Software Failure

A look into Cyberpunk 2077’s release on PlayStation 4

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# What was the software and what about it failed?

Examples of software failures that happened to me occur in Cyberpunk 2077 which I bought on my PlayStation 4. Developed by CD Projekt Red, it was a highly anticipated game which promised a sprawling open-world adventure set in a futuristic metropolis. However, upon its release, it became apparent that the developers did not optimise the game for PS4, leading to technical issues and gameplay problems.

The most glaring issue was the frequent crashing of the game, it was frequent, unpredictable, and a real mood killer. It was common to encounter sudden freezes or complete system shutdowns while doing nothing that would appear to be strenuous on the system. Additionally, the physics engine failed to function correctly, resulting in bizarre glitches and unrealistic interactions between characters and objects, especially when driving which is something I particularly enjoy in a game. As an example, I would be driving in the desert and jumping over dunes taking satisfying landings when suddenly, the car would sink into the ground or fling up into the air randomly, ruining a fun flow of gameplay. That is my main issue with these bugs, they disrupt the pace and flow and pull you out of the experience of escapism you tend to play these games for. Another immersion-breaking issue is when the rendering fails such as textures and graphics, objects would not load in on time and what out to be smooth traversal would happen on low poly surfaces with streetlights flickering in and out when passing.

# Could testing have fixed it?

“CD Projekt has said that it didn't feel any unusual "external or internal pressure" to launch Cyberpunk 2077 on December 10, and explained that the decision not to delay the game was, at least in part, because it "definitely did not spend enough time looking" at compromised last-gen versions. The company also explains that, "in theory" it could have released the game on PC only.” (Skrebels 2020)

As the developers admitted that they did not spend enough time looking at the PS4 version of their game, I would say that further testing would have led to vast improvements in the overall product and experience.

I believe that the developers did not investigate the PS4 version as they already had delayed the game from its initial release date and there were pressures placed on them by those in the company structure higher up to release the game earlier to generate revenue for the company.

# What was the effect of the failure?

Normally, Sony does not allow refunds of games easily and there is an overly complex system for asking for one, however, in the case of this game, the performance and experience were so poor that the PS Store had an easily accessible refund system that I took use of. They even removed the game from the store entirely, before it was later put back with an obvious disclaimer that there were still issues with the performance of the game and it was not the ideal experience. (Chilton 2020) CD Projekt Red had to pay back money that they had earned from sales to compensate for these refunds and as a result, they made less money on the game than they possibly would have done releasing a fully working product.

# Bibliography

Chilton, Louis. 2020. *Cyberpunk 2077 removed from PlayStation store, with Sony to offer refunds.* 12 18. Accessed 2 11, 2024. https://www.independent.co.uk/games/cyberpunk-2077-psn-removed-refund-ps4-b1775997.html.

Skrebels, Joe. 2020. *CD Projekt Addresses Why It Didn't Delay Cyberpunk 2077 Again.* 12 15. Accessed 2 11, 2024. https://www.ign.com/articles/cyberpunk-2077-pressure-delay-base-ps4-xbox-one.