**Final Project Proposal**

**JOUR 1501: Digital Games and Society**

**Due Oct 26, 2018 (before 11:55pm)**

**General Information**

* Group members: Moti Begna. Filip Momic, Minh Nguyen
* Group number: 11.1
* Game to be analyzed: Team Fortress 2 / PC

**Background and Thesis Statement**

Team Fortress 2 (TF2) is a team-based first-person shooter released on October 10th, 2007. The game focuses on teamwork from nine possible classes to win on a multitude of game modes and maps. With its unique artistic design, balanced gameplay, and humorous interactions, the TF2 community could easily build upon the game. Over the years, TF2 content has been largely community made if not influenced, considering the game didn’t have much content in the beginning. Furthermore, since it was free-to-play, the community was not exclusive and as a result, the Steam community truly developed. It is this massively influential relationship between TF2’s community and the game’s developers, along with the games variability, that make this game special in comparison to many other games.

Our thesis statement is:

TF2 is a prime example of how the level of community input that developers listen to, and implement, impact the longevity and playability of a game.

Our “Road-Map Statement” (what the paper will discuss and how,):

In this paper, we will aim to prove our argument by discussing the various aspects of TF2’s community, how that community shaped the game in terms of in-game customization/variability, and also how the community shaped the actual gameplay of TF2 and other games in it’s genre.

* **Community**
  + Supporting Argument 1:
    - TF2 is a heavily community-based game with new content consisting of community ideas and creations, and this is pivotal to the value of the game.
  + Course Material:
    - We will use the concept that games build strong social networks from (McGonigal, 2012) to prove how the prosocial emotions created from this is valuable to the state of a game. We will connect the Smithsonian American Art Museum incorporating feedback and creative input from players into the “Game” to get them more involved in the Museum exhibit.
  + External Sources:
    - We will use  (Hsiao, C., & Chiou, J. 2012) in order to prove that communities in general are important to the adoption of a game by players.
  + Planned visuals:
    - We plan to use graphics of community items that Valve has made specifically for players who have done a significant impact on TF2. Also, we will dislay a wiki hat for players who contributed significantly to the TF2 wiki.
* **In-Game Customization**
  + Supporting Argument 2:
    - Through community feedback, TF2 allowed player customization (such as hats, costumes, weapons, and even things that the community made). It’s a gameplay experience that brings the player into the magic circle cause they’re more involved, thus giving more value to the game.
  + Course Material:
    - We plan to focus on the Magic Circle and how by Team Fortress 2 developers have incorporated and invited community creativity, they have in effect expanded the Magic Circle outside of just playing the game.
  + External Sources:
    - We will use (Danylak, R., 2005), which provides a fitting definition of the magic circle, in order to show how various cosmetics choices (which enrich a games sense of fantasy) puts players deeper into the magic circle.
    - We will also mention how in 2013, Team Fortress 2’s release of an update was all from community input. (McWhertor, 2013)
    - We will also mention how the Valve Corporation has shifted TF2 from a distinct commodity to a commercial community service based around hats (Moore, Christopher 2011).
  + Planned visuals:
    - We plan to use a graphic from a Steam Community forum that a player posted about a tutorial for others to make creations for Team Fortress 2. (
* **Gameplay/Impact on Genre**
  + Supporting Argument 3:
    - Because of TF2’s community, the game has created unique game modes that have not only changed the gameplay of this game for the better, but other games in its genre as well.
  + Course Material:
    - Here we plan to talk about the first-person shooter (FPS) genre as well as how Team Fortress 2’s success in adapting to community needs and wants have impacted the aesthetics of the game as well as games that came out after.
  + External Sources:
    - We will use (Team Fortress 2 Haunted Halloween Special) to show that TF2 was one of the first games to create a Halloween event all the way back in 2009
    - We plan to use an article with an interview with Overwatch’s game director, Jeff Kaplan, talking about how Team Fortress is one of his favorite games ever as well had to elaborate the differences between Overwatch and Team Fortress 2 as the players noted many similarities. (Wilson N., 2014)
  + Planned visuals
    - (Steam Chart) that shows player visits throughout the year, and how they increase during holidays

**Bibliography**

Danylak, R. (2005). Gestural Motivation, Learning and Evaluation using Interactive Game Design. *Advances in Game-Based Learning Handbook of Research on Improving Learning and Motivation through Educational Games,* 512-528. doi:10.4018/978-1-60960-495-0.ch024

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McGonigal, J. (2012). *Reality is Broken: Why Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World*. London: Vintage.

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Wilson, N. (2014). Blizzard on Overwatch and Team Fortress 2 comparisons: "They're an enormous compliment". Retrieved from https://www.pcgamesn.com/overwatch/blizzard-on-overwatch-and-team-fortress-2-comparisons-theyre-an-enormous-compliment