**Interview Transcript: Participant 5**

**Interviewer:** All right. Thank you for finding time for my little study. I really appreciate it.

**P5:** What do you study?

**Interviewer:** I'm studying a Master's degree in game technologies. Specifically, the relationship between technologies frequently used or created for the games industry and their applications outside of game development itself. Right now, I'm focusing on the relationship between people outside the traditional target groups for the games industry – people in their 50s and above, 60s, 70s. I'm exploring who plays regularly and what their experiences are. Broadly speaking, what do games mean to them? What is their position on it? How do they approach games? This is going to be a very broad interview, taking the format of a conversation.

**P5:** Okay.

**Interviewer:** Fantastic. Then my first question is: What games have you been playing recently?

**P5:** One thing you mentioned in your introduction, you were seeking persons who are playing games regularly. I don't consider myself a regular game player. I play games every once in a while. I want to do it more, but work prohibits me from spending more time on that area. Also, private matters like working on a home, family, or having a vacation. The last games I played, I think, were Brawlhalla on PlayStation, next to Call of Duty or Formula One.

**Interviewer:** Hmm, okay. So those were the games that you were able to play every now and again? Can you specify "every now and again"? Is it more like once a week or once every couple of weeks?

**P5:** No, once a couple of weeks, nearly once a month, maybe.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. I think, but if you have more time, you mentioned you would probably play more often? Mm-hmm. Correct. Have you, in general, been playing games for a long time, or is this a hobby that you picked up relatively recently?

**P5:** Oh, no, it's an activity I've done from my teenage years. From the beginning, I became the owner of a personal computer. So, way before you were born.

**Interviewer:** So you were one of the early adopters?

**P5:** Early users, yeah. I don't know if you're familiar with Commander Keen? It's an old game. Or Leisure Suit Larry? It was an adventure text...

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**P5:** Next adventure. It's also fun.

**Interviewer:** I don't... Is it similar to Leisure Suit Larry? No, no.

**P5:** No. The Leisure Suit Larry. Yeah, that's correct.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, that I was unfamiliar with. I see. Okay.

**Interviewer:** And how would you say your gaming tastes have changed? Because I presume they changed, starting with text-based adventures at the very beginning.

**P5:** I'm more interested in the developments around those games. I work in the IT industry as a project manager, so I always work with computers. Playing games like Unreal in the past... those games were always fun to do, alone or together with others, in teams or against each other. That was always fun. But the interest has two layers: one, just relaxation and having fun, and the second one is more about what the game is capable of doing, like being interested in the technology behind it and... how do you say it in English? Yeah, being impressed by the things they were able to create.

**Interviewer:** So, like technological achievement, technological progress?

**P5:** Yeah, impressed about the achievement they were able to do.

**Interviewer:** I presume that was always there? Have you ever participated in game development, or just had interest?

**P5:** No, I was interested in it. But I never had time to dive deep into it. But I am aware of the techniques used in game development.

**Interviewer:** I see. And so I presume your work... you just mentioned it, but does your work overlap with software development?

**P5:** Uh, yes. In half of the time, there's software development involved. For example, at this moment, I have a project where we are going to migrate data from one system to the other, and we need to transform that data between these systems. So we need to Extract, Transform, and Load (ETL). We need to build the ETL chain, and there's programming involved, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, I see. Do you program yourself, or are you in a more...?

**P5:** No, as I said, my interests regarding computers are very broad, so I'm also familiar with programming. I did it in my study, and at this time, every once in a while, I program something in PHP, Python, those kinds of things, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Hmm, I see. Okay.

**Interviewer:** When you play, do you get the chance to play multiplayer? For example, I think F1 and Call of Duty can very often be played in a multiplayer capacity.

**P5:** Um, no, nearly none of the time at this moment, no.

**Interviewer:** Did you play before?

**P5:** Yes, as I mentioned, with Unreal. I played with some colleagues. We planned a long game day, and we set up our own network, and everyone took their computer, and we had a game day. Yeah, that was very fun.

**Interviewer:** Good times, good times. Was that during your education, or did you also do that with, for example, work colleagues?

**P5:** Also my work colleagues.

**Interviewer:** And do you still do that, or think about doing that?

**P5:** No, not at this moment, no.

**Interviewer:** Too much work?

**P5:** Yeah. And I come from a place where work and family were there, and there was not a lot of time and space for friends. So, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Hmm. Yeah. No, that's fair. I see.

**Interviewer:** In those specific moments that you do play, even right now, for example, once every couple of weeks, with what intention do you boot up a game? You mentioned there's a bit of a relaxation aspect to it. Relaxation in what sense? Can you elaborate?

**P5:** No, it's like watching a series. I mean, everyone watches a series for another purpose, to get a good feeling or etcetera. I like series with some tension, with some thrill. I like those, and I think that's... for example, when you play Call of Duty, you can feel the same emotions. When you are in part of the gameplay where you have to sneak into some building where you can get caught any moment, that's very... yeah, that gives you a certain tension.

**Interviewer:** It gets the blood pumping a little faster?

**P5:** Yeah, correct. So is that what I'm seeking? No, but it is a side effect. What I think is enjoyable, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, that's fair.

**Interviewer:** This frequency with which you engage in games, this once every couple of weeks, for how long has that been the case? Roughly.

**P5:** I think at this moment... and it all depends on how busy it is at work and where your focus lies at that moment. But I think at this moment, the attention for games is gaining a bit because the stress at work is very low. So there's not a lot of pressure there, and it gives time for other things like gaming. So yeah, it's at this moment, I think the attention for gaming is intensifying if I compare it with two or three years ago, yeah. I've got more time at this moment to do it.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, I see. Would you say this is a cyclical thing, because you mentioned your work with development, that maybe it can be connected to like one stage of the project because there are different workloads involved, I imagine?

**P5:** Mmm. It is not a cyclical thing. It purely depends on the... it depends on the attention the rest of the world asks for you. You've got your family, you've got your home, you've got your work. And in that order, I mean, those are the things that are the most important. And then at the end comes gaming. Yeah. So I think it has a lower priority.

**Interviewer:** No, that's perfectly fair. Do you have any other hobbies that you also do when you have the free time, when you have the attention? Not necessarily computer-related. I'm thinking stuff like maybe reading or physical...

**P5:** Binge-watching series, yeah. Binge-watching series, motorcycling.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**P5:** Riding my motorcycle. But also, that's the same thing, you know? I mean, you've got the family, you've got your home, you've got your work, and then you've got those things. No, not a lot of hobbies, no, sorry.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, that's fair. It sounds like you're generally a pretty busy man, especially these days. Motorcycle is a pretty interesting hobby. Do you just kind of explore when you get the chance? How does that look like when you take a motorcycle for a ride?

**P5:** How does that look like? Well, for example, last weekend we went to a part of Germany, to the Eifel, where there are a lot of corners. The funniest part of motorcycling is riding... it's a wrong term, but you know what I mean. You've got all kinds of curves, and riding those is really funny. And...

**Interviewer:** And also quite a little bit of excitement, I guess?

**P5:** Yeah, I think there is. Well, the... I don't want to show off, but I think I'm a pretty good rider, and that makes riding a lot more fun. Yeah, I think it is fun to do things that you're good at. Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Have you been driving a motorcycle for a long time?

**P5:** Um... from 19... yeah, about 30 years. And before that, I drove a small motorbike, a moped. It's between a motorbike and a bicycle.

**Interviewer:** I see. Have you also lived in the Netherlands at that time as well?

**P5:** Yeah, because I wouldn't think it's anywhere else in the world.

**Interviewer:** It's a good place for a moped or a motorbike, with the infrastructure, probably.

**P5:** Yes, it is. Yeah. But then again, in Germany, in the Eifel, it is very nice riding. Last weekend we went there, we had a nice place to stay, and we had three days of riding there. It was very fun, yeah.

**Interviewer:** So, it was a great time. Okay. I do have a question: you mentioned that you play on console, right? So, is it mostly on console, or do you sometimes play on the computer? Or would you say there is no preference?

**P5:** No, there's no preference at this moment. It depends on the game.

**Interviewer:** And do you play games with somebody from your family members? Because for example, your son was the point of contact between me and you.

**P5:** Yeah, yeah. I've got three kids: a short system, a middle one, and we have Jewel and Nida. Every now and then, I play with them, with all of them. On family days sometimes, as I mentioned... what's the name of the game... Baldur's Gate? Yeah. My daughter plays a game, and sometimes I'll play with her. It's... recently last year came out, and it's a... I lost the name of the game. It's a Dungeon & Dragon style game. That's it. Yeah, good time. And that's something that's on my game computer here, and on my console is Call of Duty and Brawlhalla or Formula One, yeah.

**Interviewer:** I think I see. Do you remember if there was a game that you played for a pretty long time, some kind of favorite? Maybe not necessarily recently, but that you remember quite vividly.

**P5:** Yeah, American Army.

**Interviewer:** Oh, that's unusual.

**P5:** Yeah, and during my study, I played Retaliator a lot. It's an F-16 game that fitted on one floppy disk.

**Interviewer:** I'll need to look that one up.

**P5:** Retaliator, it's on Steam, I think.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, I think I might be able to find it there actually. Do you remember any highlights from those games? What was the...?

**P5:** Yeah, with American Army, I played with random guys online, and it was very fun. Sometimes when you play all day, you stay together with two or three people that you become acquainted with at that moment, and everyone took his role in the team that you played in. And sometimes you find a favorite map and... well, basically you kill all the others. That was fun.

**Interviewer:** Kind of tactical, kind of thing.

**P5:** Yeah, tactical, strategic. Yeah, that was cool.

**Interviewer:** And also the aspect of... I presume that was multiplayer, right?

**P5:** American Army was team play, yeah. So team against team.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. Okay. And with Retaliator, was it a similar game to American Army?

**P5:** No, no. Retaliator was a kind of a flight simulator, and you control the plane, and you need to shoot down targets.

**Interviewer:** Okay, okay.

**P5:** Very simple game.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**P5:** But fun. Which proves that it's not... it doesn't have to be sophisticated or big or beautiful. Sometimes it's just the gameplay, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, I fully agree with you.

**Interviewer:** Are there any specific gameplay genres that you find yourself gravitating to, like when you're picking games or if you are to buy a new game?

**P5:** No, not specific. What I... I'm not especially attracted to a certain category. But what I am... I'm being pushed away from games where, when you play every now and then, you do not have the gear or tools or technique for yourself to be very good. For example, when you enter Call of Duty with Battle Royale, at this moment there are a lot of game players who have a lot of time and play for maybe eight hours a day. And here comes the old man and enters the game, and maybe three minutes and it's done. That's not fun.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. So there is this...

**P5:** There's that. So there's a difference in, yeah, level of playing. So that they are offended is the wrong word, but it's pushing, it pushes you away from the game.

**Interviewer:** No, that's fair, because, as you mentioned, that doesn't sound terribly fun.

**P5:** No, no. It's more fun to team up and work together and, yeah, play in such a way that you achieve something together with each other, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Would you say you're a strong team player, or do you also have a certain competitive streak? What is your kind of style of play, I guess?

**P5:** It's both. The competitive streak must be there, but I'm more a team player than a single player, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Do you play single-player games often? Because it sounds like you're more of a multiplayer kind of person.

**P5:** No, I think multiplayer, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Is the aspect of playing with other people?

**P5:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Interviewer:** You mentioned that most of the time there is a pretty significant amount of time between playing every now and again. Do you feel like you need to kind of relearn the game every now and again?

**P5:** Yeah, you have to become acquainted with the controls again. When you do it every day, it becomes second nature, right? It goes very fluently. But when you do it every month, then you really [think] "Oh, where was this? How did this work?" Yeah, you've got a learning curve again. And it's steeper, of course, because you get acquainted very quickly, but yeah, it's there, correct.

**Interviewer:** And would you say that kind of... would you say that that's also something that might be turning you away from the game, or do you perceive that as an obstacle?

**P5:** No, it is not. No, it is not like, "Oh, let's go play a game tonight, and those controls..." No, I don't. No, that's too much haggle. No, I don't think that is the consideration. No, no. Um. But I can imagine that when you play and you play again and you play again, and you do this every night, then it's easier to do it again next night, yeah. Than when there are a thousand things to do, yeah, you have to make a choice. "Do I do this, or do I go gaming?"

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Thinking about the future, have you ever had a thought about how games might look in the future? Like when you think about the future of games, how would they change? How would you hope maybe they would change? What would you say?

**P5:** There is a development I see where virtual reality steps in. I think more games are going to use the ability of virtual reality. And I don't think those games are going to be run on platforms like Quest or etcetera – not the goggles themselves. But I think you are going to use your virtual reality glasses as a display for content. Because I think the calculation power, or the CPU and GPU they're using, cannot be in the Quest, for example. So I think more and more external hardware will be added. For example, one thing that I'm very interested in, and what I think is very, very cool, is that you've got all kinds of simulation games where you can go overboard in buying hardware. Yeah, for example, flight simulators. There are some people that built in their attic room a cockpit of a Boeing. I think they went overboard there, but to a certain level, yeah, I think that hardware in the real world and the game – that is something that is growing.

**Interviewer:** Nice. So I presume you've had some experience with VR headsets and maybe VR games? Have you purchased one, or have you just tried it somewhere else?

**P5:** No, I've got a Quest. Quest 3.

**Interviewer:** And any specific games that stood out, whether technically or gameplay-wise?

**P5:** Um. I haven't played games on them for a long time. The last time when I looked, I found that... they launched this platform, and they have to populate it with certain apps in the App Store. There comes a moment that the developers or studios need to take over and use this platform to launch games, and I think that is not going fast. For example, I also used the VR headset for watching series. Netflix, you had an app that you could use, and you had a magnificent view. At this moment, they depreciated the app, and you have to fall back to the browser. The browser experience is reasonably comparable to the app, but in my opinion, the app was better. So, in my opinion, they made a step back by falling back to the browser. I have a feeling that the product isn't picked up in the markets, and there wasn't a lot of push of content for games on the VR side of the glasses. So that's why I say, you can connect them to my desktop, I can play a game in Steam in VR mode, and it works perfectly, and I think it is more going to go in that direction instead of on the platform itself.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, I see. And do you find that if it goes in that direction technologically, you find that actually interesting? Because to me, it seems like a pretty interesting technology that I would be curious to see where that goes.

**P5:** Yeah, I think the PC is more powerful than the CPU in your headset. So I think it doesn't matter which renders the image. The only downside of being connected to a PC is that you need a cable. Although you can do it wireless, you might experience some lag. But the only downside is you have to connect your headset to a cable.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, so it's...

**P5:** It's just the same, yeah.

**Interviewer:** All right. One more aspect I wanted to ask about: Do you have friends with whom you play?

**P5:** Don't have friends?

**Interviewer:** I made the pause at the wrong time. Okay, apologies, English is not my primary language. So, I'm like...

**P5:** Sorry, ask the question again.

**Interviewer:** Do you have friends that you play games with, or at least talk about games? Or does that subject not really come up outside the family?

**P5:** No. No. In my circle at work, at family... No. Yeah, at family, Baldur's Gate is a topic because of the Dungeons and Dragons style. Um... No, furthermore, not, no.

**Interviewer:** Have you played a lot of Dungeons and Dragons?

**P5:** No. I usually flee out of the house when the kids are playing Baldur's Gate or Dungeons & Dragons, because it's too loud.

**Interviewer:** I see, I see. All right, then. To finish up, I'll just probably restate the question. In your life, at this moment, what do games mean to you as an occasional hobby?

**P5:** Relaxation.

**Interviewer:** Relaxation. Alright, beautiful. I am already taking three more minutes than I promised, so I hope I'm not holding you from anything?

**P5:** Oh, I don't mind. No, I don't mind. I'm happy we were able to connect.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. So I'm also terribly sorry about last week. That was a bit... yeah, everything just went wrong. I'm curious, in a lot of games like Call of Duty and I think in a lot of racing, F1 style racing, there are a lot of these customization mechanics, the ability to buy unlocks, skins, all that sort of stuff. Do you engage with that side of the hobby?

**P5:** Um. No, not until this moment, no. Normally I hate all the in-game, in-app purchases. No, I don't like them.

**Interviewer:** Do you find them annoying or unnecessary?

**P5:** Sorry. I'd rather have the game at a price of €150 than €70 and not have to purchase extra things. Because where's the end? I mean, when you start there, okay, you got another custom suit that you can wear or a custom mask that you can wear and all those things? Where does it end? And what does it add? Yeah, no, I don't know. I think when it's something that you do every day, and you want to add some personality to it, I can understand that some people buy those things, but I don't think... no, I have not the urge to buy it. I think it's annoying. And as I stated earlier, I'd rather have a higher price for the game and not have these buy options, but have everything available, rather than this way. But I can imagine from a marketing and strategic point of view of the game maker that you do this. I can imagine it because you can lower the price and people can still play. But when you want more, you need to pay more. And probably when you add all the stuff, you've spent more than €200 instead of €150 for the whole set, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, it's understandable. Yeah, but let's say in a perfect world, maybe a different business practice would be less annoying, I guess.

**P5:** Yeah. I think it's annoying, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Have you encountered any other aspects that might be annoying or cumbersome with gaming in general? Or maybe any other aspects that you maybe thought about, but the conversation didn't really go there?

**P5:** No. Yeah, it's in the same direction as sometimes you've got a game that you buy that you only have 70% of the game options or the gameplay available, and you want to do more, you have to pay more, and I think that is the wrong strategy. Um. And that is what I find very annoying. And the other things? No. I think we see converging effects of the platforms coming together. Sometimes a game... at least it used to. Nowadays, those games come out on all platforms at once. There were times that they came out on one platform and they didn't know the other. Yeah, exclusivity. You made the wrong choice of a platform. Yeah, okay, make a point of view. Yeah, that that's annoying. But furthermore, no, no. I hadn't... I didn't have the experience of games crashing or that it didn't function good enough, no.

**Interviewer:** There is something I remember. If you predominantly play multiplayer, what about the experience of older players playing with other people? Have you encountered things like... have you encountered any toxic or childish behavior? Because I imagine, especially in shooter games, a lot of people report that that seems to happen, and that's kind of an annoyance. Have you encountered anything of the sort?

**P5:** No, I haven't, no.

**Interviewer:** Alright then. Alright then. I think I'm going to be wrapping up and thank you for your time. Um, yep. If I may possibly write you a few questions, but these like short questions, maybe clarifications in upcoming days. I'm not going to bother you too much. Thank you.

**P5:** No, that's no problem. Just drop them in the chat, and then I'll see them.

**Interviewer:** We'll do. Alright. Thank you for your time.

**P5:** Okay. Thank you. Goodbye. Nice day, have nice day.

**Interviewer:** There.