**Video Game Music Competition Guide**

**Overview:**

This will take around 2 weeks to plan and create, so start early. The way the competition works is that there are 5 rounds of 10 songs. Players earn three points, one for the game’s franchise, one for the specific game, and one for the name of the song. I used to be pretty strict with the song name, but nowadays if the player puts something relatively close, I’ll accept it. It might be a good idea to cut down the number; 45 seconds of 50 different songs played twice alone is 75 minutes, not including the time spent at the end of the round and between songs, the awards ceremony, etc. The Health and Wellness Center does 4 rounds of 6 questions for their Trivia IM, which lasts an hour and might be a better fit, but I’ll leave that to you to decide.

**Planning Songs:**

To plan out the song list I use Excel, since it’s easy to change up the order. Make sure that you’re not putting songs that sound similar back-to-back. As for choosing the songs, I never used ones from the past event, and tried not to use games from the past 2. Franchises are free game though. Try to choose songs that are easier and more popular; many of the people won’t know many of the songs you choose, so putting in a lot of easier ones will help to keep people engaged. I always use ***Mario***, ***Pokémon*** and ***Zelda***. Nintendo as a whole is a good crutch since so many of their games have iconic music, but try not to lean on it too much for the crowd that grew up with only Playstation or Xbox. ***Super Smash Bros.*** is another good resource for old and modern game, and I like using <http://www.vgmonline.net/>’s Audio of the Year lists for finding songs from new games. I also always have a joke song like **“Megalovania”** or **“Haggstrom”**. Most importantly, have a bit of fun for yourself. Don't be afraid to do a couple jokes for yourself. In the past, I’d do stuff like put ***Black Flag*** and ***Sea of Thieves*** in the same round because pirates (teehee). Round 5 is a free for all where I put my favorite songs that you’d have to be really in the know to guess like **“vs. SAYU”** from ***No Straight Roads***, or **“GRAND BATTLE”** from ***Fate/Grand Order***.

Once you have your song list, I look up the songs on YouTube and place them in a public playlist I made. This is because I made a Python script that should have come with this document that, unless something has broken, allows you to use the line

python download\_playlist.py -p url

where url is the URL of the playlist with all of the music. It is important that the playlist is set to public, as if it isn’t the script won’t be able to access it. It will first download the video into it’s memory, then convert it into an audio file. You’ll also have to install the ffmpeg and youtube-dl libraries from pip for the file to work.

**Cutting Songs:**

Once the program has finished downloading all the audio files, you’ll have to isolate a good 30-45 second chunk from each one. I never went any longer than that since every song will be played at least twice for the audience. Shorter segments are better, but *never* cut the song right in the middle of the measure. This is the only circumstance where it’s okay to go over the 45 second limit, since it would sound awful otherwise. But try to choose segments so you don’t put yourself in that situation.

To cut the tracks, I used <https://mp3cut.net/>. The rest of this section is instructions on how to use it, but feel free to use any other audio cutting/mixing tool you’d prefer.

Once the song has finished rendering, you can click the bars at the front and end of the song’s waveform to move where the beginning and end of the segment will be. For finer grain control, you can also use the [LEFT] and [RIGHT] arrow keys after clicking on the bar you’d like to change. Try to get it so the song starts and ends on the exact beat you want. Sometimes songs will have a moment of the previous/next beat overlapping the one you want, and in those cases I cut into the beat just so the audience wouldn’t hear it. I also made liberal usage of the fade out button to close out a segment. When doing that, I’d give the track a measure or two of the next section so that the fadeout wouldn’t be so abrupt.

**Putting Together the PowerPoint:**

Now that you have the tracks you want to use, you’ll have to create the PowerPoint that will be used for the competition. Thankfully, I’ve already completed another Python program that should do it for you.

perform the tedious task of naming the songs in the order you want. This is because the PowerPoint used for the competition is created with another Python script I made named vgmc\_pp\_maker.py, and in order for the script to find the songs, they have to be in the form {round\_num}-{song\_num}.mp3. So, the fourth song of the first round would be 4-1.mp3, the eight song of the second round would be 2-8.mp3, and so on.

Remember to have the Review songs not play in sequence

Align tools are your friend

Go through the songs after every time to make sure everything is in the right order

- Also so you can check formatting to make sure the tracks are all in the same exact XY values

Recheck that all the answers, from franchise, game, and song, are correct.

Don't forget your \*'s when you need them.