IN REAL GAME

Live performance as marketing

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SAMMANFATTNING

Att få bra recensioner av sitt spel är avgörande för dess försäljningssiffror. Mycket möda och pengar läggs ner på att visa upp de bästa kvalitéerna i ett spel för branschfolket i spelindustrin. I fokus står de egenskaper som går att jämföra och mäta med andra spels, såsom grafik, ljud och motor.

Med tanke på att de spel vi väljer att återgå till om och om igen för att spela, är de spel där vi gillar spelkänslan, snarare än grafik och ljud, finns möjligheten att välja att lägga fokus på just spelkänslan, när man marknadsför spel.

Denna avhandling är tänkt att lyfta fram just möjligheten att förmedla känslan i ett spel vid marknadsföring. Många produkter tilltalar oss vid en första anblick med sin polerade, avancerad yta, medan de spel vi återgår till för att spela gång på gång är dem som har en spelkänsla som ingen annnan.

- Hur skulle det då vara om ett spel blev verklighet? Det är detta vi kommer att testa och diskutera, genom att ta en del ur ett befintligt spel och applicera den på vår värld, med våra parametrar. Förhoppningsvis kommer detta sätt av marknadsföring att ge en bra förståelse för hur man kommer att känna för ett spel när man väl spelar det.

ABSTRACT

To get good reviews of your game is crucial for its sales numbers. A lot of effort and money is invested in showing the best qualities of a game for those in the trade of game industry. Focus is mainly on the qualities that can be compared and measured with other games, like graphic, sound and engine.

Considering that the games we return to over and over to play, are the ones where we like the game feel, rather than graphics and sound, there's the possibility to focus on this game feel, when marketing games.

This thesis considers the possibility of focusing more on the feel of a game when marketing. Lots of products appeal to us at the first glance with its polished, advanced surface, while the game that we keep coming back to play over and over are the ones with game feel like no other.

- So how would it be if a game came to reality? This is what will be tested and discussed, by taking a scene from an existing game and apply to our reality, with our parameters. Hopefully this way of marketing will be able to provide a good understanding of what you will feel when using the product.

CONTENT

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Background

In real game. The name of the Thesis refers to the expression "in real life" [1], playing with the idea of actually experiencing a game world in the real world.

Today, games are presented, marketed, by showing some of their features on a screen to an audience in the game industry. What's presented is parts of the game that can be compared and measured to other games, features like the graphic engine, sound effects, graphic details, polygon count.
These features only tell you what you will be able to see and hear when playing the game. If these features are advanced, like many games today are, it will be sufficient to get a positive feedback from the audience. Some of the times we do buy certain games just because they look and sound real good, but the games we tend to play over and over are the ones with great game feel.

Jane McGonial, game designer, has written a paper called *"A Real Little Game: The Performance of Belief in Pervasive Play"*, where she examines the result of putting people in situations in the real world, where they will act accordingly to game rules.

> Quote: I examine how players negotiate the boundary between these pervasive games and real life. I trace the emergence of what I call "the Pinocchio effect" – the desire for a game to be transformed into real life, or conversely, for everyday life to be transformed into a "real little game."

Will it be able to promote a game this way, by putting its gaming reality into our world?

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[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In_real_life

1.2 Goal

The best way to experience this type of marketing would of course be to be present in person, to see with your own eyes.
However, to present this idea to the biggest audience possible, it's better to document it on video/audio so that it can be shown on numerous occasions, rather than on one live performance.
So, the final product we'll be making is a movie, presenting the concept of this marketing idea.

1.3 Delimitation

Choosing what game able to perform in real life would be the first delimitation. Some of the more common genres in gaming could be rather difficult to handle within the given time limit.

Having a set time limit for you project would not result in time being one of your delimitations, but the ten weeks would normally have been spent writing the report and executing the project simultaneously. Regarding all the people that is required for the documentation of the performance, we had to set the dead-line to the 5th week, in order for everybody to attend. This meant that all effort would go to the project the first five weeks, and to the report the last five weeks.

1.4 Method

Having in mind that this thesis is accompanied by a hands-on project, the best method would be the Description. This seems like a good method to go with project work, explaining all parts without a fuss.
Other possible methods could be the Case-study. This often is a personal explanation and is easy to understand. The only problem could be that the big picture gets missing, when you get to follow the work so closely.

2. **IMPLEMENTATION**

Most of the work done on this project would normally fall under the Production phase.
But for reference, post-production is the work done on preparing the performance.
Production is the work done on the performance, and the movie.
Post-production is the work done after the performance.
Note: the project took place in Uddevalla, Sweden. "*Weeks*" are relative to the project, not the calendar.

2.1 Pre-production

The first issue of the project was to choose a game to promote. Of course it would have been a great career move to market a game under development. But finding a relevant game and persuade the developers/distributors to let me market in, in five weeks, might be difficult. So the parameters of choosing the game were: well-known, nice game feel, feasible to perform in real life.

The choice was made rather quickly. *PaRappa The Rapper* was the game that would be brought to life. To be more precise, level 4 or this game would see our reality. *PaRappa The Rapper*, made for Playstation, property of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc, is a music game in cartoon style.

The second issue of the project was to find people willing to work for free.
Needed (with exception of the producer/writer):

- Camera-men
- Movie Editor
- Sound technician
- Sound assistant
- Light technician
- Documentation photographer
- Scenery workers
- Actors / musicians
- Stage workers

Week 01 was spent trying to find as many team members as possible. The only way I initially thought I could get free labour, was to co-operate with a school or similar, to make this project part of a school assignment.

I contacted the principal of Uddevallas upper secondary school, to make sure I was allowed to ask the students to join my project.

- The band Spacesuit Ballets Dancers agreed to join the team, as Musicians and Actors.
- Lokal-TV Uddevalla agreed to join the team, as Camera-men and Editors.
- Robin Myrbäck agreed to join the team, as Sound Assistant.
- Pernilla Ludvigsson agreed to join the team as Light Technician.
- Sofia Azam agreed to join the team as Documentation Photographer.
- Booked premises for recording the video, Studio 32.

Also, I finally got my hands on the actual game, considered hard to find. It was bought from a individual seller in Australia, and took about one week for it to arrive.
The team is still missing a Sound Technician, Scenery workers, and Stage workers.

Week 02 was spent on finding a Sound Technician and Scenery workers, as well as updating the team with the basic idea of the performance. The date of recording the performance was set to Saturday the 26th of march.
When presenting the project for students in the upper secondary school a lot more volunteered than I had expected.

- 24 Students agrees to join the team as Scenery workers.

Week 03. A lot of effort was put into finding the material needed to complete the recording.

- Studio Sinclair agrees to sponsor the project by lending us all the required sound recording material.
- Högskolan I Trollhättan / Uddevalla agrees to sponsor the project by lending us 3 identic digital video cameras, complete with tripods and external microphones.
- Kaj Palm agrees to join the team as Sound Technician.
- 6 Stage workers agrees to join the team.

A production meeting is held at Studio 32, the premises where we will shoot the video, for all involved team members.

Week 04. All needed team members have joined the team, and this week was spent preparing and helping mentioned members with their work. For example, supporting the Scenery workers with an analysis of the game, and writing a script for the actors.

Week 05. The moment of truth, all the remaining pieces of the puzzle had to be solved this week.

2.2 Production

Still in *Week 05,* the recording of the movie took place the 26th of march. The day before, most of the material had been transported to Studio 32 and rigged, with the exception of some of the musicians instruments.

On Saturday, most team members showed up at 09.00 to prepare for "take one" at 12.00.

Struggling hard the day before with scenery, transportation, computers, recording material, food, plus some anxiety, it was a beautiful sight having the whole team at the same place, getting ready to do their very best.

The 2 singers of the band, the actors, got their costumes on, Mikeal as PaRappa, with laid-back hiphop clothes, and Per as Cheap Cheap the chicken, a cooking show host.

The rest of the band finally let us hear their version of the song, while the Camera men tested angles, distances and light.

On schedule, 12.00 we shot the first take. The plan was to shoot the video in 4 different scenes, editing them together to one. Like most cooking shows, we had 1 camera on each actor, crossways, plus 1 camera as a backup, also getting the sound output directly from the mixerboard, for syncing video with audio when editing later on.

Everything went very smooth, and on schedule.
After playing the same song for four hours, the band and actors had finally played the last note needed for the video. Taking down the set was a relief, compared to setting it up. After a few hours the premises looked like before we arrived, and the sound recording material and scenery returned to their owners.

2.3 Post-production

Week 06. Apart from returning the materials to Högskolan I Trollhättan / Uddevalla, most of the projects time was wasted due to illness. Took time to write "Credits[2]" for the movie.

Week 07. Started editing the sound to pass it on to the Movie Editors. Spent most of the time writing a "Editing script[3]" and "Text script[4]" for the movie. The actual work with editing would be done by Lokal-TV Uddevalla.

Week 08. All material needed for editing the movie is ready. Time is spent continuing on the report.

Week 09. Writing the report.

Week 10. Writing the report.

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[2] See Appendix A - Credits
[3] See Appendix B - Editing Script
[4] See Appendix C - Text script

For a more detailed walkthrough of the 10 weeks, have a look at the "Work Diary[5]".

3. **ANALYSIS** and **CONCLUSION**

> QUOTE: I didn't expect that sense of intimacy." But the game had left him with more than memories. "It was the sort of experience where when I went back, the whole time I half expected crazy groups of people to be dashing about madly, even though I knew the game was gone," he said. "It haunts your experience of the place, you feel more comfortable with the space, like you could do anything there." For Lee, the neighborhood was transformed by the game. "I know it better, I have lived here, it is mine, I know it better than you do, I can make it come to life, I can make anything happen here.

Considering McGonials *Real Little Game* (p.6, 10-12, 16-17, 22) research on how you respond and percieve gaming reality in the real world, it seems that most people respond very positive to the experience in it self. They tend to be a lot more attentive and likey to remember what they have felt, seen and heard, during the time they are within the gaming reality.

This movie is only a way to document this idea. The best way to understand would be to be present in person when this show takes place.

Still, it is quite clear that it feasible to make this kind of promotion of your game.

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[5] See <u>Appendix D - Work Diary</u>

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