PEKKA-Project

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One of the biggest problems of the video game community is the overwhelming amount of cyberbullying whilst playing games. Being toxic online usually doesn't come with any consequences, and a cause for why hate speech is this frequent in online games is that the victim and the bully probably never meet again after the end of the match/event. The main channel of communicating hate speech and harassment is typing in a textbox (less commonly, in some video games, talking in voice chat is the most common method of bullying). Common approaches by companies to tackle this problem are: censoring bad words, disallowing text box and only letting pre-written commands be sent to other players (like Go! Sector A clear!), or using a scoring system to put less-trusted players play together. All of these solutions are incomplete and have their limitations, and their approach is based on restricting the opportunities of bad-mannered players, instead of supporting well-behaving players and convince them to change their mindset. Our new project attemps to decrease the problem by supporting empathic behaviour, and build a community in games where the average player naturally helps other players without having to be convinced or even think about being convinced to help others.

The PEKKA-Movement

With the PEKKA-Project, along with writing a new standard for game-developer companies on how to make an empathy-driven player community, we developed a new rating system to rate players on how trustworthy they are, support supportive players and spread the empathic mindset, and rate games based on how reliable their average player is. We give badges to both players on how supportive, educative they are (PEKKA Player Rating and Badge), and games on how well they fit the PEKKA principles (PEKKA Game Rating and Badge). One of our goals is to start a movement where the focus is on getting more and more developers to make their compatible with the PEKKA standard. We would provide a platform (website) where everyone can check on which games are compatible with the PEKKA standard, what's their PEKKA-rating if they are PEKKA-compatible, what PEKKA-rating professional players would give the game (This rating is also available for games that are not PEKKA-compatible: we added this feature to put pressure on game developing companies where there is little to zero support on stopping discrimination and harassment, as these companies' games may be too harmful for the average player, we hope they'll react to the pressure by putting more effort into making their game a safer place).

PEKKA is short for: **P**revention, **E**ducation, Trac**k** **K**indness and **A**dvocate.
The PEKKA-principles are:
-Prevention: A game should be protective towards it's playerbase. Aside from raising a empathic culture in-game, if a mishap happens and a player writes something offensive in the chat, the game should step in with a fairly safe (working most of the times) preventing system, and not let other players see the parasite text. (If possible, there should be an action to develop a prevention system to voice chat too.)
There should be a step up against players who constantly write careless messages in the textbox. This should come with warnings towards the player, and players who constantly obey the rules of empathic gaming shall be limited in some opportunities in-game, e.g texting. Our recommendations for this section can be seen down below.
-Education: Mentorship and educating others is a great way for someone to be supportive in the gaming community. Not only kindness and empathy should be a goal to achieve for PEKKA-compatible games, but they should support the part of the community who educate and help other players, in any way. Education can come two ways in terms of hierarchy: an experienced user educates another user who is less experienced (mentorship), and equal-level users educating each other to develop faster and achieve in-game goals quicker (most common case of this is clans: clan members who are on the same level may team up together to figure out how to achieve something together, like beating a boss). Educating novice players is a strong way to keep a new player and integrate him into the game culture too. It is well known that for a company it costs five times more to find a new customer than to a keep a customer, this is arguably relatively true for game developing companies too, meaning it could help games be more profitable aswell.
-Track kindness and advocate: As promoting empathic behaviour is an aim, if a player is friendly and helpful to others, tracking support helps in accomplishing our aim. Measuring how „kind" a player is, to a certain extent, the game should reward players with more benefits the higher their kindness is measured.

Recommendations:

-Prevention: Harsh punishment is not the path to choose. We recommend multiple levels of restriction, first one being just an optional cancellation of the message (in some cases, a message is not meant to be offensive, a simple rephrasing from the player can fix a dangerous message too). Some options are censored text, not letting a message have certain words in it, temporary mute till the end of a match, not letting a player use chat, only let him communicate with other, restricted options (like pinging on the map, keyboard shortkeys to send pre-written messages, written by the game developers). If the game is a team-game, we recommend letting even the worst-behaving players have some option to channel information to his teammates. Banning a player for behaviour is not recommended, unless his speech was highly discriminative and he possibly broke state laws writing those

messages.

-Advocation: The reward amount might be a (monotone growing) function of the „kindness-meter", but we recommend using the Player Badge System (see below) to divide the playerbase into five different categories, rewarded differently. A new player joining the game shall have a silver badge and rank, we recommend other category rewards be increased/decreased by a relative amount to the silver badge reward:

        -bronze badge player should receive the exact same rewards as silver players, but in less quantity. We recommend -10% ± 5% less amount in quantity

        -gold badge players should receive the exact same rewards as silver players, but in more quantity, recommended quantity difference: +10% ± 5%

        -platinum badge players should have a higher chance of acquiring rare items, than bronze, silver, gold badge players, and in in-game ranking systems (like season and weekend contests) should have an advantage in ranking up

        -diamond badge players shall have the chance to receive exclusive, limited items for free. Other badge players can only receive limited items by buying it from other players.

Aside from this, one of the main advantages of the platform is that highly rated badge players receive sale bonuses on pay-to-acquire items, gadgets, plugins, etc. not just for the games they have a platinum or diamond badge in, but in other games aswell. This helps the platform grow in amount of games and amount of users too.

Block diagrams:
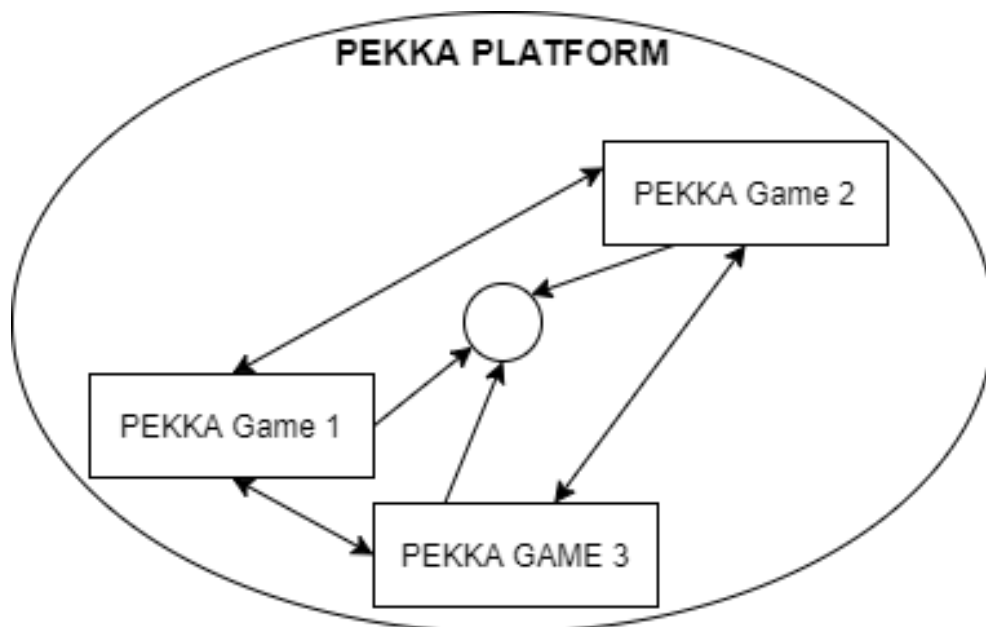
This diagram is supposed to represent how empathic players with highly-rated badges can enjoy benefits troughout more games too, and general benefits on the platform too (e.g. if the platform ever had a market)
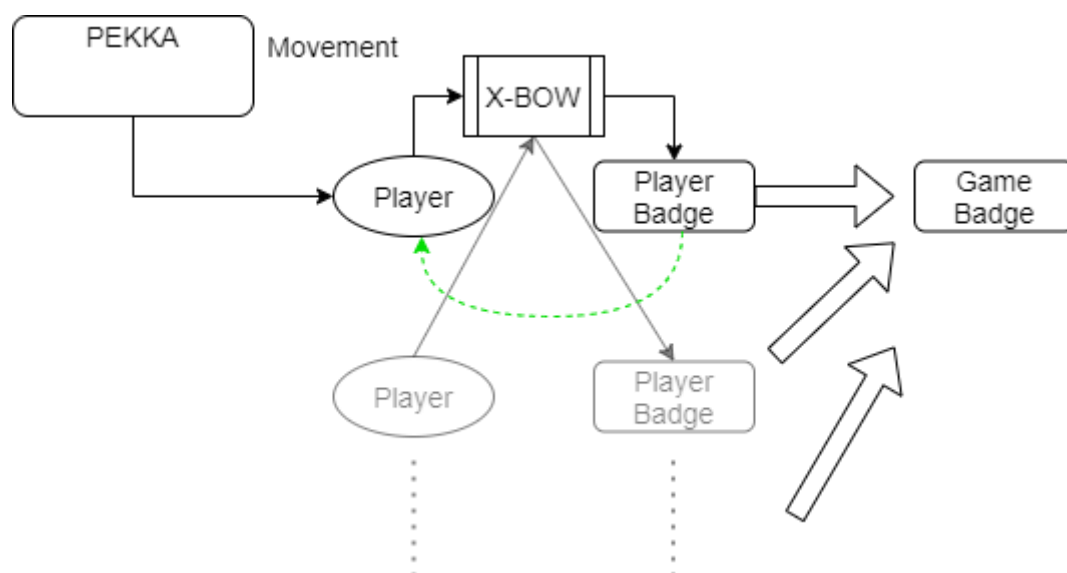
The player – player badge model. (Player Badge System)
Every component of the diagram is either defined by the standard or is an instance of players, except the X-BOW machine, which is developed by the game developers.

Using the PEKKA principles, a player is actively rated through the X-BOW „machine" which shall process every freshly gained data of a player after a match/event, and changes the player's player badge rating. The change should be small. The machine takes the negative messages/behaviour (if there is an option to write messages in the game), and the positive actions, „adds them up", and using a mathematical formula determines how much your Player Badge changes after the game. Using machine learning is allowed. It makes sense to combine the X-BOW with the prevention model, as the two are applied successively. The output range of X-BOW shall determine the intervals of different badge levels.

Badges:

There is a PEKKA Player Badge for every player in each PEKKA-compatible game, and a PEKKA Game Badge for each PEKKA-compatible game. Both can be one of five types: bronze, silver, gold, platinum, diamond, in increasing order (in terms of sentimental worth). As said above, better badge shall mean better rewarding in the corresponding game and in PEKKA-games aswell. A freshly registered player shall receive a silver badge at first. The PEKKA Game Badge is the average of the player (badge) ratings in the game (the Game Rating has a public numerical value too, which is prominent). The badge rating of games can be a very positive marketing, as it shows a trustworthy community, and a caring developer team.

How can a game become PEKKA-compatible?

By following the PEKKA principles, especially prevention and advocating. Also, the game developing team has to develop their own X-BOW machine which has to very fairly give a badge to a player.