion of the epitomic display. As a result, it is possible to distinguish two very widespread stances towards video game trailers, which either emphasise the cinematic flair or the emblematic (or lack of) accuracy of video game trailers, showing almost conflicting views of the role of trailers in the culture of video games.

Chapter 8 of this research explored vigilantism (Barnett & Sharp, 2015; Newbery-Jones, 2015) and its role in provoking audiences to identify with protagonists or antagonists. In this significant contribution to the research, I investigated how vigilantism is an under-studied concept critical to understanding how injustice, inequality and abuse of power are conveyed and how they are uniquely vindicated in video game trailers creates audience meaning with the game's themes and characters. Vigilantism was employed to shape the audience's views of violence and validating its presence in the video game trailer(s). Its function is to draw audiences; vigilantism is a technique for creating audience identification with game heroes and heroines so audiences can engage in heroism through vigilantism and not experience any ramifications from the law.

This study found that in their convincing emphasis, video game trailers for creativity and physical enactment had convincing elements and used more storytelling approaches to the path of engaging audiences. Furthermore, this study demonstrates the significance of design characteristics in selecting the three trailers, demonstrating a clear genre for their advertising message(s). The YouTube ads were examined, and a survey through Survey Monkey asked 34 questions with a blend of open-closed-ended questions. The results provided insights on viewers of the selected trailers and facilitated, encouraged, and enhanced the ability to interpret the messages and comments as derived from the material from social media.

As discussed, there is this battle between accuracy and trickery; this dilemma clarifies the nature of both gameplay and trailers, although the convincing emphasis of the trailers was not entirely different. Besides their graphical qualities, video game trailers can concentrate more intensely on solid arguments based on storytelling, as convincing arguments lead to more ability of audiences to identify with the characters. However, this research has certain drawbacks, besides its contributions to the literature. First, based on their success in 2013, I

deliberately chose the official trailers of video games examined in this study from a selection of top-game lists and diverse genres. Second, this study aimed to keep the video game's performance in terms of popularity secondary and more principally looked at games that offered unique genres and rich stories. Therefore, the focus of this research is restricted to the storytelling effectiveness of video game trailers. Nevertheless, a trade-off exists; with the length, they are much longer and may not be as persuasive in terms of the audience's attention.

Finally, while researchers have diligently classified game genres based on industry classifications, genre taxonomy may be complex. For example, the categorisation of conventional video games was more straightforward, but differentiating between physical enactment and imagination and storytelling games was incredibly challenging because of crossovers. Future research (as discussed in the last part of this thesis) would expand the number of trailers evaluated to cover more titles and genres to add more variability and include more conventional video game trailers. This research will help marketers better understand the value of substantial emphasis in video game advertisements, particularly video game trailers.

Future research

As discussed in Chapter 3 in terms of limitation and future research, researchers might look at different production quality concepts and extend them to other ages and subgenres of video games or compare familiar games to less popular ones by selecting games from lists randomly. This future research should also broaden their gender inclusion criteria and include diverse participants' ages to understand better potential age and gender influences on video game trailers.

As discussed earlier, vigilantism and future research may also investigate the audience's views with an experimental design that combines the dimensions of interest, need for cognition, and perhaps even attitude change. This research also has potential practical consequences for the growing gaming industry and its contribution to the literature by empirically analysing video game trailers in clear focus and video output quality using contemporary themes. As the number of games and interest in video games is rising, rivalry relies heavily on the successful marketing of games through trailers. However, as audiences are more time-poor and reluctant to watch trailers for over 30 seconds, detailed video games trailers (beyond 30 seconds or 1-minute) may become more challenging to allure the audience's attentiveness. Thus, findings from this research can provide insights into current trends in advertising for video games. In addition, this study may also serve as a framework for future studies on viewers' impressions of video game trailer effectiveness, as explored in Chapter 3.

Future research can consider adopting a different research method, as in observational research, observing and documenting participants' reactions upon watching a video game

trailer may complement findings. As mentioned in this research, the influence of social media on the content of video game trailers is staggering. Future research may explore hand-held devices (mobiles); and how audiences engage with their devices to watch video game trailers.

I have referred to video game trailers as a form of traditional and new-age media; further research needs to be conducted to discover how audiences interpret the video they see and the content they observe. Given that trailers range from 1 minute to 6 mins, audiences may or may not be enthusiastic about continuing to concentrate on the trailer key message. Future research could meticulously examine the limit and investigate how audiences are excessively multitasking in an era of multiple screens/devices and habituated to having short attention spans.

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Survey Questions

- Q1.** What is your age? Participants must be over the age of 18
- Q2.** What is your gender?
- Q3.** In the past 7 days, roughly how many hours have you spent playing video games (e.g. gaming consoles, mobile phones, social network games, computers, etc.)?
- Q4.** How do you learn about new video games?

Mark your three favourite types of video games:

- Q5.** Do you find video game trailers engaging?
- Q6.** When was the last time you watched a video game trailer?
- Q7.** What kind of gamer type best describes you?
- Q8.** Please name the last video game trailer(s) you watched?

- Q9.** Choose ONE of the following trailers to watch (*Fallout 4*, *Uncharted 4*, *Assassin's Creed Syndicate*, *Watch Dogs 2*)

Fallout 4

- Q10.** In your own words, what did you think of the trailer?
- Q11.** What are the aspects that you liked most about the trailer?
- Q12.** What are the aspects that you disliked most about the trailer?
- Q13.** Having watched the trailer which, aspect(s) stood out for you?
- Q14.** After viewing the trailer, was there anything you could identify with?
- Q15.** What storytelling element(s) make you most want to play a game?
- Q16.** Rank in order which aspect(s) of the trailers' narratives were most appealing to you
- Q17.** When you're deciding to play a game, what are the three most important
- Q18.** In the *Fallout 4* trailer, the central character says: *"Would you risk your life for your fellow man, even if he was a synth?"* ('synth' is an artificially created person, an android so identical to human, sometimes he/she isn't even aware that he/she is not human). What do you feel this quote means?
- Q19.** In the *Fallout 4* trailer, the central character says: *"Everything can change in an instant, whether or not you're ready. This wasn't the world I wanted, but it was the one I found myself in."* What do you feel this quote means?
- Q20.** In the *Fallout 4* trailer: *"You don't find the Institute. The Institute finds you."* What do you feel this quote means?
- Q21.** Would you like to be updated on the research results? If yes, please leave your email. We do not reveal personal information about you to others and we do not

attach your name or any other personally identifying information to your survey and/or interview responses. The protection of participants privacy is paramount.

Q22. Would you like to watch another trailer?

Assassin's Creed Syndicate

Q1. In your own words, what did you think of the trailer? (Assassin's Creed Syndicate)

Q2. What are the aspects that you liked most about the trailer?

Q3. What are the aspects that you disliked most about the trailer?

Q4. Having watched the trailer which, aspect(s) stood out for you?

Q5. After viewing the trailer, was there anything you could identify with?

Q6. In Assassin's Creed Syndicate trailer, the narrator says: *"Cripple the masses to grow their fortunes."* What do you feel this quote means?

Q7. In Assassin's Creed Syndicate trailer, the central character says: *"Seven henchmen, each controlling the pillars of London society."*

Q8. What do you feel this quote means?

Q9. In Assassin's Creed Syndicate trailer, the narrator says: *"He believes he can solve all the world's woes with a flick of a blade."* What do you feel this quote means?

Q10. Would you like to be updated on the research results? If yes, please leave your email. We do not reveal personal information about you to others and we do not attach your name or any other personally identifying information to your survey and/or interview responses. The protection of participants privacy is paramount.

Q11. Would you like to watch another trailer?

Watch Dogs 2

- Q1. In your own words, what did you think of the trailer? (*Watch Dogs 2*)
- Q2. What are the aspects that you liked most about the trailer?
- Q3. What are the aspects that you disliked most about the trailer?
- Q4. Having watched the trailer which, aspect(s) stood out for you?
- Q5. After viewing the trailer, was there anything you could identify with?

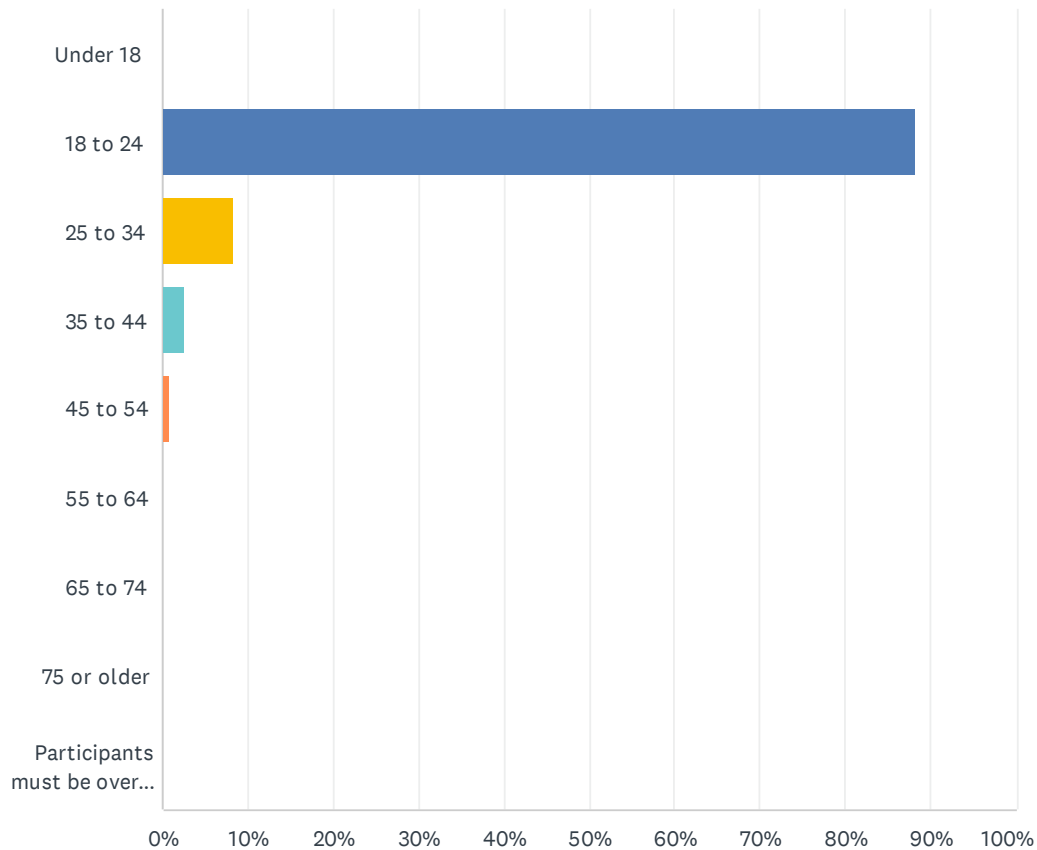
- Q6. What storytelling element(s) make you most want to play a game?
- Q7. Rank in order which aspect(s) of the trailers' narratives were most appealing to you?
- Q8. When you're deciding to play a game, what are the three most important factors?
- Q9. In the *Watch Dogs 2* trailer, the character says: "*A giant spider web endlessly gathering data. They're making backroom deals to trade our private information. We have to stop this!*" What do you feel this quote means?
- Q10. In the *Watch Dogs 2* trailer, the character says: "*A few civilian casualties is the cost you have to pay for the betterment of the world.*" What do you feel this quote means?
- Q11. In the *Watch Dogs 2* trailer, a character says: "*The people, they don't care how it works, only that it does!*" What do you feel this quote means?

Would you like to be updated on the research results? If yes, please leave your email. We do not reveal personal information about you to others and we do not attach your name or any other personally identifying information to your survey and/or interview responses. The protection of participants privacy is paramount. Would you like to watch another trailer?

Appendices

Q1 What is your age? Participants must be over the age of 18

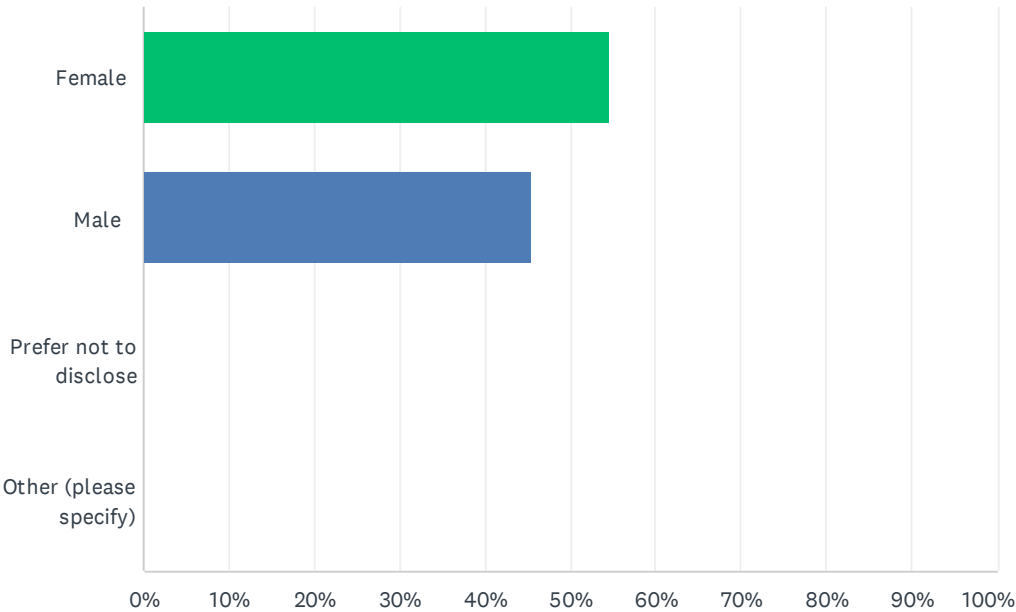
Answered: 119 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 18	0.00%	0
18 to 24	88.24%	105
25 to 34	8.40%	10
35 to 44	2.52%	3
45 to 54	0.84%	1
55 to 64	0.00%	0
65 to 74	0.00%	0
75 or older	0.00%	0
Participants must be over the age of 18	0.00%	0
TOTAL		119

Q2 What is your gender?

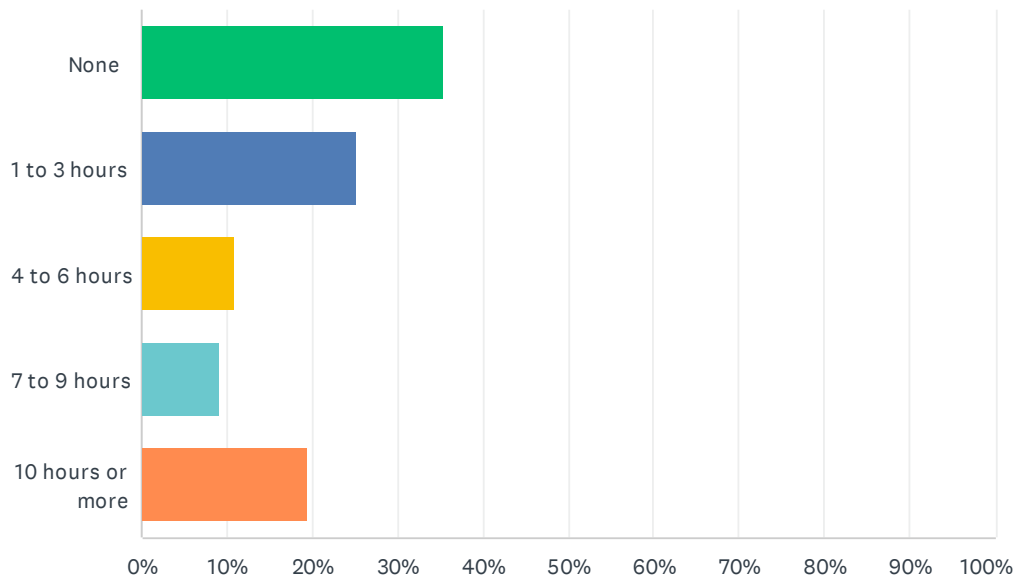
Answered: 119 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Female	54.62%	65
Male	45.38%	54
Prefer not to disclose	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
TOTAL		119

Q3 In the past 7 days, roughly how many hours have you spent playing video games (e.g. gaming consoles, mobile phones, social network games, computers, etc.)?

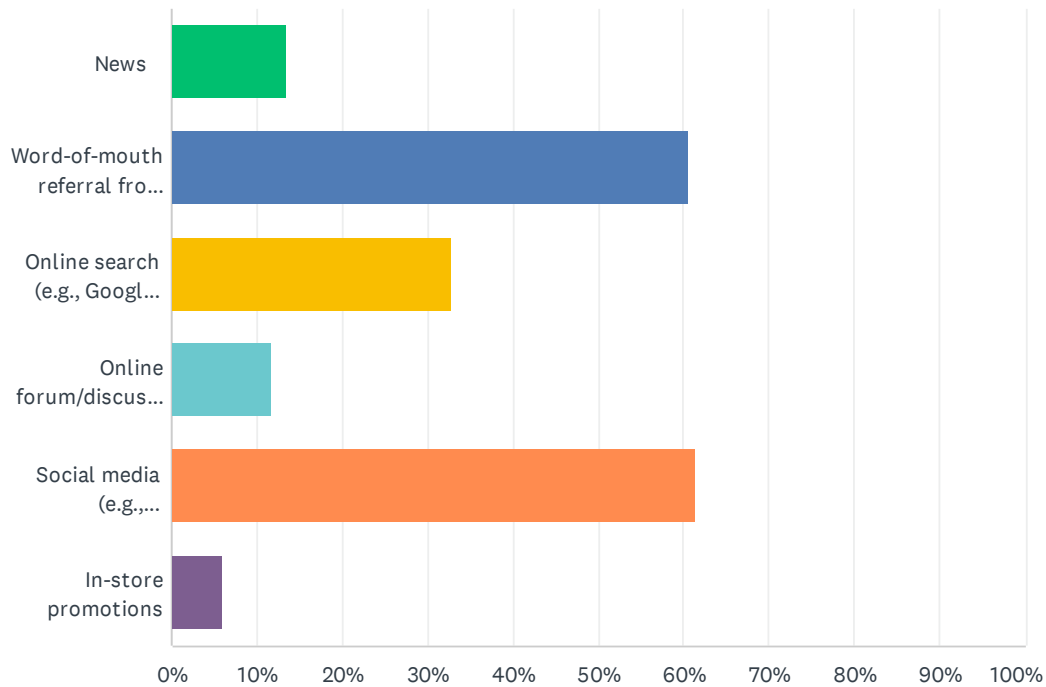
Answered: 119 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None	35.29%	42
1 to 3 hours	25.21%	30
4 to 6 hours	10.92%	13
7 to 9 hours	9.24%	11
10 hours or more	19.33%	23
TOTAL		119

Q4 How do you learn about new video games?

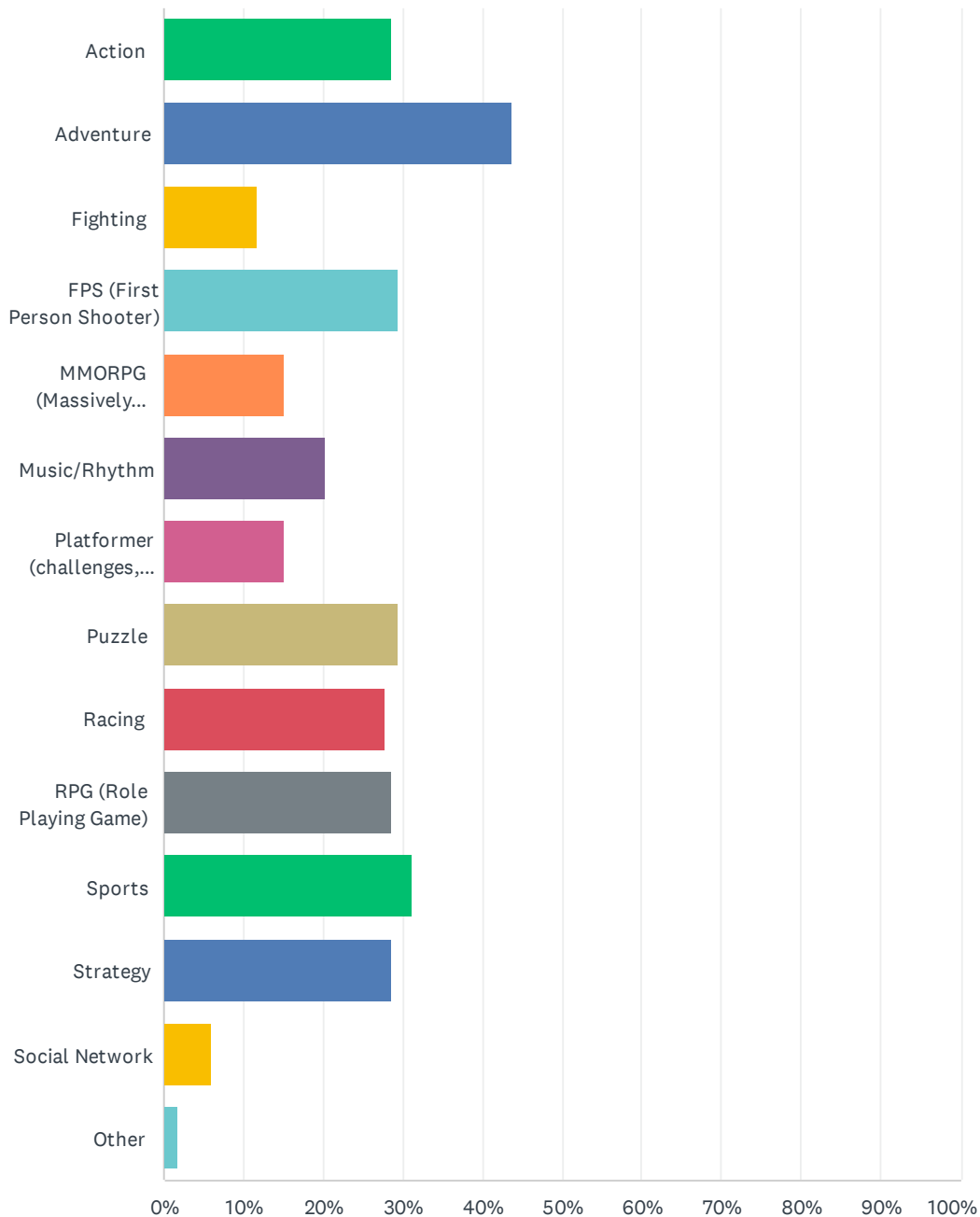
Answered: 119 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
News	13.45%	16
Word-of-mouth referral from friend	60.50%	72
Online search (e.g., Google, YouTube, Yahoo, Bing)	32.77%	39
Online forum/discussion board/blog	11.76%	14
Social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)	61.34%	73
In-store promotions	5.88%	7
Total Respondents: 119		

Q5 Mark your three favorite types of video games:

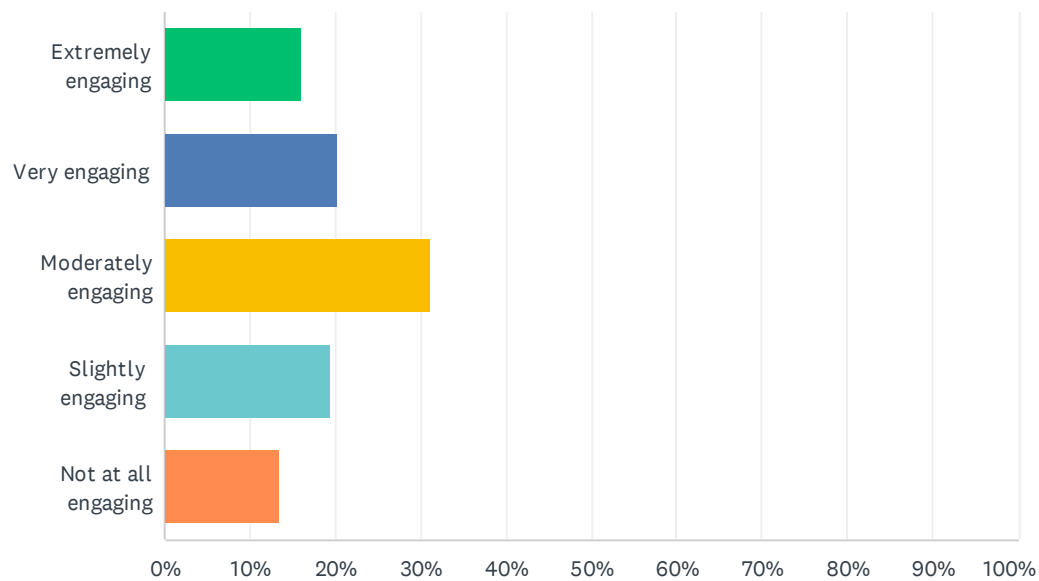
Answered: 119 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Action	28.57%	34
Adventure	43.70%	52
Fighting	11.76%	14
FPS (First Person Shooter)	29.41%	35
MMORPG (Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games)	15.13%	18
Music/Rhythm	20.17%	24
Platformer (challenges, like: jumping puzzles or freerunning)	15.13%	18
Puzzle	29.41%	35
Racing	27.73%	33
RPG (Role Playing Game)	28.57%	34
Sports	31.09%	37
Strategy	28.57%	34
Social Network	5.88%	7
Other	1.68%	2
Total Respondents: 119		

Q6 Do find video game trailers engaging?

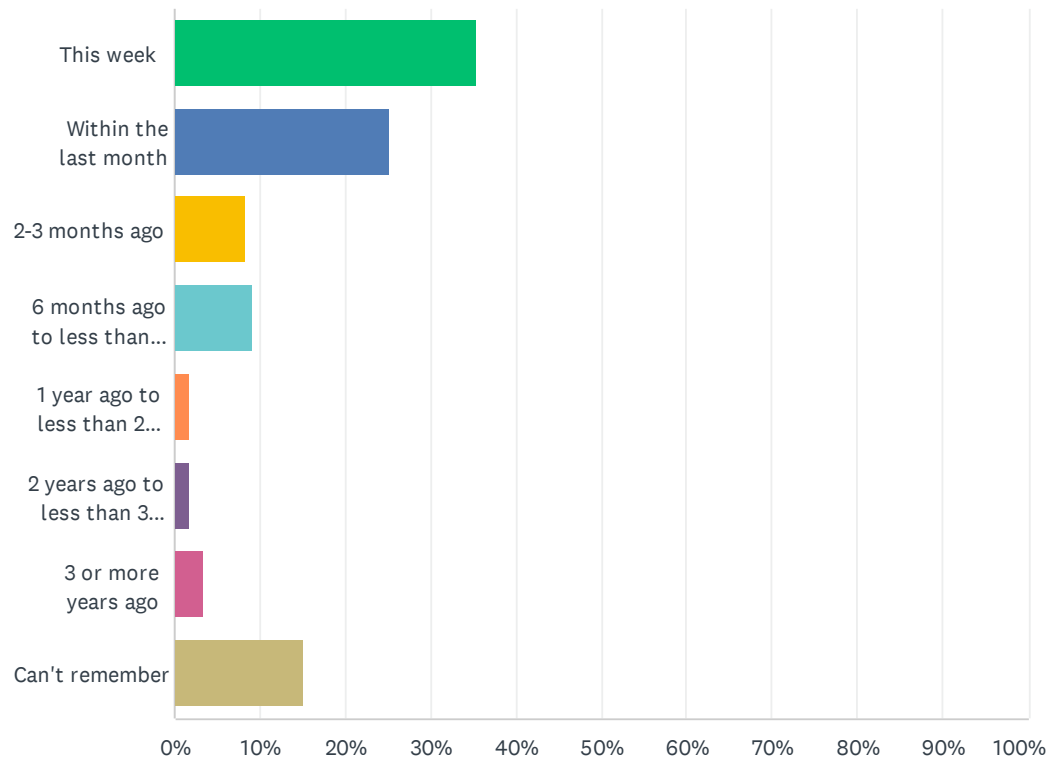
Answered: 119 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Extremely engaging	15.97%	19
Very engaging	20.17%	24
Moderately engaging	31.09%	37
Slightly engaging	19.33%	23
Not at all engaging	13.45%	16
TOTAL		119

Q7 When was the last time you watched a video game trailer?

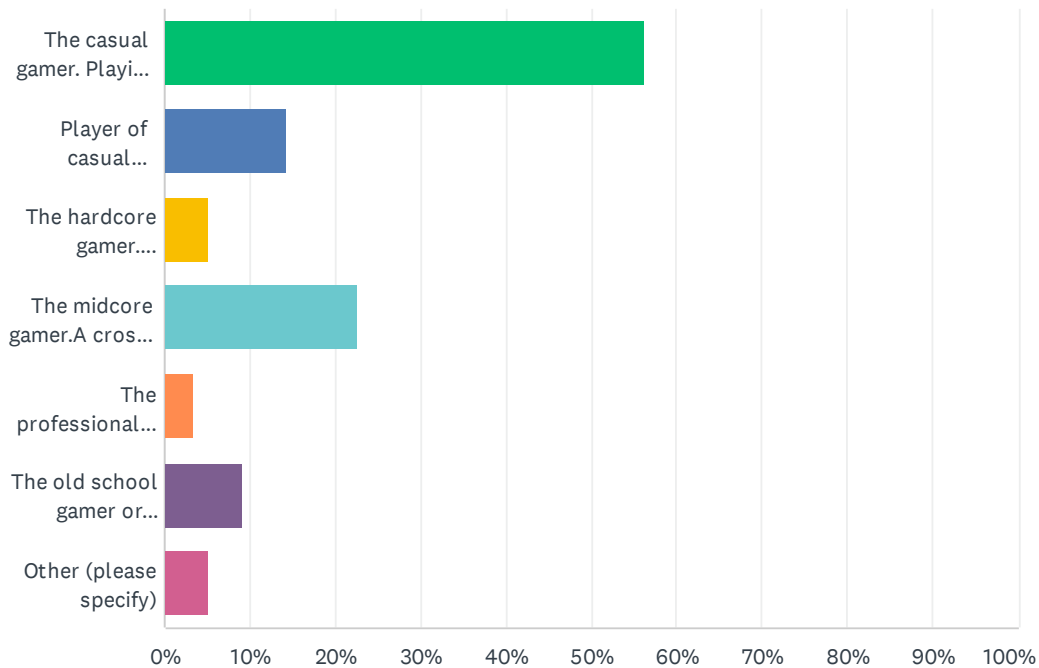
Answered: 119 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
This week	35.29%	42
Within the last month	25.21%	30
2-3 months ago	8.40%	10
6 months ago to less than 1 year ago	9.24%	11
1 year ago to less than 2 years ago	1.68%	2
2 years ago to less than 3 years ago	1.68%	2
3 or more years ago	3.36%	4
Can't remember	15.13%	18
TOTAL		119

Q8 What kind of gamer type best describes you?

Answered: 119 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The casual gamer. Playing for some light fun when you have nothing better to do.	56.30%	67
Player of casual games.You play these types of games (eg. Subway Surfers, Angry Birds, Candy Crush Soda Saga).	14.29%	17
The hardcore gamer. Schedules gaming time and takes their video games very, very seriously (eg. GTA5, Call of Duty).	5.04%	6
The midcore gamer.A cross between casual gamer and the hardcore gamer. Arranges gaming around your daily schedule.	22.69%	27
The professional gamer.Takes gaming seriously. Play competitively, and may enter tournaments.	3.36%	4
The old school gamer or retrogaming.Fans of old console or arcade games. playing of older PC, console, and arcade video games in contemporary times.	9.24%	11
Other (please specify)	5.04%	6
Total Respondents: 119		

Q9 Please name the last video game trailer(s) you watched?

Answered: 89 Skipped: 30

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Assassins Creed	11/19/2016 2:24 PM
2	GTAV	11/15/2016 7:05 PM
3	none	11/9/2016 4:56 AM
4	Battlefield 4	11/8/2016 9:19 PM
5	Paradise bay	11/5/2016 8:30 PM
6	Paradise bay	11/5/2016 7:57 PM
7	Fallout 4	11/4/2016 3:26 PM
8	Dishonored 2	11/2/2016 1:27 AM
9	Dishonored 2	11/2/2016 1:24 AM
10	The sims 4 get to work	11/1/2016 8:33 PM
11	battlefield 1 and forza horizon 3	11/1/2016 7:33 PM
12	Cannot Remember	11/1/2016 2:03 PM
13	Red Dead Redemption 2, Battlefield 1	10/31/2016 9:05 PM
14	Kara	10/30/2016 11:02 AM
15	The Sims 3	10/29/2016 3:41 PM
16	Battlefield 1 Official Launch Trailer	10/29/2016 11:48 AM
17	The legend of ZELDA	10/29/2016 11:33 AM
18	Gears of war 4	10/29/2016 1:15 AM
19	Candy Crush	10/28/2016 9:45 PM
20	Battlefield 1 (the latest Battlefield game)	10/28/2016 9:16 PM
21	Can't remember	10/28/2016 6:13 PM
22	GTA Online: Bikers	10/28/2016 5:16 PM
23	Pokemon Sun and Moon	10/28/2016 3:38 PM
24	None, never watched	10/28/2016 3:26 PM
25	call of duty	10/28/2016 3:09 PM
26	Fifa 17	10/28/2016 11:03 AM
27	Halo	10/27/2016 11:21 PM
28	Lara Craft: Tomb Raider	10/27/2016 10:24 PM
29	watch dogs 2	10/27/2016 10:09 PM
30	Fifa 17, battlefield 1 and call of duty: infinite warfare	10/27/2016 8:58 PM
31	Gears of War 4	10/27/2016 8:51 PM
32	Forgot	10/27/2016 8:51 PM
33	Tom Clancy Ghost Recon Wildlands	10/27/2016 7:00 PM

Video Game Trailers

SurveyMonkey

34	UFC 2 for Xbox	10/26/2016 1:02 PM
35	Battlefield 1	10/25/2016 12:52 PM
36	Overwatch	10/25/2016 12:48 PM
37	fall out	10/25/2016 12:15 PM
38	assassin	10/25/2016 10:14 AM
39	don't remember	10/25/2016 10:13 AM
40	CSR	10/25/2016 10:12 AM
41	Assassin's Creed	10/24/2016 8:42 PM
42	Some online strategy game	10/24/2016 6:49 PM
43	Red Dead Redemption 2	10/24/2016 5:37 PM
44	FIFA 17	10/24/2016 3:02 PM
45	call of duty	10/24/2016 2:05 PM
46	No Man's Sky	10/24/2016 12:36 PM
47	Civilization 6	10/24/2016 12:04 AM
48	Neiche, sims 4 Dine out, software inc	10/23/2016 10:26 PM
49	-	10/23/2016 9:08 PM
50	Assassin's Creed	10/23/2016 8:41 PM
51	none	10/23/2016 8:12 PM
52	FIFA 17	10/23/2016 7:54 PM
53	Fifa	10/23/2016 6:10 PM
54	Battlefield 1	10/23/2016 11:39 AM
55	Final Fantasy 14 Online	10/23/2016 11:21 AM
56	World of warcraft, Assassins creed	10/23/2016 8:38 AM
57	Candy Crush	10/22/2016 7:19 PM
58	Can't remember.	10/22/2016 11:12 AM
59	Uncharted 4	10/21/2016 10:48 PM
60	Cant remember	10/21/2016 8:12 PM
61	Gears of war 4	10/21/2016 6:09 PM
62	Battlefield 1	10/21/2016 6:07 PM
63	Fifa17	10/21/2016 5:55 PM
64	Mass effect andromeda	10/21/2016 5:07 PM
65	no idea	10/21/2016 4:50 PM
66	Nintendo pokemonGo	10/21/2016 4:31 PM
67	Titanfall 2	10/21/2016 4:12 PM
68	Assassin's Creed Unity	10/21/2016 3:43 PM
69	No Man's Sky	10/21/2016 3:42 PM
70	Mobile Strike	10/21/2016 3:39 PM
71	2k17	10/21/2016 3:37 PM

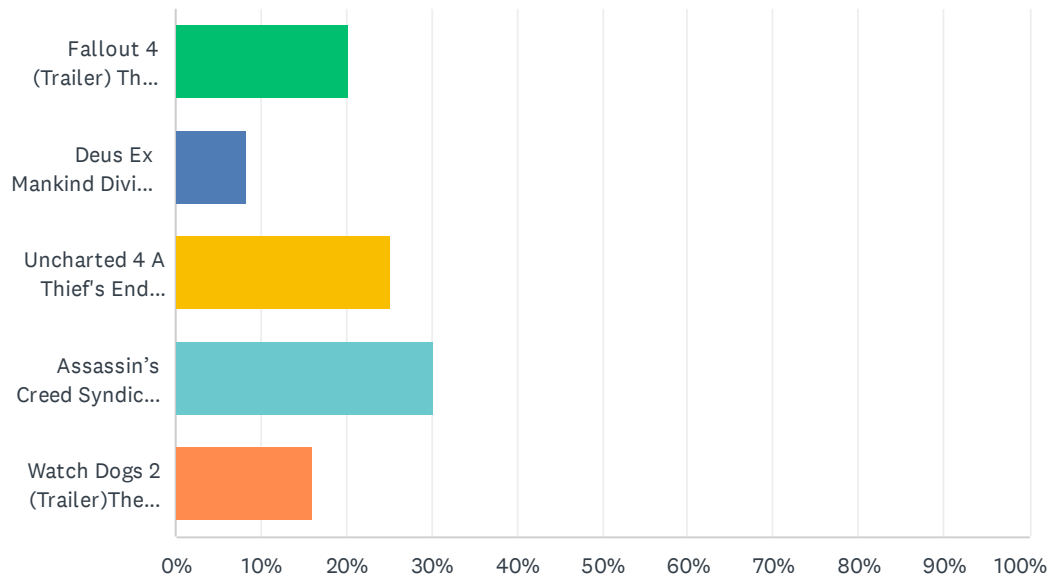
Video Game Trailers

SurveyMonkey

72	I can't remember. None	10/21/2016 3:20 PM
73	The one with kate upton	10/21/2016 3:11 PM
74	None	10/21/2016 2:38 PM
75	Mobile Strike	10/21/2016 2:25 PM
76	Fifa 17	10/21/2016 12:35 PM
77	The Witcher 3	10/21/2016 11:57 AM
78	It was for a new car racing game available on xbox and playstation but I don't remember the name of it	10/21/2016 11:54 AM
79	battlefield 1	10/21/2016 11:13 AM
80	Fifa 17	10/21/2016 11:12 AM
81	Gears of war	10/21/2016 11:03 AM
82	Red Dead Redemption 2	10/21/2016 10:40 AM
83	counter strike	10/21/2016 10:36 AM
84	Fifa	10/21/2016 10:32 AM
85	Mark McMorris Snowboarding video game (about to be released)	10/21/2016 10:29 AM
86	battlefield 1	10/21/2016 9:59 AM
87	War of worlds	10/19/2016 11:14 PM
88	Call of duty	10/19/2016 7:42 PM
89	Have never watched one	10/19/2016 6:43 PM

Q10 Choose ONE of the following trailers to watch

Answered: 119 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Fallout 4 (Trailer) The content is high in impact R 18+ material is restricted to adults	20.17%	24
Deus Ex Mankind Divided (Trailer)The content is high in impact R 18+ material is restricted to adults	8.40%	10
Uncharted 4 A Thief's End (Story Trailer)The content is high in impact R 18+ material is restricted to adults	25.21%	30
Assassin's Creed Syndicate (Story Trailer)The content is high in impact R 18+ material is restricted to adults	30.25%	36
Watch Dogs 2 (Trailer)The content is high in impact R 18+ material is restricted to adult	15.97%	19
TOTAL		119

Having Watched the Fallout 4 Trailer

Q11 In your own words, what did you think of the trailer?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 102

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Best of describing the game	11/8/2016 9:34 PM
2	It seems like there was more to the video game than a simple video game - like there's a story to it	11/1/2016 8:37 PM
3	Amazing Game! Just to say i've finished it twice	10/31/2016 9:32 PM
4	Engaging, great tone, awe-inspiring	10/28/2016 3:40 PM
5	Interesting at first but too long. Not interested in the game. I don't think much of the trailer actually shows any gameplay, it is more telling a story.	10/26/2016 1:08 PM
6	It had a nice scenery and gave insight to what you would have to do in the game	10/25/2016 12:54 PM
7	dark and exciting	10/25/2016 12:19 PM
8	I liked the trailer but I was not blown away by it. I found it very informative but not inspiring. For me gaming is about emotion and the way I feel when I play a game so I am more attracted to trailers that emphasise these things	10/24/2016 5:46 PM
9	Good graphics and highly engaging	10/23/2016 10:38 PM
10	Engaging.	10/23/2016 7:57 PM
11	I really enjoyed it. I'm not a big fan of FPS games but this actually looked pretty good. Admittedly I watched it and just wished it was a movie I could watch rather than a game to play.	10/22/2016 11:30 AM
12	It was good, it had a good emphasis on story without spoiling the plot of the game. The graphics looked good, wasn't too long.	10/21/2016 6:18 PM
13	It's about a colony, fighting for survival, revenge and finding the truth in a post apocalyptic world.	10/21/2016 6:17 PM
14	Solid trailer I would look at purchasing the game based on it	10/21/2016 5:19 PM
15	about a war between humanity and conflict	10/21/2016 4:22 PM
16	The trailer was pretty boring and quite slow paced, not something that would intrigue me as a fan of first person shooters	10/21/2016 2:28 PM
17	It wasn't very engaging. I didn't connect with the trailer.	10/19/2016 11:30 PM

Q12 What are the aspects that you liked most about the trailer?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 102

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	The story line	11/8/2016 9:34 PM
2	The fact that they made it seem more about the story rather than what technical aspects the game has (such as the regular upgrades)	11/1/2016 8:37 PM
3	Graphics, characters, open world, companion (Dog) and much more!	10/31/2016 9:32 PM
4	Music and cinematics	10/28/2016 3:40 PM
5	The graphics - very cool, it's almost lifelike.	10/26/2016 1:08 PM
6	Scenery, the way it showed the different areas of the game	10/25/2016 12:54 PM
7	the visual effect	10/25/2016 12:19 PM
8	Informative and truthful in the way gameplay and narratives are developed.	10/24/2016 5:46 PM
9	I like how it was constructed. The music, lighting and editing show great attention to detail. This craftsmanship is something that is normally missed in the gaming industry, as developers typically just mass-produce to churn out the largest profit margins.	10/23/2016 10:38 PM
10	The high-pace nature of it.	10/23/2016 7:57 PM
11	I thought the story line and narration were really intriguing and I was brought into the story of the game. I don't like games where the purpose is just to kill or ruin property but I enjoyed how the trailer showed this game as retro-futuristic and political.	10/22/2016 11:30 AM
12	The emphasis on story.	10/21/2016 6:18 PM
13	post apocalyptic theme with futuristic weapons and gears.	10/21/2016 6:17 PM
14	Set the scene for someone entering the fallout universe for the first time, teased the plot showed very few spoilers, made entirely of gameplay footage	10/21/2016 5:19 PM
15	the wide range of characters involved	10/21/2016 4:22 PM
16	The survival aspect of the game, with the trailer showing the rebuilding process in defending a house or land	10/21/2016 2:28 PM
17	It felt you might have a sense of adventure playing the game	10/19/2016 11:30 PM

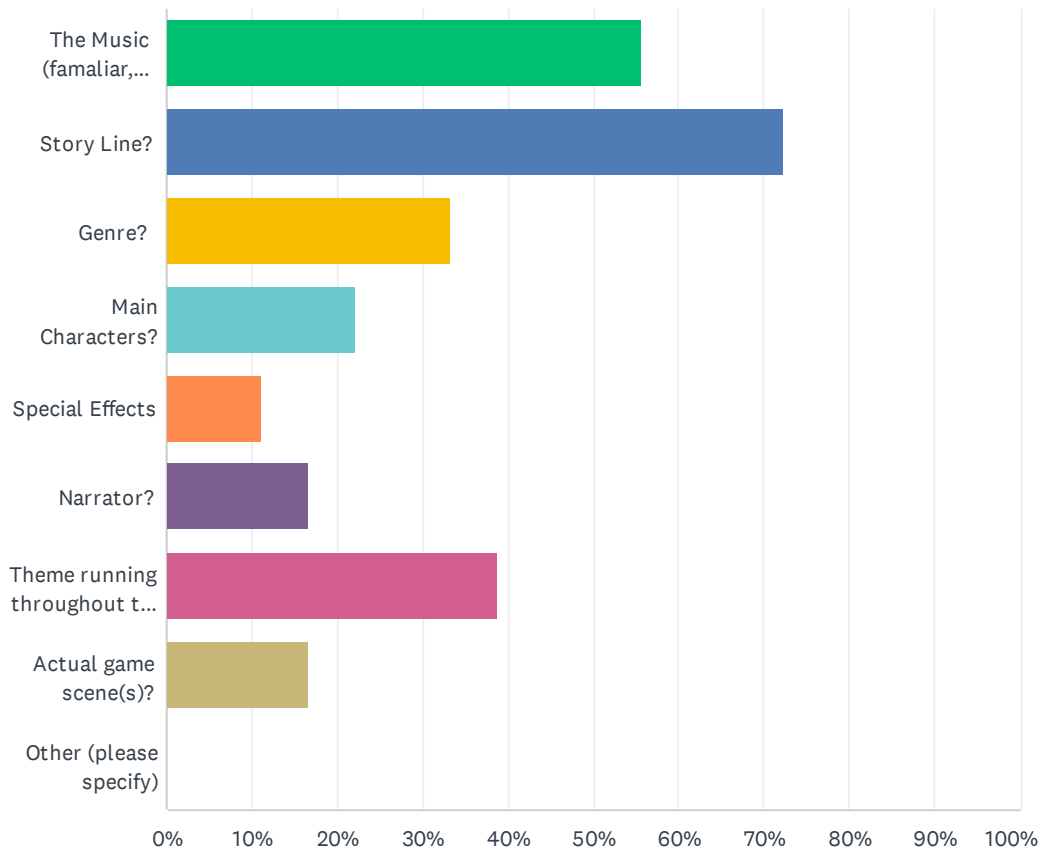
Q13 What are the aspects that you disliked most about the trailer?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 104

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Nothing	11/8/2016 9:34 PM
2	None	10/31/2016 9:32 PM
3	Length	10/28/2016 3:40 PM
4	Repeated violence, it's the same thing over and over. Clearly targeting a different audience than me.	10/26/2016 1:08 PM
5	N/a	10/25/2016 12:54 PM
6	A lack of emotion/ suspense.	10/24/2016 5:46 PM
7	none really.... I didn't watch the whole thing... Though I've watched multiple fallout 4 trailers in the past.	10/23/2016 10:38 PM
8	Nothing.	10/23/2016 7:57 PM
9	I think it went on slightly too long, at 1min 55sec I looked to see how much longer there was left, and despite enjoying the trailer I couldn't help but groan to see almost another full minute.	10/22/2016 11:30 AM
10	Colour scheme was a bit meh.	10/21/2016 6:18 PM
11	unrealistic graphics.	10/21/2016 6:17 PM
12	Potentially too comprehensive as alot can be gleaned by someone knowledgeable of the universe	10/21/2016 5:19 PM
13	a bit hard to figure out the main theme	10/21/2016 4:22 PM
14	The actual gameplay that was shown did not seem to be that fun or exciting	10/21/2016 2:28 PM
15	It didn't provide a background story as to why the war has occurred. I need a sense of origin so I understand why the characters exist and what they are fighting for.	10/19/2016 11:30 PM

Q14 Having watched the trailer which, aspect(s) stoodout for you?

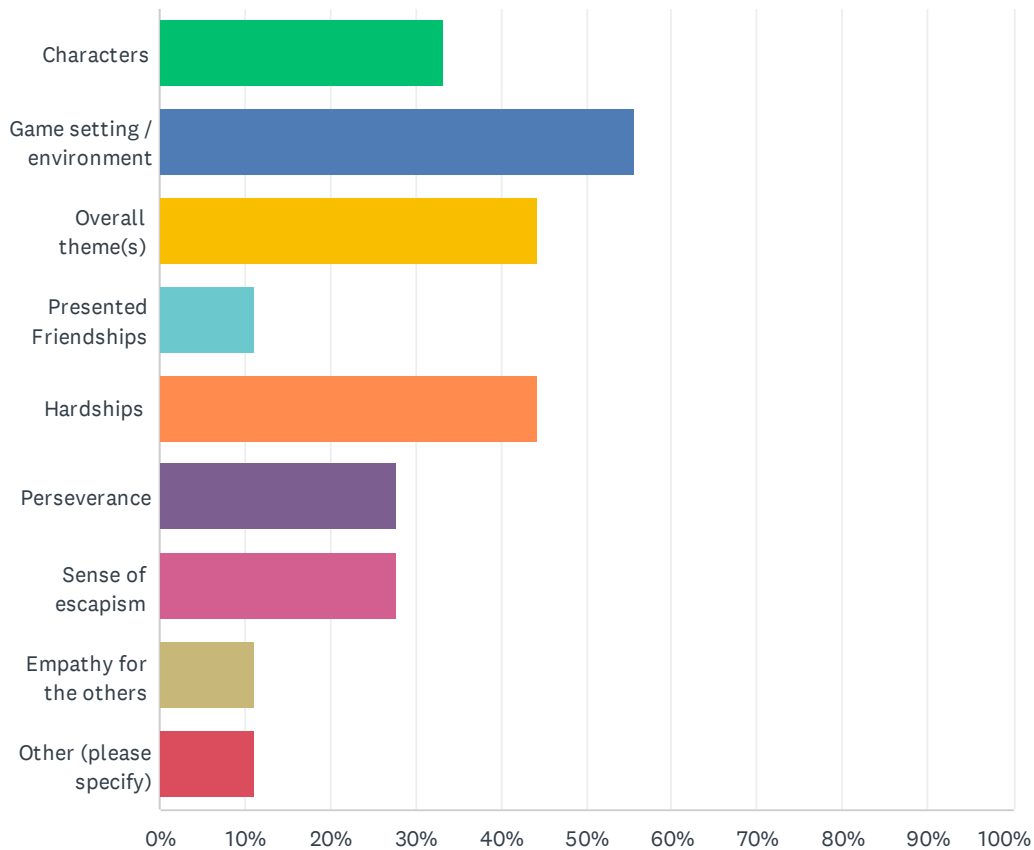
Answered: 18 Skipped: 101



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The Music (famaliar, entertaining, etc.)?	55.56%	10
Story Line?	72.22%	13
Genre?	33.33%	6
Main Characters?	22.22%	4
Special Effects	11.11%	2
Narrator?	16.67%	3
Theme running throughout the Trailer (e.g Action, mystery, suspense)?	38.89%	7
Actual game scene(s)?	16.67%	3
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 18		

Q15 After viewing the trailer, was there anything you could identify with?

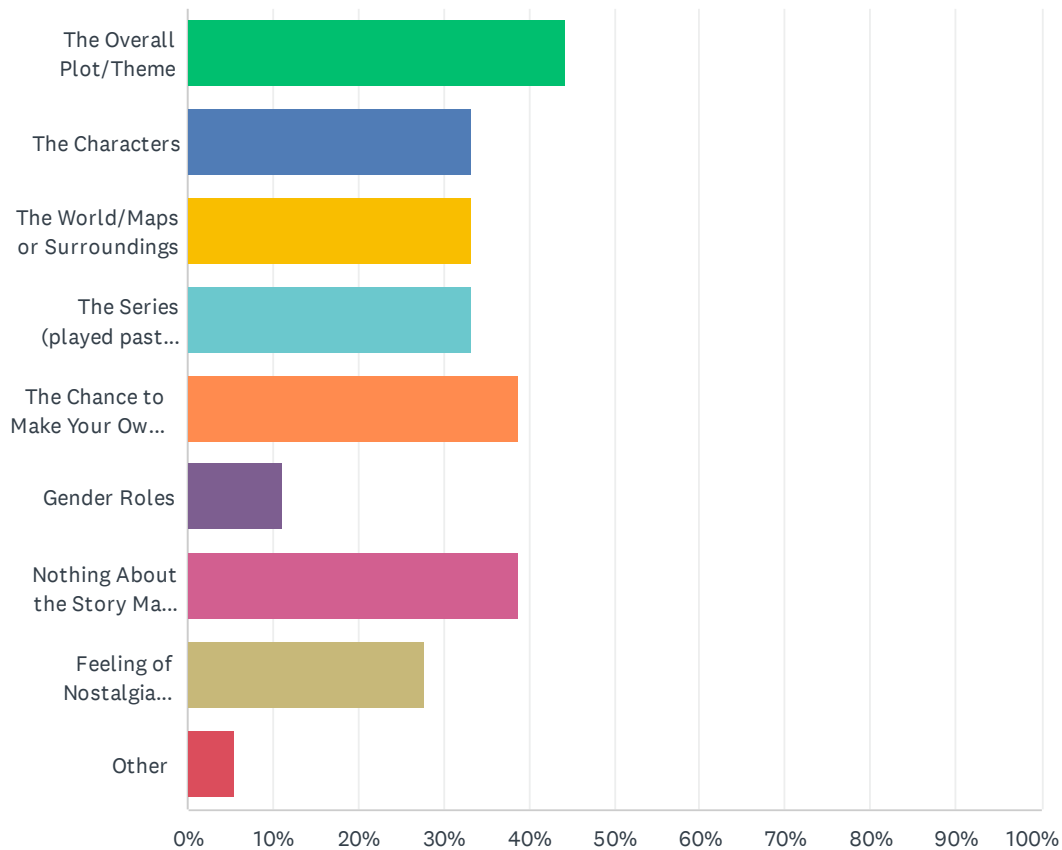
Answered: 18 Skipped: 101



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Characters	33.33%	6
Game setting / environment	55.56%	10
Overall theme(s)	44.44%	8
Presented Friendships	11.11%	2
Hardships	44.44%	8
Perseverance	27.78%	5
Sense of escapism	27.78%	5
Empathy for the others	11.11%	2
Other (please specify)	11.11%	2
Total Respondents: 18		

Q16 What storytelling element(s) make you most want to play a game?

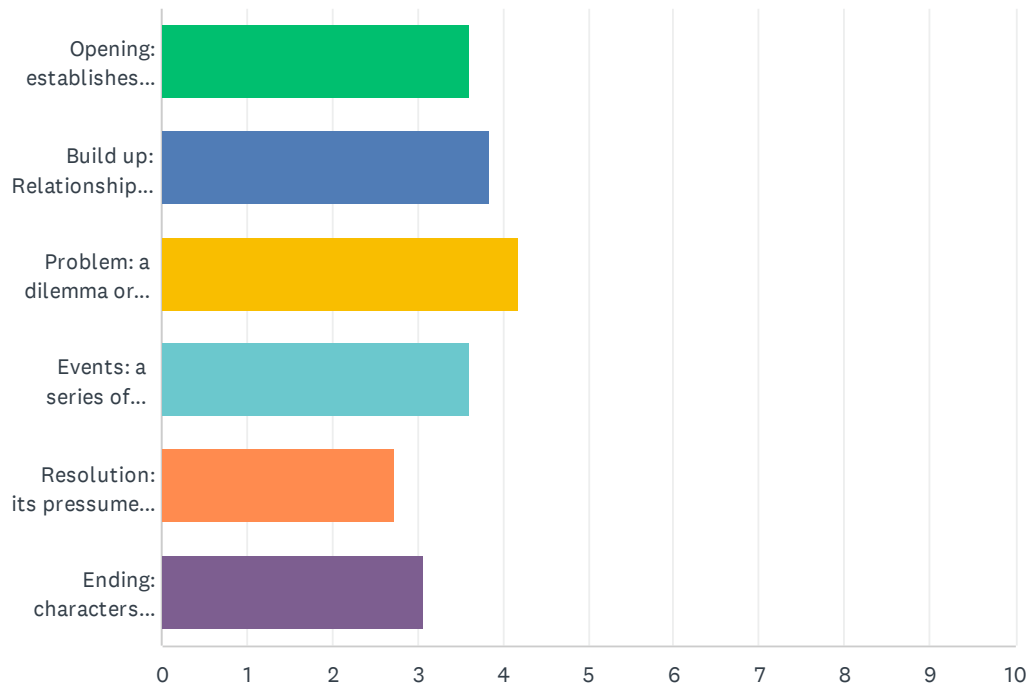
Answered: 18 Skipped: 101



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The Overall Plot/Theme	44.44%	8
The Characters	33.33%	6
The World/Maps or Surroundings	33.33%	6
The Series (played past editions)	33.33%	6
The Chance to Make Your Own Choices and/or Change the Story	38.89%	7
Gender Roles	11.11%	2
Nothing About the Story Makes Me Want to Play a Game	38.89%	7
Feeling of Nostalgia (sentimentality for the past)	27.78%	5
Other	5.56%	1
Total Respondents: 18		

Q17 Rank in order which aspect(s) of the trailers' narratives were most appealing to you?

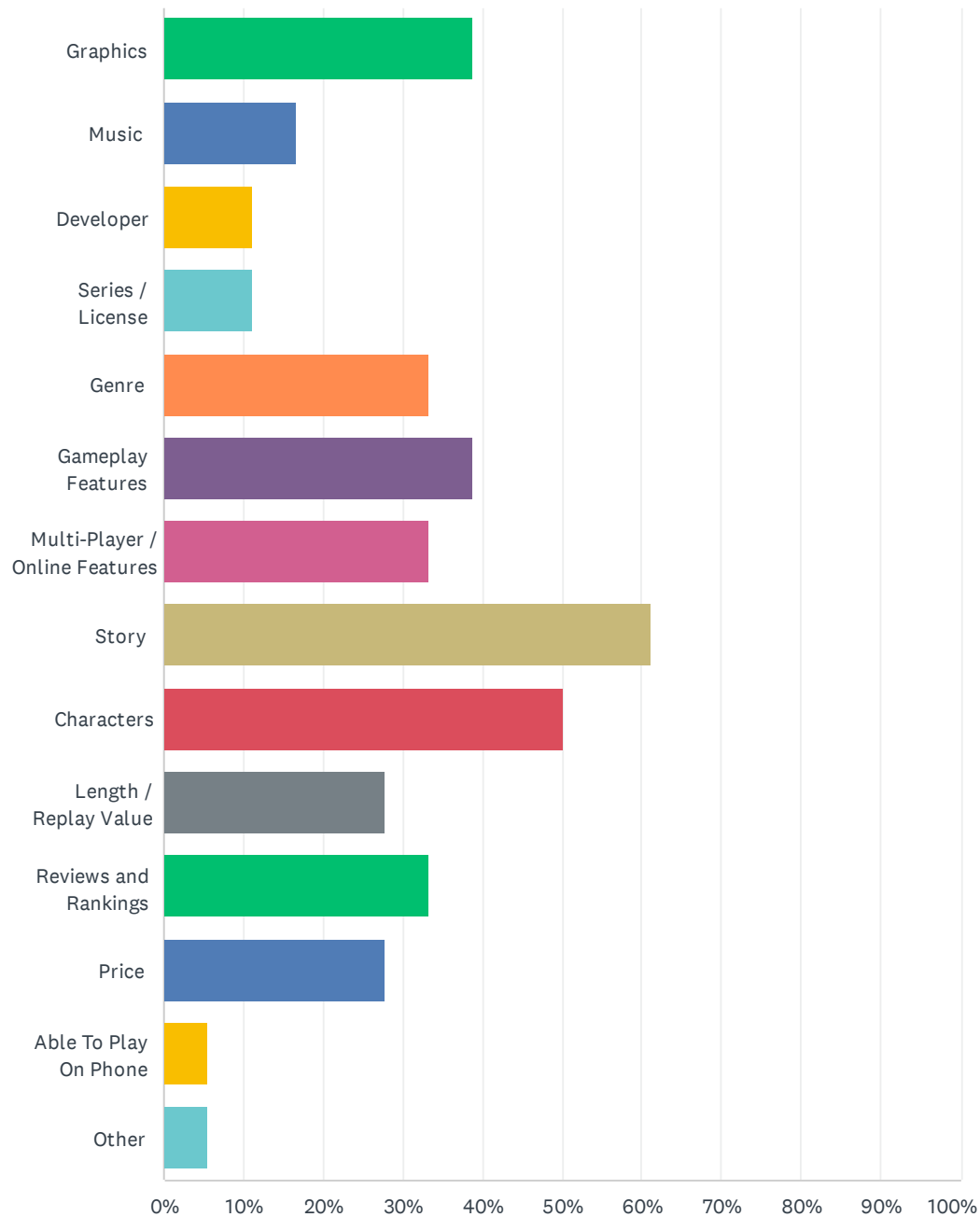
Answered: 18 Skipped: 101



	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL	SCORE
Opening: establishes setting and introduces character(s)	22.22% 4	22.22% 4	5.56% 1	11.11% 2	22.22% 4	16.67% 3	18	3.61
Build up: Relationships established. Development of characters and their world	5.56% 1	33.33% 6	33.33% 6	11.11% 2	0.00% 0	16.67% 3	18	3.83
Problem: a dilemma or series of complications. Characters are faced with an obstacle to overcome a mystery to solve, or often more than one	16.67% 3	27.78% 5	22.22% 4	22.22% 4	11.11% 2	0.00% 0	18	4.17
Events: a series of events/action as characters try to overcome obstacle, solve problem, discover truth and so on.	22.22% 4	5.56% 1	22.22% 4	27.78% 5	5.56% 1	16.67% 3	18	3.61
Resolution: its presumed the protagonists will be victorious, problems are solved, truth revealed.	11.11% 2	5.56% 1	5.56% 1	22.22% 4	33.33% 6	22.22% 4	18	2.72
Ending: characters reflect on events, reinstate relationships and look to the future	22.22% 4	5.56% 1	11.11% 2	5.56% 1	27.78% 5	27.78% 5	18	3.06

Q18 When you're deciding to play a game, what are the three most important factors?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 101



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Graphics	38.89%	7
Music	16.67%	3
Developer	11.11%	2
Series / License	11.11%	2
Genre	33.33%	6
Gameplay Features	38.89%	7
Multi-Player / Online Features	33.33%	6
Story	61.11%	11
Characters	50.00%	9
Length / Replay Value	27.78%	5
Reviews and Rankings	33.33%	6
Price	27.78%	5
Able To Play On Phone	5.56%	1
Other	5.56%	1
Total Respondents: 18		

Q19 In the Fallout 4 trailer, the central character says: "Would you risk your life for your fellow man, even if he was a synth?" ('synth' is an artificially created person, an android so identical to human, sometimes he/she isn't even aware that he/she is not human)What do you feel this quote means?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 102

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Cool	11/8/2016 9:34 PM
2	The central character is challenging the other character in terms of what that person would do for a fellow mate despite his sins.	11/1/2016 8:37 PM
3	Is it worth risking your life to a trustworthy person even if he was a robot	10/31/2016 9:32 PM
4	Equality, discrimination	10/28/2016 3:40 PM
5	You have to stick and work together to combat evil.	10/26/2016 1:08 PM
6	Asking whether someone will sacrifice themselves for something else	10/25/2016 12:54 PM
7	save someone in the game	10/25/2016 12:19 PM
8	This quote encapsulates some of the central themes of the game including the risky nature of what the protagonist undertakes and the recurring moral dilemma of humanising synths.	10/24/2016 5:46 PM
9	It is questioning what it is to be human and one's reaction to changing relationships.	10/23/2016 10:38 PM
10	It explores what it means to be human and to feel empathy.	10/23/2016 7:57 PM
11	This quote is basically the whole reason I'd play the game! I think the quote is pushing you to question how you categorise and perceive people. We say that all people's lives are equal but as soon as a person is different to you because of race, gender, class or beliefs, we sometimes back away from that.	10/22/2016 11:30 AM
12	Addresses what it means to be human. What is worth fighting for?	10/21/2016 6:18 PM
13	Would you risk your own life for a robot?	10/21/2016 6:17 PM
14	Offers you the choice of good or evil withing the games plot paramaters, it ushers you toward the "good" factions rather than the "evil"	10/21/2016 5:19 PM
15	means the if the relationship would change if the character has found his fellow man was a synth	10/21/2016 4:22 PM
16	This quote doesn't make any sense to me	10/21/2016 2:28 PM
17	There will be other beings at play within the game	10/19/2016 11:30 PM

Q20 In the Fallout 4 trailer, the central character says: "Everything can change in an instant, whether or not you're ready. This wasn't the world I wanted, but it was the one I found myself in." What do you feel this quote means?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 102

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	could be yourself in the game	11/8/2016 9:34 PM
2	That sometimes people find themselves in positions that they would not necessarily enjoy - but they still have to persevere.	11/1/2016 8:37 PM
3	That things will never be the same, you could wake up and find yourself somewhere you never wanted to be in	10/31/2016 9:32 PM
4	Being prepared for change, and having your world turned upside down	10/28/2016 3:40 PM
5	You are thrown into something you dont like and have to do it anyway.	10/26/2016 1:08 PM
6	Change is spontaneous and uncomfortable sometimes	10/25/2016 12:54 PM
7	exciting game environment	10/25/2016 12:19 PM
8	This quote is about large amount of scenarios that can happen to the player when they play this game and the choices they have to make in regards to these scenarios	10/24/2016 5:46 PM
9	Work with what you've got.	10/23/2016 10:38 PM
10	I don't think it has much deeper meaning, it just sets an ominous mood.	10/23/2016 7:57 PM
11	It's about accepting circumstances and dealing with your current situation rather than dwelling on where else you could be or how you would have rather things turned out.	10/22/2016 11:30 AM
12	Presents the problem of the scenario. This isn't what I expected, but I have to deal with it.	10/21/2016 6:18 PM
13	She was born in a post apocalyptic world where there's nothing left, scarcity of food, mutations etc not being able to enjoy a normal life.	10/21/2016 6:17 PM
14	Establishes the discourse of the universe the protagonist has woken up to and encourages the player to be resourceful	10/21/2016 5:19 PM
15	means although he the current situation is not he wants and not perfect, he still try to live in and adapt in this	10/21/2016 4:22 PM
16	It means that you have to be prepared for the unexpected, as the game will have many plot twists and surprising moments	10/21/2016 2:28 PM
17	It is not a reality. The gaming experience will provide a alternative reality.	10/19/2016 11:30 PM

Q21 In the Fallout 4 trailer: "You don't find the Institute. The Institute finds you." What do you feel this quote means?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 102

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Astonished me and made me to thinking	11/8/2016 9:34 PM
2	You are born for some things in life.	11/1/2016 8:37 PM
3	The institute is a hidden organisation that cannot be found unless they come to find you	10/31/2016 9:32 PM
4	To create mystery	10/28/2016 3:40 PM
5	Who you are on the inside is what matters	10/26/2016 1:08 PM
6	No escape	10/25/2016 12:54 PM
7	the gamer has the destiny to change something	10/25/2016 12:19 PM
8	this foreshadows a powerful antagonist/ enemy	10/24/2016 5:46 PM
9	A threat	10/23/2016 10:38 PM
10	Again, just a dramatic precursor to the storyline.	10/23/2016 7:57 PM
11	That there's a power imbalance. If you're the little guy looking to challenge the big guy, you quite often don't get to choose the circumstances.	10/22/2016 11:30 AM
12	Sets up part of the plot line. Didn't get anything particular from it	10/21/2016 6:18 PM
13	Institute is the source/organizations/viruses/aliens/government research fuck-ups that may review the truth or kill you	10/21/2016 6:17 PM
14	Creates a fear complex and uneasy curiosity about the antagonists	10/21/2016 5:19 PM
15	means you have no control in this	10/21/2016 4:22 PM
16	This quote sounds really cliché and I disliked it	10/21/2016 2:28 PM
17	There will be other characters trying to kill you	10/19/2016 11:30 PM

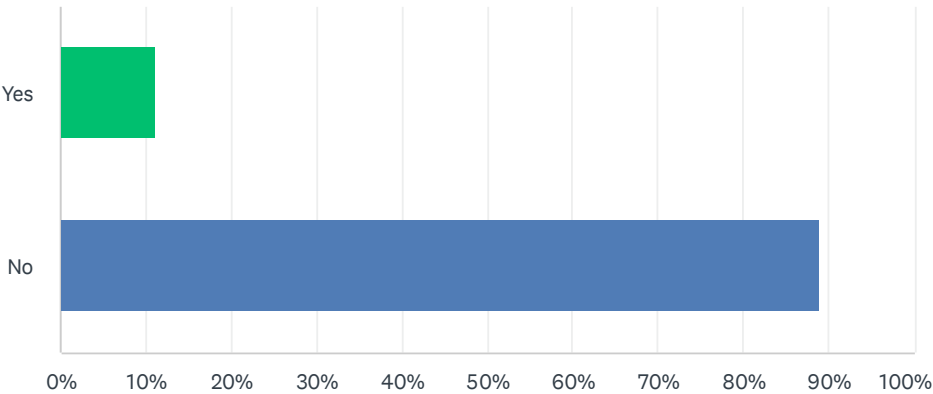
Q22 Would you like to be updated on the research results? If yes, please leave your email. We do not reveal personal information about you to others and we do not attach your name or any other personally identifying information to your survey and/or interview responses. The protection of participants privacy is paramount.

Answered: 5 Skipped: 114

Left blank for privacy purposes

Q23 Would you like to watch another trailer?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 101



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		11.11%	2
No		88.89%	16
TOTAL			18

Having Watched the Uncharted 4 Trailer

Q24 In your own words, what did you think of the trailer?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 98

I have left this blank as this video game trailer was removed and was not part of the final thesis.

Q25 What are the aspects that you liked most about the trailer?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 98

I have left this blank as this video game trailer was removed and was not part of the final thesis.

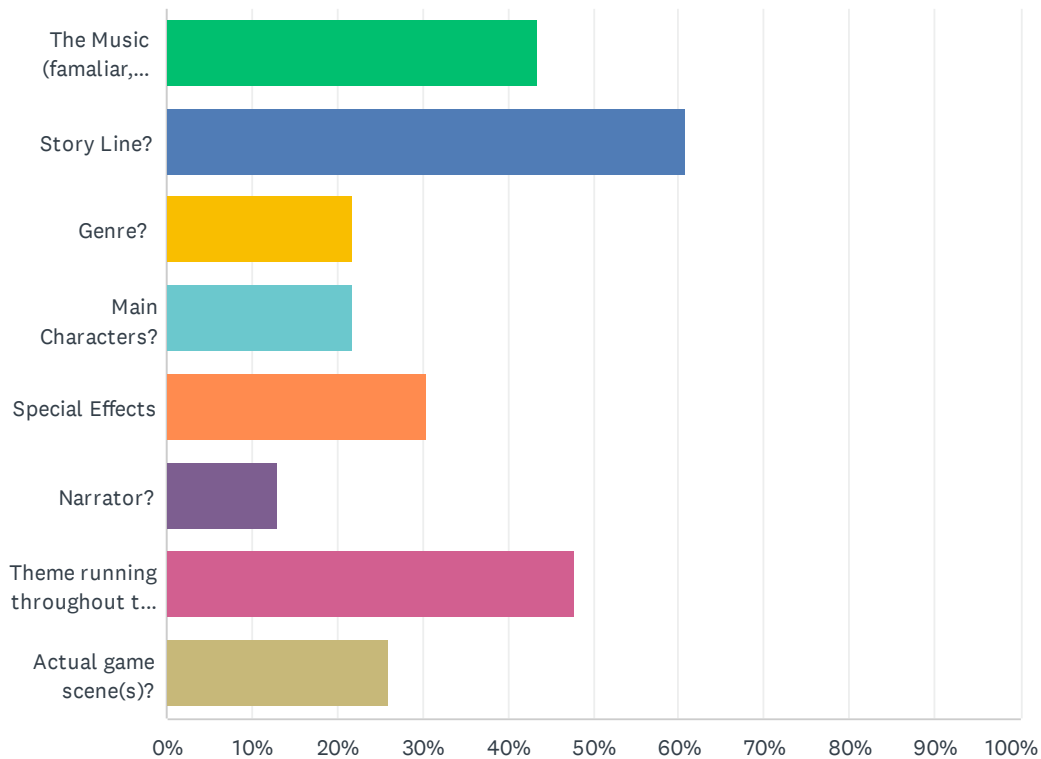
Q26 What are the aspects that you disliked most about the trailer?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 101

I have left this blank as this video game trailer was removed and was not part of the final thesis.

Q27 Having watched the trailer which, aspect(s) stoodout for you?

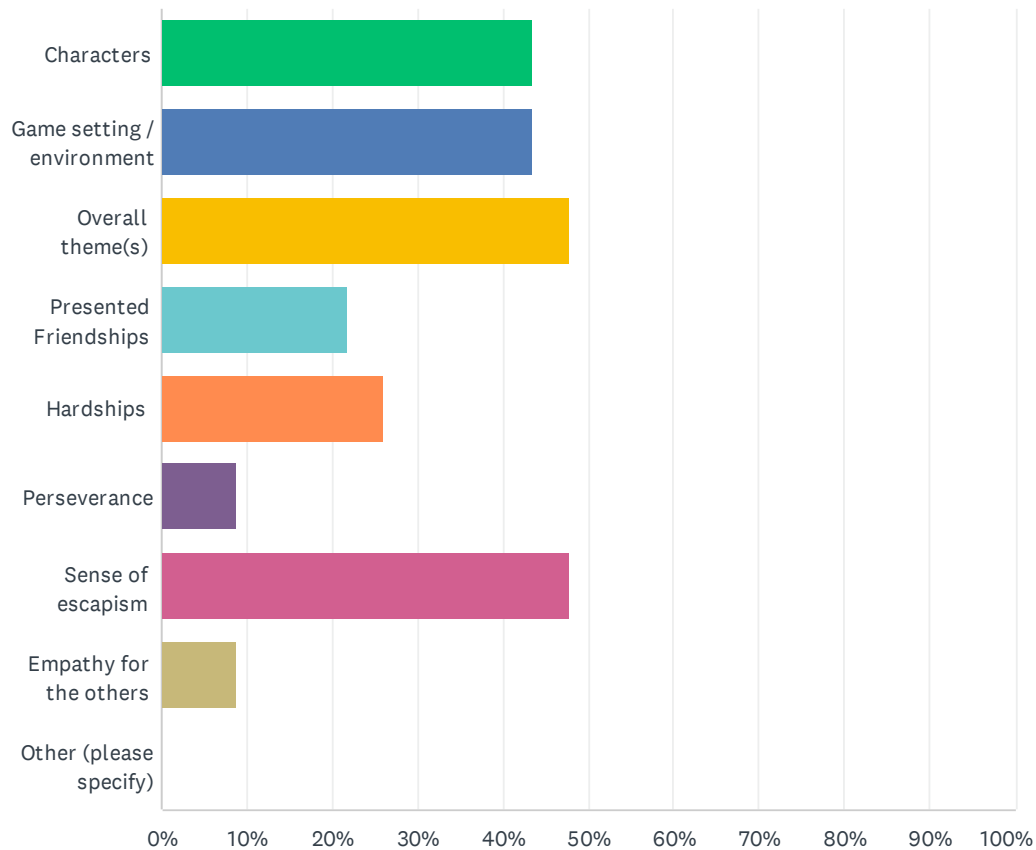
Answered: 23 Skipped: 96



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The Music (famaliar, entertaining, etc.)?	43.48%	10
Story Line?	60.87%	14
Genre?	21.74%	5
Main Characters?	21.74%	5
Special Effects	30.43%	7
Narrator?	13.04%	3
Theme running throughout the Trailer (e.g Action, mystery, suspense)?	47.83%	11
Actual game scene(s)?	26.09%	6
Total Respondents: 23		

Q28 After viewing the trailer, was there anything you could identify with?

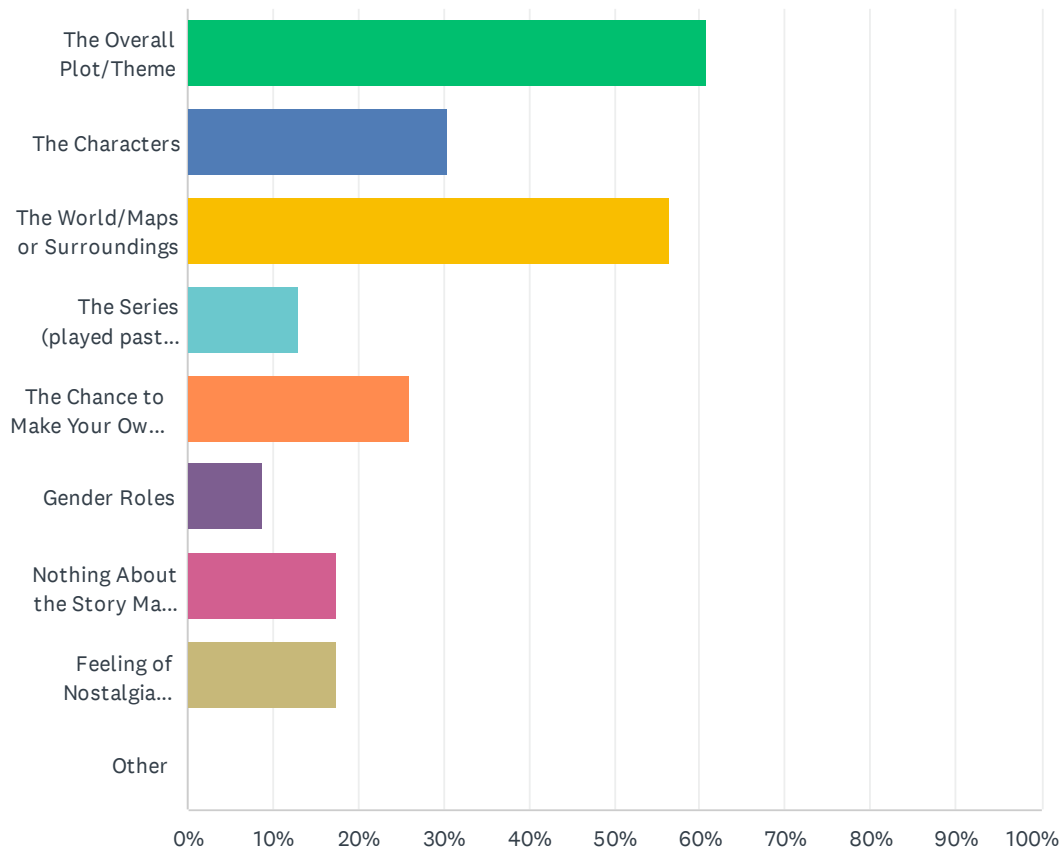
Answered: 23 Skipped: 96



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Characters	43.48%	10
Game setting / environment	43.48%	10
Overall theme(s)	47.83%	11
Presented Friendships	21.74%	5
Hardships	26.09%	6
Perseverance	8.70%	2
Sense of escapism	47.83%	11
Empathy for the others	8.70%	2
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 23		

Q29 What storytelling element(s) make you most want to play a game?

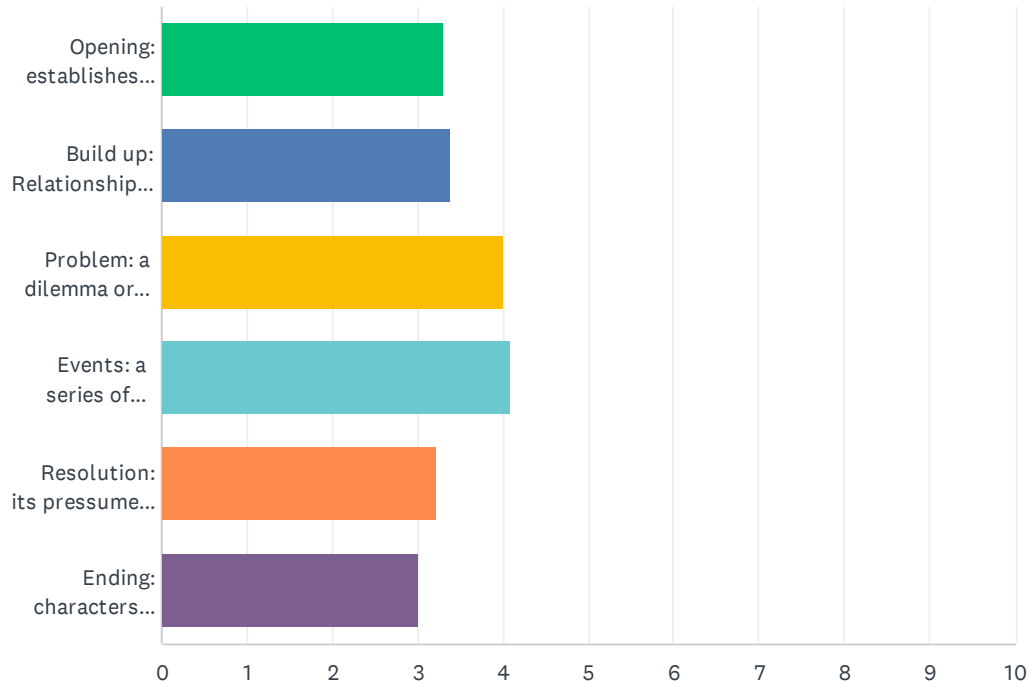
Answered: 23 Skipped: 96



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The Overall Plot/Theme	60.87%	14
The Characters	30.43%	7
The World/Maps or Surroundings	56.52%	13
The Series (played past editions)	13.04%	3
The Chance to Make Your Own Choices and/or Change the Story	26.09%	6
Gender Roles	8.70%	2
Nothing About the Story Makes Me Want to Play a Game	17.39%	4
Feeling of Nostalgia (sentimentality for the past)	17.39%	4
Other	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 23		

Q30 Rank in order which aspect(s) of the trailers' narratives were most appealing to you?

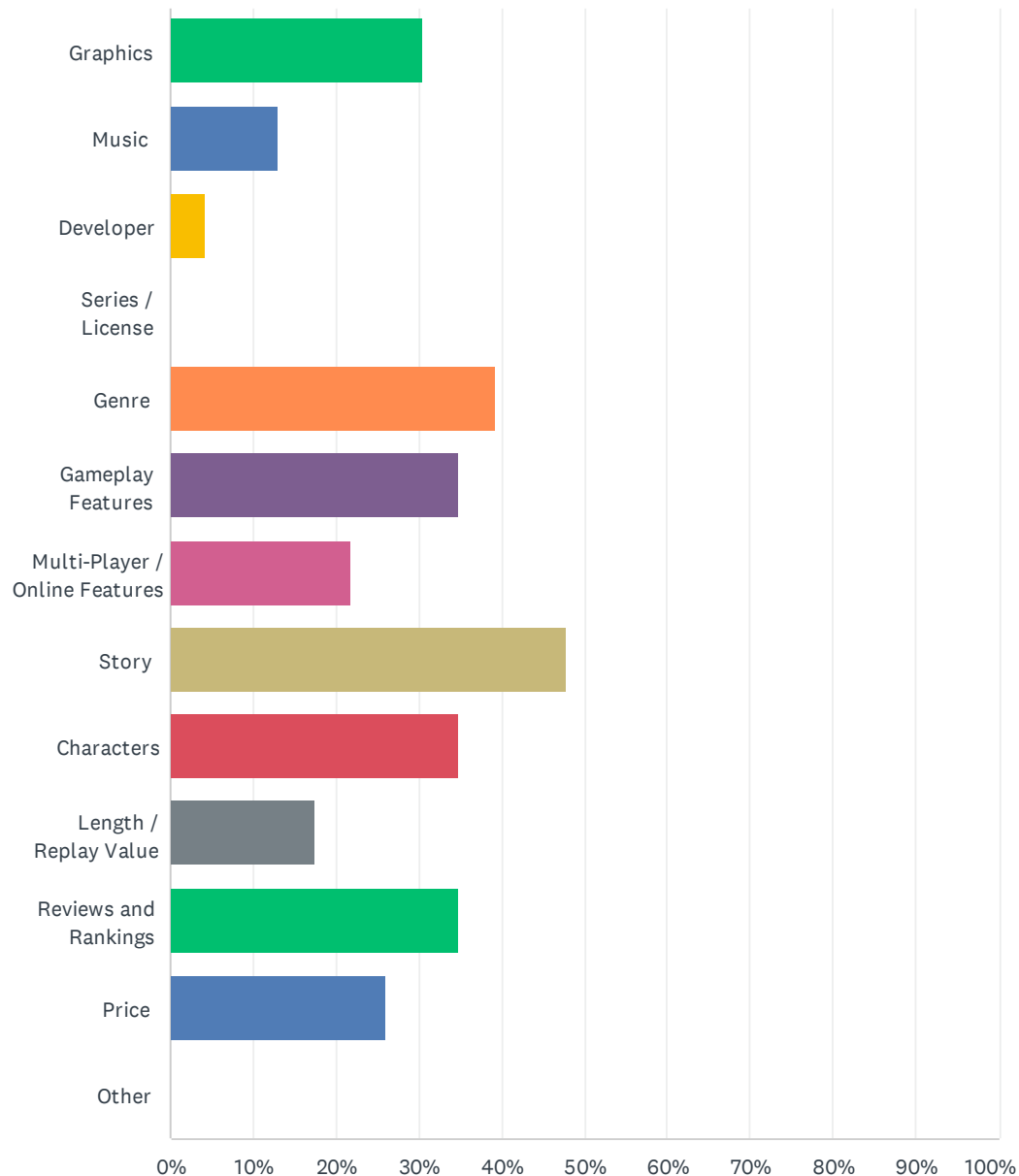
Answered: 23 Skipped: 96



	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL	SCORE
Opening: establishes setting and introduces character(s)	26.09% 6	13.04% 3	8.70% 2	4.35% 1	13.04% 3	34.78% 8	23	3.30
Build up: Relationships established. Development of characters and their world	8.70% 2	13.04% 3	30.43% 7	17.39% 4	17.39% 4	13.04% 3	23	3.39
Problem: a dilemma or series of complications. Characters are faced with an obstacle to overcome a mystery to solve, or often more than one	21.74% 5	26.09% 6	17.39% 4	13.04% 3	8.70% 2	13.04% 3	23	4.00
Events: a series of events/action as characters try to overcome obstacle, solve problem, discover truth and so on.	30.43% 7	8.70% 2	21.74% 5	17.39% 4	21.74% 5	0.00% 0	23	4.09
Resolution: its presumed the protagonists will be victorious, problems are solved, truth revealed.	4.35% 1	21.74% 5	17.39% 4	26.09% 6	8.70% 2	21.74% 5	23	3.22
Ending: characters reflect on events, reinstate relationships and look to the future	8.70% 2	17.39% 4	4.35% 1	21.74% 5	30.43% 7	17.39% 4	23	3.00

Q31 When you're deciding to play a game, what are the three most important factors?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 96



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Graphics	30.43%	7
Music	13.04%	3
Developer	4.35%	1
Series / License	0.00%	0
Genre	39.13%	9
Gameplay Features	34.78%	8
Multi-Player / Online Features	21.74%	5
Story	47.83%	11
Characters	34.78%	8
Length / Replay Value	17.39%	4
Reviews and Rankings	34.78%	8
Price	26.09%	6
Other	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 23		

Q32 In the Uncharted 4 trailer, the central character says: "We were meant for this, Nathan! You, me - together we were destined for something great. For those who proved worthy, paradise awaits."What do you feel this quote means?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 101

I have left this blank as this video game trailer was removed and was not part of the final thesis.

Q33 In the Uncharted 4 trailer, the central character says: "If you're done lying to me, then you should stop lying to yourself."What does this quote mean to you?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 101

I have left this blank as this video game trailer was removed and was not part of the final thesis.

Q34 In the Uncharted 4 trailer, the central character says: "I made a promise that I was done with this life. How long we've been chasing this thing? Long time. Real long time, just you and me.."What do you feel this quote means?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 101

I have left this blank as this video game trailer was removed and was not part of the final thesis.

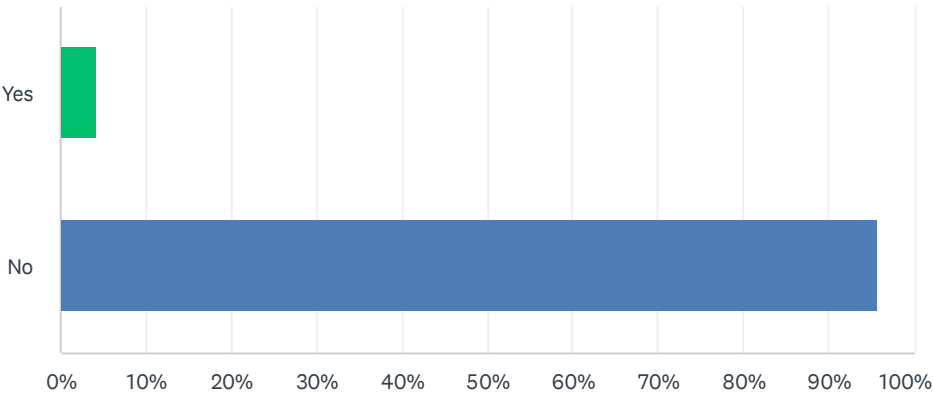
Q35 Would you like to be updated on the research results? If yes, please leave your email. We do not reveal personal information about you to others and we do not attach your name or any other personally identifying information to your survey and/or interview responses. The protection of participants privacy is paramount.

Answered: 3 Skipped: 116

I have left this blank as this video game trailer was removed and was not part of the final thesis.

Q36 Would you like to watch another trailer?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 96



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		4.35%	1
No		95.65%	22
TOTAL			23

Having Watched the Deus Ex Mankind Divided Trailer

Q37 In your own words, what did you think of the trailer?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 113

I have left this blank as this video game trailer was removed and was not part of the final thesis.

Q38 What are the aspects that you liked most about the trailer?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 113

I have left this blank as this video game trailer was removed and was not part of the final thesis.

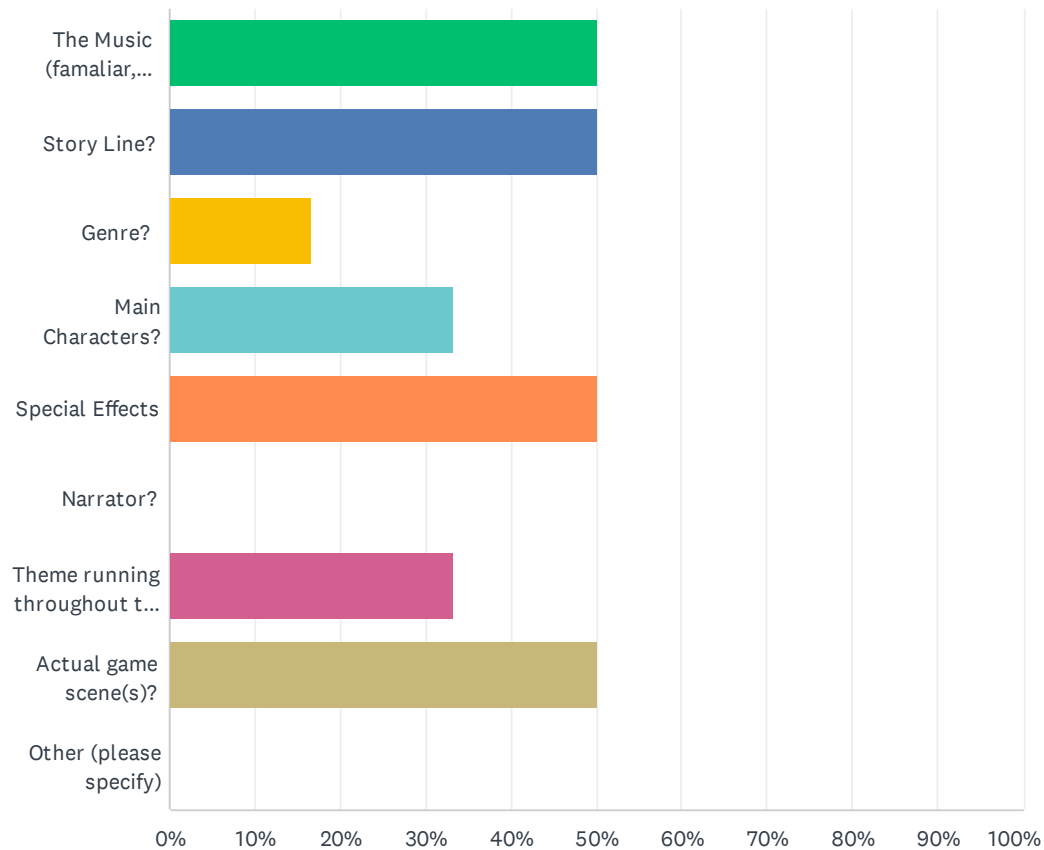
Q39 What are the aspects that you disliked most about the trailer?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 115

I have left this blank as this video game trailer was removed and was not part of the final thesis.

Q40 Having watched the trailer which, aspect(s) stoodout for you?

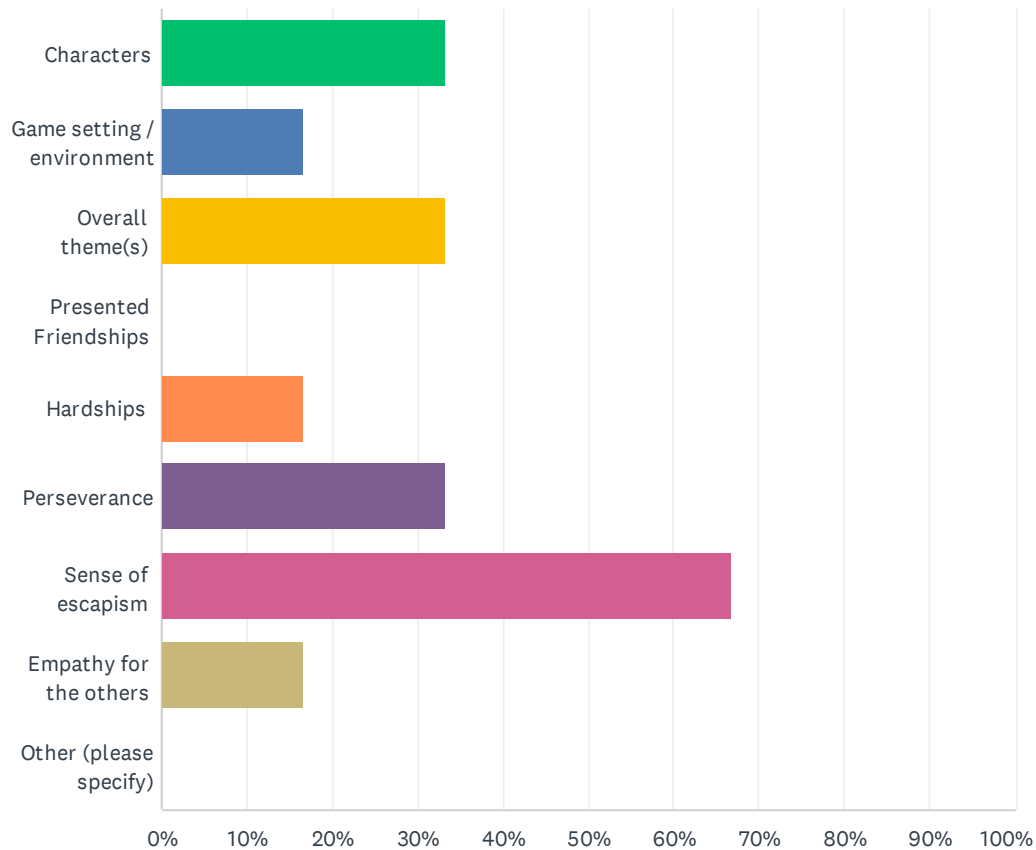
Answered: 6 Skipped: 113



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The Music (famaliar, entertaining, etc.)?	50.00%	3
Story Line?	50.00%	3
Genre?	16.67%	1
Main Characters?	33.33%	2
Special Effects	50.00%	3
Narrator?	0.00%	0
Theme running throughout the Trailer (e.g Action, mystery, suspense)?	33.33%	2
Actual game scene(s)?	50.00%	3
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 6		

Q41 After viewing the trailer, was there anything you could identify with?

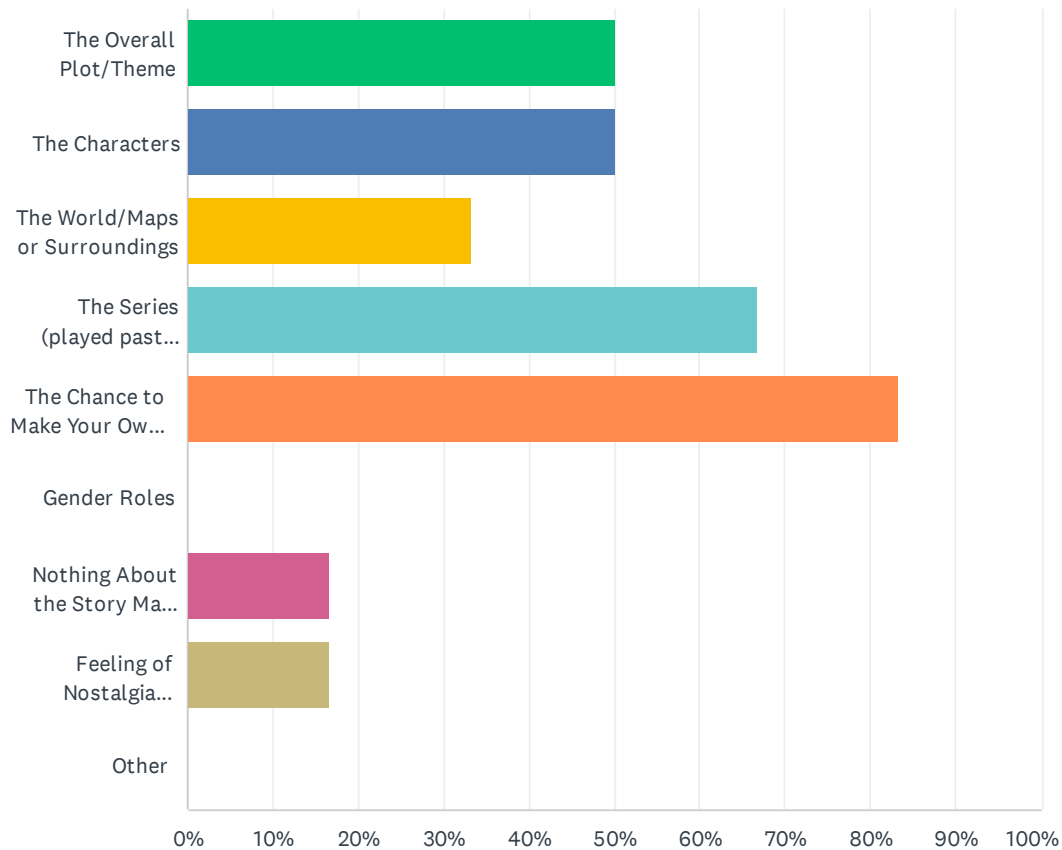
Answered: 6 Skipped: 113



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Characters	33.33%	2
Game setting / environment	16.67%	1
Overall theme(s)	33.33%	2
Presented Friendships	0.00%	0
Hardships	16.67%	1
Perseverance	33.33%	2
Sense of escapism	66.67%	4
Empathy for the others	16.67%	1
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 6		

Q42 What storytelling element(s) make you most want to play a game?

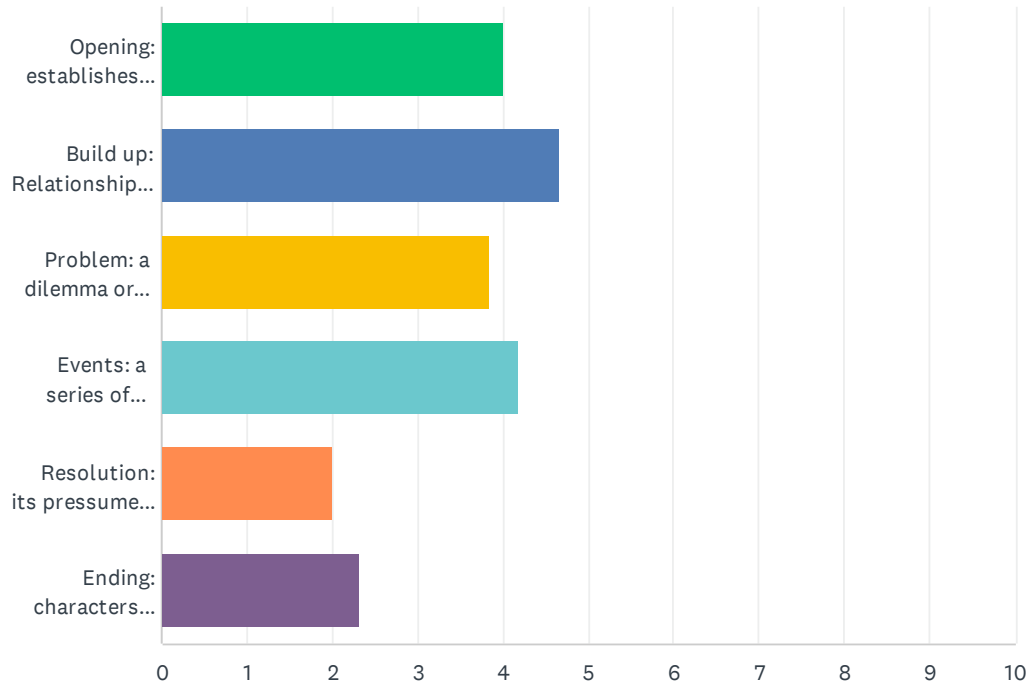
Answered: 6 Skipped: 113



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The Overall Plot/Theme	50.00%	3
The Characters	50.00%	3
The World/Maps or Surroundings	33.33%	2
The Series (played past editions)	66.67%	4
The Chance to Make Your Own Choices and/or Change the Story	83.33%	5
Gender Roles	0.00%	0
Nothing About the Story Makes Me Want to Play a Game	16.67%	1
Feeling of Nostalgia (sentimentality for the past)	16.67%	1
Other	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 6		

Q43 Rank in order which aspect(s) of the trailers' narratives were most appealing to you?

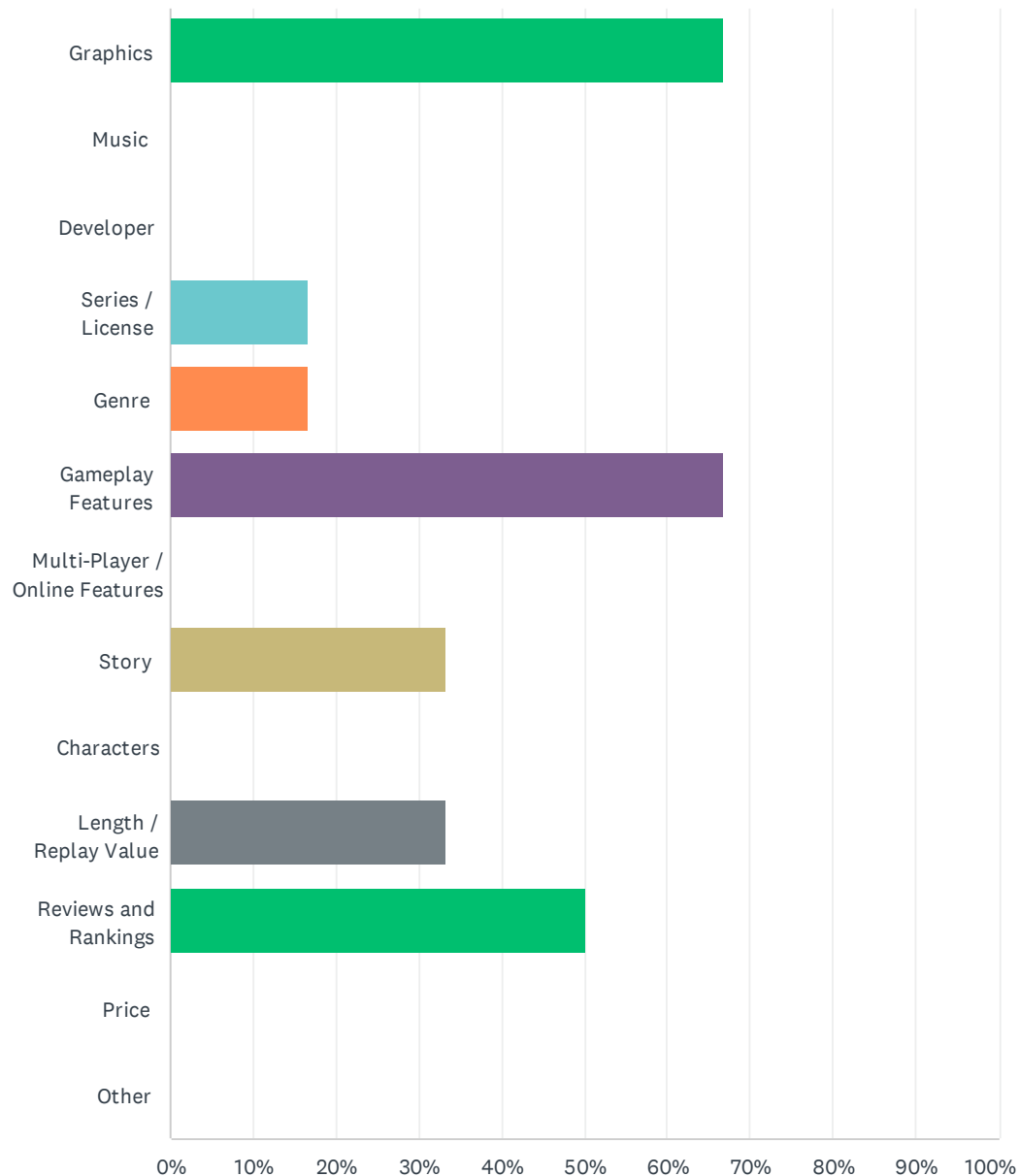
Answered: 6 Skipped: 113



	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL	SCORE
Opening: establishes setting and introduces character(s)	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	6	4.00
Build up: Relationships established. Development of characters and their world	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6	4.67
Problem: a dilemma or series of complications. Characters are faced with an obstacle to overcome a mystery to solve, or often more than one	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	6	3.83
Events: a series of events/action as characters try to overcome obstacle, solve problem, discover truth and so on.	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	6	4.17
Resolution: its presumed the protagonists will be victorious, problems are solved, truth revealed.	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	66.67% 4	6	2.00
Ending: characters reflect on events, reinstate relationships and look to the future	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	6	2.33

Q44 When you're deciding to play a game, what are the three most important factors?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 113



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Graphics	66.67%	4
Music	0.00%	0
Developer	0.00%	0
Series / License	16.67%	1
Genre	16.67%	1
Gameplay Features	66.67%	4
Multi-Player / Online Features	0.00%	0
Story	33.33%	2
Characters	0.00%	0
Length / Replay Value	33.33%	2
Reviews and Rankings	50.00%	3
Price	0.00%	0
Other	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 6		

Q45 In the Deus Ex: Mankind Divided trailer: “I used to know what tomorrow looked like — before the world split in two. Everything changed then, including me.”What do you feel this quote means?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 113

I have left this blank as this video game trailer was removed and was not part of the final thesis.

Q46 In the Deus Ex: Mankind Divided trailer: "They made me what I am."What do you feel this quote means?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 113

I have left this blank as this video game trailer was removed and was not part of the final thesis.

Q47 In the Deus Ex: Mankind Divided trailer: "It takes a weapon who chooses to believe a better future is possible ... if I can survive long enough to see it."What does this quote mean to you?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 114

I have left this blank as this video game trailer was removed and was not part of the final thesis.

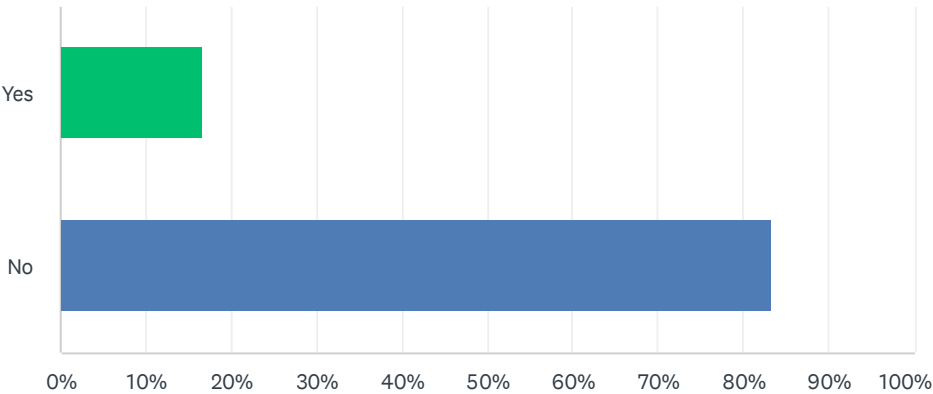
Q48 Would you like to be updated on the research results? If yes, please leave your email. We do not reveal personal information about you to others and we do not attach your name or any other personally identifying information to your survey and/or interview responses. The protection of participants privacy is paramount.

Answered: 4 Skipped: 115

Left blank for privacy purposes

Q49 Would you like to watch another trailer?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 113



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	16.67%	1
No	83.33%	5
TOTAL		6

Having Watched the Assassin's Creed Syndicate Trailer

Q50 In your own words, what did you think of the trailer?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 95

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	rubish - not my thing too violent	11/18/2016 10:46 AM
2	looks Like hollywood movie	11/8/2016 9:43 PM
3	Sick	11/4/2016 12:54 PM
4	Extremely engaging, very aesthetically pleasing, highly realistic, artistic and creative	10/30/2016 11:11 AM
5	It was interesting.	10/28/2016 6:43 PM
6	This trailer has quite good quality and good character image design, some scenes maybe quite shocking for female however such as shooting at the very first beginning.	10/28/2016 3:39 PM
7	Quite engaging	10/27/2016 11:27 PM
8	The animation and graphic design are very realistic.	10/27/2016 10:35 PM
9	Exciting	10/27/2016 7:12 PM
10	Storyline looks good, but what stood out to me was that the graphics don't appear as good as I would expect of today's games (or even some of the previous assassin's creed games). But the plot made me think it would be interesting.	10/24/2016 8:48 PM
11	It was interesting, a bit too 'movie' like trailer.	10/24/2016 7:00 PM
12	Interesting, sounds like a good story line. Seems like a movie though and not a game.	10/24/2016 3:09 PM
13	Very epic, funny and reminds me a little of sherlock holmes.	10/23/2016 8:45 PM
14	I liked it. Reminded me of a movie trailer	10/23/2016 6:14 PM
15	The trailer was very engaging, good story line.	10/23/2016 11:25 AM
16	Although i'm not a gamer, like the trailer. It has more human elements than i thought it would.	10/21/2016 6:02 PM
17	Quite dramatic, like a movie trailer	10/21/2016 5:03 PM
18	The trailer was exciting and presented the game as one with a really engaging storyline and likeable characters. I love watching Assassin's creed trailers for their entertainment value but have never actually played one of the games (or many non-sporting games more broadly).	10/21/2016 3:50 PM
19	I found it very engaging, fast paced and exciting.	10/21/2016 3:50 PM
20	it looked good, but not my type of game. just	10/21/2016 3:45 PM
21	Creative	10/21/2016 2:45 PM
22	Engaging but not as good as the other Assassin Creed's games.	10/21/2016 12:03 PM
23	It was highly engaging. Made me feel like it was a movie i wanted to watch and of course a game i wanted to play.	10/19/2016 7:51 PM
24	It was a bit boring, not something i would be interested in playing	10/19/2016 6:50 PM

Q51 What are the aspects that you liked most about the trailer?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 95

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	None of them	11/18/2016 10:46 AM
2	Music Scene	11/8/2016 9:43 PM
3	The music	11/4/2016 12:54 PM
4	The context, storyline and theme, music, characters	10/30/2016 11:11 AM
5	It felt like I was watching a movie trailer.	10/28/2016 6:43 PM
6	None	10/28/2016 3:39 PM
7	Told a story	10/27/2016 11:27 PM
8	The witty dialogue and the partnership of a male and female working to save London.	10/27/2016 10:35 PM
9	The zipline, new characters and new setting	10/27/2016 7:12 PM
10	The storyline, showing the plot and the journey that the story will take you on.	10/24/2016 8:48 PM
11	story line	10/24/2016 7:00 PM
12	Well disclosed story line	10/24/2016 3:09 PM
13	There was a clear story line and villain. Didn't give away too much of what you can do in the game which is good.	10/23/2016 8:45 PM
14	The music and the actions scenes	10/23/2016 6:14 PM
15	Incorporation of visuals of actual in game elements.	10/23/2016 11:25 AM
16	I love london as i am from there, so i relate to it a lot. Also the plot seems to be quite intriguing - meaning there is a story behind it, and a humanistic plight for a better world.	10/21/2016 6:02 PM
17	About the under-dog trying to defeat the criminals	10/21/2016 5:03 PM
18	I like the thematic element of going up against powerful figures, and the characters were immediately charismatic. The music was good and the story introduction was efficient.	10/21/2016 3:50 PM
19	I enjoyed the beginning where the characters were introduced in detail, indicating thought had been put into the story.	10/21/2016 3:50 PM
20	- explained the plot line well - nice graphics	10/21/2016 3:45 PM
21	The graphic design was cool	10/21/2016 2:45 PM
22	The fighting scenes.	10/21/2016 12:03 PM
23	I liked it presented a story, it also evoked a sense of emotion making want to engage. In a sense the trailer made me feel like i wanted to be the hero and save the town.	10/19/2016 7:51 PM
24	Very good visuals, it had a storyline which seemed compelling to someone who would be interested in this type of a game	10/19/2016 6:50 PM

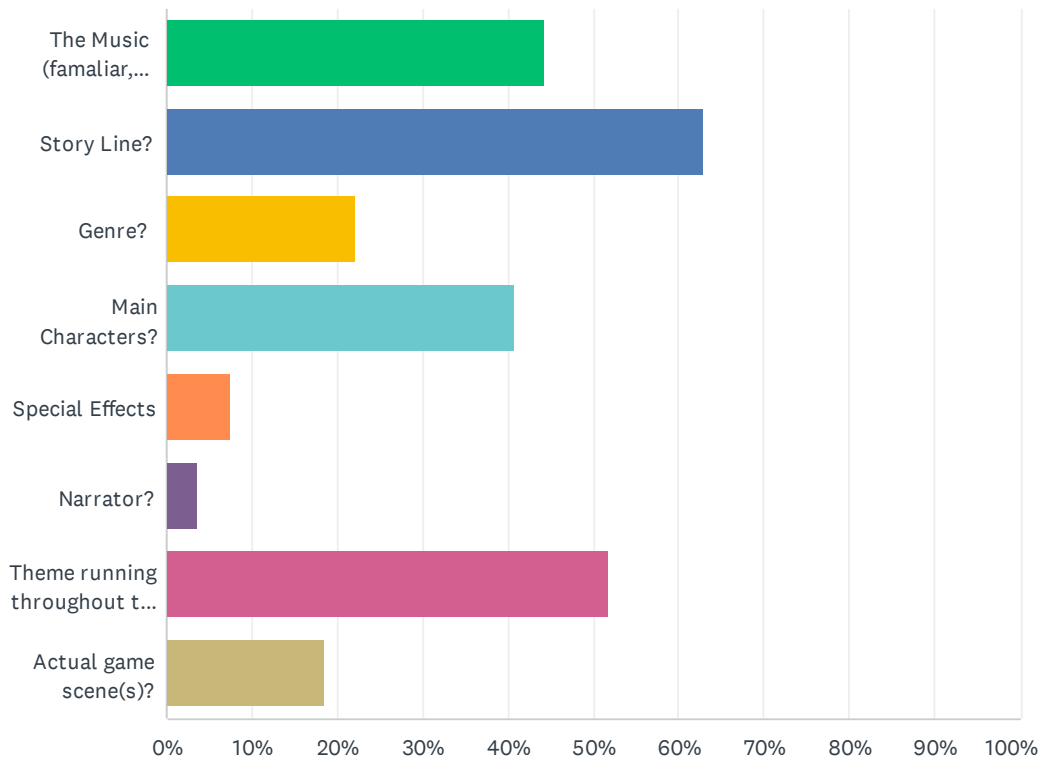
Q52 What are the aspects that you disliked most about the trailer?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 95

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	the whole thing - definitely not for me	11/18/2016 10:46 AM
2	No	11/8/2016 9:43 PM
3	nothing	11/4/2016 12:54 PM
4	nothing, would consider looking into the game	10/30/2016 11:11 AM
5	The graphics could have been better. It didn't show what the gaming experience would be like at all.	10/28/2016 6:43 PM
6	None	10/28/2016 3:39 PM
7	It was too long	10/27/2016 11:27 PM
8	The ruthless nature and how killing seems to become so easy for all involved in the cause.	10/27/2016 10:35 PM
9	None	10/27/2016 7:12 PM
10	The graphics looks a bit cartoonish, and maybe they did give away slightly too much of the story. A bit of mystery to hook you is sometimes more intriguing.	10/24/2016 8:48 PM
11	Graphics	10/24/2016 7:00 PM
12	Didn't show what it is actually like to play the game.	10/24/2016 3:09 PM
13	The other Creed trailers look more realistic than this one. Other than that it was good.	10/23/2016 8:45 PM
14	The costumes	10/23/2016 6:14 PM
15	Nothing	10/23/2016 11:25 AM
16	The graphics maybe weren't the best, but i'm not a gamer so i wouldn't know the benchmark.	10/21/2016 6:02 PM
17	The violence	10/21/2016 5:03 PM
18	The graphics looked outdated, particularly with closeups of the characters speaking.	10/21/2016 3:50 PM
19	There were sections that were just unexplained killing that was boring after a while.	10/21/2016 3:50 PM
20	- i thought it would be in a different era. - not enough gameplay footage	10/21/2016 3:45 PM
21	N/A	10/21/2016 2:45 PM
22	The scenes with just talking.	10/21/2016 12:03 PM
23	I wish it a bit more life like in its animation.	10/19/2016 7:51 PM
24	It took to look to get to the point i.e. what is this game about?	10/19/2016 6:50 PM

Q53 Having watched the trailer which, aspect(s) stoodout for you?

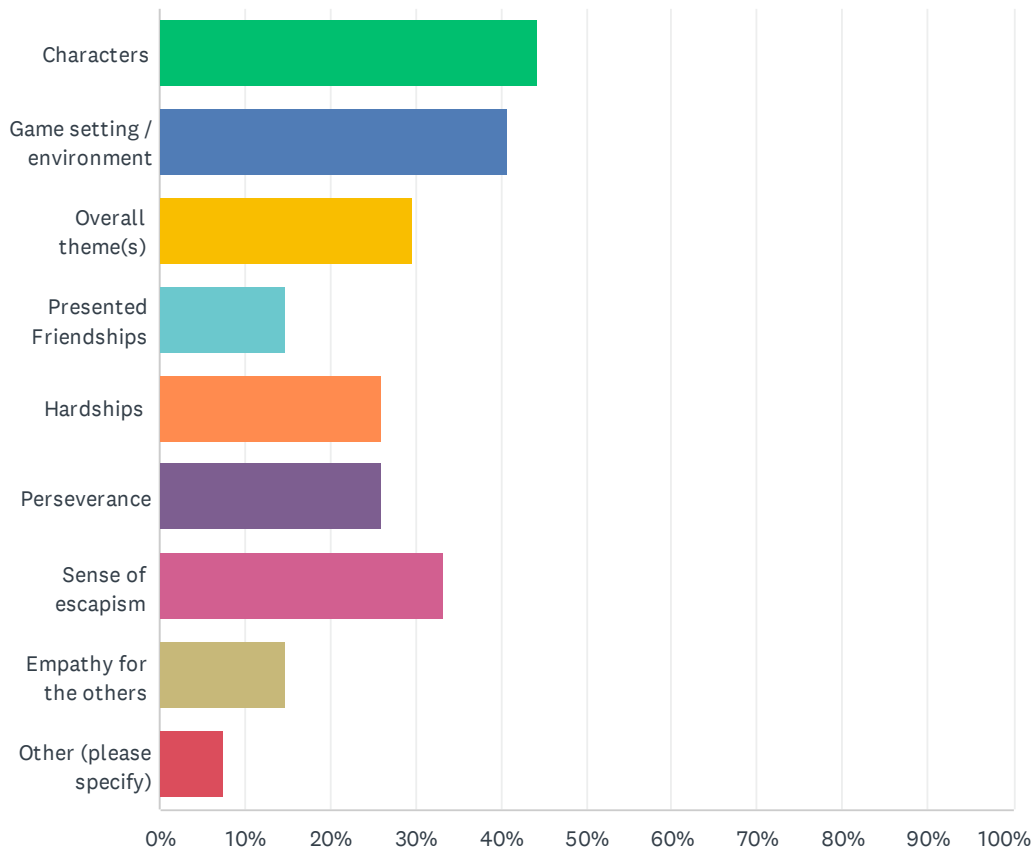
Answered: 27 Skipped: 92



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The Music (famaliar, entertaining, etc.)?	44.44%	12
Story Line?	62.96%	17
Genre?	22.22%	6
Main Characters?	40.74%	11
Special Effects	7.41%	2
Narrator?	3.70%	1
Theme running throughout the Trailer (e.g Action, mystery, suspense)?	51.85%	14
Actual game scene(s)?	18.52%	5
Total Respondents: 27		

Q54 After viewing the trailer, was there anything you could identify with?

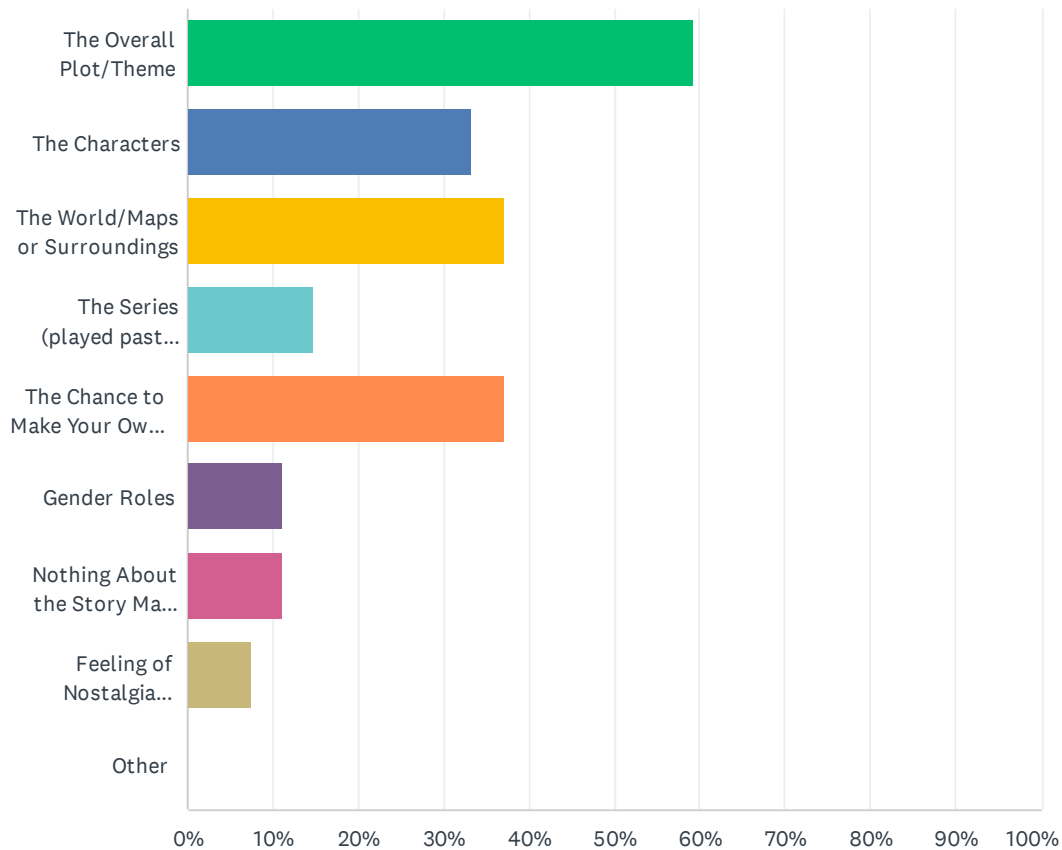
Answered: 27 Skipped: 92



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Characters	44.44%	12
Game setting / environment	40.74%	11
Overall theme(s)	29.63%	8
Presented Friendships	14.81%	4
Hardships	25.93%	7
Perseverance	25.93%	7
Sense of escapism	33.33%	9
Empathy for the others	14.81%	4
Other (please specify)	7.41%	2
Total Respondents: 27		

Q55 What storytelling element(s) make you most want to play a game?

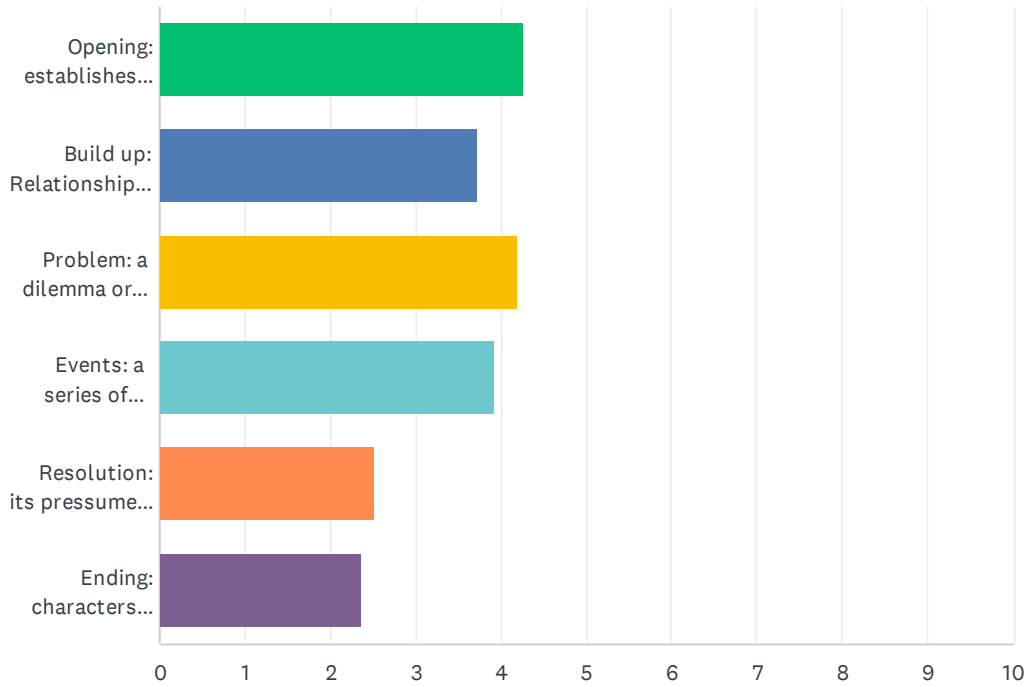
Answered: 27 Skipped: 92



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The Overall Plot/Theme	59.26%	16
The Characters	33.33%	9
The World/Maps or Surroundings	37.04%	10
The Series (played past editions)	14.81%	4
The Chance to Make Your Own Choices and/or Change the Story	37.04%	10
Gender Roles	11.11%	3
Nothing About the Story Makes Me Want to Play a Game	11.11%	3
Feeling of Nostalgia (sentimentality for the past)	7.41%	2
Other	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 27		

Q56 Rank in order which aspect(s) of the trailers' narratives were most appealing to you?

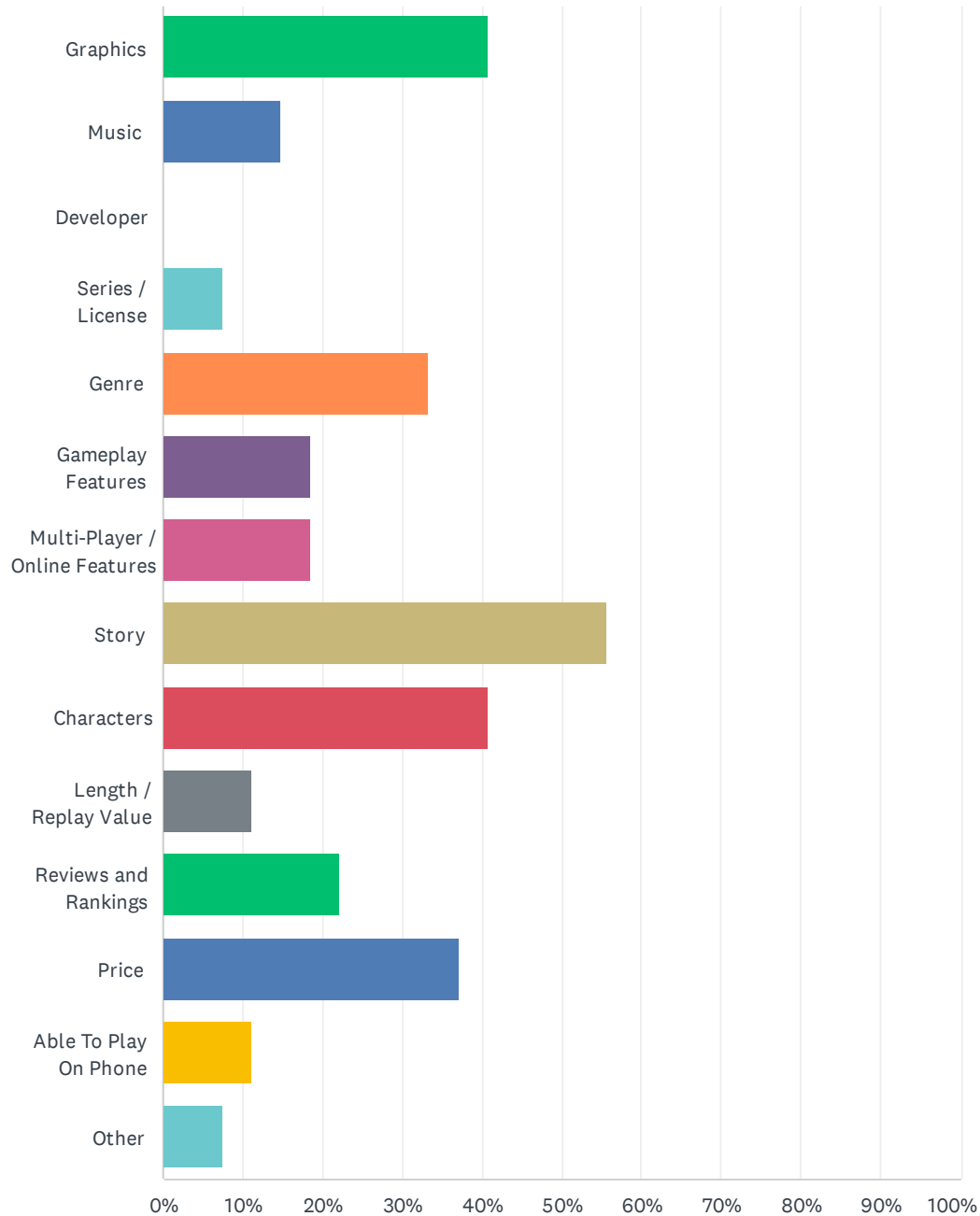
Answered: 27 Skipped: 92



	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL	SCORE
Opening: establishes setting and introduces character(s)	40.74% 11	18.52% 5	3.70% 1	11.11% 3	14.81% 4	11.11% 3	27	4.26
Build up: Relationships established. Development of characters and their world	18.52% 5	14.81% 4	22.22% 6	18.52% 5	18.52% 5	7.41% 2	27	3.74
Problem: a dilemma or series of complications. Characters are faced with an obstacle to overcome a mystery to solve, or often more than one	18.52% 5	25.93% 7	25.93% 7	18.52% 5	7.41% 2	3.70% 1	27	4.19
Events: a series of events/action as characters try to overcome obstacle, solve problem, discover truth and so on.	11.11% 3	25.93% 7	25.93% 7	22.22% 6	11.11% 3	3.70% 1	27	3.93
Resolution: its presumed the protagonists will be victorious, problems are solved, truth revealed.	7.41% 2	3.70% 1	11.11% 3	22.22% 6	22.22% 6	33.33% 9	27	2.52
Ending: characters reflect on events, reinstate relationships and look to the future	3.70% 1	11.11% 3	11.11% 3	7.41% 2	25.93% 7	40.74% 11	27	2.37

Q57 When you're deciding to play a game, what are the three most important factors?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 92



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Graphics	40.74%	11
Music	14.81%	4
Developer	0.00%	0
Series / License	7.41%	2
Genre	33.33%	9
Gameplay Features	18.52%	5
Multi-Player / Online Features	18.52%	5
Story	55.56%	15
Characters	40.74%	11
Length / Replay Value	11.11%	3
Reviews and Rankings	22.22%	6
Price	37.04%	10
Able To Play On Phone	11.11%	3
Other	7.41%	2
Total Respondents: 27		

Q58 In Assassin's Creed Syndicate trailer, the narrator says: "Cripple the masses to grow their fortunes."What do you feel this quote means?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 95

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	no idea	11/18/2016 10:46 AM
2	cool	11/8/2016 9:43 PM
3	Killing the poor to gain riches.	11/4/2016 12:54 PM
4	Destroying the general society and people to gain power and eventually changing their lives in a way desired by the character	10/30/2016 11:11 AM
5	No idea.	10/28/2016 6:43 PM
6	Maybe means this game has some violate scenes	10/28/2016 3:39 PM
7	To tread on people for money	10/27/2016 11:27 PM
8	I feel as though those in power see the general population as disposable and naive to figures of authority.	10/27/2016 10:35 PM
9	How capitalism has a similar effect to the 99%	10/27/2016 7:12 PM
10	That these elite members of society are making themselves wealthy at the expense of the 'everyday innocent' man/woman. Also seems to be a theme that's relevant regardless of what time period humanity is in so it's relatable.	10/24/2016 8:48 PM
11	That wealthy and powerful minority is robbing the rest of London's population	10/24/2016 7:00 PM
12	Milk as much money out of society's good citizens to build wealth by any means possible	10/24/2016 3:09 PM
13	Weakening the masses can help the powerful people grow their money?	10/23/2016 8:45 PM
14	Not sure really	10/23/2016 6:14 PM
15	Take away things from someone to help another person grow	10/23/2016 11:25 AM
16	I feel this relates to the lower class of London, meaning a dictatorship of some sort that rules the city.	10/21/2016 6:02 PM
17	Greed of the bosses not good for their workers	10/21/2016 5:03 PM
18	A comment about establishment figures who use their positions for personal gain at the expense of people who are suffering. A good characterisation of villains.	10/21/2016 3:50 PM
19	The characters are established as villains, selfishly exploiting people to make more money for themselves.	10/21/2016 3:50 PM
20	reap the rewards from the common people by doing something to them...?	10/21/2016 3:45 PM
21	N/A	10/21/2016 2:45 PM
22	I think it means that the top level boss is exploiting the working class to further his wealth.	10/21/2016 12:03 PM
23	It means the oppressor will harm and destroy anything or anyone in order to succeed and growth his own empire. He would build his wealth from the misery and destruction of others.	10/19/2016 7:51 PM
24	kill people to increase your money	10/19/2016 6:50 PM

**Q59 In Assassin's Creed Syndicate trailer, the central character says:"Seven henchmen, each controlling the pillars of London society."
What do you feel this quote means?**

Answered: 24 Skipped: 95

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	no idea	11/18/2016 10:46 AM
2	is it the target?	11/8/2016 9:43 PM
3	Warlords control London.	11/4/2016 12:54 PM
4	The control over the society is centralised in the hands of seven different powerful groups	10/30/2016 11:11 AM
5	The governing bodies of London are corrupt and are really henchmen for the underworld.	10/28/2016 6:43 PM
6	There are 7 powerful people and each of them control the whole London society	10/28/2016 3:39 PM
7	Each of the men run and have great influence over different spheres in society eg industrial production	10/27/2016 11:27 PM
8	Seven power figures ruling London corruptly. The pillars that should be holding up London is tearing it apart.	10/27/2016 10:35 PM
9	The families behind the money, banks and deaths.	10/27/2016 7:12 PM
10	That there are seven people you'll need to 'eliminate' as part of the storyline, with each of these henchmen controlling some aspect of life/business/institution (ie. trade, government, etc)	10/24/2016 8:48 PM
11	Each of this seven people is 'ruling' the main industries in London	10/24/2016 7:00 PM
12	Introduces what the character will come up against: The problem	10/24/2016 3:09 PM
13	There are only very few people with power over a large city.	10/23/2016 8:45 PM
14	London society is controlled by 7 henchmen	10/23/2016 6:14 PM
15	There are seven people who control the functionality of the city	10/23/2016 11:25 AM
16	I feel this quote means only the top few % of men within the city make all the decisions for hundreds of thousands of people	10/21/2016 6:02 PM
17	City is run by baddies!	10/21/2016 5:03 PM
18	The imagery is of a strong building being supported by key components. The 7 characters they refer to all hold crucial positions that allow them to have a huge amount of influence and power. By extension, their removal one by one weakens the control the others have.	10/21/2016 3:50 PM
19	There is an evil force at work, controlling what happens within the society.	10/21/2016 3:50 PM
20	There are 7 different characters who each control a certain aspect of the society - e.g. transport etc	10/21/2016 3:45 PM
21	N/A	10/21/2016 2:45 PM
22	I feel this means they are the mini-bosses that will need to be dealt with before confronting the boss.	10/21/2016 12:03 PM
23	This means there's potentially seven different stages or levels that could be played before reaching the ultimate level or crime boss.	10/19/2016 7:51 PM
24	seven people controlling some aspect of society i.e. politics, economics	10/19/2016 6:50 PM

Q60 In Assassin's Creed Syndicate trailer, the narrator says:"He believes he can solve all the world's woes with a flick of a blade." What do you feel this quote means?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 95

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	violence solves everything	11/18/2016 10:46 AM
2	Cool	11/8/2016 9:43 PM
3	Violence solves everything	11/4/2016 12:54 PM
4	The character is so naively confident about his individual ability to save the society and people	10/30/2016 11:11 AM
5	He uses thuggery to solve all issues.	10/28/2016 6:43 PM
6	This narrator is arrogant and silly	10/28/2016 3:39 PM
7	Violence to solve problems	10/27/2016 11:27 PM
8	I think this means, one person with a weapon has the ability to be victorious. The flick as it is of minimal impact.	10/27/2016 10:35 PM
9	That death is the answer.	10/27/2016 7:12 PM
10	That being an assassin and eliminating the 'wrong doers' will better society	10/24/2016 8:48 PM
11	That he can control everyone by violence	10/24/2016 7:00 PM
12	Violence is the means to make the world a better place	10/24/2016 3:09 PM
13	He's a powerful assassin who feels he can fix the world with the only skills he has.	10/23/2016 8:45 PM
14	Blade is a very powerful tool- can kill to solve problems	10/23/2016 6:14 PM
15	He would be able to help control how the city works with his blade (killing the people who are involved)	10/23/2016 11:25 AM
16	I feel this quote means the main character/protagonist in the game is attempting to solve the city problem of a sort of dictatorship	10/21/2016 6:02 PM
17	He thinks violence wins out	10/21/2016 5:03 PM
18	A violent freedom fighter/renegade who is taking direct action.	10/21/2016 3:50 PM
19	It is believed violence is the answer to the problems the society faces, but this suggests it is not.	10/21/2016 3:50 PM
20	He can fix corrupt society by taking down the head guy ... the main villain (i forgot his name)	10/21/2016 3:45 PM
21	I think it means that he think of himself as a superhero	10/21/2016 2:45 PM
22	I feel this quote means the assassin will execute the "bad people" via knifing them.	10/21/2016 12:03 PM
23	The heroes character uses force and his own violence to balance the world and ascertain justice	10/19/2016 7:51 PM
24	he can solve the worlds problems easily	10/19/2016 6:50 PM

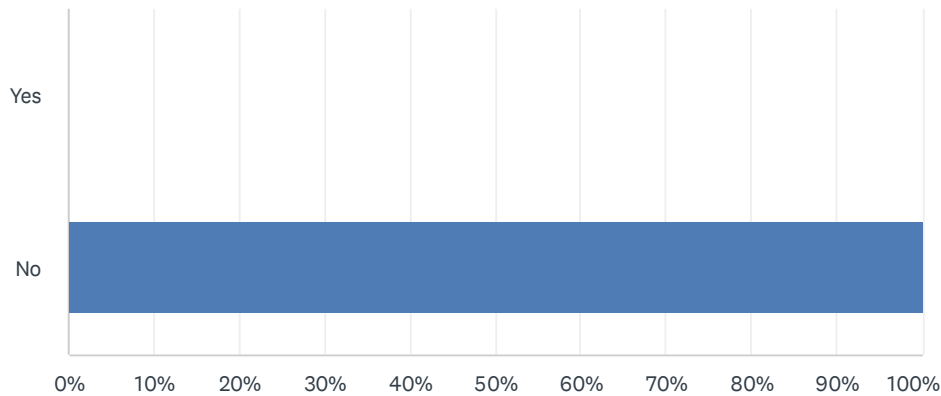
Q61 Would you like to be updated on the research results? If yes, please leave your email. We do not reveal personal information about you to others and we do not attach your name or any other personally identifying information to your survey and/or interview responses. The protection of participants privacy is paramount.

Answered: 4 Skipped: 115

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Q62 Would you like to watch another trailer?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 94



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	0.00%	0
No	100.00%	25
TOTAL		25

Having Watched the Watch Dogs 2 Trailer

Q63 In your own words, what did you think of the trailer?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 107

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	i think that the watch dogs 2 trailer was very good and the music really went well with the content which was happening. Also the trailer made me on the edge of my seat	11/1/2016 7:45 PM
2	Only showed the story, but not actual game play. Storyline is a little like social commentary and collecting personal information.	11/1/2016 2:14 PM
3	Just Crazyyyyyyyyy! It's actually one of the games i highly anticipate and can't wait to play. I just hope the driving experience isn't the same as the first game.	10/31/2016 9:23 PM
4	i think the trailer is going to be very engagingly 'adventurous'	10/29/2016 4:03 PM
5	Exciting, visually appealing and different tone to the first game.	10/29/2016 11:53 AM
6	I thought it was pretty cool, the game looks fun and action packed.	10/29/2016 1:24 AM
7	Amazing, fun, and really convincing. I was actually thinking to buy Playstation just to play this game.	10/28/2016 9:30 PM
8	Exciting and intriguing.	10/28/2016 11:13 AM
9	Interesting - good graphics and background music	10/27/2016 10:15 PM
10	Nicely displayed, all the new and important aspects have been outlined, the graphics look amazing and it makes an individual commit to buy.	10/27/2016 9:10 PM
11	Very unique and fun	10/27/2016 8:58 PM
12	New and fun	10/27/2016 7:08 PM

Q64 What are the aspects that you liked most about the trailer?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 108

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	the music, the cars and inteserty of it	11/1/2016 7:45 PM
2	Story seemed interesting and characters were interesting.	11/1/2016 2:14 PM
3	EVERYTHING! It focuses on the technology we have today such as drones, smartphones and much more. The characters personalities as well as the roles of the characters. Not to forget open world including the alternate endings the game has to give!	10/31/2016 9:23 PM
4	all the background music was amazing!! its very catchy and makes people to put their full attention to!	10/29/2016 4:03 PM
5	It gave a good insight into the storyline which I was most drawn to.	10/29/2016 1:24 AM
6	The story, scenery, technologies, and the facts that gamers can do various actions in the game.	10/28/2016 9:30 PM
7	The cinematic graphics and story line.	10/28/2016 11:13 AM
8	Music / Graphics	10/27/2016 10:15 PM
9	The graphics and new game modes being highlighted	10/27/2016 9:10 PM
10	Engaging and relatable with my age	10/27/2016 8:58 PM
11	The gadgets, since this game became famous for being different than other third person.	10/27/2016 7:08 PM

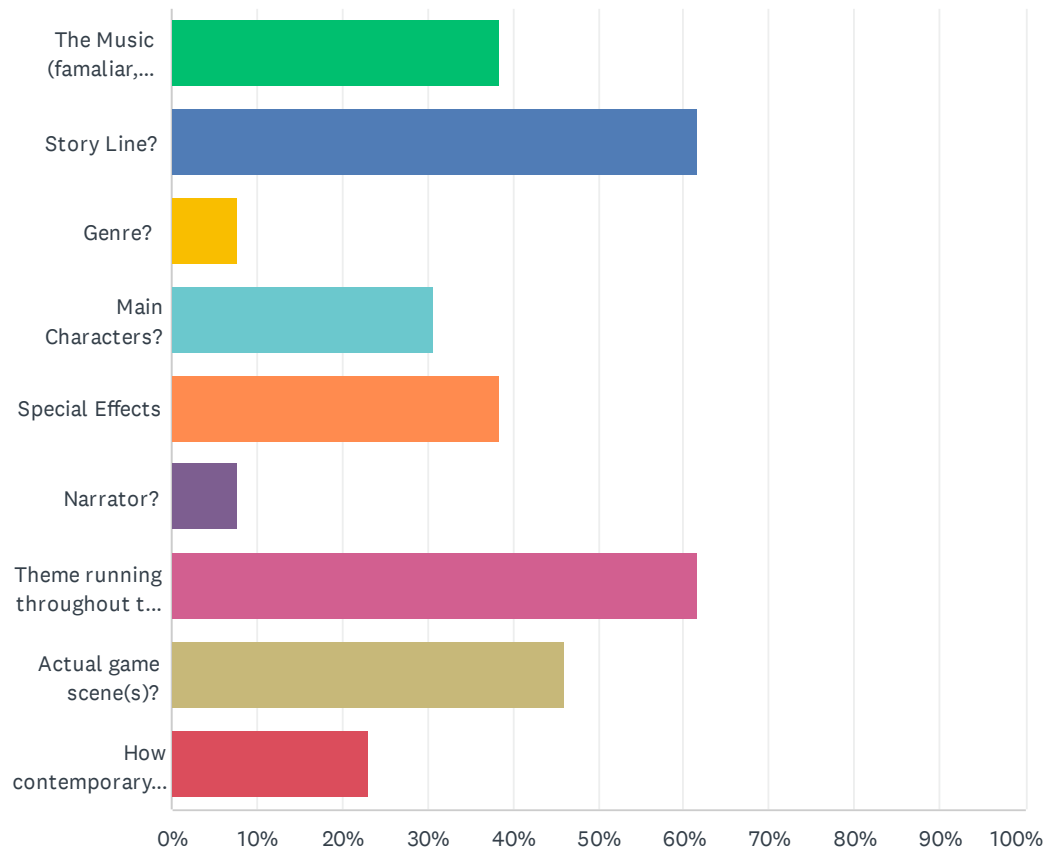
Q65 What are the aspects that you disliked most about the trailer?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 108

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	i really did not like much it was just great	11/1/2016 7:45 PM
2	The beginning where it was pretending to be static.	11/1/2016 2:14 PM
3	Nothing at all.	10/31/2016 9:23 PM
4	i dont have anything to critique for this trailer. i love the whole trailer and i think its one of the best video games trailers ive ever seen. sorry for not being able to answer this question!	10/29/2016 4:03 PM
5	It seemed more like a movie trailer, it didn't show the things that the player could control.	10/29/2016 1:24 AM
6	None.	10/28/2016 9:30 PM
7	The fact that the real game will not look as good as they are proposing here.	10/28/2016 11:13 AM
8	Not good enough graphics	10/27/2016 10:15 PM
9	Nothing at all. Very successful trailer as it made me keen to purchase.	10/27/2016 9:10 PM
10	Nothing really	10/27/2016 8:58 PM
11	None	10/27/2016 7:08 PM

Q66 Having watched the trailer which, aspect(s) stoodout for you?

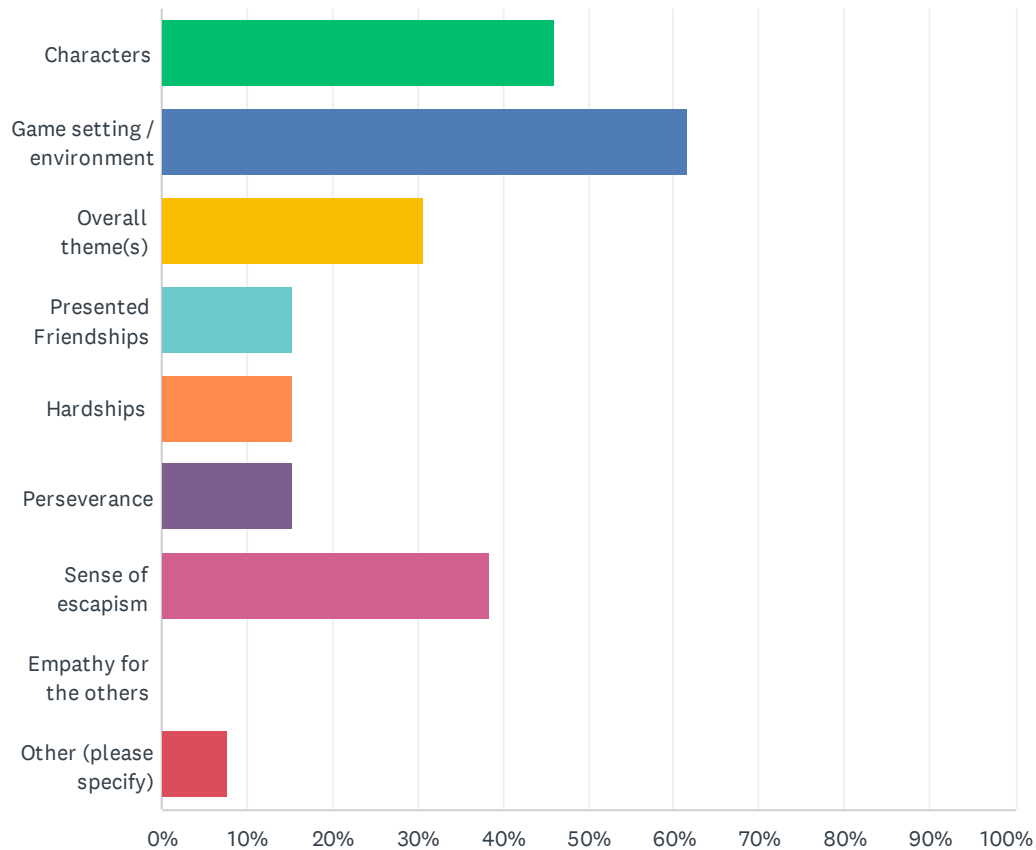
Answered: 13 Skipped: 106



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The Music (famaliar, entertaining, etc.)?	38.46%	5
Story Line?	61.54%	8
Genre?	7.69%	1
Main Characters?	30.77%	4
Special Effects	38.46%	5
Narrator?	7.69%	1
Theme running throughout the Trailer (e.g Action, mystery, suspense)?	61.54%	8
Actual game scene(s)?	46.15%	6
How contemporary the themes are?	23.08%	3
Total Respondents: 13		

Q67 After viewing the trailer, was there anything you could identify with?

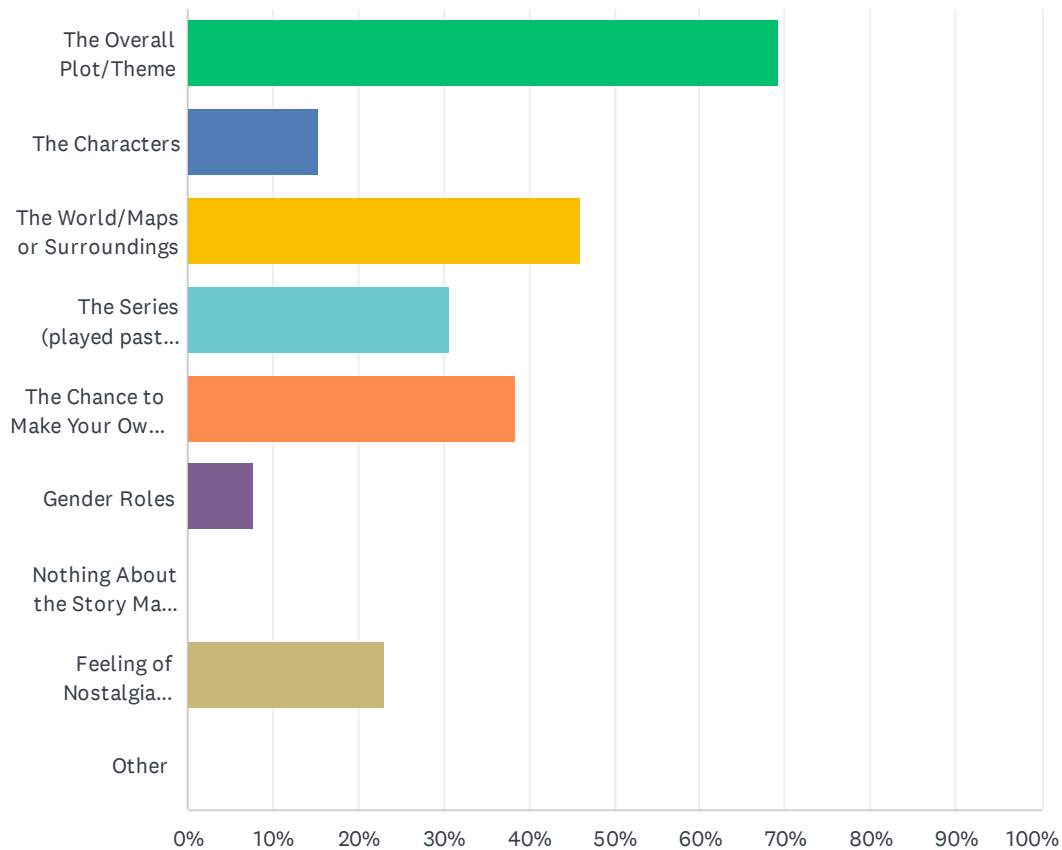
Answered: 13 Skipped: 106



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Characters	46.15%	6
Game setting / environment	61.54%	8
Overall theme(s)	30.77%	4
Presented Friendships	15.38%	2
Hardships	15.38%	2
Perseverance	15.38%	2
Sense of escapism	38.46%	5
Empathy for the others	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	7.69%	1
Total Respondents: 13		

Q68 What storytelling element(s) make you most want to play a game?

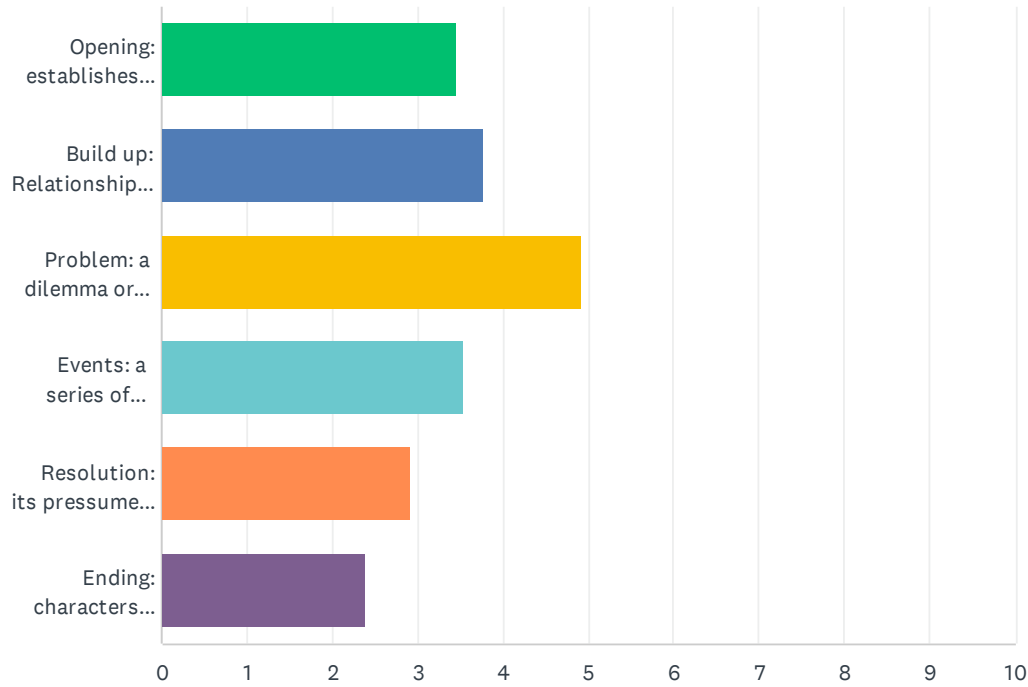
Answered: 13 Skipped: 106



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The Overall Plot/Theme	69.23%	9
The Characters	15.38%	2
The World/Maps or Surroundings	46.15%	6
The Series (played past editions)	30.77%	4
The Chance to Make Your Own Choices and/or Change the Story	38.46%	5
Gender Roles	7.69%	1
Nothing About the Story Makes Me Want to Play a Game	0.00%	0
Feeling of Nostalgia (sentimentality for the past)	23.08%	3
Other	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 13		

Q69 Rank in order which aspect(s) of the trailers' narratives were most appealing to you?

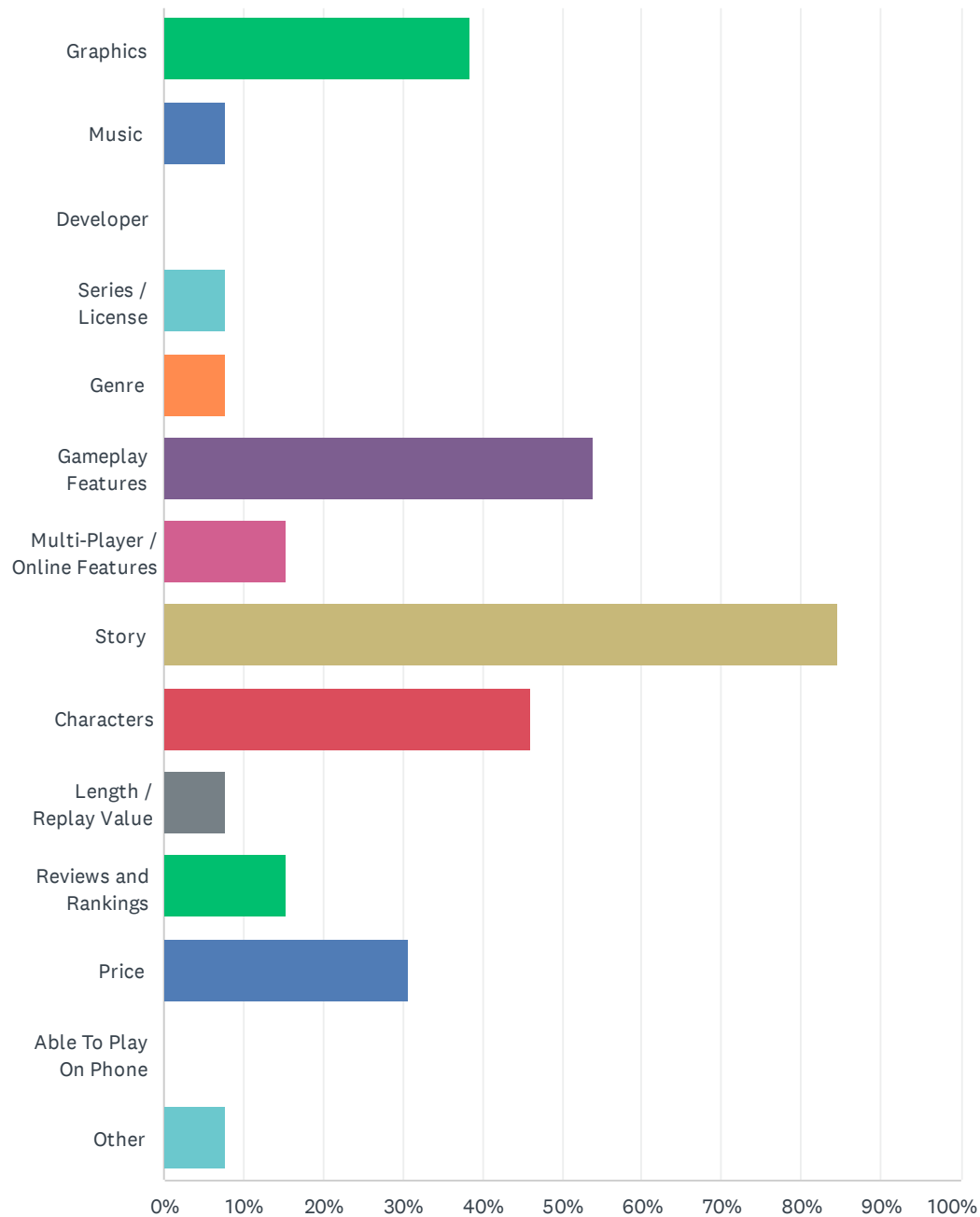
Answered: 13 Skipped: 106



	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL	SCORE
Opening: establishes setting and introduces character(s)	15.38% 2	15.38% 2	15.38% 2	15.38% 2	30.77% 4	7.69% 1	13	3.46
Build up: Relationships established. Development of characters and their world	7.69% 1	15.38% 2	46.15% 6	15.38% 2	7.69% 1	7.69% 1	13	3.77
Problem: a dilemma or series of complications. Characters are faced with an obstacle to overcome a mystery to solve, or often more than one	46.15% 6	23.08% 3	15.38% 2	7.69% 1	7.69% 1	0.00% 0	13	4.92
Events: a series of events/action as characters try to overcome obstacle, solve problem, discover truth and so on.	7.69% 1	30.77% 4	7.69% 1	23.08% 3	23.08% 3	7.69% 1	13	3.54
Resolution: its presumed the protagonists will be victorious, problems are solved, truth revealed.	15.38% 2	7.69% 1	7.69% 1	23.08% 3	15.38% 2	30.77% 4	13	2.92
Ending: characters reflect on events, reinstate relationships and look to the future	7.69% 1	7.69% 1	7.69% 1	15.38% 2	15.38% 2	46.15% 6	13	2.38

Q70 When you're deciding to play a game, what are the three most important factors?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 106



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Graphics	38.46%	5
Music	7.69%	1
Developer	0.00%	0
Series / License	7.69%	1
Genre	7.69%	1
Gameplay Features	53.85%	7
Multi-Player / Online Features	15.38%	2
Story	84.62%	11
Characters	46.15%	6
Length / Replay Value	7.69%	1
Reviews and Rankings	15.38%	2
Price	30.77%	4
Able To Play On Phone	0.00%	0
Other	7.69%	1
Total Respondents: 13		

Q71 In the Watch Dogs 2 trailer the character says: “ A giant spider web endlessly gathering data. They're making backroom deals to trade our private information. We have to stop this!”What do you feel this quote means?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 108

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	that it is just a massie amount of information which	11/1/2016 7:45 PM
2	Corporations are gathering private information on their users and selling it to other companies, which eventually leads to loss of privacy and groups that possess profiles on everyone. The protagonists are trying to protect users from companies using and collecting their data for personal interests and profit.	11/1/2016 2:14 PM
3	That hackers access backdoors without alerting the server to any threats forming transactions by exchanging important data	10/31/2016 9:23 PM
4	the 'bad guys' are in search to illegally exploit the characters privacy,	10/29/2016 4:03 PM
5	It means that data is being shared by companies (and others) for profit gain and the characters feel a sense of duty to stop it.	10/29/2016 1:24 AM
6	That means an organization acted as a big brother and tried to expose everybody's personal information for personal or the organization's benefit. The team of hacker was planning to stop this madness.	10/28/2016 9:30 PM
7	The government or the people with authority are conspiring to exploit the common people, using their personal information without consent.	10/28/2016 11:13 AM
8	privacy infringement	10/27/2016 10:15 PM
9	That the player of the game has a large responsibility and is challenged	10/27/2016 9:10 PM
10	The problem has formed	10/27/2016 8:58 PM
11	Trying to send a message to the gamer about current world problems such as lack of privacy and cyber tracking.	10/27/2016 7:08 PM

Q72 In the Watch Dogs 2 trailer, the character says: "A few civilian casualties is the cost you have to pay for the betterment of the world." What do you feel this quote means?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 107

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	idk	11/1/2016 7:45 PM
2	The benefit of the group outweighs the sacrifice of an individual and the group must accept that some innocent bystanders may to die in the process of achieving a larger plan.	11/1/2016 2:14 PM
3	That to improve the world, you should eliminate a few civilians.	10/31/2016 9:23 PM
4	we have to sacrifice something in order to make the world a better place	10/29/2016 4:03 PM
5	Establishing the "bad guy" is bad.	10/29/2016 11:53 AM
6	It means someone is willing to sacrifice what they think is little in order to gain a larger benefit.	10/29/2016 1:24 AM
7	I feel like it refers to collateral damage, meaning few casualties cannot be avoided if the hackers go against the the organization.	10/28/2016 9:30 PM
8	There is sometimes a human price in the battle between good vs. evil.	10/28/2016 11:13 AM
9	ends justify the means	10/27/2016 10:15 PM
10	There are sacrifices that must be made in the game and that its just part of the game.	10/27/2016 9:10 PM
11	There are some people to be sacrificed for	10/27/2016 8:58 PM
12	Nothing comes for free	10/27/2016 7:08 PM

Q73 In the Watch Dogs 2 trailer, a character says: "The people, they don't care how it works, only that it does!"What do you feel this quote means?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 108

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	idk	11/1/2016 7:45 PM
2	Most users are oblivious to how technology works and they do not actively seek out how things work. The trailer implies that if they were genuinely concerned, they would actively seek out the answers, but clearly do not.	11/1/2016 2:14 PM
3	The ones at the top only care if something operates and not what goes through the process to make it operate	10/31/2016 9:23 PM
4	people always find an easy and quick way to get what they want	10/29/2016 4:03 PM
5	It means that people are more concerned with results rather than the process.	10/29/2016 1:24 AM
6	People use technologies without knowing the consequences, such as being monitored, watched, and potentially private information is being collected. People only care what the technologies do and their benefits toward the users.	10/28/2016 9:30 PM
7	The common people are being exploited and they don't realise that it is wrong, or they just don't care.	10/28/2016 11:13 AM
8	looks don't matter, only use	10/27/2016 10:15 PM
9	People won't worry how the job gets done and that there's always many solutions towards getting a job done.	10/27/2016 9:10 PM
10	People only care that its gotta be working	10/27/2016 8:58 PM
11	The people's obsession with technology and how they value their experience with others through technology than privacy.	10/27/2016 7:08 PM

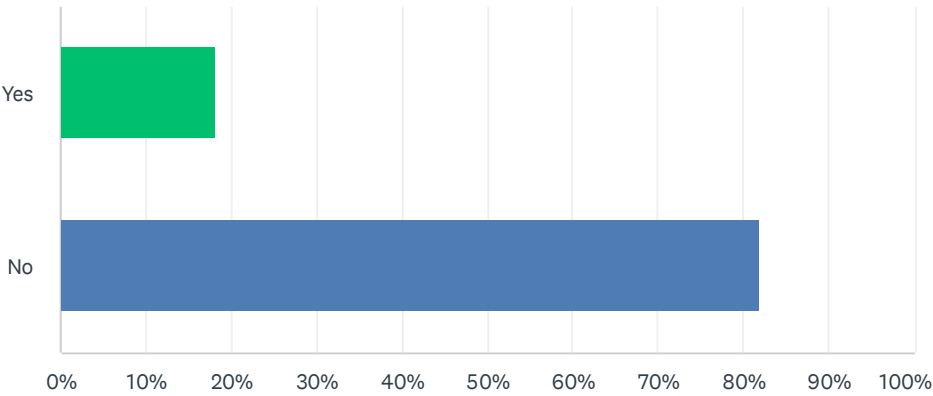
Q74 Would you like to be updated on the research results? If yes, please leave your email. We do not reveal personal information about you to others and we do not attach your name or any other personally identifying information to your survey and/or interview responses. The protection of participants privacy is paramount.

Answered: 4 Skipped: 115

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Q75 Would you like to watch another trailer?

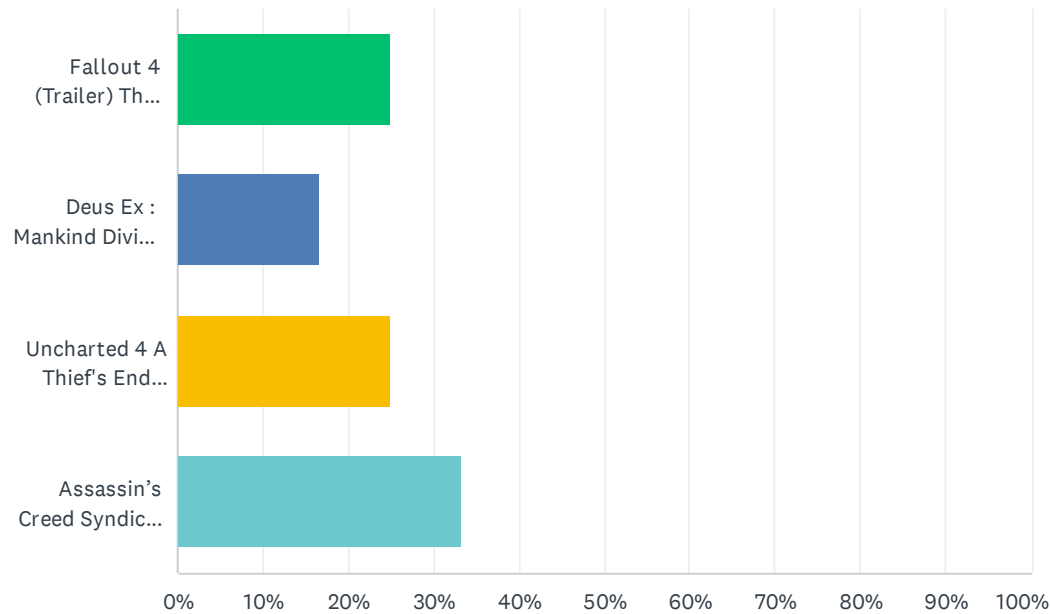
Answered: 11 Skipped: 108



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	18.18%	2
No	81.82%	9
TOTAL		11

Q76 Choose ONE of the following trailers to watch

Answered: 12 Skipped: 107



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Fallout 4 (Trailer) The content is high in impact R 18+ material is restricted to adults	25.00%	3
Deus Ex : Mankind Divided (Trailer)The content is high in impact R 18+ material is restricted to adults	16.67%	2
Uncharted 4 A Thief's End (Story Trailer)The content is high in impact R 18+ material is restricted to adults	25.00%	3
Assassin's Creed Syndicate (Story Trailer)The content is high in impact R 18+ material is restricted to adults	33.33%	4
TOTAL		12