GSP Lecture 3
Market Research & Analysis

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Lecture Overview

- *Intro: what is marketing and why is it relevant?*

- *Target Audience*

- *Market Fit*

- *Competitive Analysis*

Intro: what is marketing and why is it relevant?

What is Marketing?

Two Key Aspects:

- **Understanding the customer** – *today's lecture*

    - Identify the target audience

    - Conduct ***market research*** to understand them

    - Use this insight to inform our decision-making

- **Getting their attention** – *later lectures*

Why is Marketing Relevant?

We need to understand the customer
- So we can make a game they want to play
- To tailor the game to meet their needs and interests

Once we've made the game, we use our understanding
- To find them and sell it to them
- To build communities
- To gain even greater insights, so we can iterate on our ideas

Why is Marketing Relevant?

This is especially important:

- If you plan to self-publish
- If you work for a small company
- *(also, getting a job is essentially self-marketing!)*

Marketing is multifaceted

- It has technical aspects – lots of stats
- It requires analysis and intuition
- It feeds into decision-making

Further Thoughts

Audience Engagement
- Figure out what your audience wants
- Build community
- Increase anticipation and engagement

Market Visibility
- Stand out in a crowded market!
- Increase visibility among players
- Build brand awareness for your studio

Further Thoughts

Monetisation
- Figure out the best way to make money
- Bring in customers to make more money!

Feedback and Iteration
- Gather player feedback through marketing channels
- Iterate on game before launch
- Enhance player experience and satisfaction

Further Thoughts

Market Research
- Identify target audience & market trends
- Make informed decisions
- Minimise risk

Build Hype!
- Generate a buzz before launch (main & updates)
- Establish emotional connection with potential players

Further Thoughts

Player Acquisition & Retention

- Get new players
- Keep existing players
- Build a loyal fan base

Post Launch Support

- Visibly support players through media channels
- Extend lifecycle of product with post-launch marketing

What Is Marketing?

Generally

- Creating, communicating and delivering *value* to customers

- Understanding customer *needs* and wants

- *Aligning* products / services to meet these

What Is Marketing?

Core Concepts

- **Product:** Make a game that meets customer needs / wants

- **Price:** Make it at the right price – so your business is viable & customers can afford it

- **Place:** Where you sell it

- **Promotion:** How you make people aware of it

What Is Marketing *Not*?

Marketing is different to *sales*!

- **Marketing is about:**

  - Gaining insights, building relationships → long-term

  - Encouraging people (advertising) to come to your sales channels

- **Sales is about:**

  - Making a transaction → short-term

  - What you say / do to actually get them to buy

Summary

Two Key Aspects:

- **Understanding the customer** – *today's lecture*

  - Identify the target audience

  - Conduct ***market research*** to understand them

  - Use this to tailor your game to meet their needs & desires

- **Getting their attention** – *later lectures*

Understanding the Customer

Intro

Market Research

Definition

- Systematic gathering, analysis and interpretation of info about a market, including potential customers and competitors
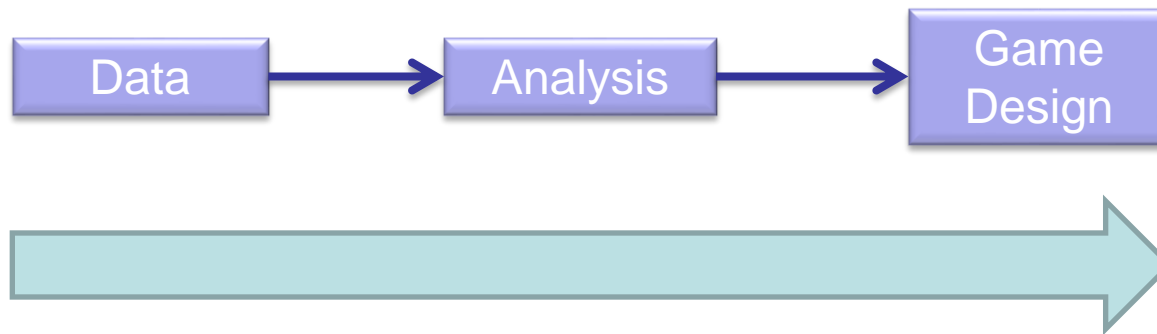
Aims

- *Understand the potential customers*

- *Understand market dynamics and trends*

- *Identify opportunities and challenges*

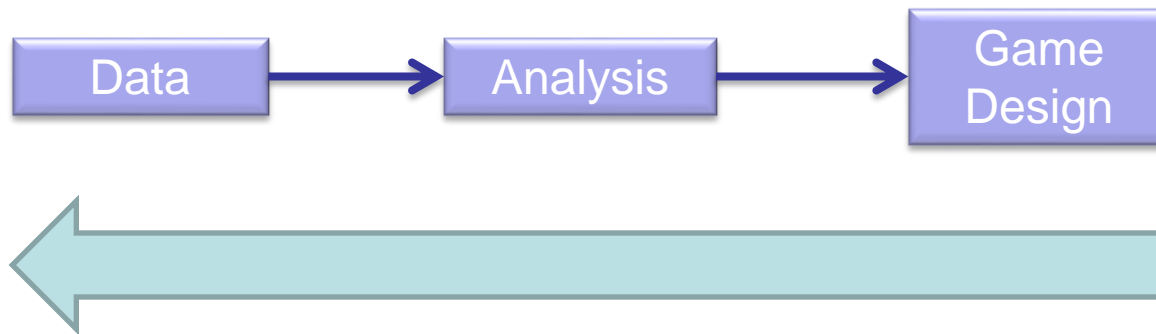- *Inform strategic decision-making early in game dev process*

Market Research

```
Data  →  Analysis  →  Game Design
```

Market Research

```
┌──────────┐        ┌──────────┐        ┌──────────┐
│   Data   │ ─────→ │ Analysis │ ─────→ │   Game   │
│          │        │          │        │  Design  │
└──────────┘        └──────────┘        └──────────┘
```

Start with data, see what emerges, use this to inform game design

Market Research

Data → Analysis → Game Design

Start with a design question, see if data supports this concept

Market Research
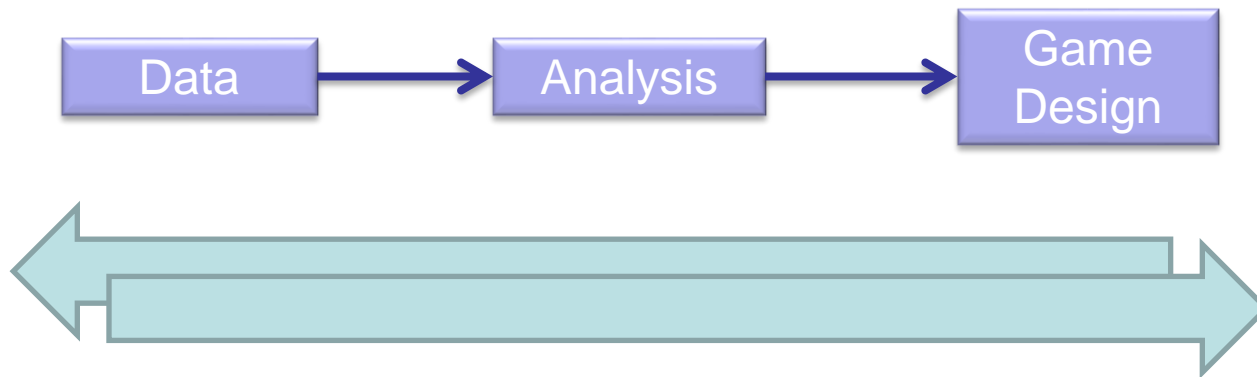
Both methods are valuable and can lead to different insights

**It's best to combine approaches,
usually in an iterative manner**

Market Research

```
┌─────────┐      ┌──────────┐      ┌──────────┐
│  Data   │ ───▶ │ Analysis │ ───▶ │   Game   │
└─────────┘      └──────────┘      │  Design  │
                                    └──────────┘
```

Data Sources

Primary Research

- Gather first-hand data, direct from source
- E.g. surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations

Secondary Research

- Look at existing data / research from others
- E.g. industry reports, market studies, competitor analyses

Market Research

```
[Data] → [Analysis] → [Game Design]
```

Types of Data

- **Demographics:** age, gender, location, income

- **Psychographics:** interests, hobbies, lifestyles, values

- **Market Data:** size, growth rates, revenue figures

- **Player Metrics:** in-game metrics

- **Qualitative Data:** player feedback

Market Research

Analysis

- **Statistical Methods:** prepare primary research data

- **Personas:** description of the 'ideal player'

- **Patterns and Trends:** identify emerging patterns in player preference and behaviour or shifts in market dynamics
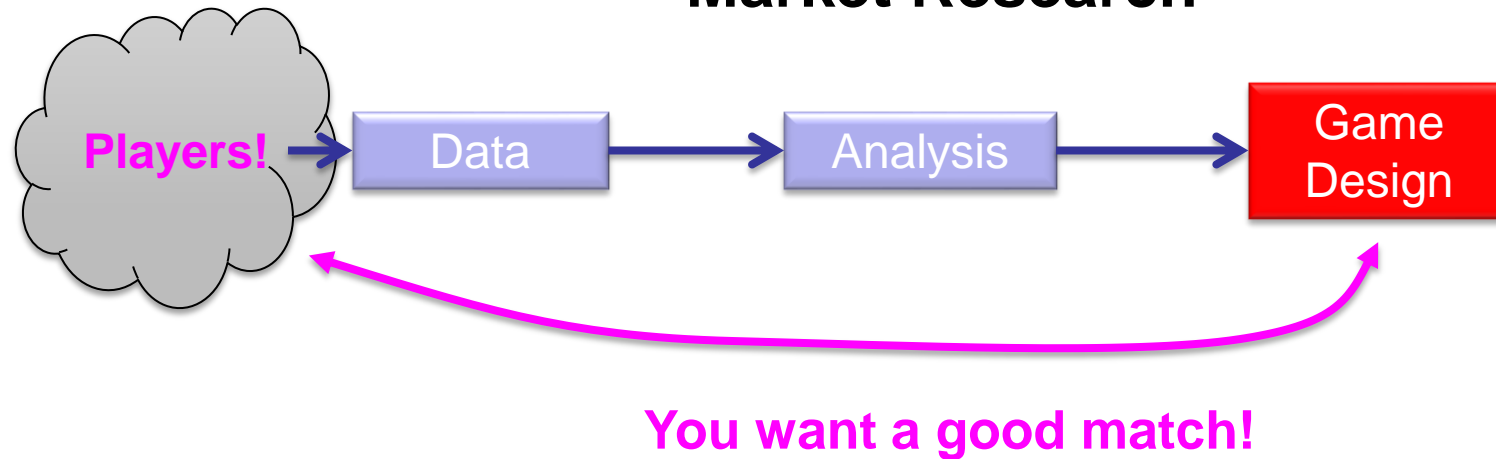
Market Research

```
Data  →  Analysis  →  Game Design
```

Game Design

- **Broad Aspects:** genre, type

- **Style:** art style, gameplay, – how the game looks and feels

- **Content:** characters, features, mechanics

Market Research

Players! → Data → Analysis → Game Design

You want a good match!

Market Research

Players! ←————— **You want a good match!** ————→ Game Design

- **Basic Matches:** does your audience like this genre and type, do they use your chosen platform?

- **Market Size:** are there enough potential players to be viable?

- **Monetisation:** can players afford it? Are your strategies aligned with market trends?

The point is we don't just guess, we use data!

Market Research

Players! ← **You want a good match!** → Game Design

- **Concept, Narrative:** does your audience like this genre and type, do they use your chosen platform?

    - **Demographic:** is it appropriate for the demographic? E.g. kid's game

    - **Psychographics:** does the concept resonate with player interests and hobbies?

Try not to fall into stereotypes and assumptions

Market Research: Aligning Art Style

Question: Can we get our art style to fit the audience?

- ***Direct Data:*** *questionnaires, surveys, focus groups*
  - *Find target audience, show them something, ask for feedback*
- ***Social Media Analysis:***
  - *Look at posts by players, what do they like? Analyse & identify trends*
- ***Online Platforms:***
  - *What's trending on ArtStation? What do players say about concept art?*
- ***Competitor Analysis:***
  - *Analyse player reviews. Identify aspects players like / dislike…*

Market Research: Competitor Analysis

What we can learn:

- *Player Preferences:*
    - *What do players like / dislike?*
- *USPs: what makes it unique?*
    - *Identify specific features*
- *User Engagement:*
    - *How do they engage with their audience?*
    - *Vital for launch build-up and long-term survival*
- *Technical Innovations:*
    - *Are they active in R&D? Do they develop their own tech?*

Market Research: Competitor Analysis

Specifics to look at:

- ***Gameplay Mechanics: analyse the popular features***
  - *Identify features, how do they make the game better?*
- ***Storytelling / Narrative:***
  - *How and why does it resonate with the audience?*
- ***Art & visuals, level design, environment:***
  - *How does it contribute to atmosphere, what mood does it set?*
- ***UI / UX:***
  - *What expectations are there in how things work?*

Market Research: Competitor Analysis

Actionable Steps:

- ***Identify Gaps***
  - *What's missing? What could be added to make it better?*

- ***Identify Weaknesses***
  - *Where are players dissatisfied? How can you do better?*

- ***What works well***
  - *How and why does it resonate with the audience?*

Market Research: Competitor Analysis

Actionable Steps:

➔ *These feed into your game concept*

➔ *Refine your ideas*

➔ *Build a stronger product!*

Market Research: Market Reports

Market Research: Market Reports

What we can learn:

- ***Market Size & Growth***
  - *Is there enough money? Identify broad opportunities*
- ***Platforms & Genres***
  - *Align with user base of sufficient size*
- ***Player Demographics, Regional Insights***
  - *Age, gender, geographic location*
- ***Broad Competitors***
  - *Prep for competitor analysis*

Market Research: Market Reports

Specifics to Look at:

- ***Genre Popularity & Trends***
  - *What demand is there for your type of game?*
- ***Consumer Spending Patterns***
  - *Monetisation preferences, seasonal trends*
- ***Platforms and Tech***
  - *Is there any emerging tech that's proving popular?*
- ***Emerging Markets***
  - *New markets with fresh opportunities*

Market Research: Market Reports

Actionable Steps:

- ***Strategic Alignment*** *– align your game to the market*
  - *Platform & Tech*
  - *Genre & Theme*
  - *Monetisation*
  - *Regional customisation*
- ***Selling your game***
  - *Competitive positioning – highlighting your strengths / USPs (which address competitors' weaknesses)*

Market Research: Market Reports

Example Reports