Page Contents

NACON Is optimizing its competitiveness through in-depth analysis of player expectations using Google Cloud's data and AI solutions

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Video game publisher NACON utilizes an AI-powered analysis platform using

Google Cloud solutions to better understand player expectations.

Optimizing its offering through a better understanding of the market and player expectations

NACON—a French company based in Lesquin, in northern France—brings together all the gaming activities of the leading digital entertainment industry group, Bigben. Founded in 2019, the company quickly became a key player in the world of gaming. With 16 creative studios around the globe, it distributes its games in more than 100 countries and has millions of users worldwide. NACON stands out in the video game industry for specializing in the publication of "AA" (mid-market) games, focusing its investments on projects with a moderate budget (€1–25 million) in order to offer an alternative to the major blockbusters on the market. It's a strategy that has paid off, as the company counts around a hundred video games among its assets, including the hugely successful RoboCop.

NACON partially owes this success to listening to player expectations, particularly through the analysis of comments left by gamers on gaming platforms and social media. However, this analysis is time-consuming when performed manually by Community Managers, and doesn't always offer sufficient responsiveness in a highly dynamic market.

In order to scale the approach, the company decided to create a data platform that uses analytics tools and AI models. As an ambitious

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project with multiple challenges affecting different strategic, operational, and technical aspects, the platform not only had to allow the company to achieve an in-depth analysis of the market, it also had to support the optimization of NACON's internal processes. "The goal was to create a tool capable of quickly extracting and analyzing players' comments in order to rapidly identify what they like, as well as what they don't like. Armed with this analysis, we can steer the development of our games accordingly," explains Antoine Lecomte, Data Engineer at NACON. "This data platform also had to offer the flexibility necessary to respond to different business needs, like LiveOps tracking and press monitoring. In other words, we needed a stable but scalable foundation that enabled ad hoc or recurring analyses according to the specific needs of each project."

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Antoine Lecomte
Data Engineer at NACON

This in-depth market analysis is all the more crucial because, as Christophe Zerathe, Director of LiveOps at NACON, highlights, "Negative buzz can kill a game, before it has even been released in some cases. Things can move rapidly as gaming communities are very active on social media and gaming platforms. You have to be able to analyze reactions to offer an optimal experience and anticipate any bad publicity. In other words, this ability to "listen" to the market is not a luxury in the modern video game world, it's essential."

"It's not enough to count how many players click on a certain spot, to record login frequency, or to add up the total number of downloads," adds Guillaume Paris, Data Engineer at NACON. "It's much more than just quantitative analysis. We have to combine it with qualitative analysis, performing sentiment analysis and detecting all the weak signals in order to resolve issues before they harm the reputation of a game."

The power of BigQuery and a wealth of data platform features made Google Cloud the top choice

In technical terms, NACON needed a scalable data platform capable of processing large volumes of structured and unstructured data. However, to increase responsiveness and gain further understanding of player expectations without devoting too many human resources to the matter, they also needed AI to automate and refine the analyses. After a comparative study of offers on the market, they chose Google Cloud to support their approach.

Nacon RoboCop: Rogue City

Several factors were considered when selecting Google Cloud's data platform, and more specifically BigQuery, as Guillaume Paris explains: "We needed a powerful solution that could be easily scaled up. We register an average of 100 to 200 events per second in our databases. The solution had to be simple, with as little administration as possible, because our added value isn't in maintaining and updating infrastructures. As a managed database integrated into a serverless service environment, BigQuery means we don't waste time on administration or scaling management. Everything is automated according to predefined variables. Therefore, we can focus on what really matters to us, which is analyzing the player experience."

The wealth of features on Google Cloud's data platform, with its different solutions for analysis, machine learning, and batch or real-time (stream) data processing in a perfectly integrated environment, was a deciding factor. "Especially as the AI part is also becoming well integrated, which facilitates implementation, and we have big ambitions in this area," adds Guillaume Paris.

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>
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>
> Data Engineer at NACON

Vertex AI predicting player behaviors and optimizing interactions with players

Currently, NACON mainly uses Gemini 1.5 Flash to filter and better understand the comments left by players, as well as perform thematic analyses that help to identify what needs to be adjusted and/or improved in a game. Eventually, the company is considering going even further in its use of AI with several use cases already under review. In particular, its projects are focused on predicting behaviors and customization in order to increase player retention, optimize marketing strategies, and provide more targeted communications and offers. Through AI, NACON would also like to improve its competitive intelligence by analyzing what players enjoy in competitors' games and simplifying the work of its Community Managers. "At the moment, they devote a lot of their time to manually analyzing player feedback and creating reports—processes that are both time-consuming and prone to bias. With AI, they'll gain up to 50% more time to focus on tasks with added value, such as strategic communication with players. We can imagine generative AI responding to certain questions in real time, which all contributes to optimizing the quality of interactions between NACON and its community, with more accurate analyses in real time that support informed decision-making and an increased responsiveness to player expectations," states Guillaume Paris.

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>
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>
> Data Engineer at NACON

An innovative and flexible architecture crafted with Google Cloud's expertise

Following the advice of Google Cloud experts who supported them throughout the implementation, NACON opted for an architecture that offers both flexibility and high levels of scalability. For every game and project, the company rolls out a dedicated data and analysis environment. The segmentation presents several advantages, including the possibility to independently scale up one environment without impacting the others. This approach also simplifies the correct assignment of costs. Nevertheless, this segmentation doesn't prevent data from being passed between the different environments, offering maximum flexibility in terms of information analysis and exploitation.

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And more generally, armed with expert assistance and Google Cloud's advanced solutions in the fields of data and AI, NACON is on its way to an increased command of its market and the optimized use of its internal resources to generate more added value, thus illustrating how technology can contribute to optimizing player engagement and employee productivity.

Part of the Bigben Group, **NACON** has become a key player in the video game industry with a global presence spanning more than 100 countries. A video game pure player, NACON is both a designer of premium gaming accessories, and a developer and publisher of its own games. The company currently has 16 studios, all of them experts in their field. Experiencing significant growth since its creation in 2019, it has about one hundred games on the market, centered on four strategic models: racing, sport, simulation, and adventure.

Industry: Gaming

Location: Lesquin, France

Products: Google Cloud, BigQuery, Vertex AI

Why Google

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Multicloud
Global infrastructure

Products and pricing

Google Cloud pricing
Google Workspace pricing
See all products

Solutions

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Databases
Application modernization
Smart analytics
Artificial Intelligence

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