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## Rainbow Six Siege Community Field Notes

"Uh, yeah they have a Maestro blue."

"Ash B, lit."

"They hard breached I-25. Watch for entry."

"Dok has no calls, but she has cams."

These are just a few phrases heard in Rainbow Six Siege (R6S). R6S is a tactical

first-person shooter (FPS) released by Ubisoft in 2015. The game pits 2 teams of 5 against one

another on a variety of maps, using a variety of in-game characters (known colloquially as

operators or ops). How can the English language sound so foreign and strange when spoken in

terms of Rainbow Six Siege? What's different, and why? These will be my guiding questions as

I play a few games of R6S with some people I know. I will be analyzing how we talk, what

makes it sound weird, and the reasons behind why we edit our language when playing.

Midnight. Close to 1 AM now. The entire house is asleep, but the internet is alive and

bustling. Because of work constraints and other obligations, this was when we could all get on to

play. We mostly live in Colorado, but there are a few in our circle of players that live in other

states. R6S is a global game played by millions, and the professional scene is getting more and

more popular, now sporting a 2-million-dollar prize pool. Though the people I play with won't

be pro players anytime soon, we still try to take the game pretty seriously, and that means getting

into the right mindset. Games of R6S happen fast; the rounds are only minutes long and each

gunfight is about 10 seconds unless the combatants are fighting from odd angles. Because of the
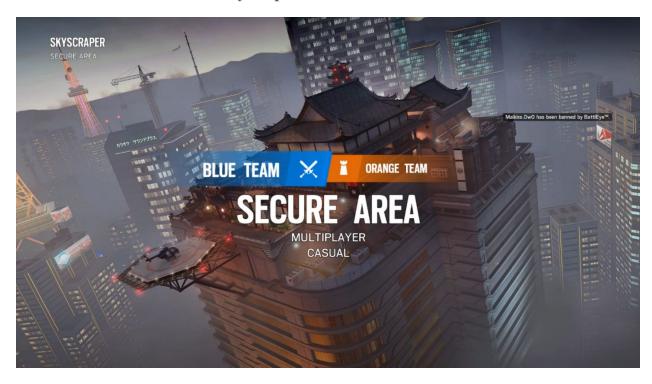
tactical fast paced nature of the game, we are required to speak quickly but clearly. One wrong communication (named 'callouts' in the community) can result in a teammates death.

In our first game we find ourselves on a map called Skyscraper. Some people on our team of 5 strongly dislike this map, while others say its just fine. Right now, people might still understand what we're saying.

"This is a high-quality map," one member of the team says.

Another responds, "This map sucks ass."

Load screen for the first game
on Skyscraper



This is just general banter, but as soon as the operator select screen comes up, we're all business. We debate which operator is best for which site and talk over one another for who should play who. After this is done, the round begins. One of our teammates lets us know that

he's going to, "place drone above hatch to see if they play it." None of us respond, knowing full well what he's talking about. The information is stored for later. It turns out that the hatch was reinforced, and no one on the enemy team was playing it. We took over hatch instead and attacked the objective site from above.
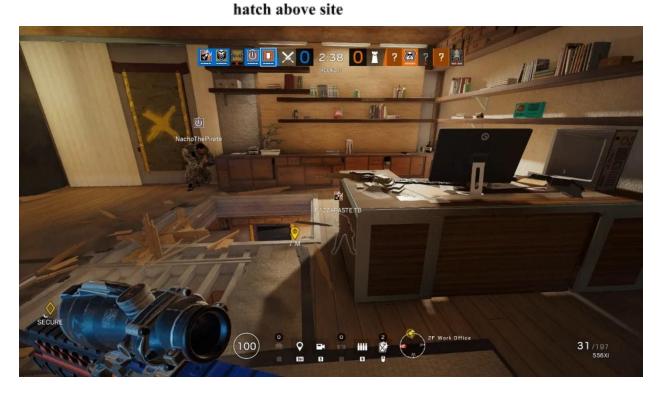
"Hatch open."

"Yeah, I'm planting back to watch for flanks."

"Is Frost dead?"

"Yeah but watch for traps still. I only got one."

This all happened in seconds, and this was four different people talking one after the other.

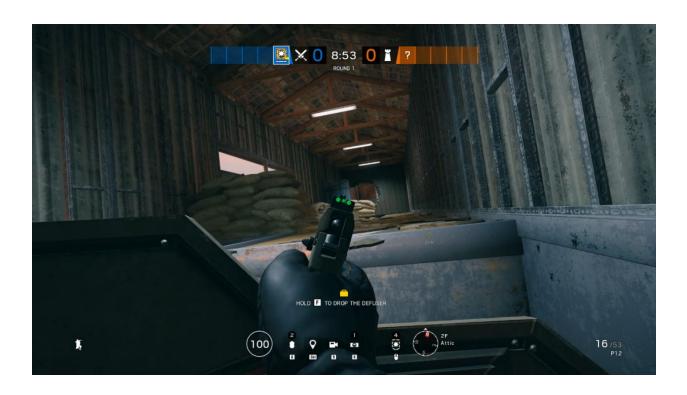
Our team taking the hatch above site

This sort of fast paced dialogue isn't uncommon. In fact, this makes up the great majority of in-game talk when playing R6S. Callouts are essential and can mean the difference in winning and losing. The interesting part of this project is that I'm only going to be writing a small example of how people in the community talk. Because I've played with some of these people a lot in the past, we have made our own unique callouts for things that other R6S players might not understand at first. The **The room known as "Attic" that we call I-25** prime examples of this are things like calling a certain gadget in game a "DJ Khaled" or calling a room "I-25" (the name of a highway specific to Colorado).



After playing a few games with my team, I realized that my guiding question might have focus on our own "sub-community" within the R6S community. While we share some callouts, a lot of ours are very different. The primary question of how we change our language applies

though. Most players, English speaking or not, do the same things to their language as we do to ours. The main difference is the shortening on sentences. An entire round of R6S can be spoken in fragmented English. There are few complete sentences or thoughts. In fact, I'd argue that they're literally simplifying their speech or dumbing it down. It's an amalgamation of fragments and info that no one but a person inside the community would understand.

Take the phrase "Ash B, lit," as an example. These 3 words mean nothing to most people, but to someone in the R6S community, it means a lot. Ash (an attacking operator) is inside of bomb site B, possibly with defuser, but she's taken damage from one of the defenders and is hurt (lit).

A response to this phrase might be, "We have defuser basement. Play time, it's a 3v1."

Aside from the huge amounts of community specific jargon, the other primary difference I noticed was our ability to "selectively listen." Oftentimes there are 5 people talking. One might be manning cameras giving callouts to his buddy who's roaming in the basement of the map, while two others are in a gunfight. Those two are chirping at one another (flank here, I hit him, fall back, move left etc.) while the other members of the team are doing their own thing. That doesn't mean the gunfight isn't important to the rest of the team though.

I've noticed that we've developed a way to listen to information that is most immediate to us, but still manage to keep the background info in our heads. For example, when two of us were in a gunfight and I heard my teammate die, he said, "Alibi lit, running downstairs." Though I was in the middle of a fight myself, I remember this information for later. If I were to come across Alibi, I would know she was hurt, and I didn't necessarily have to go for a hard headshot.

This ability to listen and take in fragmented bits of language here and there is by no means exclusive to the R6S community, but it definitely is something we have gotten good at.

After it was all said and done, I thanked my team and left for the night. I felt really comfortable around them, because I've known a lot of them for years. The strangers that we played with made me a lot less comfortable to play with and observe. We played with people who used all sorts of racial slurs on the mic, and who were generally being horrible people. Though it sucks, I can't just write them off. They're part of this online community as well, and R6S is known (like many other online games) for having a very toxic player base. People are openly racist and rude (not every game, but a lot) and it creates tension with the people who are just playing to have fun.

So, if asked whether I connected with the community or not, I'd say that I connect with the people I know who play a lot better than some of the strangers I play with. I'd also say that I connect with this community when they're focused on the game and talking about the game. Otherwise, there have been some pretty tense encounters where I find myself arguing with people who are there to make others angry. There's a lot of good and a lot to study linguistically from this online gaming community, but it definitely isn't without its flaws, that's for sure.