Discourse Analysis of a Video Game Press Release

In “OVERWATCH™ READY FOR ACTION SPRING 2016†—PRE-PURCHASE NOW FOR CONSOLE AND PC” from November 2015, a well-established videogame company known as Blizzard Entertainment reveals new information about its latest game, *Overwatch*. Blizzard’s goal in this press release is to inform both potential customers and press sources about their latest game and its developments. Though the document has no specific author, it is has been written for one of the most successful videogame companies in the world that spends hundreds of millions of dollars on advertising and understands how to convince readers to purchase their products.

Throughout the document, it is evident that the style and language is geared toward exciting its audience rather than objectively informing. The very first sentence sets the tone of the entire release, stating, “The world needs heroes… and *Overwatch*™ is recruiting starting today!”1(par. 1). The use of ellipses and exclamation points is typical of advertisements and not of informative research papers. Although this style is not used professionally, it induces a level of suspense and excitement that gets consumers and subscribers interested in what follows. The release also describes the game with words that excite the reader. For example, the document is full of buzzwords and phrases like “unique arsenal of weapons,” “iconic,” and “critical.” It even proceeds to describe *Overwatch* as a game in which, “the action is intense, with a focus on immediacy and fun”1(par. 2). As such, the release is targeted toward an audience that enjoys fast-paced action and entertainment. It is clear that the goal of using such language is to create excitement in readers that inevitably translates to sales for Blizzard Entertainment.

Though the language can excite readers, there is little value for Blizzard Entertainment in this excitement unless the readers can actually purchase the content being advertised. For this reason, the formatting and content of the article is carefully designed to have readers pre-purchase the game. The press release does not have any images to attract attention, but there are several hyperlinks placed throughout the article. These hyperlinks lead either directly to the page where customers can pre-purchase the game, or to the game’s home page, which contains several large images, unlike the actual press release, and links to the pre-ordering page. Regardless of where the reader’s focus is while reading, there is quick and easy access to purchasing the game. Making it very easy for the reader to convert to sales is clearly an important thing to consider for a press release. If the exciting language wasn’t enough for readers, Blizzard Entertainment has even offered a special in-game vanity item for those who order the game early, providing even more reason for readers to make an impulsive purchase. It’s important to note that the mention of this special vanity item, along with a link to the pre-purchase page, is provided at the start of the release. This way, readers know exactly where to go if they find themselves interested in purchasing the product at any point while reading.

Reference

1. OVERWATCH™ READY FOR ACTION SPRING 2016†—PRE-PURCHASE NOW FOR CONSOLE AND PC [Internet]. Blizzard Entertainment; [2015 Nov 6, cited 2016 Jan 19]. Available from: http://blizzard.gamespress.com/

Hey \_\_\_\_,

After finishing reading your rough draft I think that you have a great start. I think the most pressing issue is that your paper isn't completely finished – you're missing some of the requirements, namely relating this discourse to your own technical writing. It seems that aside from that however, what you do have is really good. As I said in the comments above, you make a good effort to extrapolate on the evidence you pulled from the text. I think its really interesting you chose a video game press release and there is a lot of different and unique aspects to them which you've done a good job drawing from.

I think that you could benefit the most from reading your own paper out loud. While your organization is good, there are some sentences that can be written more concisely or eloquently. Overall its a bit hard to offer more critique on this paper since it ends abruptly but from what I have already read, it seems like you have a good start on analyzing this discourse.

Additionally, while you have given good evidence, to support your two paragraphs, they both seem very similar. You might consider combining them or trying to differentiate them more. They both start by talking about how the text creates excitement in the readers but I think there is more to be said about other areas of the text such as why there are no authors or what the implications of the date the document was released in relation to the time of the game release.

Finally I think you might want to double check your citations. The web format can make it confusing sometimes, and I'm no expert but I think that it would be a good area to make sure is correct.

Best,

Lydia