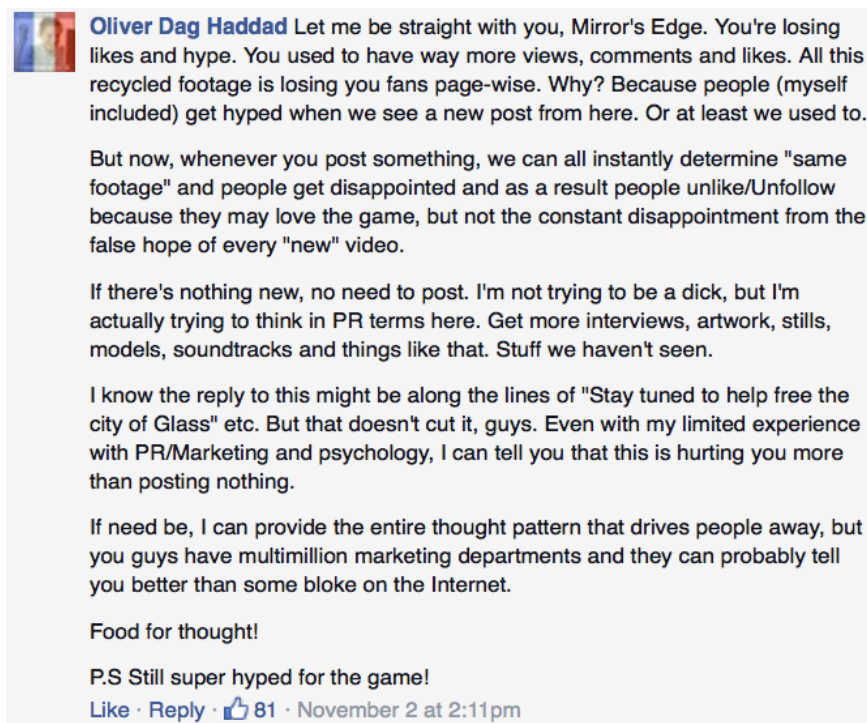


The gaming community is a very active and tightly knit group. Gamers are heavily involved online, are tech savvy, are often relentless and shameless in expressing their opinions, are comfortable hiding behind the anonymity of online profiles, conduct a lot of research prior to making purchases, and actively converse with one another. For this reason, it is essential that Mirror's Edge and Electronic Arts as a whole pay close attention to how its brand is being received through digital channels. Currently, Mirror's Edge has a variety of social media presences, but no owned online community. Therefore, these channels, like Facebook and Twitter, should be the primary focus for realizing the influence that consumers hold in regard to brand perception. Furthermore, EA should pay close attention to reviews on YouTube, comments on promotional materials, opinions on presales for the upcoming game *Mirror's Edge Catalyst*, and track engagement on the original 2008 game *Mirror's Edge* to see whether or not fans' interest is being rekindled in the brand as a result of digital efforts online.

While tracking these channels, Mirror's Edge needs to understand and be able to recognize the influence users have over others' perception of the Mirror's Edge brand. Word-of-mouth is one of the most popular ways in which gamers communicate. A gamer's most trusted source of information regarding the purchase of a new title is other gamers' opinions. They will reach out not only to local friends, but also through online forums and through posing questions to gaming communities online. Mirror's Edge should uncover what these communities said about the 2008 release and focus on what consumers liked and what stood out to consumers in order to market the upcoming release. Thus far, Mirror's Edge has done a great job listening to feedback about the original *Mirror's Edge* game. For instance, the developers opted to remove the player's ability to use guns entirely from the upcoming release because many fans complained that weapons completely destroyed the pacing of the original game. Comments regarding this change online have been exceptionally positive, which illustrates how influential users' opinions can be and how effective simply listening to complaints can be at generating newer and better content. In Dr. Petouhoff's Salesforce online video series, she discusses how many customer service representatives wished that CEOs would simply listen to customer service calls and that doing so can break the divide between departments at organizations and make the product development cycle run much more smoothly and efficiently. Customers present some of the best insights for improvement, so by monitoring these online forums and various topics generated online related to Mirror's Edge, the franchise only stands to gain and grow.

Another strength of Mirror's Edge's online branding efforts in relation to paying attention to consumers and the influence they have in affecting sales is that they reply directly to comments on their social media channels, including complaints. These comments are very prompt, courteous, appropriate, and good-natured. However, Mirror's Edge has also shown weakness in this area. The brand often times appears robotic and has a

somewhat copy-paste feel to some of their responses. Furthermore, the brand's pages continuously post the same ten-second in-game footage, which has aggravated some fans online. Fans have expressed that they would rather see no content than old content and that simply replying to their complaints with cookie-cutter responses is not going to cut it. In some ways, it is almost as though the community has caught on to the trick that the brand has been playing through its posting strategies and is turning against the brand for this reason. Mirror's Edge would be wise to reconsider its branding strategy online or it stands the risk of losing a lot of fans leading up to the release of *Catalyst*, which – to the dismay of many fans – has recently been delayed till March. The following comment on a recent post illustrates the frustration some of the game's fans are experiencing and is one of the most liked and responded to comments on the brand's Facebook page:



For these reasons, Mirror's Edge needs to find ways in which it can actively and successfully engage with its consumers through a variety of channels. Sharing fan art is one very effective strategy it has undertaken because it shows that the brand values its fans and because it generates positive word-of-mouth between fans about the franchise. This engagement should be measured and likes, shares, and comments should be compared between different styles of online posts to uncover what works best and what is most effective. The best way, however, to track effectiveness of engagement with the community is by tracking how many preorders are placed immediately following social media posts. The posts that generate the most traffic toward an actual purchase of the game are posts that should be emulated and, in some way, repeated and improved upon. By paying attention to the influence fans possess online and acting directly in response to concerns raised by these fans, Mirror's Edge can generate interest or regain interest in the upcoming release.