

# *Ghostbusters (2016)* Game Evaluation Report

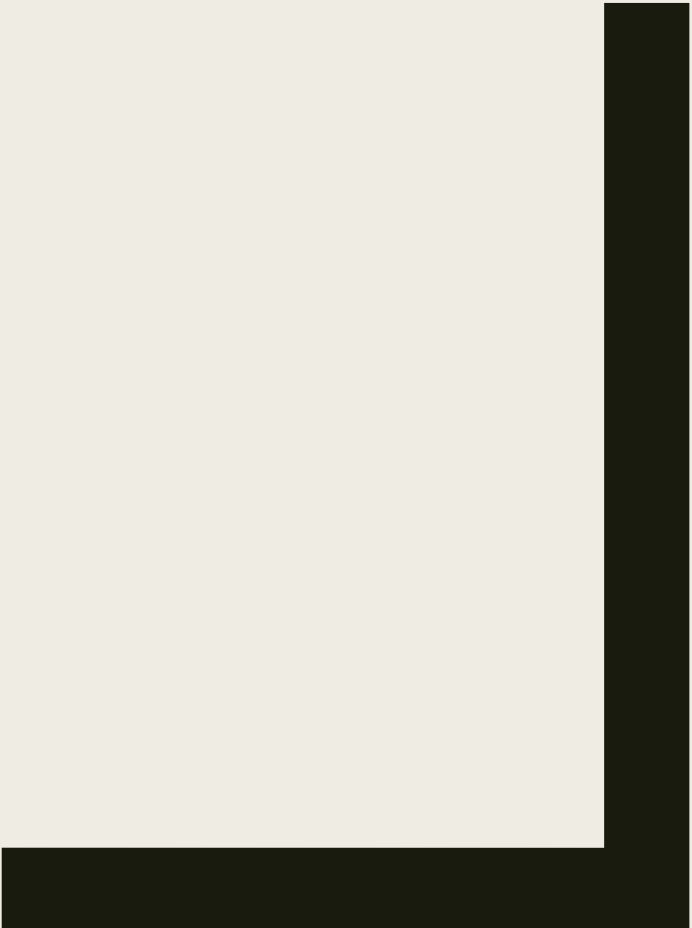
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# Overview

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# Main Research Objectives

1. Why was *Ghostbusters (2016)* received poorly by players?
2. How does the game compare to its competitors?
3. What usability issues do players encounter?
4. Is the game player experience enjoyable for players?

# Executive Summary

*Ghostbusters (2016)* is a twin-stick action shooter video game. We examined the game on the Xbox One platform through **four stages**.

## Competitive Review

Tier 1 competitors were other Ghostbusters-themed games.

Tier 2 were other movie-based third-person action shooters.

Tier 3 were other purely top-down isometric third-person action shooters.

We found that *Ghostbusters (2016)* was unique in being the only movie-based top-down isometric third-person action shooter, apart from *Reservoir Dogs: Bloody Days (2017)*.

## Heuristic Review

We used Sauli Laitinen's game heuristics (2008) based on Jakob Nielsen's heuristics. We found that most of the usability and gameplay heuristics were violated in the game, as the underlying critical issue was that the game's main goals and objectives were unclear. Lack of appropriate feedback and help to the player can cause confusion as to how mechanics/controls relate to the scoring system.

# Executive Summary

## Usability Test

Although players felt confident due to the simplified gameplay, this test round confirmed the heuristic review findings that there would be usability issues. Players found objectives, controls/mechanics, and navigating the game user interface and maps to be confusing and detrimental.

## Playtest

In assessing the game's playability, we found that players enjoyed the game's aesthetics and found AI teammates to be helpful. However, it's critical that most players found the overall gameplay to be repetitive and not fun, leading them to say the levels were too long. Most players weren't motivated to continue playing the game after the tutorial level. The major usability issues revealed in the last round were found to result in overall dissatisfaction with the player experience.

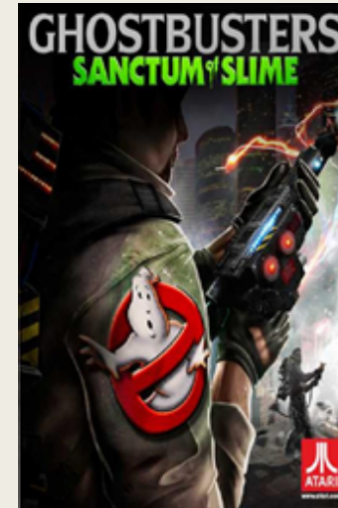
We have provided recommendations to specifically address these issues to improve on the foundation that *Ghostbusters (2016)* currently has for a better player experience.

# Competitive Review: Tier 1 Competitors

## Related *Ghostbusters* franchise games

### 1. *Ghostbusters: Sanctum of Slime* (2011)

- Co-op twin stick shooter
- Local and online co-op multiplayer modes
- AI teammate options
- No weapon upgrades
- No cutscenes or voice narration



### 2. *Ghostbusters: The Video Game* (2009)

- Third-person shooter (Nintendo DS is top-down)
- Local and online multiplayer modes
- Weapon upgrades available
- 3 difficulty levels: normal, experienced, professional
- Uses same characters from *Ghostbusters II*



### 3. *Lego Dimensions: Ghostbusters Story Pack* (2016)

- Action-adventure 3D platformer
- 2-player local co-op
- Weapon and character upgrades available
- Uses same characters from *Ghostbusters* (2016)



# Competitive Review: Tier 2 Competitors

## Movie-based action shooter games

### 1. *Reservoir Dogs: Bloody Days* (2017)

- Top-down isometric third person shooter
- No multiplayer modes; 1 player for 3 characters
- Defeat enemy waves for every level
- No cutscenes or voice narration



### 2. *Star Wars Battlefront II* (2017)

- Switch between third- and first-person
- Campaign: solo; has other multiplayer modes
- Has player upgrades
- 3 difficulty levels: explorer -> soldier -> special forces
- Uses same characters from franchise and cutscenes



### 3. *007: Quantum of Solace* (2008)

- First-person: PC, PS3, Xbox 360
- Third-person: Nintendo DS and PS2
- 2-4 players in local and online co-op multiplayer (Wii)
- Weapon and character upgrades available
- Uses voice acting, dialogue, and events from movies





# Competitive Review: Summary

Game	Tier	Co-op Campaign	Local Co-op	Online Co-op	Twin Stick Shooter	Top-down Perspective	Weapon Variety	Based on Movie/Show	Multiple Levels of Difficulty	Voice Acting	Destructible Environment	Rating
Ghostbusters (2016)	--	X	X		X	X	X	X		X		E
Ghostbusters: Sanctum of Slime (2011)	1	X	X	X (not on PC)	X	X		X			X	E
Ghostbusters: The Video Game (2009)	1	Wii	Wii	X			X	X	X	X	X	T
Lego Dimensions: Ghostbusters (2016)	1	X	X			X		X		X	X	E
Reservoir Dogs: Bloody Days (2017)	2				X	X		X				M
Star Wars Battlefront II (2017)	2			X			X	X	X	X		T
007: Quantum of Solace (2008)	2		Wii				X	X	X	X	X	T
The Binding of Isaac: Rebirth (2011)	3	Xbox One	PS4 PC Xbox One	PS4	X	X	X		X	X (opening narration)		M
Nex Machina (2017)	3	X	X		X	X	X		X		X	T
Livelock (2016)	3	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	T



# Heuristic Review

We used Sauli Laitinen's game heuristics (2008) based on Jakob Nielsen's heuristics. These heuristics are split between **usability** and **gameplay**.

We found that most of the usability and gameplay heuristics were violated in the game:

- Goals/objectives are unclear throughout the game
- The relationship of mechanics to the scoring system is unclear
- Lack of feedback and available help/assistance to player when they are confused
- Tasks are repetitive and monotonous, throwing off the game's challenge and pacing

# Usability Test

## Main Research Goals

- Assess effectiveness of game UI
- Identify issues interaction issues in the following game activities:
  - Complete the tutorial level (“Gertrude’s Revenge” in “Aldridge Manor Level”)
  - Upgrade character skills
  - Complete the post-tutorial level (“St. Lou’s Cemetery Level”)

## Research Questions

- Can players start new games?
- Can players move their character?
- Can players roll to dodge attacks?
- Can players shoot/attack with their main weapon?
- Can players throw bombs?
- Can players cool off their overheated weapon?
- Can players be revived by teammates?
- Can players capture main ghosts/bosses?
- Can players upgrade their character’s skills?
- Can players navigate to required checkpoints in a level?
- Can players find the next level?

# Usability Test: Participants

Four participants who were in the range of 21-28 years old.

Participants were screened for:

- They are at least 18 years old.
- They have played on Xbox before (this was the available console for testing).

All participants had played shooter games before – 3 rating their skills average; 1 excellent.

3 out of 4 participants typically played games for 30-60 minute sessions; 1 for 60-90 minutes.

3 out of 4 participants rated their competitiveness as average; 1 rated theirs very high.

Commonly played games genres were RPGs and first-person shooters (FPS).

# Usability Test: Prioritization

Positive

**Positive** issues indicate good practice, where the feature worked as intended.

Critical

**Critical** issues are those that occurred on a core task, were not easy to overcome, and occurred persistently for the same user. Fix urgently.

High

**High** issues met two of the criteria of occurring on a core task, being hard to overcome, or occurring persistently.

Medium

**Medium** issues either occurred on a core task, were hard to overcome, or occurred persistently.

Low

**Low** issues were usability issues that met none of the criteria, but too many of them will impact people's perception of the experience.

# Highlights

# Usability Test: Positive

Participants did not think the game was unnecessarily complex.

(3 out of 4 participants)

In the post-test questionnaire, participants were asked to rate their agreement from 1-5 (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) with the statement: **“I found the game unnecessarily complex.”**

*“It’s a pretty straightforward game...”*

# Usability Test: Positive

Participants felt fairly confident playing the game.

In the post-test questionnaire, participants were asked to rate their agreement the statement: **“I felt very confident playing the game.”** The average score for this statement was 3.75.



# Usability Test: Positive

Participants found menu interfaces simple and easy to understand.

3 out of 4 participants were able to select the correct level and start the game without confusion.

*“I thought that in general, the menu options were really sort of clear in what I’m doing.”*



# Lowlights

# Usability Test: **Critical**

**Players don't know the required objectives in the game.**

All participants were frustrated and guessed what their tasks were (e.g. capture bosses, earn points, find secret runes, etc.).

All participants skipped audio that revealed the main ghost to capture.

Learnability problems tied to a **high** number of unique issues for tasks:

- Intro tutorial level: 8.5 issues per player on average
- Cemetery level (post-tutorial): 6.75 unique issues per player on average

*"I don't know what I'm supposed to be doing. There are no objectives, literally. Do I just explore the entire mansion?"*

*"Do I just walk around the cemetery again? I really wish I had objectives!"*

*"No objectives. No nothing. This is just boring. I don't know what I'm supposed to be doing."*

*"Do we even need to capture these ghosts?"*

*"Do I need to scan surroundings to make the ghosts appear?"*

*"What am I supposed to find here?"*

# Usability Test: **Critical**

Players don't know the required objectives in the game.

- Include clear objectives in the game. Examples:
  - *Reaching a certain number of points*
  - *Defeating specific enemies*
- The objectives should be easily accessible in a menu or subtly displayed on screen.

# Usability Test: High

## Players don't understand the points and achievement system.

The points and achievements system were not explained in the introductory tutorial level.

This led to participants not knowing what objects and parts of the game they should interact with.

*"Are these points for us?"*

*"I don't even know [about getting points]. I think it correlates to the upgrade points. I didn't even know it mattered."*

*"I'm assuming these points are what you use to upgrade but the fact is, it didn't connect to me if I could get more points, I could really get more cooler upgrades. There was no incentive for me to press rapidly for the trap. There was no incentive for me to go search out these things. I don't even know what the 2 out of 4 thing is. It's like okay, I found it I guess, by accident. It's not like I specifically went out and looked for it."*

# Usability Test: High

Players don't understand the points and achievement system.

- In the tutorial, include explanations and descriptions of the points and achievements system.
- Introduce what objects and parts of the game players can interact with.
- Provide clear visual and audio feedback when objects are interacted with.



Participant 2 ignores the bonus points multiplier mini-game closer to the end of the gameplay session.

# Playtest