VIDEO GAMES AND THE SHIFT TO A MIRCOTRANSACTION BASED MONETIZATION SYSTEM

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Audience Justification Statement

AUDIENCE:

My audience that I am going to be speaking to in this essay is my older brother, David Smith.

WHY:

I grew up playing video games with my brother and we have both become gamers as we have grown up and have played different games. However, we have both experienced this shift in the industry. I already know that he is going to be familiar with a lot of the different terms and ideas that I am presenting. He himself cannot do a whole lot within the industry to change anything but we can have a meaningful discussion about this shift in monetization and how that has influenced the games and communities that he is in. I think that he already has a pretty set idea and opinion on this topic so if I can, I would like to inform him on a more academic level and either reinforce his opinion or change it with the new facts provided. I am also hoping that by sharing my findings with him we can have a meaningful discussion about this shift, and I can grow closer with him as a brother.   
HOW:

My brother has always been the smartest one in my family, so I am going to use logos to speak with him as I have experienced that his brain responds better to that. I am also going to use pathos to have him connect with the communities that have been influenced by this and to have him reflect on his own experience when it comes to microtransactions and a live service game model. I am going to use these two to then boost my ethos with him and show him that I have done some research into this topic and can have a conversation with him about it.

Essay:

ANNOTATED REFERENCES

Zendle, D., Meyer, R., & Ballou, N. (2020). The changing face of desktop video game monetisation: An exploration of exposure to loot boxes, pay to win, and cosmetic microtransactions in the most-played Steam games of 2010-2019.*PLoS One, 15*(5)

SUMMARY:

The main point of this source is that between the years of 2010 and 2019, the games played on Steam increasingly used loot boxes and microtransactions compared to the one-time purchase of a product. The researchers developed a system that calculated the average amount of exposure a player had to cosmetic microtransactions, pay to win microtransaction and loot boxes rose significantly in some cases. They looked at public player counts and calculated the exposure percentage for each of these categories. Their takeaway was that pay to win microtransactions rose slightly until 2015 then fell to low levels of exposure in 2019. Compared to cosmetic microtransactions and loot boxes, which jumped to over 70% of gamers being exposed to these types of monetization.

HOW WILL I USE THIS SOURCE IN MY ESSAY:   
 This is a good data driven source that shows that the average gamer on steam experienced a significant amount more cosmetic microtransactions and loot boxes in 2019 than in 2010. This shows that shift that I was talking about in my research proposal. I am going to use this to talk about how games started to implement this and just how they tried to do so. I am also going to infer that the main reason why pay-to-win microtransactions were not very popular and ended up almost becoming nonexistent is because they were not popular with certain communities that were being exposed to them, and they were instead replaced with cosmetic microtransactions and loot boxes.   
SIMILARITIES:

This paper does not have a whole lot of similarities to any of my other sources because it is SO data driven and is more about the change rather than the effects. The other sources that I am planning on using look more into the mental health side of this change and the pros and cons of this. As well as the predatory aspects of this type of monetization. Though they do all share an overarching message that video game monetization has changed.   
DIFFERENCES:

This article mostly talks about exposure rather than any of the consequences. Which is still helpful because YES it does show that there was a shift and a change in games over the 2010s. One thing that is starkly different is that this paper does not really take a stance or anything, it just wants to give you the facts and nothing else really, which for the sake of this paper can be a good thing because I can then use that to show that correlation and how the community affects it.   
STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES:

I have already touched on this, but I think that this paper is going to be such a strong source to have for my paper because it talks about the shift in a much more data-based way. It’s strong for showing that growth for Steam Desktop gamers but does not do a really good job of showing the WHOLE market. That and it’s only the most popular games of each of those years rather than some of the smaller less popular games. Which for the sake of the paper is not a bad thing. I think that focusing on popular games is the best way to go, but I think that if I can I want to find another source that highlights a different audience and can show a broader range of gamers, rather than just Steam Desktop gamers of the most popular games.

APPEALS:

This paper relies heavily on logos, using statistics and data to show what they were looking for and how they found it. By doing so, this also adds ethos of the paper showing that they know what they are talking about, and they can back it up. However, this paper does not have a whole lot of pathos in it. It struggles to connect to that human emotion and use that for an argument. Which is alright because I can use the other sources that I have to cover that.

AUDIENCE JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT:

I want the main audience of my essay to be high level executives at a game development company. I want to use this paper to show them how they might be able to take the data and the lessons from each of my points and use that to be able to transition their games and products into this more microtransaction and loot-box based system. I am going to use this source to show that there are numbers for this and that other popular games have done this in the past decade or so and that the market is already used to this type of system. I am going to be formal, use professional language, and industry terms to show that I not only know what I am talking about, but that I should be taken seriously in the matter.

Petrovskaya, E., & Zendle, D. (2022). Predatory Monetisation? A Categorisation of Unfair, Misleading and Aggressive Monetisation Techniques in Digital Games from the Player Perspective: JBE.*Journal of Business Ethics, 181*(4), 1065-1081.

SUMMARY:

The main point of this source is that there is range of monetization techniques that player communities view as more problematic and harmful to their experience. This source goes into depth about regulation and policymaking surrounding video game monetization. The source talks about how the player side of this discussion is often left out in these discussions.

HOW I AM GOING TO USE THIS IN MY ARTICLE:

I am going to use this source in my essay to enhance the point I am making that players and communities are a huge part of the story when it comes to video game monetization. I will use this source to show that there has not been a whole lot of player feedback when it comes to these decisions regarding policy or other types of regulations. This source also talks about how most of the regulation surrounding video games has mainly focused on loot boxes and that there is more research that needs to be done surrounding other types of monetization. I am going to use this source to show that there have been some legal things surrounding the shift to a live service and microtransaction based video games but that players are really the focus when it comes to this shift.

Ritzki, N. M., Mukharil, A., & Hermawan, Y. A. (2019). Relationship between development and quality of video games.*Journal of Physics: Conference Series, 1402*(6)

SUMMARY:

HOW I AM GOING TO USE THIS IN MY ARTICLE:

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