



CHARITY GAMING

Case study deck

How-to Guide

There are many ways you can use this case study deck. You could go old skool and follow the pages in numerical order. You could use the glossary to find linked case studies around a theme. You could use a random number generator to open the deck at an unexpected page.

OR You could play our adventure game.

At the bottom of each case study page is a mini-chapter from our interactive adventure, 'The Tales of the Necronomicon'. You start by waking in a dark forest. As you read, you'll encounter various decision points where you must choose from different options presented to you.

Each choice will lead you down a unique path with its own set of adventures and outcomes. To navigate through your adventure, simply click on the option that you find most appealing or interesting.

Remember, there are no wrong decisions here, just different stories to uncover. So, dive in, choose boldly, and enjoy the journey of creating your own adventure!

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Jingle Jam

Jingle Jam is the world's largest charity gaming event, raising more than £2.6m in 2023 for their charity partners. The event features unique live-streaming content hosted by a variety of creators, as well as a games bundle sent to anyone who donates over the minimum amount. In 2021, they also launched community-based fundraisers, with creators, charities, and game companies running their own Jingle Jam streams.

SO WHAT: Gaming is all about community. Jingle Jam offers a space for gamers to come together over shared passions, whether that be at their annual event or at a community-based fundraiser. Level up your mass participation offer by embracing this community.

You awaken in a dark forest. Your head hurts and you're regretting that last glass of mead you drank in the tavern.
You have no idea how you got here, or even where here is.



International Committee of the Red Cross

The ICRC's recent 'Play by the Rules' challenge saw them partner with several Twitch streamers to challenge gamers to avoid committing war crimes in popular First Person Shooters. They even created their own *Fortnite* mode to teach players the rules of actual war. Although the event wasn't monetised, it drew 143,618 unique viewers. The ICRC has also been experimenting with VR experiences to create more engaging narratives. The 'Enter the Room' campaign simulated challenges faced by individuals affected by armed conflict.

SO WHAT: Gaming's interactivity lends itself to a uniquely engaging narrative style. The ICRC is using this to literally place their audience in someone else's shoes, and experience perspectives they otherwise might not consider. Experiment with new narratives to engage your supporters with your mission.

There is enough light from the moon to see you're at a crossroads. There are paths to the north, south, and west.
You are filled with a sense of dread. You need to get out of this forest. Pick a path.

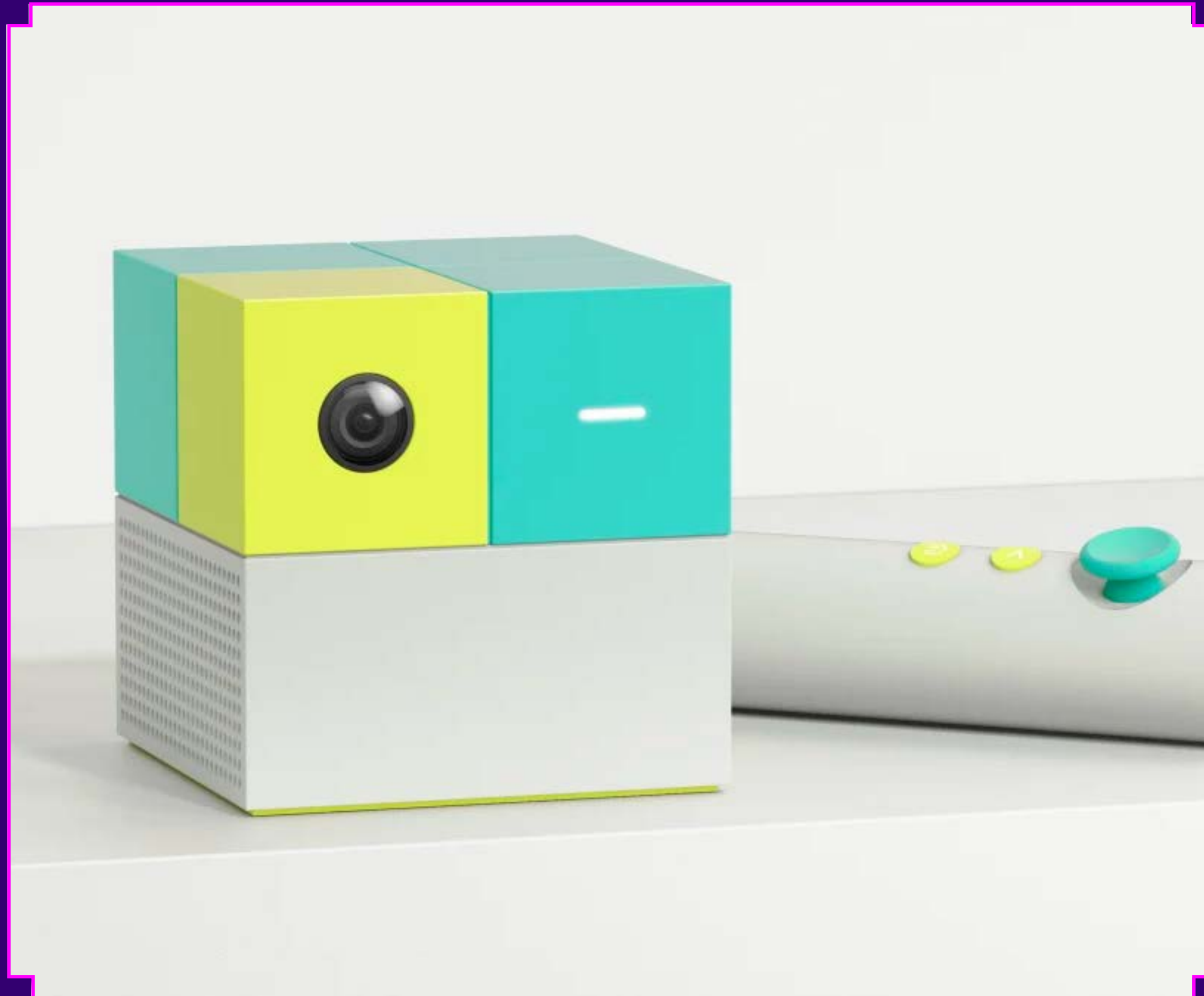


NSPCC

In February 2024, NSPCC hosted the **Game Safe Festival**, hoping to find a better way to game that could keep children safe in the environment, without excluding them from it. The event saw collaboration with developers, platforms, industry bodies, esports and influencers to play and act for designing a safer gaming future. The event wasn't only for children – parents were welcome too to find resources and information about keeping their kids safe in the world of gaming. The event is a great example of tapping into the gaming community while linking it to the organisation's own mission, and without compromising their ethical stance.

SO WHAT: As today's kids spend increasing amounts of time in digital spaces, swapping the playground for the Fortnite battle arena, we need to ensure that these are safe for use. Ensure your activations in this space are up to scratch, and collaborate with your audiences to create safe and welcoming spaces for all.

You follow the path north. The tree canopy is becoming denser, blocking the light.
You can continue going **north**, or turn around and **start again**.



Nex Playground

This colourful cube-shaped console is built explicitly for family fun. Designed to get you off the couch and jumping around your living room, it has a motion-tracking camera to put you in the game. Gamers play physically, with gestures and movements, without needing a controller. The cube has a set of built-in games available through a subscription model, including charades-style games, football, and dancing. It also has a fitness feature with a set of guided workouts.

SO WHAT: With couch co-op and family co-gaming on the rise, the Nex Playground allows families to make their hobby less sedentary and more physically engaging. While the games available now are limited, expect to see more devices built for families to bond over gaming pop up in the future. The developers also plan to add object detection in the future, allowing gamers to incorporate everyday objects into their gameplay (think playing virtual tennis with a real racket) – great for kids who are increasingly blurring boundaries between online and digital.

You follow the path north. It's so dark you can no longer see the path in front of you. You can continue stumbling forwards, hoping to clear the trees, or turn around and go back to the crossroads.



My Little Pony x TripAdvisor

In 2022, My Little Pony launched a Roblox activation aimed at young kids, building a game that lets players jump into the franchise setting of Maretime Bay. Rather than only advertising their game on Roblox, they also advertised to would-be gamers' parents through a TripAdvisor listing for Maretime Bay as a family holiday destination. Part of the campaign focussed on safeguarding and showing parents how the game could be made more child-safe through settings.

SO WHAT: By targeting parents over their kids through their marketing campaign, My Little Pony is tapping into the rise of co-gaming while also showing their awareness of new challenges parents face when their kids game. By highlighting the safe environment they created and the multiplayer opportunities in the game, the brand is acknowledging the latest way that families are adopting gaming as a communal activity.

You continue along the north path. It's now pitch black. You reach into your pocket to try and find your lighter.
Did you remember to pack your lighter? Yes, No.



XBOX: BEYOND GENERATIONS

When everybody plays, we all win

xbox

As part of their 'When Everybody Plays, We All Win' brand platform, Xbox launched their Beyond Generations campaign in 2021. The campaign focused on intergenerational connections via loneliness, particularly timely given its launch in the middle of pandemic lockdowns. The brand also encouraged people to become Age UK Digital Buddies.

SO WHAT: The benefits of Xbox's campaign are twofold: they're celebrating intergenerational connection and joy through gaming, while also shining a spotlight on a demographic not typically associated with the industry. Despite older audiences increasingly entering the gaming arena, older audiences are often marginalised by its marketing and product offering. Take Fortnite sensation Grumpygran1948 as inspiration for how older audiences are choosing to play.

The lighter catches and illuminates the space around you. You realise you've reached a dead end.
Oh dear. That's frustrating. Better turn around and start again.



Billie

Made by women-based self-care brand Billie, the 'No Worries If Not!' board game is designed to address the outlandish expectations that women often face. The unwinnable game, similar to *The Game of Life*, takes players through places like "Smile More street" and "Judgement Junction." Their tagline ("The game women never wanted to play") is a nod to the real-life 'game' that women often find themselves forced to play.

SO WHAT: Billie uses gamification, along with humour and colourful design, to call out women's challenges through a digestible and quirky lens. The humorous approach lets players move through a journey (that many of its players will no doubt find recognisable) that challenges societal norms and promotes inclusivity.

You're out of luck. Your lighter must have fallen out of your pocket at some point. Do you turn around and try to find your way back or keep going in the hope that you'll be able to find your way out of the forest?



Dove

Beauty and self-care brand Dove has been working to promote inclusivity and diversity in gaming. Their multi-pronged approach includes a Roblox game, specifically designed to help girls combat negative self-esteem; a collaboration with Epic Games and Women in Games to design a set of inclusive character art that's free to use for developers; and a training programme to help devs and designers learn how to avoid unconscious bias when designing new avatars.

SO WHAT: Although we've seen progress with diversity in the gaming industry, there is still a long way to go. The majority of games still feature male protagonists and female characters are often hyper-sexualised with unrealistic body standards. By partnering with industry experts, Dove is pushing for continuous improvement, and furthering their company ethos of improving self-esteem for girls and women.

You walk forwards, hoping the tree canopy will thin and the moon will guide your way.
It doesn't. You keep shuffling forwards.



Group of women, trans and non-binary people from the Video Games sector in Argentina

Women In Games

NGO Women In Games recently launched a campaign for men to experience the gender assault that female gamers face daily. Professional male players were invited to play their favourite games using a voice modulator. The campaign then recreated the violent comments heard by participants during real play and showed how the average number of wins significantly went down when playing as women as a result of the verbal abuse.

SO WHAT: While gaming has helped people express and explore every aspect of their identity in virtual worlds, people are still subjected to real-world prejudices and biases. Women in Games recognises the need to create safe digital spaces where everyone can thrive. By improving the visibility of the challenges faced by marginalised gaming sub-communities, the organisation is hoping to shift the narrative for women gamers.

It's so dark you don't see the dead end in front of you and walk head first straight into a tree.
You hit your head and pass out.



Pilsen Callao

Peru-based beer brand Pilsen Callao has launched an AI-driven bot that translates real-time audio chats into sign language. Designed to help deaf gamers talk to their friends mid-game, the E-nterpreters software is free to download for Discord. The software was made in collaboration with members of the deaf community, who developed new gaming signs for the bot. It was downloaded by 75% of Peru's deaf gaming community within the first week of its launch in October 2022.

SO WHAT: Accessibility software and hardware in gaming is often challenging to find and expensive. By offering their interpreter free of charge, Pilsen Callao is breaking down barriers for the deaf community, whilst raising awareness for their brand. With the rise of generative AI tools, developments like these will become increasingly easy to make and distribute.

You follow the path south. As you walk further into the forest you notice fog starting to creep through the trees. The sounds of the forest start to still, filling the space with an eerie silence. Do you carry on, or go back?



Halo

Recent entries into the *Halo* franchise feature more extensive accessibility features. These include meeting accessibility standards like enhanced colourblind settings, and the ability to rebind a mouse, keyboard, and gamepad controls. Inclusion isn't just limited to the game's settings either – the studio partnered with disabled service member group Warfighter Engaged to design prosthetic customisation options for players creating their own avatars.

SO WHAT: These features are part of a bigger push across console gaming to be more accessible to players of all abilities. While indie games tend to have better accessibility features available, many bigger franchises are still behind the curve. Integrating these features and customisations in flagship games like *Halo* will encourage others to meet the same standards.

You creep further along the path. The fog is rising from every direction. It feels like it's heading straight towards you.
Paranoid much? Do you continue along the path or return to the crossroads?



REGION'S LARGEST COMMUNITY OF FEMALE C

Girls Got Game

December 2022 saw Nivea launch the female gaming community Girls Got Game, following a massively successful 2021 pilot that reached 16 million women across the MENA region. The community showcases female gaming in the region, hosts bi-weekly streams on Twitch, a weekly YouTube show, and tournaments, and has a dedicated space for gamers to share stories and connect. They hope that more women will be able and inspired to pursue interests and careers in gaming and esports.

SO WHAT: Girls Got Game aims to unite an existing community in a safe space where open dialogue is encouraged. Not only does Nivea hope to promote women in games, they're also meeting their customers where they live. The platform is designed to foster player-to-player interaction with minimal brand interference rather than act as a brand-to-consumer marketing channel.

As the fog thickens you struggle to see the path in front of you. Do you carry on forwards, hoping something terrible doesn't befall you (like hitting a tree) or do you retrace your steps?



Heineken

As part of their 'Not All Nights Out Are Out' campaign, Heineken introduced Beer Matchmaking: a platform designed to connect gamers and promote socialising while playing. The platform lets gamers register and find others with similar interests and schedules, mapping their favourite games, consoles, and skill levels. To celebrate the launch, Heineken released collectable beers with QR codes that directed gamers to the platform.

SO WHAT: Gaming sometimes gets flack for being an antisocial hobby – but for many gamers, it's the opposite. It acts as a connector between them and their friends and families and lets them make new friends worldwide. Heineken's new initiative taps into this community aspect by connecting people.

Well you're certainly a determined traveller! You carry on through the fog, hoping not to walk into anything ...



/r/LowSodium Communities

Anyone who has spent time on gaming subreddits will know that most threads are inundated with toxic comments. *Halo's* subreddit was temporarily locked in 2021 because it became too toxic to manage. Fed up with the negativity, some gamers are starting Low-Sodium threads (low-sodium, as in low salt ... Get it?), where people gather to discuss and enjoy games in a more positive way. If you're tired of the toxic nature of your favourite game's subreddit, there's usually a low-sodium alternative.

SO WHAT: Gamers are actively creating safe, non-toxic spaces to come together over their enjoyment of the game. Spaces where the haters aren't welcome. Doesn't matter how niche your interest, there's a community out there who will share your passion. Connecting over joy in uncertain times is a great way to take your first steps into a new community.

Through the fog you can just make out the shape of trees edging the path, and the rocky path beneath your feet.
The silent forest is really unnerving, so you decide to fill the silence with a tune.

GAMERS ≡VERSUS≡ DEPRESSION

Gamers vs Depression

Movember-funded initiative aims to train gamers to be 'psychological first-aiders.' Volunteers attend three hour online workshops with a team of experts followed by supervised experience over several weeks. The training helps them pick up on signs of common mental health disorders, how to start the conversation, and to look after their friends. Ultimately, the hope is ensure that every gaming guild, esports team and society has a psychological first aider.

SO WHAT: For many people, gaming communities are already a safe space that can provide solace from their daily anxieties. This initiative is working to embed more awareness and mental health support skills into these communities, to make the positive mental health benefits structural. Give gamers the tools to support themselves and others through difficult times.

What song do you choose to sing? The Nintendo Wii theme music, Shake it Off by Taylor Swift, or Never Gonna Give You Up by Rick Astley



Roblox

A whopping 60% of Roblox's user base is under 16 years old. How does the company keep them safe? One of the measures they've taken is to launch a section of its website called For Parents, which explains their safeguarding tools. From algorithms blocking swear words and names and addresses in text-chats, to how to report inappropriate chat or content, or detecting whether players' avatars are wearing appropriate clothing.

SO WHAT: Creating safeguarding tools that are 100% effective is a challenge that we're yet to see a solution to. But signposting to existing interventions, and encouraging parents to do their research and have open conversations with their kids about safely interacting with the environments they're in will go a long way for improving the safety of online communities.

Great choice! If only this were the Eras Tour and you were actually Taylor Swift. Sadly, unlike Taylor you can't hold a note and your out of tune caterwauling echoes in the silent forest. You decide to try another song.



ZERO HARM IN COMMS

Ubisoft x Riot Games

In 2022, Ubisoft teamed up with Riot Games on a new research project that's intended to reduce toxic in-game chats. The project, called Zero Harm in Comms, is broken up into two phases: first, the studios are trying to create a framework for sharing, collecting, and tagging data in a privacy-protecting way; next, they'll use that framework to create AI-powered tools to detect and mitigate disruptive behaviours.

SO WHAT: The chat function has become a core part of gaming as it has become more community-focused. While the potential for connection is great (**43% of gamers** have found friendships and/or love through the chat function), gamers are also opening themselves up to potentially harmful conversations. Collaborating to create better safeguarding systems in these chats will not only support the better mental wellbeing of existing gamers, but also break down barriers for those who might be more likely to face in-chat abuse to join the gaming community.

You're getting your groove down to Rick and are so in the moment, shaking those hips, that you don't spot the massive 5 metre hole in the middle of the path. You fall straight down the hole, hitting your head. You pass out.

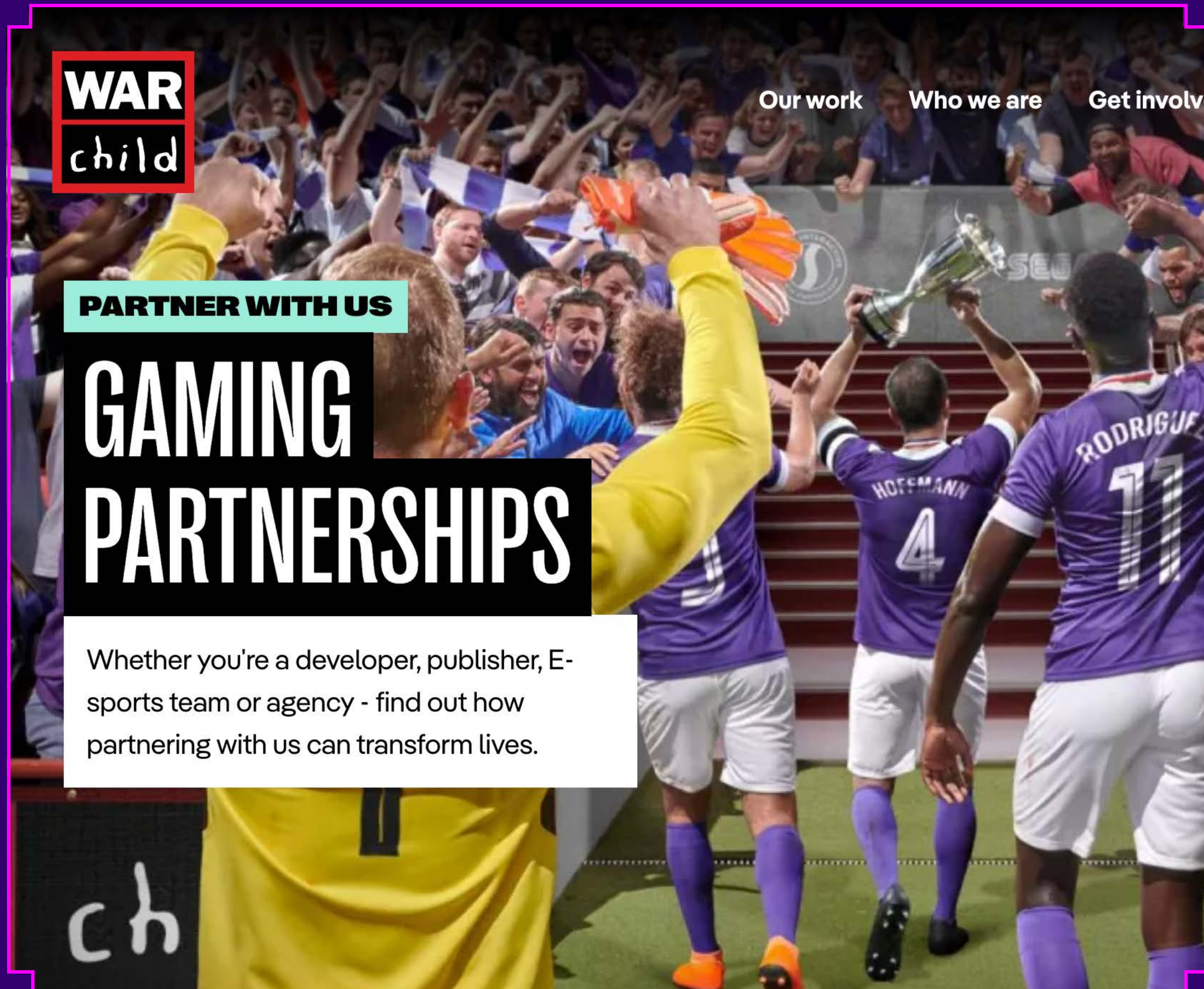


Unicef x Outright Games

Unicef UK has signed a long-term partnership with video game studio Outright Games, known for a number of popular kid's games. The publisher committed to **raising at least £200,000 a year** through the sale of video game bundles featuring popular children's entertainment characters. Beyond the sale of these bundles, there's a number of events and livestreams planned, as well as community fundraising by Outright Games.

SO WHAT: The partnership is a great example of charities partnering with major gaming studios to generate income. In this case, Outright Games acts as an expert partner of sorts, bringing knowledge of the gaming sector and iconic IP to the table, whilst also aligning with Unicef's mission through their focus on children's games.

As the first notes of the Wii theme echo through the trees you feel the energy in the forest **start to change**.



WAR
child

Our work Who we are Get involved

PARTNER WITH US

GAMING PARTNERSHIPS

Whether you're a developer, publisher, E-sports team or agency - find out how partnering with us can transform lives.

ch

war child

War Child has an in-house partnership team focused on creating long-lasting, strategic partnerships with various players in the gaming space. From developers to publishers, esports teams, or agencies, these partnerships have raised over £5m for the charity. This includes a 15 year partnership with Sports Interactive, which sees every sale of its *Football Manager* games contribute 10p to War Child and includes in-game advertising; a series of game partners for which they create downloadable content (DLC); and partnerships with IP owners who dedicate a percentage of their lifetime royalties to the charity.

SO WHAT: The sheer variety of War Child's gaming portfolio is what makes this an interesting case study. Some are mission-aligned (ie. DLC for games about war), others are almost purely focussed on income (ie. the partnership with Sports Interactive), but all of them lend the charity legitimacy within the gaming community, and a deeper understanding of how their different audiences interact with this space.

The forest seems to like your choice of music. The fog is starting to thin and you think you can hear the sounds of life starting to return to the woodland. They're obviously fellow gamers.

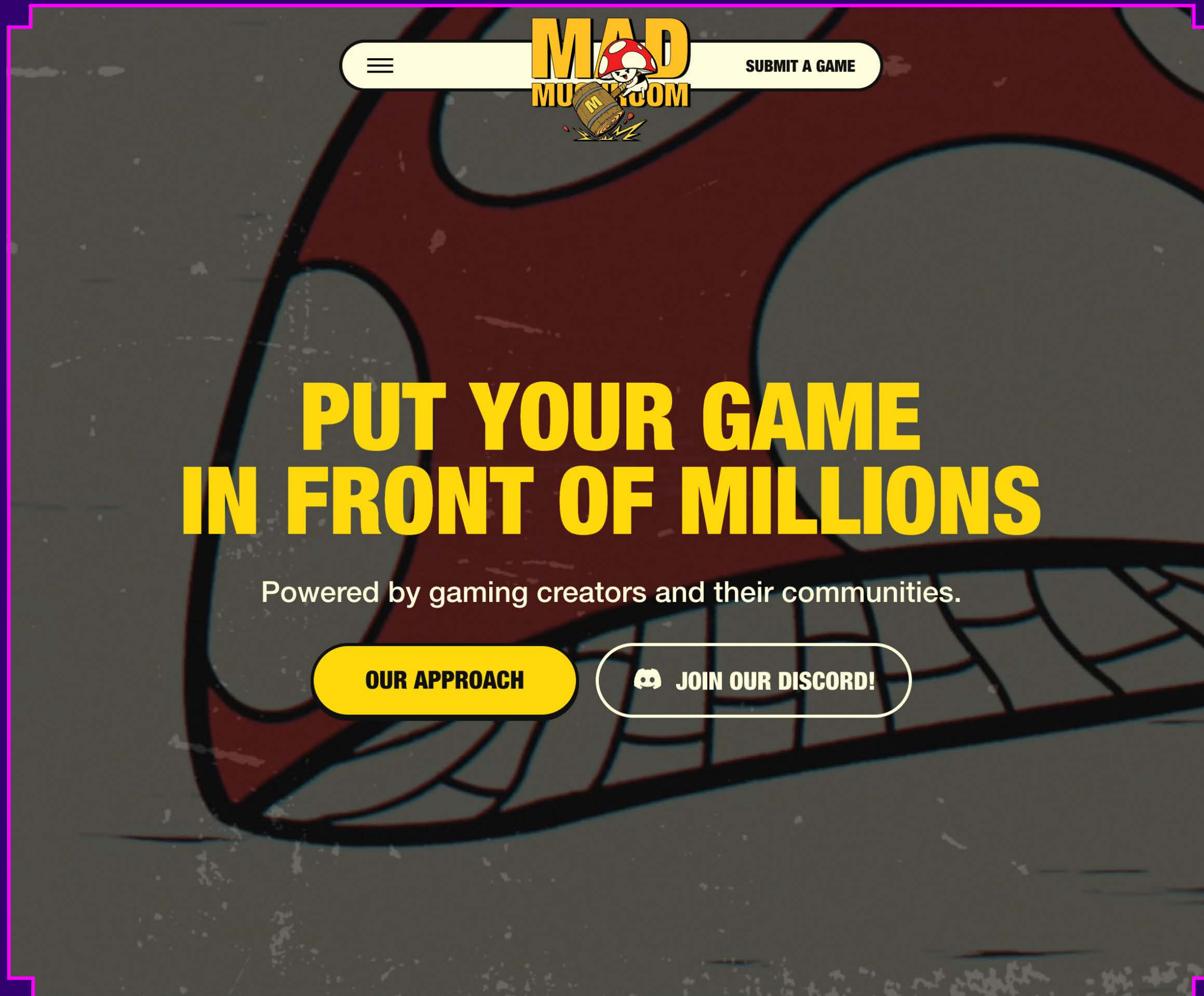


Fortnite

Fortnite is switching to a UGC-driven model. They've updated their engagement payout model, allowing creators to earn when players make in-game purchases, and their UI to push creator-made games to the top of the recommendations list.

SO WHAT: *Fortnite* is no doubt inspired by Roblox's success using a similar model. In response to increasing appetites for co-creation opportunities and UGC, *Fortnite* is hoping that these changes will build stronger brand relationships with young users craving a space to call their own.

The fog has cleared so much that you can now clearly see the path in front of you and what looks like a clearing ahead.



Mad Mushroom

Creator-owned gaming company One True King (OTK) has launched a publishing label, Mad Mushroom, to develop indie games specifically with streaming audiences in mind. The label will help smaller, independent creators bring their game ideas to market while also distributing them via their varied marketing channels.

SO WHAT: Streaming (and social media) are changing how players discover up-and-coming games. By promoting indie games with these audiences in mind, Mad Mushroom hopes to contribute to a future of creator-made gaming and elevate voices that don't always get heard in studio-dominated games. The question is whether we'll be losing a bit of authenticity and depth in indie games if they become solely focused on making hits for streaming and social media—only time will tell.

You enter the clearing. It's a lush meadow of soft grasses and wildflowers. In the middle of the meadow there looks to be the remains of a camp. After the night you've had, you're filled with hope that there might be others travelling through the forest.



Life By You

This *Sims*-like simulation game features an open world where players can click to control any character. Like *The Sims*, players manage their characters' basic needs and higher life goals. Unlike its predecessor, *Life By You*'s characters will speak real language (not Simlish), and players will be able to choose their gender, pronouns, and sexuality. Crucially, users who create mods for the game will own them and be free to sell them.

SO WHAT: As we see the rise of UGC and the monetisation opportunities that come with it, we'll start to see more discussions of who owns what. Help audiences take control of their creations, as well as their data.

You approach the camp and check the fire to see if it's still warm. It's not. Damn. Alone again, naturally. However you do notice that there is a backpack lying open on the ground. You wonder what happened to the other traveller....



streamloots

This live-streaming platform offers streamers new ways to monetise real-time fan engagement. For example, they might offer a fan a one-on-one interview or give tips about beating a notoriously hard game or particularly tricky level. This added layer of interaction works: the average Streamloots buyer spends **\$26 per month on digital interactions**, more than four times the average user spends on Twitch subscriptions.

SO WHAT: Interactivity sells. People want to feel like they're a part of something, and offering them direct interaction (even at a price), alongside more profound connection and belonging that many users crave. Level up your streaming propositions by incorporating more opportunities for interaction.

There's no way to tell how long the camp has been abandoned as the fire is stone cold. You're hungry and you have no provisions on you. Do you go through the backpack, or leave it alone.



Downpour

This new app lets anyone build games out of their photos from the comfort of their Smartphone. Users simply make a collage of images, add some text, and save that as a page. Pages can then be linked together to create a game. It's as easy as that. The Downpour library already includes a wide variety of games, from 'spot my dog' to more complex adventure games.

SO WHAT: Making a game doesn't have to be complicated. We all carry portable yet powerful computers in our pockets at all times—the technology is at our fingertips. Downpour is a great example of the rise of no-to-low-code games that tap into the skills many people already have as internet natives. It's proof anyone can make a game—and it doesn't even have to cost anything.

Don't be silly. Of course you go through the backpack! You obviously have no respect for other people's possessions so you open the backpack in the hope of finding something to eat.



WWF Germany

WWF Deutschland launched their own adventure game last year: 'Tree of Hope.' Rather than being played on a typical gaming platform, the story plays out as a choose your own adventure story via Whatsapp messages, making it one of the first games to launch on the platform. It was designed to be interactive, informative, and to reach audiences where they live – whilst also being a genuinely fun game to play. Around 85% of internet users in Germany use WhatsApp, and the game was promoted via billboards with QR codes.

SO WHAT: Integrating their game into the world's most popular mobile messenger app makes it available to a vast audience and removes participation, language and geography barriers. Harness the popularity of digital platforms, like WhatsApp, to bring your narrative to new supporters.

In the backpack you find: a half eaten Bounty bar, a hank of rope, a corked bottle full of some unidentifiable liquid, a compass (well that would have been really helpful earlier!), some suspect-looking biltong, a box of matches and a book.



Habbo X

Metaverse chatroom Habbo X recently called on its community to help design its merchandise. The company asked players to submit their garment and toy design proposals, followed by a community-led voting process. Winning items were brought to life as NFTs and physical products.

SO WHAT: Habbo X's initiative taps into three current audience demands: bridging the physical and virtual worlds, strengthening communities by giving audience members a voice, and letting them co-create their worlds. Expect to see more brands launch merchandise lines in phygital spaces.

You're ravenous. Do you eat the Bounty bar or the biltong?



LEGO x Epic Games

LEGO worked with Epic Games, the studio behind *Fortnite*, to create digital twins for more than 10,000 Lego building pieces to let designers and gaming communities build limitless Lego products, sets and digital experiences. During the launch presentation, the brands shared side-by-side photos of two Lego dinosaurs: one physical and one built in the Unreal Engine. No one in the crowd could tell the difference.

SO WHAT: LEGO and Epic Games (with *Fortnite*) are responsible for some of the most popular games in their respective universes. By bringing these together through a transmedia approach, they're allowing their fan bases to tap into phygital play and enjoy the brands in new spaces.

So you're one of those coconut people huh? Each to their own I guess.
The chocolate bar gives you a moment of satisfaction but you're ultimately left unfulfilled.



Chipotle Builder

Chipotle launched its metaverse debut on Roblox with the Chipotle Burrito Builder. Like most branded content on Roblox, the experience is an immersive game that lets players complete challenges (rolling burritos) in exchange for in-game currency.

SO WHAT: This is the first collaboration that lets Roblox users exchange in-game currency for IRL items – namely, a real Chipotle burrito. The game goes one step further than simply driving brand awareness through its activations and encourages gamers to have real-life experiences with Chipotle as well.

You give the biltong a sniff. It doesn't smell too bad so you decide to chance it. Much rather suspect cured meat than coconut!
Ew. You eat the biltong in 3 mouthfuls. Your hunger is temporarily satiated.



All On Board

This VR game wants to bring the 'game night' tradition to the digital sphere. It essentially recreates the experience of sitting around a table with friends, with access to a growing selection of adapted board games. A no-code PC add-on allows users to create and share their games, and the platform also offers a matchmaking service to connect new gamers.

SO WHAT: All On Board hopes to recreate the joy of communal tabletop games but inside a metaverse. VR makes the experience fully immersive, letting players see each other's body language and use their hands to manipulate game pieces and objects, just like they would in real life.

You decide to take a closer look at the book in the backpack. Your hand reaches into the bag and, as you touch the book, you're filled with the feeling that the book is not from this realm and you really, really shouldn't be touching it.



Nvidia Ace

Nvidia's Ace technology transforms the role and scope of NPC characters in games. Essentially, the AI-driven tech allows NPCs to be smart, with their own AI-generated personality and the capacity to interact directly with human players, talking in real-time and responding to gamers' actual voices.

SO WHAT: The typical NPC interaction features a few branches of conversation with pre-programmed sentences, but not much more. With new AI technologies like Ace, these characters could offer a whole new layer of immersion and possible exploration, creating the impression of a more fully realised world. On top of that, the technology is available to all game developers and could break down barriers for smaller developers to create richer worlds.

You pull the book out of the bag and see that it's bound in some type of leather and has the word Necronomicon embossed in gold on the front cover. You decide to go with your gut and put the book **back inside the bag**.



Nubank

Financial services platform Nubank partnered with Estrela, a Brazilian toy manufacturer, to launch a fresh take on the board game classic *The Game of Life*. In the new, educational version, players are encouraged to learn about financial education in a gamified way, with strategies that are day-to-day relevant. As part of the launch, the company hosted a Twitch livestream with some of Brazil's top streamers playing the game.

SO WHAT: Finances and financial services aren't always seen as the most exciting part of life planning, nor are they the easiest to understand. By turning something that can be daunting for many into a playful and entertaining board game, they're hoping to increase understanding and knowledge around the topic while also raising awareness for their brand.



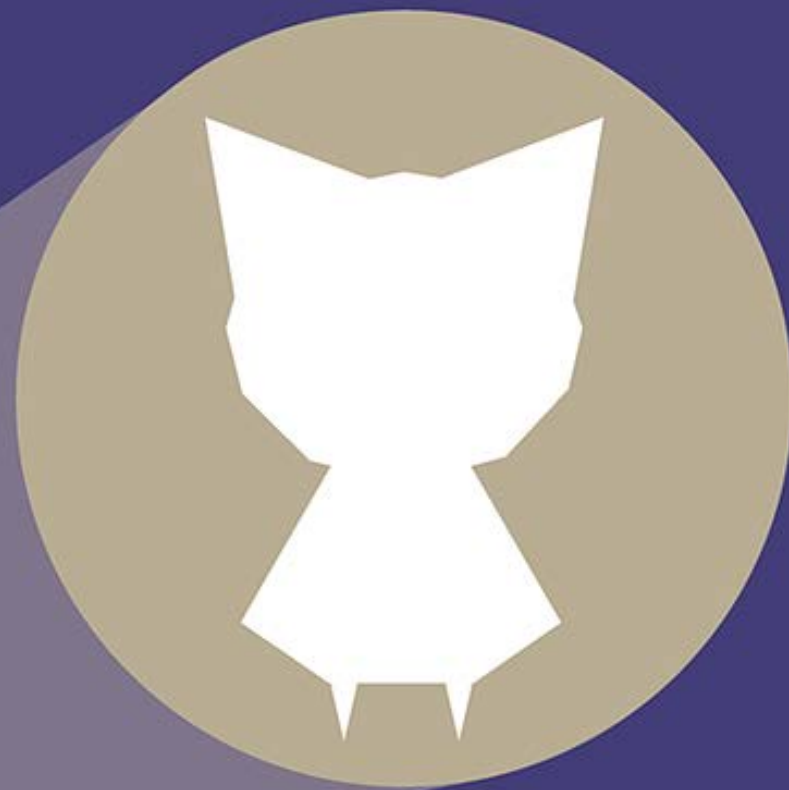
LEGO

In 2019, LEGO launched a set of special bricks to help kids learn braille. Instead of the usual patterns of studs, these bricks were built to correspond with the braille system. They were initially only available to schools, but after widespread calls to make them more accessible, they have now been made available to everyone who wants to learn braille. The bricks are designed to integrate with standard LEGO sets, morphing them from a learning method to a playtime activity that bridges the gap between the sighted and visually impaired world.

SO WHAT: By making these bricks available to everyone, LEGO encourages kids to subconsciously learn the basics of a new language. Integrating them into standard LEGO sets also breaks down barriers for kids with sight loss wanting to participate in a communal activity.

On your next trip you manage to find some larger logs. Despite the fog from earlier they are remarkably dry to the touch. You deposit them by the campfire and start to build a small fire.

E.A.K.



eraseallkittens.com

Erase All Kittens

This *Mario*-style platformer built specifically to appeal to girls uses its game mechanics to introduce kids to coding. It works with standard programming languages, like HTML, CSS and Javascript, making the skills readily transferable to other projects. To expand their reach, they partnered with Tesco to give Clubcard members access to a discounted subscription. As of March 2022, over 170,000 players in over 170 countries had signed up, over half of whom were girls.

SO WHAT: Gender bias continues to keep girls and women out of STEM. Giving young girls access to tools and resources that show them coding isn't just a boy's hobby is crucial for breaking down the stigma and difficulties faced by women in this field. Games like *Erase All Kittens* are small but meaningful ways of showing kids that everyone has the same opportunity to develop digital skills.

Using the matches from the backpack you manage to light the kindling and soon add larger twigs and small logs.
Quickly your small fire grows into a roaring and warming blaze.



Minecraft x Cambridge University

Language experts at Cambridge University teamed up with Minecraft to launch *Adventures in English*, a story-driven map designed to teach the language. Players are guided through a quest filled with puzzles, characters, and multiple worlds, simulating real-life communication through problem-solving.

SO WHAT: The game is designed to be a fun way for young learners to come to grips with the English language while building their problem-solving and general communication skills. Immersing gamers into an environment they're already likely comfortable in allows them to feel safer throughout the learning process.

As you settle in to enjoy the heat from the flames you hear a noise behind. A sound coming from the forest. A noise that sounds exactly like a growl. As you slowly turn you find yourself coming face to face with a giant grey wolf.

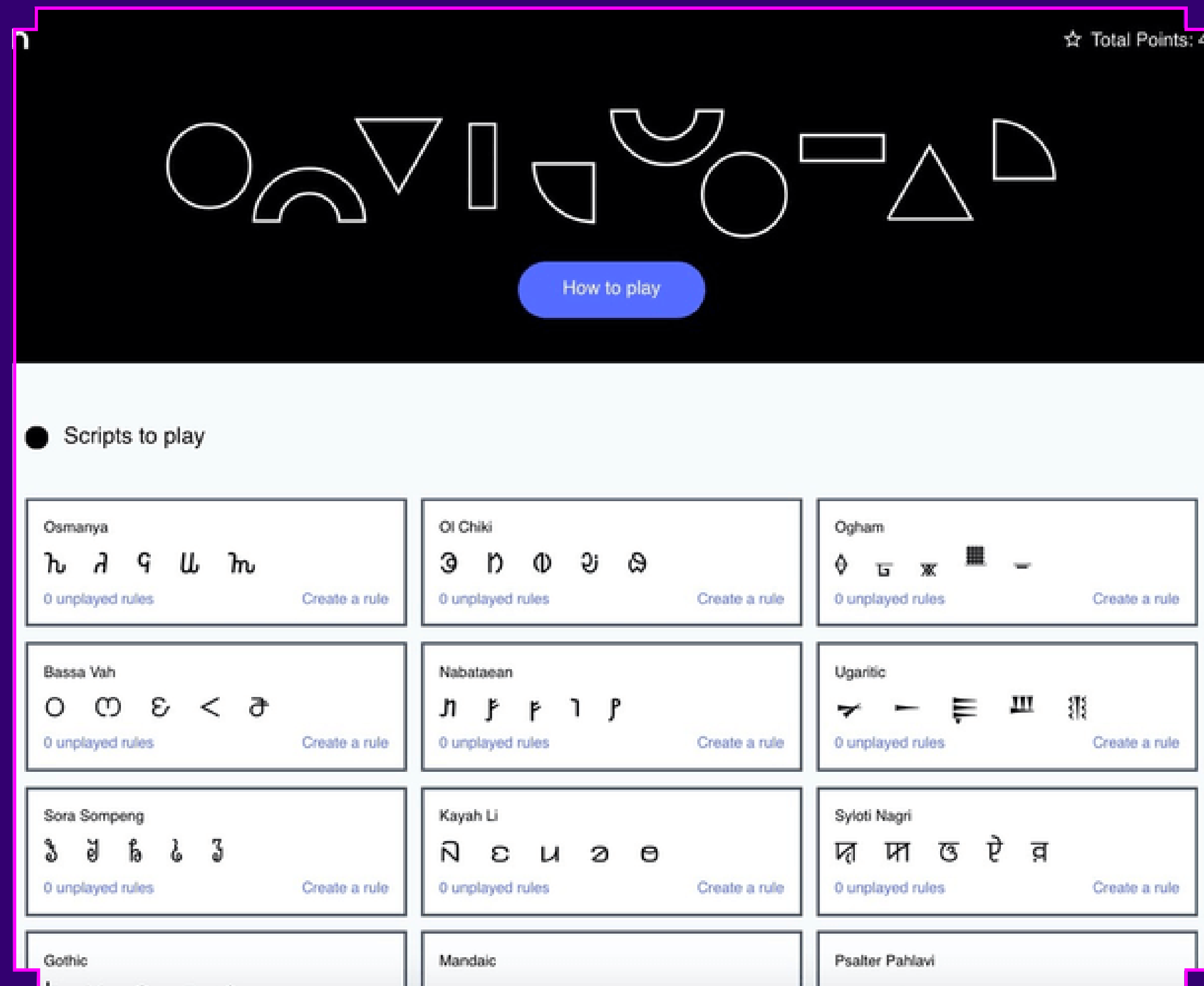


The Uncensored Library

The Uncensored Library is an initiative by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) to preserve censored information in *Minecraft*. Many countries control the flow of information on websites, social media, and blogs, and governmental disinformation campaigns can manipulate news. Gaming often doesn't see the same restrictions. The online library preserves articles that are censored or banned worldwide and gives voices to journalists in countries where free speech is risky. It currently has rooms for countries including Russia, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, and Egypt. Developers chose *Minecraft* because it is difficult to legislate and enforce server shutdowns.

SO WHAT: The Uncensored Library preserves journalistic freedom and accessible information in virtual spaces, where young players are introduced to topics of press freedom and freedom of speech, maybe even for the first time.

The wolf looks hungry. You slowly reach for the backpack, keeping your eyes on the wolf, and pull out the biltong.
It's at this point you are intensely grateful that you chose the Bounty and not the biltong earlier.



Glyph

This online game is designed to investigate the shapes of letters by getting players to sort characters into two groups. Built by scientists at the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, Harvard University, and Université Paris Sciences et Lettres, the game aims to help researchers understand how letter shapes evolved to be distinctive.

SO WHAT: This is an excellent example of a basic version of gamified citizen science. The gaming mechanic is simple (an organisational task with limited story-telling around it) and easy to build. However, it can be as fun as many other idle puzzling games.

You throw the biltong towards the wolf. It leans down and sniffs the cured meat, looks at you curiously, then back down and gobbles up the meat in one mouthful.



Play a Game, Speed up Alzheimer's Research

Stall Catchers

Stall Catchers, an online game developed by the Citizen Science Alliance, sees players analyse actual research data in a gamified way to help advance Alzheimer's disease research. The game mechanic is simple: letting audiences look at videos of the brains of mice and identifying vessels as flowing or stalled. Collectively, players could process **50 times as much data** as the scientists working alone.

SO WHAT: Some people would love to volunteer for charity but don't have the time or ability to commit to a more formal volunteering programme. These remote, micro-volunteering options, which incorporate gamification to make the process fun for volunteers, let these audiences contribute to ongoing research and raise awareness from the comfort of their sofas.

The wolf looks back up at you. You keep very still, not sure if you're still on the menu for dinner.
The wolf stalks towards the fire, sniffs and then lays down **on the opposite side from you.**



Cancer Research UK

Cancer Research UK has launched several citizen science initiatives, starting with *Cell Slider* in 2012. These ranged from simple sorting games (e.g. games that let players identify and classify images of tumours) to adventure games with more complex narratives, like *Play to Cure: Genes in Space*, which saw players navigate genetic cancer data in their quest to explore space. These games saw wide success, with the latter hitting over 400,000 downloads and 5,000,000 nuggets of data being analysed.

SO WHAT: Simply put, people want to win at games. By framing this task in a gamified way, researchers motivated players to deliver quality data and research at higher speeds and volumes than would otherwise be possible.

The wolf stretches out, closes its eyes and within seconds it appears like it's fallen asleep. You let out the breath you've been holding for the last minute and decide whether to skulk away or try to copy the wolf and get some sleep.



AlphaGo

AlphaGo is an AI programme made by DeepMind that was trained to master the board game Go. This game is complex and hinges on human intuition – so much so that previous computer programs could only master the level of amateur players. By playing the game thousands of times (often against real players) and learning from its mistakes, AlphaGo learned to mimic human intuition. The model then pivoted to apply this knowledge to predicting the shape of proteins in the body. Hundreds of thousands of researchers now use it to predict the structures of more than 350,000 proteins.

SO WHAT: Expect to see more organisations using their audiences to train LLMs and chatbots. This is essentially a levelled-up form of citizen science.

Many would call this decision foolish, but as you settle in on the opposite side of the fire from the wolf you feel a sense of calm and peace wash over you. Within seconds you've fallen into a deep sleep.



Virtual Protesting

275,000 teens and tweens took to the virtual streets of Roblox to protest the war in Gaza. In 2016, young users stormed *Club Penguin's* servers to protest Trump's victory in an election they were too young to vote in, and *Toontown*, *Habbo*, and Roblox all hosted Black Lives Matter marches amid lockdown.

SO WHAT: Every generation seeks to have its voice heard but doesn't always have the platform or resources to protest in real life. Digital spaces offer more agency and freedom to take a stand. These virtual hangouts are now spaces for people to organise and rally around their values.

You try and quietly get to your feet but as you stand your foot knocks the backpack, making the contents rattle. The wolf opens one eye and issues a warning growl. Rather than push your luck you decide to try option 2.



Minecraft

French President Emmanuel Macron launched an official Minecraft server, a 'Macronverse' if you will, during his most recent re-election campaign in 2022. The server, called *Avec Vous Sur Minecraft* ("With You on Minecraft"), recreated the President's home as the centre of the map. Players could explore the area, including his election office. NPCs were programmed to give information about Macron's previous political successes, point players to the official merchandise store, or sign them on the mailing list.

SO WHAT: Gen Z and Gen Alpha are increasingly getting political news or voicing their opinions in online forums, whether TikTok or *Minecraft*. This campaign was willing to meet these audiences where they were and bring politics into their community spaces (although it would have benefited from more open dialogue).

You decide to take a closer look at the book in the backpack. Your hand reaches into the bag and, as you touch the book, you're filled with the feeling that the book is not from this realm and you really, really shouldn't be touching it.

Impostor



Among Us

In 2020, American congress members Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ilhan Omar participated in a more unusual voter outreach event: streaming *Among Us* on Twitch. The stream lasted a few hours and garnered a whopping 439,000 real-time viewers (the Twitch record at the time was **about 628,000**) and 5.2m aggregate viewers.

SO WHAT: These congresswomen tapped into gaming to have an authentic sit-down with their supporters in their space. Find a game that's popular on streaming, tap into the authenticity of live streaming, and sit down with potential audiences for a few hours in a casual setting.

You pull the book out of the bag and see that it's bound in some type of leather and has the word Necronomicon embossed in gold on the front cover. You decide to go with your gut and **put the book back** inside the bag.



Terra Nil

This game has been dubbed a 'city-builder' in reverse, painting a picture of environmental restoration. Players get dropped into an arid desert, where it's up to them to rewild the landscape using various technologies, like a toxin scrubber, or a beehive. The game's simplicity, as well as its stunning visuals, delivers a fun game experience while offering up a clear critique of detrimental consumption.

SO WHAT: Intended to act as both moral instruction and educational resource, Terra Nil can be enjoyed by any gamer, regardless of their attitudes to climate change going into it. Once playing it, though, it would be hard to miss its emotional depiction of a post-climate disaster future.

It's getting late. You decide to light a fire. You go to the edge of the clearing to gather kindling and firewood. You gather a few handfuls of twigs and leaves and take them back to the firepit.

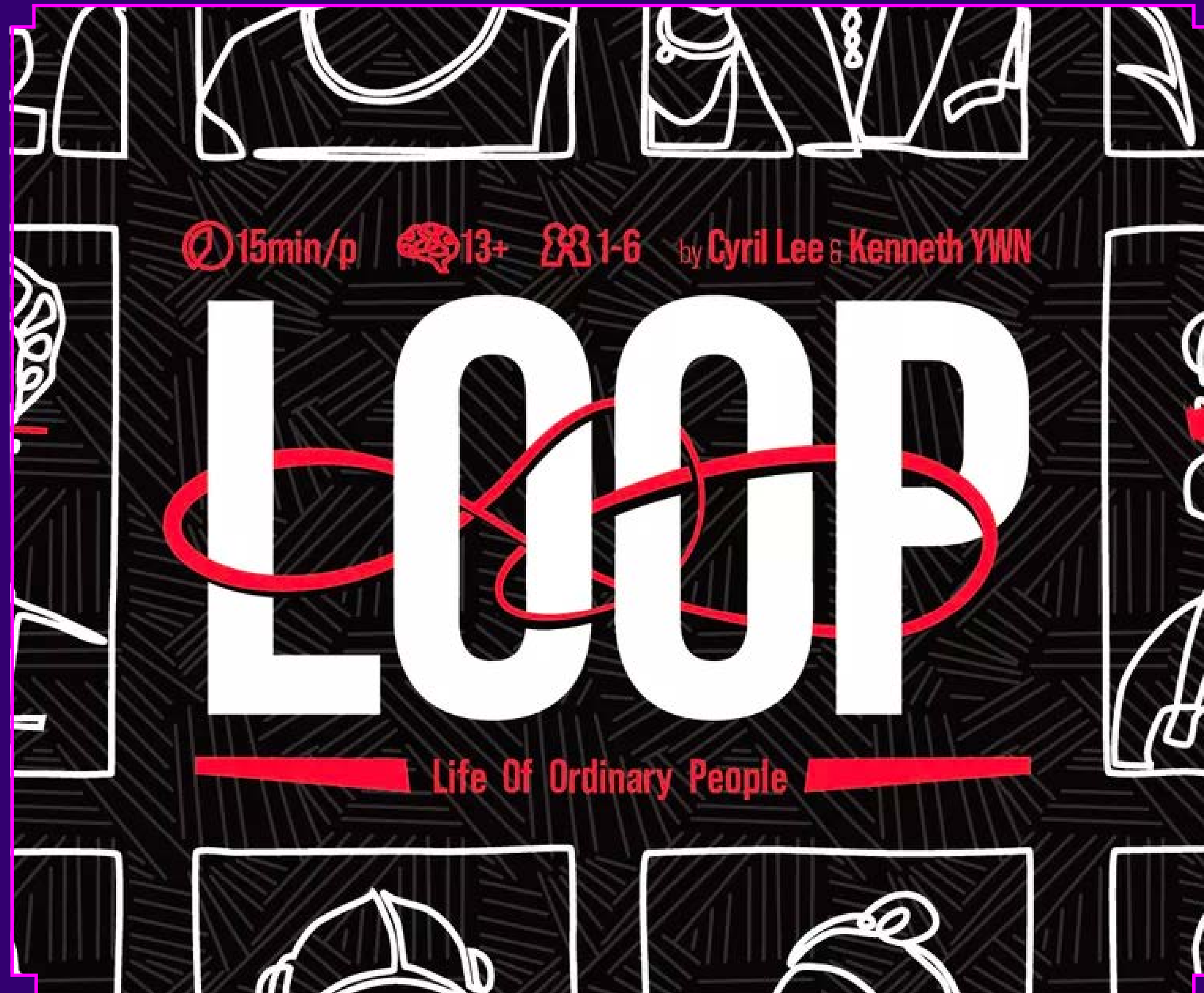


GTA x Greenpeace

In this collaboration, Los Santos (the fictional GTA city designed after Los Angeles) was altered to showcase the real-world effects that climate change could have. Gamers were invited to explore the 'Los Santos +3°C' altered map, which showed a submerged Santa Monica pier, displaced residents, the disappearance of the California coast, and characters wearing face masks while they complete missions like delivering drinking water and rescuing climate refugees. The campaign also included links to donation pages, where fans could also sign a Greenpeace petition hoping to pressure governments to declare a climate emergency.

SO WHAT: By collaborating with one of the most popular video games of all time, Greenpeace was able to raise awareness with a wider audience, and drive a sense of urgency by immersing the player in the realities of climate disaster.

On your next trip you manage to find some larger logs. Despite the fog from earlier they are remarkably dry to the touch. You deposit them by the campfire and start to build a small fire.



Loop: Life of Ordinary People

This board game challenges players to question consumeristic pursuits and hopes to raise awareness of the “work-buy-consume cycle” through satire. The game centres around the cycle of Materialistic Value Orientation and its impact on the environment and personal happiness. It can be played alone or in groups of up to six people.

SO WHAT: The board game introduces players to alternative consumption behaviours. It hopes to make them stick by raising awareness of the impacts of more detrimental consumption through a card mechanic.

Using the matches from the backpack you manage to light the kindling and soon add larger twigs and small logs. Quickly your small fire grows into a roaring and warming blaze.

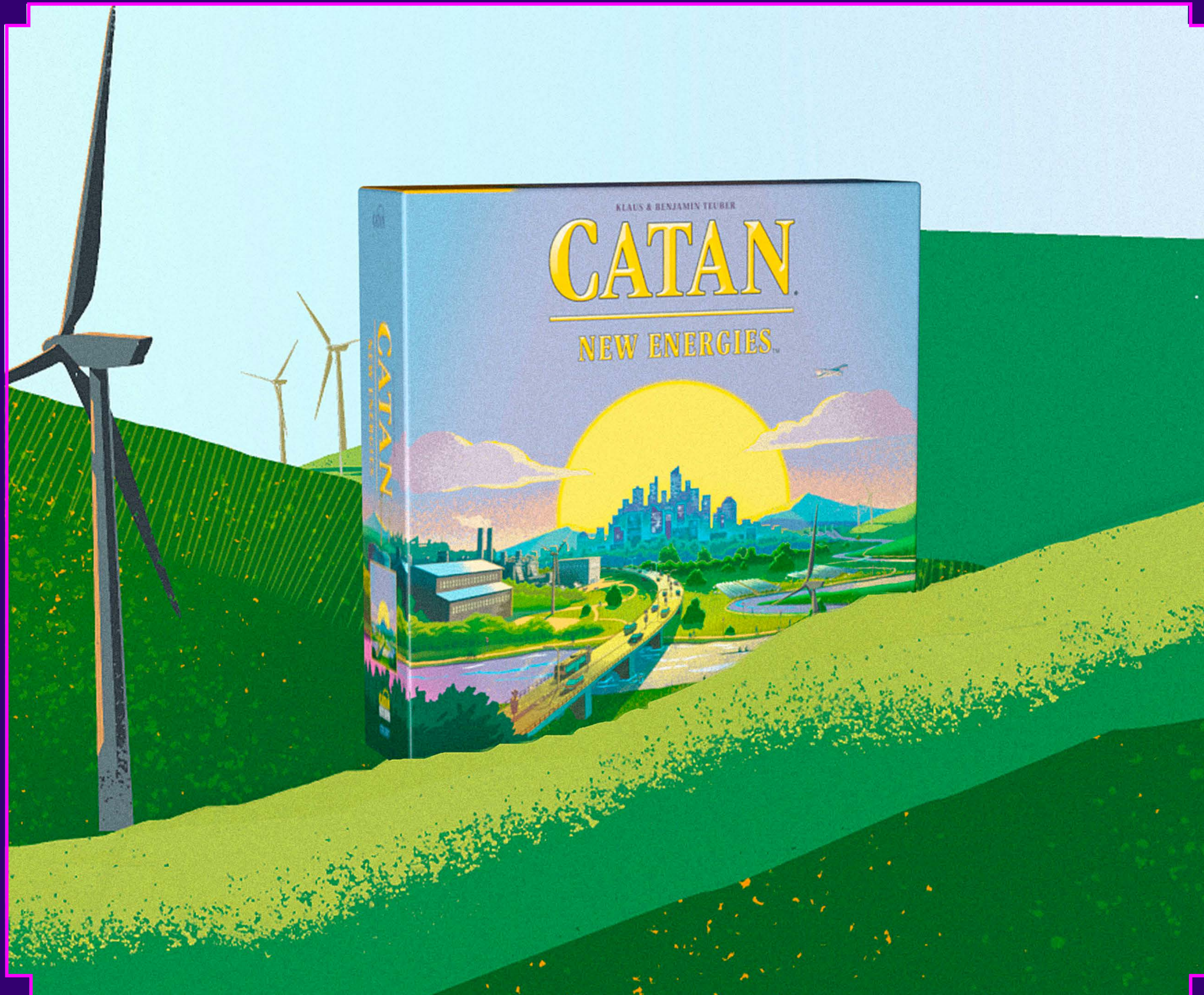


Playing for the Planet

The UN-led initiative 'Playing for the Planet' aims to inspire environmental change in and through the video game industry. Alongside a push for industry-wide decarbonisation, the organisation has hosted four "green game jams:" remote workshops in which game companies devise sustainable themes and gameplay mechanics. Results from these jams are published to help other developers.

SO WHAT: No single game developer will have all the answers for how to 'fix' climate change through gaming. (And then there's the carbon impact of energy consumption in creating and playing games, and the associated technology used to power this). But, by bringing together the expertise of big gaming studios, trading associations, and gamers (and making all of that information widely available), the UN recognises that actual progress will come from collaboration.

As you settle in to enjoy the heat from the flames you hear a noise behind. A sound coming from the forest. A noise that sounds exactly like a growl. As you slowly turn you find yourself coming face to face with a giant grey wolf.

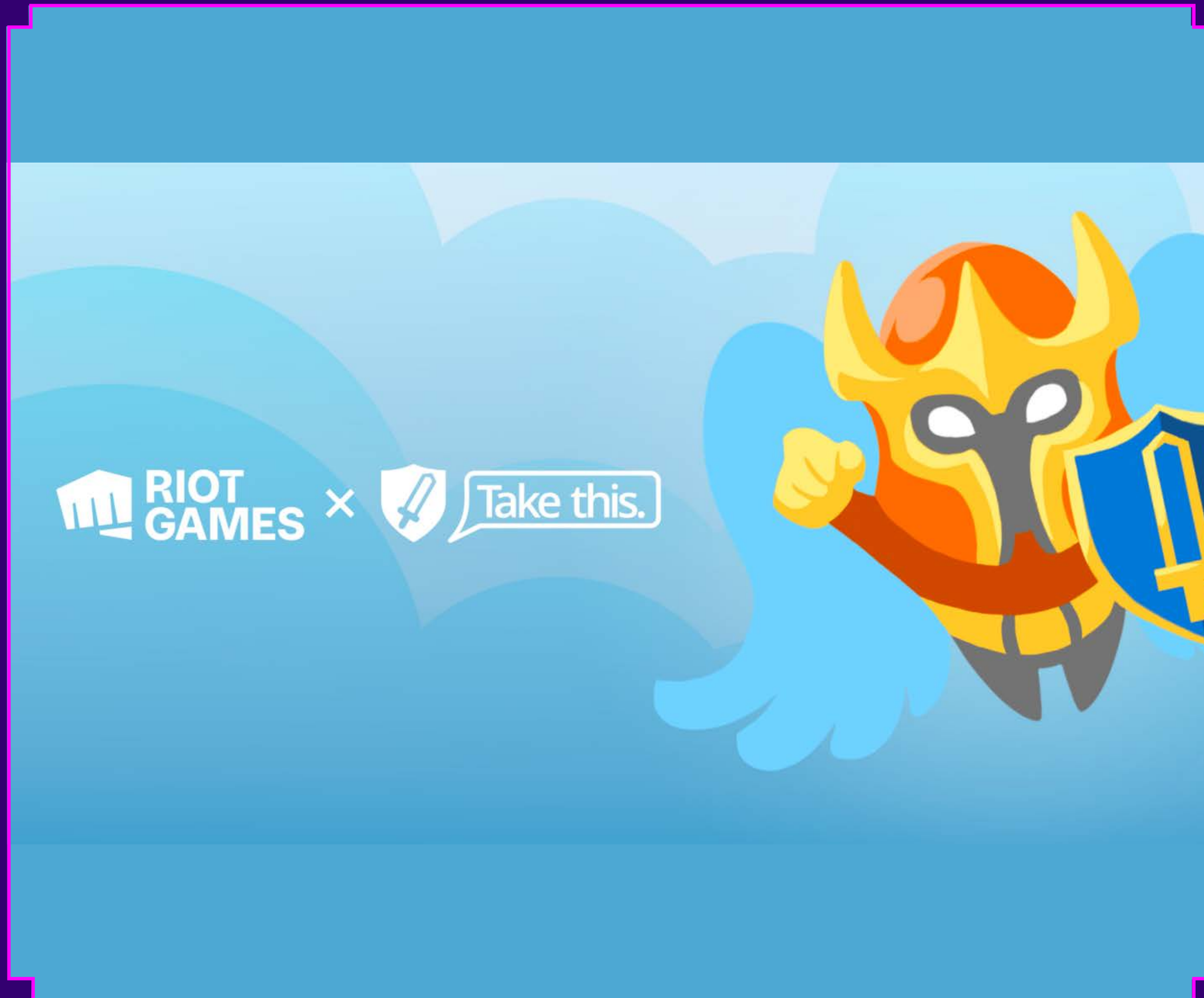


Catan

Undoubtedly one of the most iconic board games of all time, *Catan* is releasing a new version of its game in 2024. This updated version, called *Catan: New Energies*, will see players decide whether to build fossil fuel power plants quickly and cheaply (which also increases pollution), or invest more slowly in renewables. The most eco-friendly player won't necessarily win, but if pollution levels rise beyond the threshold, the game ends and the player who prioritised sustainability wins. The collective impact of pollution levels mirrors the unequal effects of climate change – the biggest polluters tend to face smaller consequences.

SO WHAT: To quote the game's creator, "The outcome of this game won't change the world. But maybe your way of thinking will change, and you can later go and change the world." Playing *Catan* won't stop climate change, but it can educate its players about possible futures.

The wolf looks hungry. You slowly reach for the backpack, keeping your eyes on the wolf, and pull out the Bounty bar.
It's at this point you start to seriously question your earlier decisions.

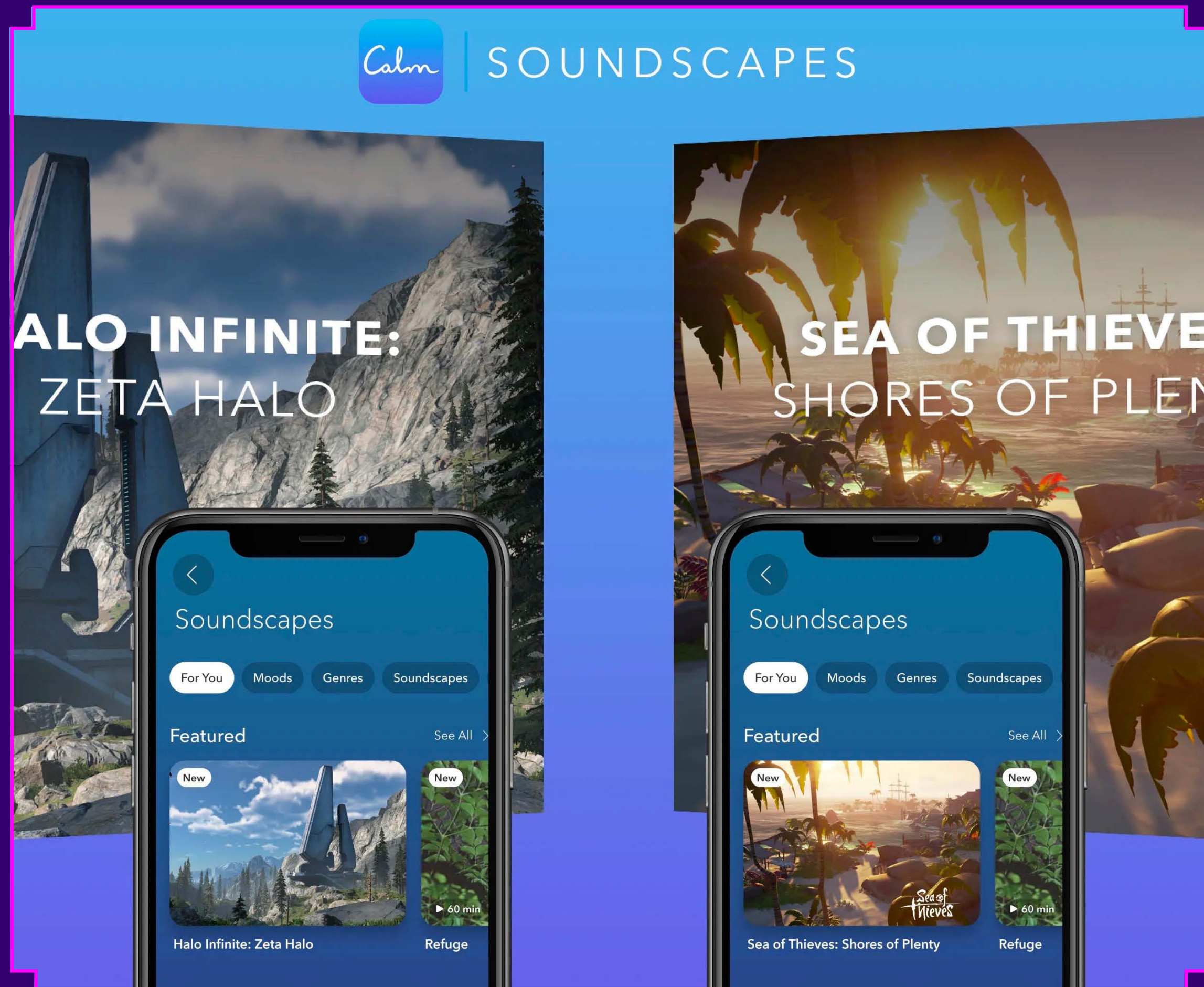


Riot Games x Take This

Game studio Riot Games has announced a partnership with the charity Take This to support the mental health of players and content creators. The collaboration started by creating a programme designed to give casual and professional streamers practical tools to support their own wellbeing and that of their community. A series of modules, created with the charity's clinical experts, were released, kicking off with the topic of burnout in content creation.

SO WHAT: While gaming itself doesn't cause mental health problems, its broad audience is not immune to mental stress. A single developer, studio, or gamer will not solve this problem in isolation. We need to develop strategic partnerships between gaming studios and expert organisations to ensure that games have the best possible impact on the community.

You throw the Bounty towards the wolf. It leans down and sniffs the chocolate bar and then looks up at you in disgust. It obviously is not a fan of coconut.



xbox x Calm

Shooting games might not be the first thing that comes to mind when you think about better sleep and meditation. And yet, mental health app Calm is offering Premium members soundscapes from games like *Halo Infinite* and *Sea of Thieves* as they drift off. This partnership with Xbox is the first in a series of game-themed meditations to be featured on the app.

SO WHAT: Gaming isn't just about the gameplay. It's about the graphics, the characters, the narrative, the sweeping music that sets the tone – the artistry makes the game. This collaboration lets both brands increase their audience by leveraging the creative assets in and around games.

The wolf's growl gets louder as it starts to stalk towards you. In a panic you reach again into the backpack and pull out the Necronomicon. The wolf pauses in its approach, obviously sensing the same dread coming from the book.



Game Therapy UK

This charity uses therapeutic gaming to combat isolation. Their primary goal is to support a wide variety of hard to reach communities, like people experiencing homelessness, survivors of abuse, people in addiction recovery, and socially excluded youth through the benefits of gaming and the adjacent community, mostly through cooperative games, which facilitate creativity, imagination, and social interaction.

SO WHAT: As the positive mental health effects of gaming become more recognised, expect to see more organisations exploring the practical applications of gaming in service design. Get creative with your service delivery — platforms like gaming might let organisations reach audiences that wouldn't otherwise engage.

You set the book beside you and stare the wolf straight in the eyes, almost challenging it to come for you.
You're not sure where this sudden confidence comes from but you're going along for the ride.



Spiritfarer

This warm and cosy game tackles the topic of death yet still manages to feel like a colourful, cosy adventure. The main plot sees you captain a boat full of friendly spirits who've recently passed, helping them complete their last wishes (which get deep fast) before guiding them safely to the afterlife. Despite its difficult subject matter, the game falls squarely into the wholesome gaming category, with the highlight being the deep relationships the protagonist builds with the spirits.

SO WHAT: While a wholesome and cute game about death doesn't sound immediately logical, this game makes it work. It gives its players the opportunity to process grief in a safe and uplifting way, whilst simultaneously driving deeper conversations about letting go.

The wolf starts to slowly retrace its steps, backing into the forest until all you can see are its glowing eyes in the darkness of the trees.



Minecraft

ExperienceCraft, a Minecraft server launched in 2022, provides a safe, moderated, and grief-aware online community for young kids going through grief. The joint partnership between charities Experience Camps and Connected Camps, allows kids to connect across a wide variety of in-game activities, like a Memorial Garden where they can express their feelings and talk to peers and near-peer mentors, who are trained volunteers.

SO WHAT: These grief-aware communities help kids process emotions they may not have experienced before in spaces where they feel comfortable talking and connecting with peers. By helping kids talk openly about their experiences with grief from a young age, we're breaking down barriers for similar conversations in later life.

You look back down at the book, your hand still touching the leather bound surface and you know, with absolutely no shred of doubt that the book is bound in something other than cowhide. Something more akin to human.



ICRC

The ICRC's 'Enter The Room' app simulates challenges faced by individuals affected by armed conflict, particularly related to healthcare in conflict zones. The experience begins in real life, where users hold up their phones to see a virtual door appear. They're then invited to cross the threshold and explore a seemingly ordinary child's bedroom as if they were really there.

SO WHAT: The initiative sees supporters dive into a more engaging, immersive, first-hand perspective of the impact of war on civilians. Unlike many similar experiences, which require audiences to have expensive technology, this simpler technology brings VR to hardware that almost everyone has: a mobile phone.

The more you touch the book, the more you feel the ominous and negative energy coming from its pages. It's alluring and you feel drawn to wanting to open the tome and explore the pages. Do you open the book or remove your hand from the cover?



That Dragon, Cancer

This emotional game is based on the developers' experiences raising their son, Joel, who was diagnosed with terminal cancer at twelve months old. Through a series of poignant vignettes, the game shows their journey through post-diagnosis distress, uncertainty about his health, and his eventual death, all in the style of a point-and-click adventure game. Alongside the interactivity, the game includes narration from the real-life parents and family members.

SO WHAT: Interactive games offer a different medium for players to experience complex emotions that they may not have experienced before. Developers can create a world close to their hearts and have players live in it and feel the emotions they felt going through the narrative as well.

You slowly remove your hand from the book and move further around the fire away from its pages. As the adrenaline from your encounter fades from your system you decide to rest your head on the ground and close your eyes.



Papers, Please

Focused on the working day of an immigration inspector at a border checkpoint in a fictional country, players are tasked with reviewing the documents of new arrivals. The goal is to allow legitimate travellers through the border and arrest anyone else. As the game progresses, the rules for legitimate immigrants become more complex, and the player can decide to arrest any non-compliant NPCs. At the end of each in-game day, the player earns money based on how many people have been processed (and bribes collected), then allocates their budget to rent, food, heat, and other necessities for their family.

SO WHAT: Starting as a relatively simple puzzle game, the game challenges players with increasingly complicated moral dilemmas as it progresses. Essentially, players consistently have to choose between providing for their family and what is 'right'. It's a great example of presenting moral choice through a video game while also immersing players in the reality that many migrants face daily across the world.

You turn towards the fire and slowly open the first page. As the spine cracks and the pages slide open you see text swirling on the page. It looks like the book is alive as words float off the pages and into the air around you.

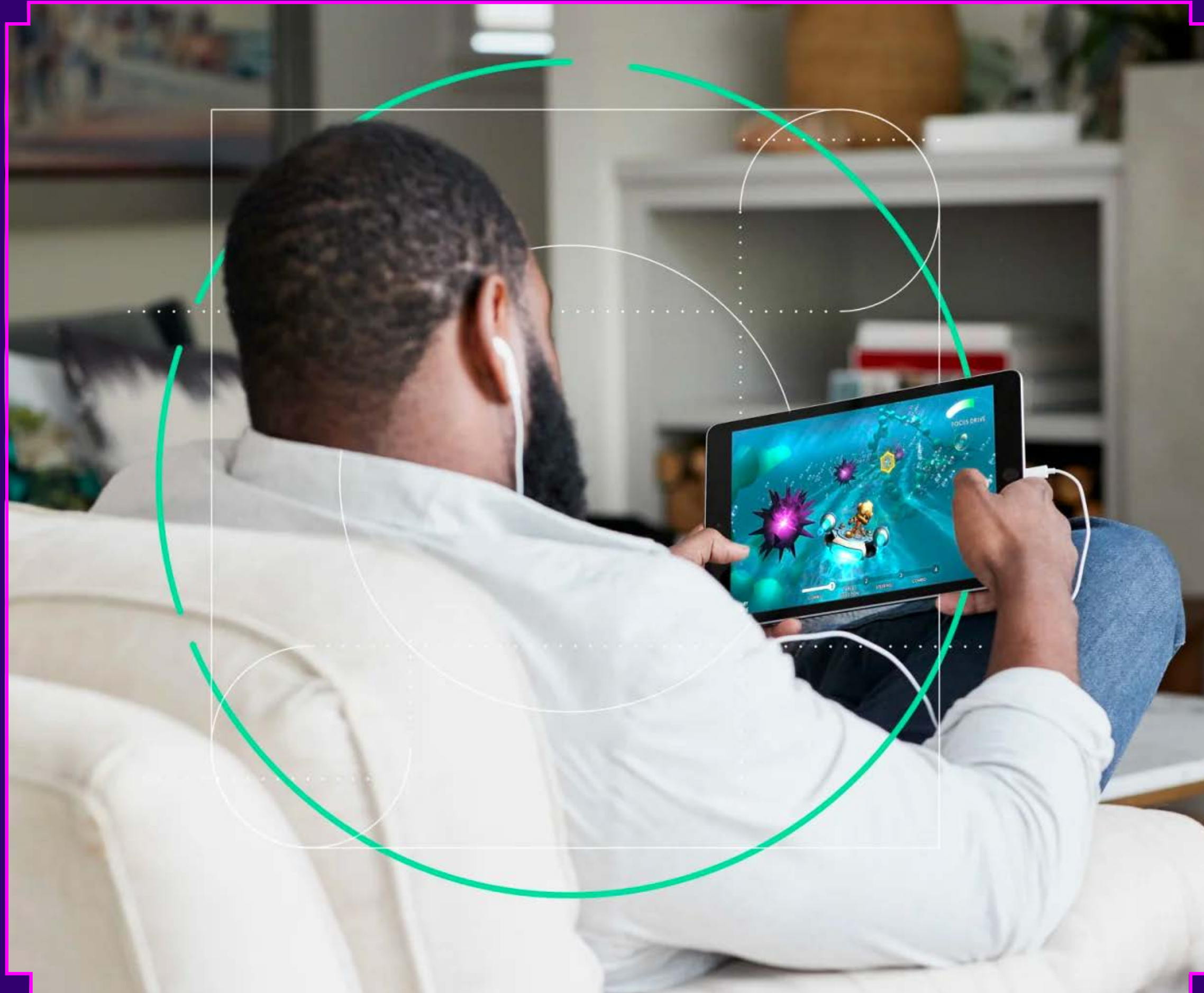


Ami

Ami is the world's first multilingual brain game to stave off dementia, aiming to boost cognitive function in seniors with early-to-moderate signs of the disease. The app uses bilingual brain games based on research that shows multilingualism enhances cognitive abilities beyond language learning.

SO WHAT: With healthcare waiting lists growing and interventions becoming increasingly difficult to access, people worldwide are increasingly asking for preventative healthcare. This game taps into that need, hoping to show how gaming could help stave off disease. And dementia isn't the only disease that can be delayed through gamified interventions—expect to see more research into this space over the coming years.

Your field of vision starts to narrow, the edges filling with the dark shapes of swirling script. You hear a drum beat but you're not sure if it's your heart pounding in your chest or the sound of distant drums.



EndeavourOTC

ADHD medication has remained mainly the same since the 1960s, since the advent of Ritalin. Most people who receive treatment are either on medication or in behavioural therapy, but those interventions don't work for everyone. Enter EndeavourOTC: the first video game licensed as an official treatment for ADHD. It works by activating neural networks in the brain that improve focus, similar to the ones Ritalin lights up. Patients are prescribed 25 minute incremental sessions, five times a week. Their earlier game, EndeavorRx, is a prescription video game that treats ADHD in kids and has been approved for marketing since 2020.

SO WHAT: Early research into the benefits of gaming shows positive impacts across a number of different areas. However, there's still a lack of thinking about how these could be turned into effective interventions. Integrate gaming in your service design as a low-intervention way of helping your audiences manage their health struggles.

You're paralysed by the book, its weight in your hands freezing you in place. You start to feel breathless and lightheaded as a voice whispers in your ear, "Foolish human. Now I'm free." Your eyes close as you pass out.



Meteor Blaster

This browser-based mobile shooting game was created to identify the early signs of glaucoma. Designed by the Tohoku University Graduate School of Medicine and TV network Sendai Broadcasting, it is designed to be an early diagnostic tool. Given that people with glaucoma often don't recognise the symptoms until it reaches a point of no return, Meteor Blaster's 5-minute, at-home diagnostic time could make a real difference for the people it affects.

SO WHAT: Inequalities in access to healthcare mean that at-home, easy diagnostic tools are crucial for significant swathes of the population. Meteor Blaster is but one example of the many applications of gaming for diagnostics.

You awaken in a dark forest. Your head hurts and you're regretting that last glass of mead you drank in the tavern.
You have no idea how you got here, or even where here is. Or do you?



Metropolitan Museum of Art x Verizon

In partnership with Verizon, the Metropolitan Museum of Art has launched a novel way for kids and young adults to experience the museum's collection. 'Replica', an AR app within Roblox, lets users explore a virtual version of The Met's iconic facade, as well as other renowned spaces and collections. Visitors to the museum can access the in-app map to guide them through different artworks, learn about their history, and collect wearable digital versions of them for their Roblox avatars. Collectables include Van Gogh's straw hat, an Anubis statuette, and Medusa's iconic snake hair.

SO WHAT: Replica connects people to art in a new and culturally relevant way, recognising that gaming has become cultural heritage for modern audiences. AR helps bridge modern and old heritage, creating more immersive possibilities for art education.

As you come to, you remember something about wolves and books and rivers, but you're not sure if it was all a dream.
As you look around further you realise you're at a crossroads. There are paths to the north, south, and west.



Voices of the Forgotten

In 2023, *Fortnite* became home to the world's first virtual Holocaust museum. The digital building, dubbed the Voices of the Forgotten Museum, lets visitors read plaques outlining the history of the genocide, learn about Jewish resistance fighters, and read about people who provided refuge – much like you'd do in a physical museum. Since its launch, the space has collaborated with the LA Holocaust Museum to better curate its exhibition, and now features testimonies from survivors.

SO WHAT: Not everyone has access to a similar museum in their local area. By bringing this piece of history to life in the digital realm, creators can preserve important stories from the Holocaust for generations to come, and potentially educate younger players about history in an engaging and informative way.

Beside you is a backpack. You pick yourself and the bag off the ground. Which path do you choose?

North, south, or west?

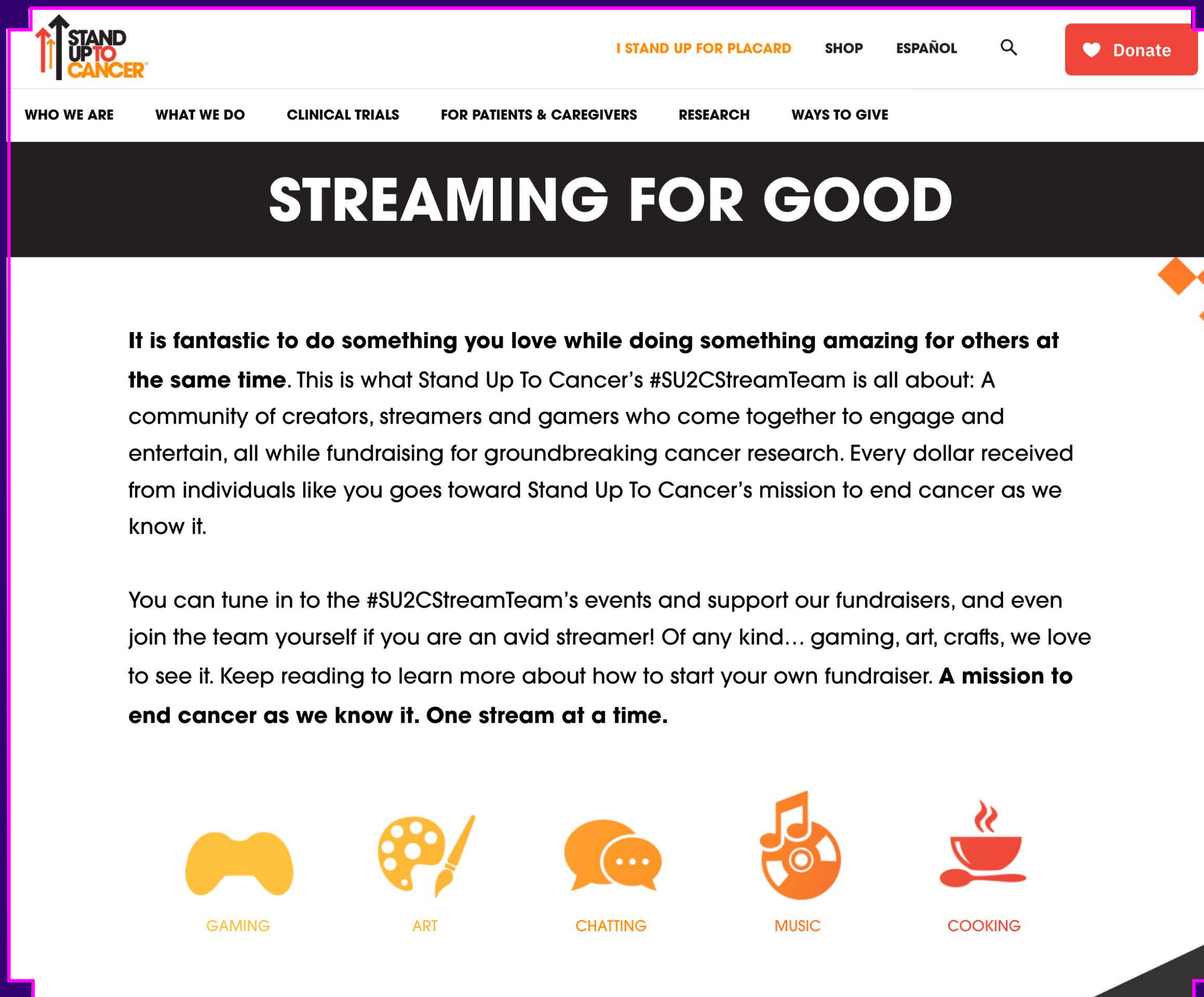


venba

Cooking-based game Venba uses a series of cooking puzzles to immerse players in emotionally intense family saga. Players embody an Indian mother, who emigrates to Canada in the 1980s, and uncovers lost family recipes that guide players through themes of immigration, identity, and family.

SO WHAT: Venba recognises that is an incredibly important cultural marker for many, and cleverly uses it as a vehicle to introduce new audiences to the nuances of the Tamil diasporic experience and drive deeper conversations around immigration and identity.

You follow the path west further into the trees. The moon shines brightly, lighting your way. Despite everything that's happened you're feeling upbeat and positive about getting out of this forest.



Stand Up To Cancer

Stand Up To Cancer has been slowly embedding themselves in the streaming community over the past years. They launched streaming fundraising in 2018, became an official Twitch partner in 2019, and partnered with Xbox On in 2020. Their website includes a Tiltify leaderboard (at the time of writing, the leader has raised more than \$150k), a link to their thriving Discord community, and a breakdown of how streaming can make an impact.

SO WHAT: More and more charities are getting into the streaming for good space, so how do you stand out? What Stand Up To Cancer does well is embedding itself on every level of the community (ie. building a presence in spaces like Twitch and Discord); tapping into gamified design and competition with leaderboards; and collaborating with big names in the business like Xbox.

You continue west. In the distance you can hear the sound of running water. Maybe this is a river you could follow to safety.
You pick up the pace and walk purposefully in the direction of the water.



ST. JUDE
PLAY ▶ LIVE

St Jude's Children's Research Hospital

St Jude's Children's Research Hospital multichannel gaming strategy is possibly the most established and successful in the third sector. PLAY LIVE, their biggest fundraising activation, engages gamers and content creators to raise funds while streaming. They also collaborate with gaming organisations, influencers, and companies to organise other events, partnerships with streamers and esports teams, and gaming conventions. In 2023, PLAY LIVE **raised almost \$3m.**

So What: PLAY LIVE is successful for a number of reasons, but most notably their commitment to understanding the gaming community. They've embedded themselves on multiple levels, from engaging with popular and emerging influencers, existing gaming events, esports teams, up-and-coming games and new releases, and community platforms. Their knowledge of the community has allowed them to identify effective partnerships and understand the needs and preferences of the audience they're engaging.

The sound of running water is getting louder and as you turn a corner you see the riverbank straight ahead. The river looks to be at least 10m wide, with a relatively fast flowing current. **It doesn't look that deep.**



Insomnia

Insomnia is a festival dedicated to all things game. It has gaming stations, a massive LAN party, esports tournaments, keynote presentations, exhibits of classic and cutting-edge games (both video and tabletop), *Dungeons and Dragons* campaigns, famous creators and big-name guests, cosplay championships, a gaming-themed drag show – I could go on. If it's gaming-related and fun, you name it, it's there.

SO WHAT: This festival caters to every aspect of the gaming community, bringing together various niches and uniting them over their shared love: gaming. The event's success stems from its success in creating a genuinely inclusive, friendly space where everyone can feel like they belong.

On the other side of the bank you can see the lights of the city. Freedom!
You just need to cross this river and then you're home and free.



UK Games Expo

The UK Games Expo is a Comic Con for board games. Gamers come to play a variety of tabletop games, go to seminars and shows, hear from publishers and designers, support indie developers, join a LARPing party (Live Action Role Playing) and participate in tournaments of board games of all kinds (ranging from big *Monopoly* competitions to smaller titles like *Azul*).

SO WHAT: This expo welcomes board game fans to enjoy their hobby, meet like-minded individuals, and learn something while they're at it. Although its setup isn't flashy, it continues to draw in the largest crowd of any hobby games convention in the UK based on its inclusive atmosphere.

You contemplate trying to wade across the river. It's not that deep. Is it?
Do you try and wade across, or do you look for other options?



Now Play This

This indie-focussed game event is all about interacting with thoughtful, innovative games drawn from the world we live in. Their aim is to show that games are art, and are driving complex interrogations into all sorts of spaces. The festival showcases cutting-edge new releases, features workshops on creating games and more, documentary screening, co-working sessions about implications for the gaming industry, and LARPing sessions that examine complex themes.

SO WHAT: Gaming events don't have to focus on mainstream, popular titles. They can also exist to support indie developers, spotlight complex and thoughtful narratives, and engage audiences with the thinking that's gone into these. The best events focus on both connection and introspection.

You step into the water and are met by the freezing cold current. As you make your way across the river you realise it's deceptively deep, and you can't swim. Didn't think this one through did you?



League of Legends

Perhaps the most well known esports competition, and definitely one of the biggest, *League of Legends* continues to draw huge viewership numbers for its championships. Events include numerous smaller competitions, in-person co-streaming sessions, and the prestigious World Cup, which is live-streamed. The 2024 World Final is set to be hosted at the O2 in London.

SO WHAT: *League of Legends'* esports competitions are so well known and streamlined by now that they resemble most big sporting tournaments. Hence, sponsorships and collaborations make up a significant part of their income.

As the water starts to drag you down into its depths you question every choice that brought you to this point in your journey.
Maybe choose a better option next time huh? Your eyes close as the river takes you.

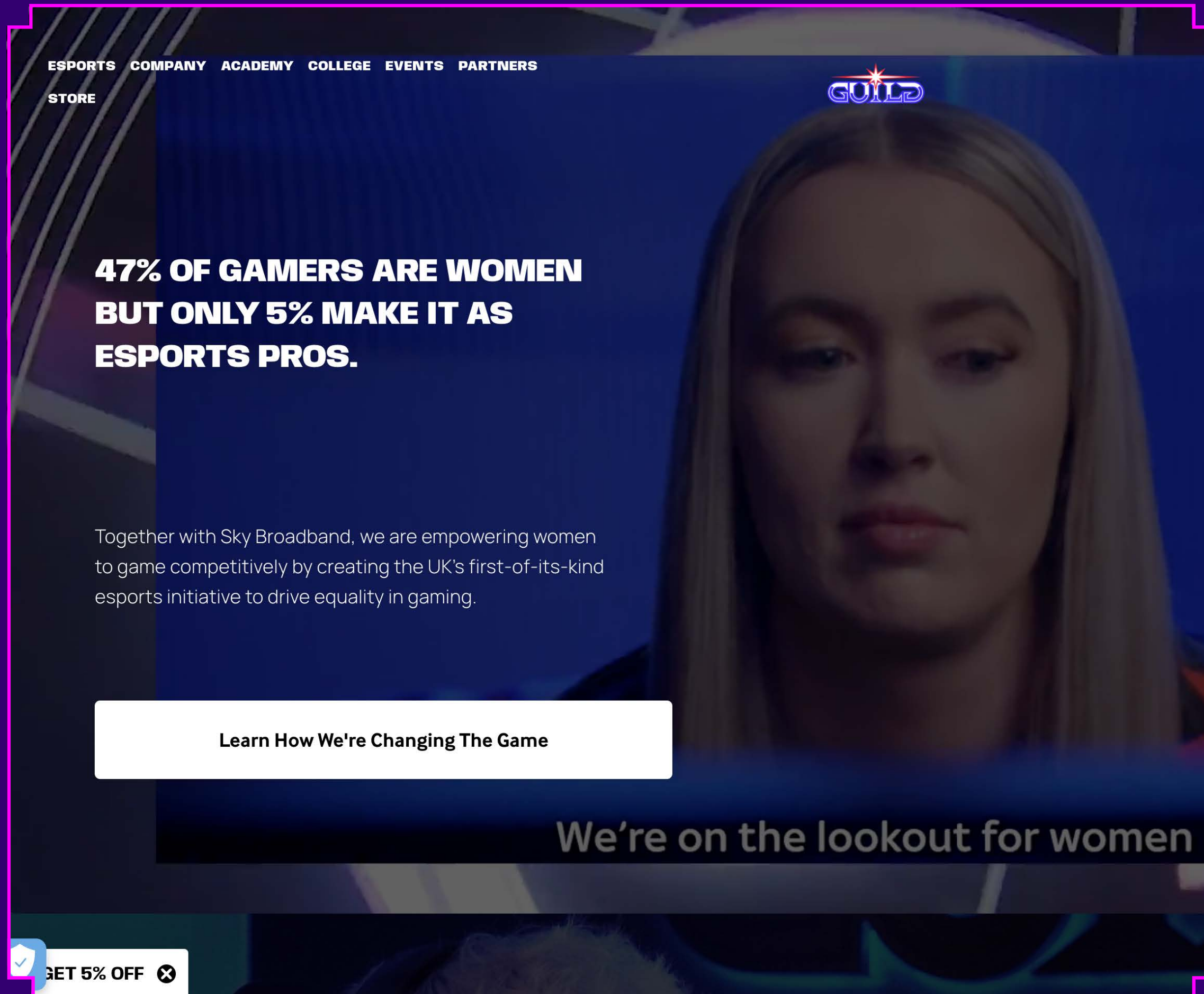


Commonwealth Esports Championships

The inaugural Commonwealth Esports Championships were held in Birmingham in 2022. They featured esports athletes competing in renowned global titles and featured a series of demonstrations showcasing new technologies created to bridge the gap between sports and esports.

SO WHAT: As the popularity and viewership of esports grows, expect to see more events pivot to phygital versions of themselves: both physical and virtual. These twinned events offer up new opportunities for hybrid eventing, and have the power to reach wider audiences.

You can't swim so you don't want to risk getting swept away by the current and drowning. That wouldn't be fun.
Instead you look around the river bank for other options to cross.



Guild Esports

Guild Esports is a competitive esports firm with teams across popular games like *Counter-Strike 2*, *Fortnite*, and *Valorant*. They also run a UK-based talent pipeline, fostering young talent with a focus on building inclusive teams, and provide training boot camps that teach kids skills like maths, problem-solving, teamwork and creativity through the vehicle of esports. They've also partnered with Sky to create *#NoRoomforAbuse*, a campaign focused on making women feel safer within the community.

SO WHAT: Gaming, and esports specifically, can offer escapism for a lot of young kids, and give them an environment to engage with their hobby away from the challenges of day-to-day life. Yet professional esports is still largely made up of white men. Guild Esports recognises the need to create equal opportunities for young talent and provide them with a safe space, to ultimately improve the diversity of the industry.

You spot a few fallen branches along the river bank. Maybe if you had some rope you could fashion some kind of raft to cross the river.



Netflix Games

Netflix recently turned to gaming as part of their strategy to become an entertainment subscription behemoth. It has been steadily building its games portfolio, curating a suite of downloadable mobile titles ranging from BAFTA-nominated *Immortality* to Netflix-show-based *Love is Blind* games. While they've struggled to get their standalone gaming offering off the ground, they have been testing cloud streaming for games to TVs which could offer a future breakthrough, and are considering evolving their subscription service into one supported by ads and microtransactions.

SO WHAT: While Netflix's subscription gaming service is hardly a smash hit yet, it gives us a glimpse into a future where all entertainment is wrapped up into a singular end-to-end platform. What cross-media collaborations and opportunities could this offer the sector?

You reach into your backpack and discover a hank of rope hidden in its depths. Well isn't that lucky!
You quickly fashion a rough raft, tying logs together with the rope. It's not the most seaworthy ship but it gives you hope.



Humble Bundle

Game retailer Humble Bundle sells, you guessed it, gaming and software bundles at flexible prices. A portion of proceeds of every sale goes to their monthly charity partner, and buyers can choose how their money is divided between creators, charity, the company's partners, and the company itself. Their membership offer gives members free access to a number of PC games each month, as well as a discount on their other games, with 5% of the membership fee going to charity.

SO WHAT: This subscription model is not only a great way for gamers to discover new games, it's also an avenue for them to discover a new charity every month. Consider how your organisation could partner with similar subscription services to raise awareness and funds.

You drop the raft into the river and amazingly it doesn't sink. You gingerly climb on board and push off into the current. Using a longer log as a makeshift gondola pole you steer into the heart of the river.



4DSIGHT

4D Sight

Typical esports advertising is similar to TV or YouTube, where ads pop up in between breaks. 4D Sight is an AI platform that integrates native ads in real time on streams or recordings. Instead of interrupting a stream, ads are embedded so that they appear on empty walls or spaces in gameplay (think of a billboard in real life, just in a game). The algorithm can also detect key moments in gameplay, so that ads are integrated at the best moments to draw maximum attention.

SO WHAT: Plenty of people tune out during ad breaks – it's the prime time to go get another cup of tea. By integrating ads into the gameplay, 4D Sight removes this obstacle, ensures maximum exposure of the ads, and avoids disrupting the experience for watchers.

As you reach the halfway point, ghostly hands start to emerge from the river, grabbing onto your raft. You knew it had all been going too well up till this point. I mean, who really thought the raft would float?



Mountain Dew

Mountain Dew's drink 'MTN DEW AMP GAME FUEL' is specially crafted to fuel endurance gaming in an effort to become the go-to gaming energy drink. Their branding is bold, colourful, and high-octane, taking design cues from sports, energy drinks, and gaming with tech-inspired graphics. Their tagline: "The first drink made by gamers, for gamers" further signals their understanding of the gaming world.

SO WHAT: Visual language is a core part of the gaming community. Mountain Dew's new drink taps into a recognisable style to signal a level of understanding towards the gaming industry, in the hopes of building more authentic connections. Think of it like social mirroring.

The hands are starting to pull at the ropes on your makeshift raft. So the question arises, did you open the book?

Yes, no, what book?



War Child x 11-11: Memories Retold

Part of War Child's gaming strategy involves creating branded, downloadable content in games that align with their brand. For example, they released a suite of downloadable content for WWI game *11-11: Memories Retold*, which featured the story of two children drawn into the conflict, shown through letters, drawings and photographs collected in game.

SO WHAT: Branded content works best when the game you're choosing is aligned with your brand and mission. In War Child's case, they chose conflict-based games to bring to life the stories of children in war. Which existing games link to your charity, and what new features, stories, and content could you bring to them?

Really? You really didn't open the book? Are you telling porkies?
1. Ok, I opened the book or 2. I promise I really didn't open the book.



Gucci

Fashion brand Gucci opened their Gucci Town virtual piazza on Roblox, in 2022. Available activities are evolving as the town grows, but include a creative corner where gamers can discover the works of visiting artists, create their own compositions and visit the fashion house's concept store. There is, of course, also a Gucci Shop, where visitors can buy digital Gucci clothes and accessories for their avatars.

SO WHAT: Sandbox games allow brands to build entire worlds of branded content, activities, challenges, and hangout spaces for their supporters. These spaces can be places to unwind and connect with fellow fans, deck out your avatar in merchandise (whether that's Gucci clothing or slogan t-shirts in support of your favourite charity), and learn about a brand's background, mission, and more. You might be wondering why a brand like Gucci is on Roblox – Millennials and Gen Z are expected to make up **75% of luxury goods buyers by 2026**, with Gen Alpha not far behind. Challenge yourself on the spaces you're allowed to have a voice in, it's not always obvious.

Really? You know nothing about the Necronomicon and what evil it holds?
Ok, I'll believe you. This time.



Wesgro

Cape Town's tourism agency Wesgro is leveraging Roblox to attract more family holidays to the city. The branded hangout spot sees some of Cape Town's best-loved destinations brought to life in a gamified, child-friendly way. Players interact with Table Mountain through games like 'Climb Table Mountain'.

SO WHAT: Although Roblox's audience is rapidly diversifying across age groups, their key demographic is still young kids. You might think young kids aren't your organisation's audience now, but they have strong lines of communication to their parents. Use these platforms to engage young kids and get to their parents through them.

The ghostly hands undo the final knot and your raft disintegrates under you. You drop into the icy depths of the river.
The bank and freedom within grasping distance.



Hellman's x Animal Crossing

This Covid-time initiative saw condiment brand Hellman's tap into *Animal Crossing* audiences to turn virtual food waste into real meals. The brand created Hellman's Island in the game and began taking donations of spoiled turnips. For every turnip dropped off, they donated one meal to Second Harvest, a charity that feeds people in need.

SO WHAT: This is an excellent example of a branded hangout space doing good. Hellman's tapped into a frequent phenomenon in a popular game (turnips going to waste – it happens more often than you think in *Animal Crossing*) to drive brand engagement, education about food waste, and real-life impact. Identify in-game events and spaces that link to your cause to integrate your branded experiences seamlessly.

As the water drags you down, you hear a distant laugh. Your eyes close and as your lungs breathe in the icy river water you hear that same voice cackle, "Choose better next time human."



E.l.f

Makeup brand E.l.f has launched a gaming-inspired makeup collection that draws on the electric shades of gaming aesthetics. The packaging includes a secret code that, when cracked, can unlock bonus points, gift cards, and more. This isn't E.l.f's first foray into the gaming space; they were one of the first makeup brands to get onto Twitch.

SO WHAT: To align with gaming audiences, a product doesn't need to be directly to gaming anymore. Tap into the language and style of games to transform your product into a gaming-audience must-have. This marketing isn't reserved for stereotypically masculine brands anymore either - campaigns like this one help further break down those stigmas and normalise broader gaming audiences.

You try and push the ghostly hands off the raft, retying the knots as quickly as they are undoing them. In desperation you reach into your backpack, hoping to find something, anything to help your plight.



war child

War Child hosted a series of live music concerts in partnership with Bethesda Gaming (creators of the *Skyrim* game). Basic seats sold for £45, while VIPs could pay extra for better seating, merchandise, signed score pages, and meet-and-greets after the show. Profits from the series went to War Child.

SO WHAT: Sweeping soundtracks are often crucial to a game's success, and many have become iconic pieces of music in their own right. In fact, the prevalence of classical music in sweeping gaming scores is inspiring a whole new generation of classical music fans (the BBC Proms series in 2022 even featured a gaming night). This campaign identifies an adjacent hobby to gaming that might not be immediately obvious (classical music) and brings it to life for the community.

You grab a bottle of mysterious brown liquid and try pouring that over the hands. Nothing. Next you reach for the leather bound book. As you pull the tome from your bag the river emits a terrifying scream.



Doritos

‘Doritos Silent’ brings new crunch-cancelling tech to PC gamers. Those who play online co-op games over microphones will be familiar with the frustrating crunching sound that most gamer-favourite snacks make. In response to this insight and the fact that **85% of gamers** consistently eat Doritos, the brand set out to create a new, silent chip.

SO WHAT: This is a prime example of a brand choosing their activations carefully, and only engaging to improve the gaming experience. Doritos simply identified a problem which fell in their wheelhouse and created a solution.

In desperation you hurl the book into the heart of the churning, screaming river. The ghostly hands leave your raft, following the book as it sinks under the swell and into the dark depths.



Great Ormond Street Hospital

GOSH first introduced a raffle programme in 2011, as a way to introduce new products to new audiences. The programme, which now hosts three raffles a year, is now a booming source of income, aiming to raise £12m this decade. On top of that, the charity launched a lottery in 2020, looking to net £47m in profit over the course of the decade. These prize-led initiatives are building long-term relationships as well: 23% of their legacy income from 2015–2019 was attributed to supporters who had engaged with the charity's prize-led fundraising.

SO WHAT: The raffle isn't just a great fundraising product, but also offers new pathways to engagement. It introduces new audiences to GOSH, and provides an alternative way to give for existing, warm cash audiences. Clearly, these prize-led fundraising initiatives offer the ability to build life-long relationships, from donation through to legacy giving.

Grabbing your oar you push towards the river bank like your life literally depended on it. As you reach the final metre you leap off the raft and crawl your way up the river bank and away from the water.



Omaze

This fundraising platform offers prize draws for funds. The prize? Luxury homes. The company is a for-profit fundraiser, making money for itself and its charity partners through prize draws. It guarantees a minimum £1m donation to its partners, irrespective of entry sales. Winners of the draw can either live in the home (Omaze gives the winner a cash prize of £100k to help with maintenance costs), rent it out, or sell it. On top of that, the company makes direct donations to small, local charities in the areas where their prize draws take place.

SO WHAT: The company complements charities' existing fundraising, helping them reach audiences who wouldn't normally donate and raising awareness for their causes. The company's partnership model allows charities to engage with prize-led fundraising with limited risk and cost.

As you stand and look back towards the river and the forest it all looks eerily calm and quiet. No hint of the strange and terrifying occurrences you just witnessed. You take a deep breath and turn back towards the lights of the city.



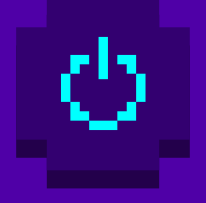
LidOnLoots

The #LidOnLoots campaign is run by the Gambling Health Alliance and campaigns for loot boxes to be re-classified as gambling. Their philosophy is that too many kids are exposed to a gambling-like activity that could be dangerous to their wellbeing. The campaign encourages a boycott of games which contain paid-for loot boxes, calling out publishers who use predatory loot box mechanics, and open conversation with young people about the risks of gambling.

SO WHAT: While some loot boxes could be classified as kids spending money on their in-game hobby, others use far more predatory practices. Opening conversations about loot boxes and educating kids (and parents) about the risks will be crucial for reducing their harm.

As you drag your wet and tired body towards the lights of home you reflect on the strange evening you've experienced, and wonder if the tavern might still be open for a glass of mead.

GAME
OVER



RESTART?

YES

NO

Get in touch for a coffee
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