

ELEN1997 Vacation Work Report

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Abstract

The purpose of this document is to summarise the work completed by the author during the *A MAZE*. gaming festival. Details are provided in terms of the festival's technical aspects, such as its popularity, duration, location and objective, and the results are compared to other gaming festivals from around the world. The problems that were brought about because of the event, on society, the economy and the environment, are explained.

To whom it may concern

This letter serves to confirm that **Benjamin Rosen** worked under my supervision on the A MAZE./Johannesburg Festival from Wednesday 10 September to Sunday 14 September 2014.

I hereby certify that the student's performance on assigned tasks was not satisfactory / satisfactory / excellent

I hereby certify that the student's overall conduct was not satisfactory / satisfactory / excellent

Additional Comments:

None

Name: Kieran Reid

Date: 12 July 2016

Signature: 

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1 Introduction

This report details the organisation of the *A MAZE*. gaming festival, namely its structure and constituents. It includes the author’s contribution to the event, as well as the issues that arose from the ethical, local and global sectors. Juxtaposed with this is insight into other international gaming festivals, comparing their revenue generation and public reception.

The rest of this document is structured as follows: Section 2 details the structure of the organisation behind the festival’s planning and implementation. Section 3 provides an examination of the various components that make up the *A MAZE*. festival, along with two other such events. Section 4 lists particulars regarding the tasks completed by the author while Section 5 delves into the integrity required throughout the event. Lastly, Section 6 analyses the effects of the event both economically and in various sectors of society.

2 Organisational Structure

The organisational hierarchy is outlined in Appendix A. The international organiser, Thorsten S. Wiedemann, based in Berlin, conceptualised the festival internationally and guided the South African contingent in implementing it locally. Together with Hanli Geyser of the *Wits School of Arts* and Matthew Dowdle of the *Kalashnikovv Gallery*, the specific design, layout and speaker list were developed. Kieran Reid assembled the demonstration staff and organised the logistics of the festival. Benjamin Rosen formed part of this demonstration team. His specific duties are detailed in Section 4.

3 Technical Aspects

3.1 A MAZE.

Focusing on independent developers (also known as indie corporations), *A MAZE*. hosts a seven-day annual event under the *Fak’ugesi* event, which showcases African digital innovations. It is hosted in *Founders Square*, in proximity to the University of Witwatersrand in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. [1]

Although numbers are not ready available for the 2014 edition of the festival, the author approximates that 1000 paying guests, with an average entrance fee of R300, generated R300,000 income. As the festival’s aim was not to be a commercial venture, exhibitors were not charged a fee to display their wares. [2]

The organisers pride themselves in providing a space for both African and international game developers, “forward thinkers” and “digital activists” to present their work to the local community and exchange skills and ideas with fellow designers [1].

3.2 gamescom

Held for five days annually in Cologne, Germany, *gamescom* boasts 345,000 visitors from 97 different countries. It is the largest event for computer and video games in the world. 877 different companies showcased their games from a total of 54 countries in 2016. The exhibition floor encompasses 193,000 m² and was divided into business and entertainment areas. With a ticket price of €19 for a one-day pass and €40 for three days, the author estimates that a turnover of in excess of €10 million was generated [3]. In addition to this, the fees paid by exhibitors (based on a mixed rate

of €130/m² for about 100,000 m² usable space) amounts to €13 million [4]. At the present exchange rate of about R14.70 to Euro, this totals to over R300 million [5]. [6]

Success factors listed for the event are the growth in the number of developers involved in the festival (9%), the diversity of content with a high satisfaction rate amongst attendees and the well-received increase in security measures adopted by the organisers compared to previous years [6].

3.3 Tokyo Game Show

Organised by the *Computer Entertainment Supplier's Association*, together with *Nikkei Business Publications, Inc.*, this gaming festival is hosted near Tokyo, in the *Makuhari Messe* convention centre. It runs for four days, two of which are dedicated to business (exclusively for the media and industry associates), while the rest of the conference is open to the public. [7]

A total of 268,446 people visited the exhibition in 2015, which hosted 480 gaming companies. The total revenue, calculated in more detail in Table 1, equals close to R26 million at R0.12 to Japanese Yen [7, 8, 9, 10].

The organisers list having the second highest attendance in the event's history, a focus on trending gaming subjects such as game streaming and virtual reality, as well as playing an integral role in connecting the international gaming industry with the Asian continent as factors for success. [7]

4 Time Management

In the weeks leading up to *A MAZE*. festival, the author was required to put up

posters advertising the event, as well as to transport and arrange the necessary equipment at the event's location.

Tasks pertaining to the running of *A MAZE*. during its duration was divided in to three types. The author's contribution is summarised in Table 2. Running the **Exhibition** involved working in the arcade area of the festival; assisting attendees by providing instructions on how to play certain games and supplying directions to important areas in the venue (e.g. restrooms, exits, events, etc.). Working on a **Conference** required the assembly and troubleshooting of equipment (such as projectors and microphones, computers and screens) needed for presentations and talks given at *A MAZE*.. Finally, assisting in a **Workshop** entailed setting up areas for hands-on sessions and ensuring that they ran smoothly.

5 Professional Ethics

In addition to that described in Section 4, the Exhibition aspect of the event necessitated monitoring the various equipment used in the event. Employees worked in shifts, ensuring that the pieces of gaming apparatus were not abused or misappropriated by festival-goers. This required integrity, on the employees' behalf, as they were left largely without a supervisor.

In terms of personal conduct, employees were required to be proficient in the layout of the *A MAZE*. venue in order to provide assistance if necessary. They needed to be able to communicate effectively and politely with attendees while explaining the various games on show, as well as their controls and rules.

Lastly, employees had to have a technical understanding of the hardware on display.

Table 1: Total Estimated Revenue Generated at *Tokyo Game Show* 2015

Type of Attendee	Price Per Ticket (Average)	Number of Attendees	Revenue
Companies	¥5000	480	¥2,400,000
Public Members	¥1000	209,831	¥209,831,000
Total	¥6000	210,311	¥212,231,000

Table 2: Summary of Work Completed During the Week of *A MAZE*.

Date	Time	Description
10/09/2014	18:00 - 22:00	Exhibition
11/09/2014	17:30 - 20:30	Conference
12/09/2014	10:00 - 13:00	Workshop

This was necessary in the event that a computer problem needed to be rectified.

6 Social and Economic Issues

6.1 Societal Value

In making the *A MAZE*. gaming festival open to the public, opportunities were created for a larger demographic group, from various cultures and backgrounds, to be introduced to the world of gaming for the first time. It provided the equipment necessary to effectively experience games, such as an *Xbox* television console, controllers, computers and large screen monitors. These devices are costly and comprise the biggest barrier to people who wish to start playing games. It also showcased the benefits that gaming could provide for society as a whole. One example of this was the author showing a teacher visiting the exhibition how games could be used to enhance learning in an educational setting.

6.2 Economical Benefits

A MAZE. showcased many games from small game studios and supplied a platform on which to grow their public recognition and ultimately provide them with greater income in the long term. Additionally, the festival brought a foreign contingent (from Sweden, in 2014) to South Africa to not only impart their expertise and experience to the local gaming scene, but also allowed them to experience the content that this country has to offer. This allowed for local developers to market their games on an international level.

6.3 Environmental Issues

The event did not address the negative impact that gaming can have on the environment. On the contrary, it highlighted some of these issues. For instance, the plethora of lights, monitors, computers, projectors, speakers and other electronic equipment used in the festival were constantly running, even when not used, for extended periods of time. This squandered large amounts of electricity, which in turn increased the proportion of environmentally harmful chemicals released into the atmosphere in the electricity generation process.

6.4 Gender and Racial Equality

Statistical evidence has shown that the number of female computer and video

gamers in the United States has increased from 38% (in 2006) to 48% (2014) [11]. This was poorly reflected in the gender representation of the 2014 edition of *A MAZE.*, with only 23% of the festival's organisers and staff comprising of women. The above applies to racial equality as well, with 79.2% of South Africa's population consisting of African individuals (for 2011), whereas *A MAZE.*'s employees for 2014 were less than 10% black [12].

In contrast to this, the festival did prove more accessible to underprivileged members of society, with entry to the festival being made entirely free for the first of its seven days.

7 Conclusion

A comprehensive look at the *A MAZE.* gaming festival, in which the author participated, is achieved by breaking down the event into its employee structure and assignments required to prepare and maintain it during the seven days of its duration. Its particulars are compared to two other festivals to demonstrate its intention, success factors and place in the worldwide gaming community. Also highlighted are the consequences brought about by the event for a variety of situations.

References

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A Maze. Organisational Structure

