**AI x Gaming**

**Week of February 10th, 2024**

# **Top 3-5 Key News Items**

**Key News Item #1:** Split Fiction developer not so split on AI ([Link](https://www.gamesradar.com/games/action/split-fictions-josef-fares-thinks-game-devs-should-embrace-ai-i-can-understand-the-fact-that-some-people-could-lose-their-jobs-but-that-goes-for-every-new-technology/))

* In an interview with VGC, Josef Fares, director of Split Fiction, advocated for game developers to adapt to AI technology. He acknowledged potential job displacement but emphasized its inevitability with new tech advancements.
* Taking a realistic point of view he also acknowledged that both bad and good will come out of it and it can’t just be ignored as he believes it will have a bigger impact than the internet eventually. He does admit that he sees it being a long time until it can be used in actual development at his studio.
* Fares isn’t just some indie dev as his studio, Hazelight Studios was behind the breakout Game of the Year winner (Game Awards 2021) and hit, It Takes Two (20M+ copies sold), and the previous hit A Way Out (9M+ copies sold). Both previous games and the upcoming Split Fiction are all published by EA. Split Fiction isn’t released until March, but it’s also likely to be successful with the solid track record so far.
* **Why does this matter to AI x Gaming:** Game developers' relationship with AI is currently quite contentious, but the more successful game devs that start speaking out about it as a reality, the faster the industry can come to terms and evolve.

**Key News Item #2:** Sony patenting AI Playstation assistants ([Link](https://gamerant.com/sony-playstation-gaming-ai-assistant-patent/))

* Sony has filed patents indicating the development of an AI assistant for Playstation designed to interact with gamers during gameplay, offering real-time assistance and personalized recommendations. This is just one of a few related AI patents Sony has been filing.
* In April last year Sony filed a patent for an AI-driven autoplay feature to help players auto-play through undesirable portions of gameplay. On February 6th of this year they filed a patent for a “conversational digital assistant” which players could ask directly for information on how to play the game as well as get alerts related to game actions.
* The other patent filed on February 6th is for a “virtual assistant for game discovery” that works similar in some ways to the conversational assistant in being able to give tips and info, but could do so as a virtual overlay version of popular Sony game characters like Kratos from God of War. In this case the example was given of being able to ask how to defeat a particular enemy.
* Getting information, tips and tricks for games has a long history going back to game magazines, early internet walkthroughs, Twitch Streamers and YouTubers. Embedding all that information directly in the game or at the OS level could certainly help players stay more engaged and increase completion rates and franchise retention. Of course the obvious question then is where the information for the AI will come from, with the most likely answer being the game developers themselves.
* **Why does this matter to AI x Gaming:** It’s not unusual for lack of information or frustration with particular parts of games to lead to earlier churn than should be necessary. Not having to pull out a smart phone to find out how to get unstuck, especially when the game is just released, could be a big help for many players, but also risks spoiling some of the learning experience.

**Key News Item #3:** Gamers recruited to train AI for underwater creature recognition ([Link](https://www.notebookcheck.net/From-gaming-consoles-to-the-deep-ocean-Gamers-train-AI-for-underwater-missions.962115.0.html))

* Researchers at the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute (MBARI) in California developed FathomVerse, a game that enlists players to identify unknown sea creatures such as rare jellyfish, thereby training AI for autonomous underwater exploration. So far more than 17.5K gamers have analyzed nearly 48K images, representing about 14% of the FathomNet database.
* With a definite risk of false identification the game smartly requires a tutorial that teaches gamers how to recognize different creatures, especially the rare deep sea variety they may not be familiar with. A consensus has to be reached with other gamers before the data is passed on to the AI to help weed out errors in recognition. The eventual goal is for the AI to be trained well enough to perform identification on its own.
* This approach copies other previous successful attempts at recruiting gamers to help with scientific problems that require some brute force like [Folding at Home](https://foldingathome.org/start-folding/). It certainly won’t be the last either, but the idea of using it to help bootstrap an AI, like a more fun but free version of Amazon’s Mechanical Turk project, is a good way to make sure the project has a clear goal and endpoint. Games like this may also have the effect of interesting the players in the subject area, in this case deep sea marine life.
* Quality training data is an area that has recently started to become a bottleneck for AI and synthetic data can only do so much. It’s not hard to imagine more projects like this that allow for crowd sourcing data and reinforcements for any kind of data training that gamers could get behind.
* **Why does this matter to AI x Gaming:** This initiative demonstrates a potentially useful intersection of gamification and AI to help train models in a positive context. This concept can even be applied to games themselves with players helping train AI to recognize play patterns that could inform AI coaches or even anti-cheat.

**Key News Item #4:** BLOCKLORDS reveals an AI Roadmap for its live Web3 game ([Link](https://cointelegraph.com/press-releases/blocklords-unveils-ai-roadmap-age-of-intelligent-heroes-begins))

* The medieval Web3 strategy game BLOCKLORDS announced an AI roadmap introducing features like AI-powered tutorials, autonomous hero agents, and AI-driven farm management to enhance gameplay. Unlike many of the AI pitches in the blockchain gaming space, BLOCKLORDS has been a playable beta game for quite a while and building in public.
* The game’s original key Web3 gimmick is NFT heroes that can be developed over their lifetimes and have children with a defined lineage. This does seem like an interesting match with the AI potential as of course the heroes already have had basic game AI.
* The more novel elements on the roadmap that suit the gameplay are features like AI farm management, an AI market trading agent and AI trained battle generals. All of these represent areas of gameplay at different levels as the game is divided into hierarchical levels of gameplay genre. Of course this also gives a pretty clear impression of incorporating player run botting into a feature instead of something to fight against.
* **Why does this matter to AI x Gaming:** Integrating advanced AI functionalities within the mechanical gameplay aspects from a player owned perspective is something Web3 games seem quite interested in pursuing as part of agentic blockchain economic ecosystems. With this being an actual live game and hopefully not empty promises, it will be interesting to see if this ends up subverting gameplay and just turning into a medieval bot simulation.

# **Other News Items**

* **Sony Removes 'Eslop' Games From PlayStation Store** ([Link](https://www.cnet.com/tech/gaming/sony-removes-eslop-games-from-playstation-store-report-says/)): Sony is cleaning house on the Playstation store of garbage AI games, something Nintendo and others will need to do as well.
* **Astra Nova Joins NVIDIA Inception Program to Advance AI in Gaming Ecosystem** ([Link](https://www.cryptopolitan.com/astra-nova-joins-nvidia-inception-program-to-advance-ai-in-gaming-ecosystem/)): Astro Nova, a community-driven AI powered game ecosystem is joining NVIDIA’s Inception Program, an initiative to accelerate AI starts.
* **Google will use machine learning to estimate a user’s age** ([Link](https://www.theverge.com/news/610512/google-age-estimation-machine-learning)): Google is planning to use machine learning to try and identify if a user is under 18 or not. Could be quite useful for platforms like Roblox if it works.
* **OpenAI Roadmap Update for GPT-4.5 and GPT-5** ([Link](https://x.com/sama/status/1889755723078443244)): OpenAI is under constant pressure from competitors now to stay relevant in the news, leading them to announce details of a GPT that will combine the conversational models with the reasoning models and just reducing model count in general.
* **Musk Says Chatbot Grok 3 Will Be Unveiled Monday** ([Link](https://www.barrons.com/news/musk-says-chatbot-grok-3-will-be-unveiled-monday-3b200e6b)): Elon has been [speaking publicly](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EosppBqAz7Y) about Grok 3 being the “smartest AI” with it being released today at 8pm PST. He’s also supposedly raising $10B for xAI, and hopefully some of that could be applied to the AI game studio he promised.
* **Introducing Perplexity Deep Research** ([Link](https://www.perplexity.ai/hub/blog/introducing-perplexity-deep-research)): Perplexity, the AI search tool, has somewhat one-upped both Google’s Deep Research (requires premium) and OpenAI’s Deep Research (requires the $200/mo premium) with a limited use but free version. Premium users do get more usage, but clearly the space is getting competitive fast.
* **Qualcomm's New Chip Touts AI, Gaming Capabilities for Cheaper Phones** ([Link](https://www.cnet.com/tech/mobile/qualcomms-new-chip-touts-ai-gaming-capabilities-for-cheaper-phones/)): It’s not just PC’s and laptops getting into the AI features but also mobile which is leveraging scaled down AI for far more frequent use.

# **Content Worth Consuming**

* **Gaming In The Age Of AI: Lessons On AI Implementation For Tech Leaders** ([Link](https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbesbusinesscouncil/2025/02/11/gaming-in-the-age-of-ai-lessons-on-ai-implementation-for-tech-leaders/)):
  + Denys Kliuch, CEO of Whimsy Games Development shares some things he’s learned from using AI with games. In this case his company was working to create an AI that plays games exactly like the player by analyzing past gameplay.
  + Some of the things learned included balancing player personalization vs performance, making decisions that reflect actual player risk and having clear goals that reflect user values. Interestingly part of the theoretical value is around having AI that can play for and as the player to handle things like repetitive tasks to focus on enjoyable parts of the game.
  + Much like the aforementioned Sony patents and BLOCKLORDS reveal, there’s clearly interest in allowing players to leverage AI to automate parts of gameplay. Of course this begs the question of why the player is playing that game in the first place, or why it’s designed with elements players would rather automate.
  + That being said, the Idle genre and auto-playing RPGs definitely show a growing interest from players in “managing” gameplay sometimes rather than directly engaging in it. In all likelihood this has the potential to become its own form of genre where training the AI and monitoring/adjusting it are part of the main appeal of the game. There’s certainly some history with pet monster games and others that involve training things to act on a player’s behalf.
* **The Anthropic Economic Index** ([Link](https://www.anthropic.com/news/the-anthropic-economic-index)):
  + Claude developer Anthropic released an “Economic Index” report that digs into millions of anonymized conversations on Claude to see how exactly it’s being used for real world tasks. Surprisingly Anthropic is also open sourcing the data set for other researchers to analyze and learn from.
  + The conclusions from the report aren’t terribly shocking, but do help confirm some assumptions around the typical user of AI. First is the heavy concentration of software development and technical writing task usages with approximately 4% of occupations using it across three-quarters of their associated tasks. It makes sense for this to be a key usage as software development is essentially writing like a human for a computer and technical writing is writing like a computer for humans.
  + The second takeaway is somewhat a result of where things stand right now with slightly more usage as augmentation (57%) than automation (43%). That is likely to at least try and shift this year as automation sees a significant push. Of course this is data from just one AI model provider and each may skew differently based on capabilities and where those types of users gravitate.
  + Lastly the AI usage is more reflective of mid-to-high wage occupations like the aforementioned computer programmers as well as data scientists. This can be a mix of the personality likely to adopt AI more readily as well as occupational utility compared with low and very high paying jobs. There definitely will be some shift here, although its hard to say which direction as AI may take over some jobs or simply require that those holding the job be competent with AI.
* **AGI Is Already Here—It’s Just Not Evenly Distributed** ([Link](https://www.thealgorithmicbridge.com/p/agi-is-already-hereits-just-not-evenly)):
  + One of the biggest issues with evaluating AI utility is the classic “garbage in, garbage out” principle that is often reflected in “prompt engineering” capabilities of users. This piece analyzes just how much of an impact user skill actually has in getting high quality responses from AI. One key point the author, Alberto Romero, makes is that it is somewhat of a false assumption that as models improve they will get better at inferring intent. It makes sense however when you think of AI as an intern with basically 0 context on anything you’re asking about and having to ask a ton of “dumb” questions to infer what’s really being asked.
  + Romero does a nice job in comparing the different models here to see how well they perform when used poorly to really narrow in on how the two work together, or don’t. This sort of technical analysis of prompt engineering can definitely help figure out whether the AI is the problem or the user, especially given that prompt engineering is nowhere near “solved”. Ideally analysis like this will eventually lead to some form of interactive tutorial (via the AI itself) for new users to ramp up to mind blowing usage without the awkward phase of not knowing what to say.