

# Cyberpunk 2077 Review

Technological University Dublin

Introduction to Digital Media

Assessment 2: Report

Link to artefact: [https://youtu.be/tZGu\\_GQs33E](https://youtu.be/tZGu_GQs33E)

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Submission date 05. 01. 2021

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## 1 Introduction

This project is an analysis of the video game “Cyberpunk 2077” (henceforth “the game”) in the context of digital media, and with a focus on ethics.

### 1.1 Project aims

The aims of this project are

- Appraise the game as entertainment from the perspective of a newcomer
- Consider the game as a continuation of the Cyberpunk genre
- Analyse the ethics of the production of the game

### 1.2 Project requirements

The review of the multimedia product should address the following:

- Situate the topic in a digital media context
- Consider the multimedia product or artefact as it relates to multimedia production environments and the role of digital media in society
- Reflect on how the multimedia product or artefact relates to ethics in digital media
- Reflect on your opinion in relation to this media ethics discussion
- Include a written credits /references section that details the resources used in this assessment

### 1.3 Scope of the project

The scope of this project is to analyse the game and its production against the history of the Cyberpunk genre, investigate the game as entertainment for the newcomer to videogames, and to learn something about the production of the game.

Out of scope is an in-depth review from the perspective of a gamer.

### 1.4 Context

The cyberpunk genre is a subgenre of Science Fiction and imagines a dystopian future. There are many tropes associated with Cyberpunk, including but not limited to

- Cybernetic upgrades
- A retro-future aesthetic, i.e. a future aesthetic as imagined from the 1980s
- Mega-corporations
- Disempowered people scratching out an existence in a legally and morally questionable way
- Cyberspace, an early imagining of the interconnected computer network - a combination of Internet, Virtual Reality, and direct brain-computer interfacing

The term Cyberpunk seems to have originated in the title of a short story by Bruce Bethke published in 1980, and this gives us a timeline for the origins of Cyberpunk as the early 1980s. (Bethke, 1997)

Notable Cyberpunk authors include Philip K Dick, who wrote the book that the movie Blade Runner was based on, Bruce Sterling, and the highly influential William

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Gibson, who's novel *Neuromancer* can be seen as setting the context for all Cyberpunk novels thereafter. (Person, 1999)

The game is based on a tabletop roleplaying game simply named Cyberpunk. There are a number of sequels to this game, such as *Cyberpunk 2020* and *Cyberpunk Red*, which extend the timeline from the original up to 2035. The game - *Cyberpunk 2077* - extends this same timeline up to the year 2077. (Hall, 2019)

Another significant context to this report is the production of video games. Video game production in 2020 is hugely expensive and labour-intensive. In order to recoup the expense, video games must be released at the right time to capture sales at certain strategic times – the holiday season being the most important one. (Ritcher, 2020)

Therefore the concept of Crunch. Crunch is the video game industry practise of making staff directly involved in production work longer hours in the run up to release to make sure that the game is ready in time. (Williams, 2015) (ea\_spouse, 2004)

The game *Cyberpunk 2077* has been in production since at least 2012, and possibly earlier, meaning that development was nearly a decade long process. (Hector, 2020)

Added to this, 2020 was a particularly challenging year, with staff being required to work at home. Where they may not have all the facilities to work effectively or may be interrupted by others in the home. (Intrado GlobeNewswire, 2020)

And so, *Cyberpunk 2077* was delayed 3 times, from its original planned release date of 16th April 2020 to its eventual release date of 10th December 2020 but the quality of the release was questioned by many people. (VELOCCI, 2020)

The developers, CD Projekt Red, have been subject to debates relating to their gender representations in the past, and the same seems to have followed them into *Cyberpunk 2077*. (HOWARD, 2020)

### 1.5 Typical users

The key demographic target will be peers and the class lecturer. This video might be appealing to people who are interested in *Cyberpunk 2077* history and development

### 2 Research process

As Jurate had previously never played or even watched the Cyberpunk 2077 game she started her research by reading and referencing articles and websites and listened to the Neuromancer audiobook. She also played the game for a few hours.

After gathering enough information Jurate started to write the script in a Microsoft Word document and collecting images for her video.

#### 2.1 Research Methods

The primary source of research was internet searches and news alerts around Cyberpunk, and Cyberpunk 2077.

#### 2.2 Area of Research – Cyberpunk Background

Jurate's first area of research was the Cyberpunk Genre in which the game's many storylines and plots are situated. She read articles and short stories from the web. She then listened to the short story Neuromancer on audiobook. (YouTube, 2019)

#### 2.3 Area of Research - Videogames

Jurate began researching the Cyberpunk game on the web, noting the amount of publicity and high levels of anticipation pre-release, the issues during production, and the issues with the quality of the product after release. (King, 2020) (Byrd, 2020)

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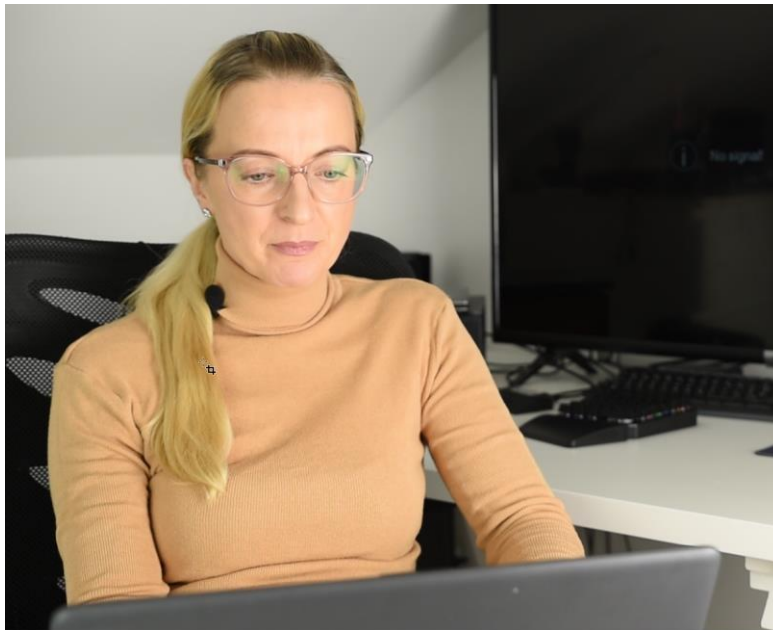
She then did further research into production timelines and Crunch. And refined the script further.

### 3 Production process

#### 3.1 Pre-Production

The pre-production process was researching the areas of Cyberpunk and videogames, playing the game, then creating the script which the video artefact would be based on.

#### 3.2 Production



*Figure 1: Image of Jurate shooting her video*

Jurate prepared the Nikon D750 DSLR camera and studio lights for shooting her video. To ensure that the sound was good quality, Jurate used a clip-on microphone. She arranged her desk and computer because she planned to shoot a talking head style for some of the video.



Jurate recorded her video reading the script paragraph by paragraph and it took a few attempts to get desired result.

Jurate also recorded herself playing the game and looking for bugs.

### 3.2 Post-Production

After finishing recording clips Jurate used Adobe Premiere Pro to edit her recording, add video and images from online sources and make a final video for the project.

She first created a new project. Then she added the clips she had recorded. She marked in and out points on each clip, then assembled them in the timeline. She then added images and video at the points where she did not want to use a talking head. She added transitions, did some final editing for time, then exported a file. (Adobe , 2020)

She uploaded her video to YouTube 2 days before submission time to make sure there was enough time for generated subtitles to be visible.

She edited the generated subtitles to match the recording.

## 4 Hardware and software tools used

For the research Jurate used an Asus laptop and Microsoft Word.

For the recording, Jurate used

- Nikon D750 DSLR
- Continuous lights for photography x 2
- 80 x 50 softbox x 2
- Camera Tripod
- Lavalier style mic
- 49-inch 4k TV Monitor

In post-production Jurate used a Desktop PC for editing with the following specification

- AMD Ryzen 3800x CPU
- 1tb SSD
- 32GB RAM

And the following software

- Adobe Premiere Pro
- Adobe Photoshop

## 5 File formats and compression information

- Recording format - 1080p 59.94fps H.264/MPEG-4 AVC (Nikon, 2020)
- Export format (Match Source in Premiere Pro) 1080p 59.94fps H.264/MPEG-4 AVC

## 6 Copyright compliance

All the video and photos of the game Cyberpunk 2077 are copyright CD project Red but used under fare use.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

Link to Artefact: [https://youtu.be/tZGu\\_GQs33E](https://youtu.be/tZGu_GQs33E)



Figure 2 Final artefact on YouTube

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## Appendix B

Cyberpunk 2077 is an open-world computer role-playing game (RPG), from CD Projekt Red, the games studio responsible for The Witcher series of games.

10 years in the making, this game has been surrounded by a massive wave of [hype](#), and hit stores on the 10th of December 2020 after a number of delays.

Cyberpunk 2077 is based on the Cyberpunk tabletop role-playing games series, itself based on the science fiction literary subgenre of the same name. Cyberpunk the genre has its roots in 1980s anxieties about a high-tech future, with artificial intelligences, extreme modification of humans with cybernetic implants, cyberspace (the virtual reality of all connected computers), and mega-corporations with greater capabilities and fewer morals than the governments of the time.

Cyberpunk is about people being crushed under a huge machine which does not care about them. Corporations kill with impunity, and ordinary people must modify themselves with machinery and computer hardware, take risks and hustle [in order to](#) survive.

No discussion of Cyberpunk is complete without mentioning William Gibson. His 1984 novel Neuromancer covers all the main touch points of [Cyberpunk](#) and tells the story of a washed up cyberspace 'cowboy' Case and a heavily modified '[razor girl](#)' Molly being recruited by a shadowy figure for a futuristic computer heist.

Cyberpunk 2077 sticks closely to the genre tropes; I played as a 'Corpo'. A former [corporation executive](#), sold out by his employers in the first act. From my research and reading, the storylines and setting were straight from the source material with few surprises.

\*talking head\*

I came to this project as a non-gamer, thinking that [i](#) could combine a newbie's review of the game with some commentary on how relevant the ethics of the imagined alt-future world of Cyberpunk are to the 2020s.

However, a larger story related to the ethics of the video game industry presented itself to me as [i](#) did my research

\*end\*

Even before the game was released, CD Projekt Red shared an in-game advertisement for a drink featuring a trans woman with a very large and visible penis, and the slogan "mix it up". If this had been a gateway to [discussion about](#) trans representation and hyper-sexualization, this could have been a positive development. However, many saw this as a cynical move by CDPR, appearing to be highlighting issues with trans representation, but actually [exploiting](#) it.

<https://collider.com/cyberpunk-2077-disaster-explained-cd-projekt-red/>

The issues with Cyberpunk 2077 development didn't end there. Crunch is the questionable video game industry practice of having production staff working longer hours [in order to](#) meet deadlines for publishing games. In 2004 Erin Hoffman became well known as EA Spouse,

after posting an initially anonymous blog about the long hours her husband was being required to work. In the post she described his usual working week as being 9am to 10pm, seven days a week.

<https://ea-spouse.livejournal.com/274.html>

After [publicising](#) the fact that the studio was against crunch, CDPR backtracked in September and ordered staff to work a [6 day](#) week

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-09-29/cyberpunk-2077-publisher-orders-6-day-weeks-ahead-of-game-debut>

And when the game finally did release, after 3 significant delays, the quality of the release was questioned by many. The Internet is awash with tales of strange visual bugs, broken [quests](#) and even spontaneous nakedness. I personally have witnessed a few bugs in my short time with the game, most notably my car deciding to drive itself in circles, smashing the doors off and killing pedestrians.

<https://www.windowscentral.com/cyberpunk-2077-known-bugs-and-launch-issues>  
<https://survivethis.news/en/cyberpunk-2077-nude-bug-naked-npc/>

All the previously [mentioned issues](#) are somewhat explainable. The trans issue could be seen as a misguided attempt at being progressive in representation. The crunch time and eventual release quality are two sides of the same coin. The company CDPR invested 10 years and hundreds of millions of dollars into the game, so they presumably acted [in order to](#) preserve their investment by overworking staff and releasing an unfinished product, in order to [hasten their recap](#). Covid-19 is likely to have had an impact here as well, with lower staff productivity causing difficulty in getting the release out.

But [i](#) don't think any of [this excuses](#) them or diminishes their responsibility. CDPR were the darlings of the games industry. The Witcher series gained plaudits as something that bigger studios would not be able to pull off. The idea that they did things differently, more maturely and not at the cost of their staff was one they traded off. Now [we're](#) in a position of seeing them not as pioneers, but just more of the same. A bit like the game itself, despite the glossy sheen, [there's](#) nothing new here.

Figure 3 Original script