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Google Stadia

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1 Introduction

Stadia is a new gaming platform by Google which is presented as the next evolution of console gaming. The video gaming industry as it stands consists of several integral parts (as of now) one of which is the gaming console (Fig. 1). The gaming console is the hardware necessary to experience video games. It can be expensive, hard to maintain and become irrelevant after several years of use (which requires purchasing a new console with new hardware).

Figure 1: Gaming Consoles

Stadia tries to eliminate the console by offering video gaming as a subscription service like streaming services (Hulu, Netflix, etc...). with internet speed on the rise with the cloud computing industry taking shape, the possibility of removing the need of specialized hardware for gaming is increasing. In this paper, we take a closer look on Stadia, what it does right, what is does wrong and what can it do to achieve its goals.

2 Type of Product

Stadia can be classified as an augmented service as the main purchasable is a subscription-based service that can't be access without a sufficiently high internet speed connection (a minimum of 10Mbps according to their website [9]) so it can't be a product as a product must be tangible and can be consumed at will without a special requirement(internet connection).

Bandwidth, data usage, and stream quality

Bandwidth requirements

An internet connection speed of **10 megabits per second (Mbps) or greater** is the minimum recommended to use Stadia. A slower network speed can cause issues while playing games on Stadia.

To play in 4K resolution, you'll need an active Stadia Pro subscription, a network speed of **35 Mbps or greater**, a 4K TV with Chromecast Ultra, or a Windows computer or Chromebook with VP9 hardware decoding and a 4K monitor.

Figure 2: Screen Capture Of Internet Requirement

As for the augmented part, Stadia subscriptions include (optional) products to use with the service such as the stadia controller.

Figure 3: Google Stadia Controller

In conclusion, google stadia is a service with optional products to enhance the experience.

3   Marketing Mix (4Ps)

In this section, we will discuss the `4Ps Marketing Mix` of our research product *(Google Stadia)*. We will discuss the product definition, its price analysis, its place and promotion. This helps us further understand the marketing setup of this new product and develop a common understand of how it begins and whether it will stand and succeed.

Figure 4: 4Ps Marketing Mix Diagram

3.1   Product

As mentioned before, *Google Stadia* is a cloud streaming service for video games, where gamers can stream video games, running on cloud systems, without having to buy the game console themselves. Stadia offers a very cheap way of playing videos games for gamers, who can't afford buying a game console or an expensive gaming rig.

To use Stadia service, the user just need a device with *Google Chrome* or any Stadia-supported application on his/her personal computer or mobile phone and a reliable internet connection, in addition to the monthly subscription.

Stadia is not the first project of its kind. We have *Nvidia Geforce Now* and *Microsoft Project XCloud*. However, Stadia offers seamless $4K$ video

game streaming based on *Youtube* streaming service, which is a big bonus over other streaming services.

3.2   Price

Stadia is subscription-based service, where the users pay a monthly fee, in order to use the service. There are two levels of membership: *Stadia Pro*, which is paid for, and *plain Stadia*, a free access plan.

Stadia Pro offers the user a seamless HDR $4K$ gaming experience, with a good library of video games. However, the user still has to purchase most of the video games on top of it. Stadia Pro membership costs 8.99 GBP per month in the UK, \$9.99 USD per month in the US. New subscribers can get a free one-month trial of Pro membership.

The alternative plan is *plain Stadia* (a.k.a. Stadia Base). In this plan, users must purchase any required video game themselves. Also, the streaming quality is limited to $1080p$. This comes with an advantage that user doesn't have to pay any monthly fee.

3.3   Place

Since Stadia is an online cloud streaming platform, it's available worldwide. It's unavailable only in *Hawaii* and *Guam*. However, such service can be unpopular in countries, where internet connectivity is limited, such as African countries.

3.4   Promotion

`Google` follows an online promotion campaign, through advertisement on online platforms such as *Youtube*. Most of the details of the platform development can be found at their developers website [1]. Open source contribution to the project is also applicable.

The service also provides a one-month free trial for Pro membership to encourage different users to use their platform. `Google` is also enhancing the service by including more video games and improving the streaming performance.

4 SWOT Analysis

4.1 Introduction

SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, SWOT Analysis helps you define what your business is better at and what it is lacking from.

By analysing and studying your business you will run into some questions like:

what do you have?

what do you miss?

what is open for you?

what may harm your business in the future?

all these questions can be answered by providing a suitable SWOT Analysis of your business.

4.2 Strengths

- **Gaming Experience:** Google Stadia offers a very well-established gaming stream for their users, no delay or frame-drop, and the game controller is immediately reflected.

- **Google Image:** Google itself is the most clicked (visited) search-engine in the world this gives Stadia a great advantage since it's related to Google; on the contrary, companies like Tencent and Walmart will strugle more in marketing their competening product (service).

- **Content Creators:** nowadays we have a large number of YouTubers (content creators), who stream their games and upload it on their channels, since YouTube is one of Google's corporations Google Stadia easily offers full integration with YouTube for content, so no license are required, and it becomes easily to upload your content.

4.3 Weaknesses

- **Fiber:** most of the world has turned their cables from TCP to Fiber however, some countries are still using old cable technologies, unfortunately Google Stadia requires the usage of Fiber cables, not only fast internet connection with $20mbs$, but also having Fiber cables.

- **Online Gaming:** even though Stadia offers a very good experience when playing, but sometimes the game controller may not be reflected, and the game may not respond, in offline games this is not a big issue, as you can respawn to your last checkpoint, but in online gaming this issue may but Stadia out of business.

- **Pricing:** as explained before, Stadia requires monthly fee and games are purchased separately, this demerit affect gamers mostly, many people are purchasing gaming consoles (PS, XBOX) or even upgrading their PC for better gaming experience, and then purchase video games separately, so without a price plan for video games, Stadia is not offering them so much.

4.4 Opportunities

- **Unique:** Google Stadia's strengths majorly lies in the uniqueness of their service, Cloud Gaming business is a brand new service not so many companies are competening in this area yet.

- **Leadership:** Stadia is the first of its kind, no major competitors yet, so they can add more features and obtain license for them before any other company does.

- **Gaming:** in total, there were an estimated 2.7 billion gamers across the globe in 2020, this creates a major opportunity for companies like Stadia.

- **Evolution:** as time goes by video games are evolving, and to have the best gaming experience you need to purchase the most recent gaming console, these consoles cost a lot, Stadia here appears to be a better solution for providing the same (sometimes better) gaming experience without the need of purchasing newer gaming consoles, so in order to acheive that they need to be always updated with the best technology.

4.5 Threats

- **Competitors:** the arising of other companies like Amazon and Microsoft, these major companies will have to compete against Stadia oneday, and as huge as they are they will also come up with a huge marketing plan, and even better promoiton and pricing plans to overcome Stadia.

- **Gaming Consoles:** PS, XBOX and other companies can have similar approach as google Stadia, allowing the user to play online without the need of purchasing new gaming consoles, and overcome the problems google Stadia has regarding online gameing.

5 Pricing Strategy

6 Promotion Strategy

Stadia Follows Promotion strategy to attract more users/gamer in many different ways, like many advertisements and hot offers. It also tries to attract developers to maintain its technology to be up to date and provide its service with everything a user needs. we will discuss its tools in the following subsections.

6.1 Advertisements

As google owns YouTube and Stadia streaming service based on it, so youtube is a good platform to advertise on it. Google sponsors many youtubers and companies for advertisements(like `IGN` company). They also has a user-friendly website to show their games and offered service, And tries to offer the largest possible library of modern video games.

6.2 Free Trials

Google stadia offers two months free trials for new/ existing expired subscriptions to encourage new gamers to use it. They Also offers three months free trial for *chromecast* owners. This allows a wide range of gamers and potential users to use Stadia service, which, in return, increases the number of users adopting the service and continuously using it.

6.3 Open Source Projects

Their developer website has technical content, There exists some open source project, which can be an open source code for some of Stadia features, so developers can contribute on them. Thus, the number of users, interested in Stadia, can increase and attract users from software engineering background.
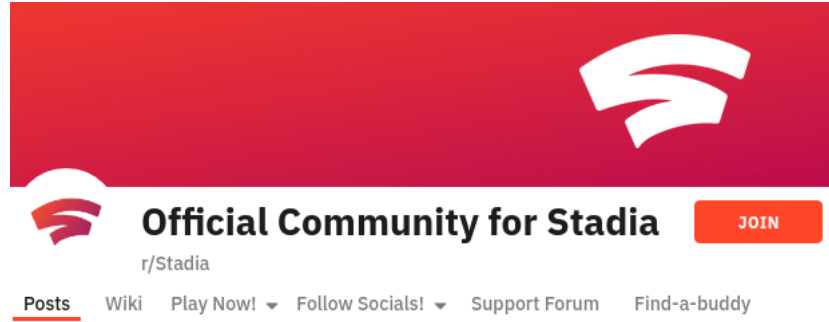
7   Recommendations of Researchers

Figure 5: Stadia Sub-Reddit Banner

To further understand users' demands and possible improvement, we have to explore a massive community for *Google Stadia* users and enthusiasts. This community is *Stadia sub-reddit* [3], which is the official community for Stadia users.

Aside from our analysis, we checked some recommendations and reported bugs from Stadia users. This information helps us to develop a list recommendations and improvements for Stadia service, in order to improve the overall marketing process.

Our recommendations focus on both promotion campaign and technical improvements, that can positively affect the market share of Google Stadia. We target the competition with game consoles, like *PlayStation* and *XBox*, and other cloud streaming services, like *Nvidia Geforce Now* and *Microsoft Project XCloud*.

Our recommendation list can be summarized as follows:

- Stadia have to consider in-game promotions, as most gamers' opinions heavily rely on in-game recommendations. For example, *Nvidia Geforce series* has been dominating the PC gaming market for years, due to in-game recommendations and the technologies, by which Nvidia enhances video games.

- Expanding the game library is a crucial thing for any gaming platform to flourish. Stadia has to expand its game library to include a wide range of video games from `AAA` games to `indies`.

- Stadia is only available through a limited number of platforms that support *Google Chrome* or *Chrome OS*. This can be a drawback for some users that don't have a compatible device. So, Stadia has to expand its compatibility to include a wide range of devices and applications, in order to increase the number of potential users.

- Technical issues can form a negative impression among users and enthusiasts and Stadia suffers from some issues during streaming and game rendering, especially for users with limited internet bandwidth. So, Google has to optimize its service for this type of users.

- As Google isn't a video game producer or publisher, it has cooperate with specialized video game publishers, like *Blizzard Entertainment* and *Bethesda Softworks*, in order to promote their platform and even have some exclusives on their own. This can positively affect their market share and attract more users to their platform.

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