Accessibility in Video Games: A Humanistic Approach

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Introduction

In 2012, there were 33 million disabled gamers out there, and numerous more today! Game developers need to take that into account when they are developing a game. This poster will be about two case studies the researcher did at Full Sail University as well as research the researchers gathered through the months here. The research will also include what current developers and hardware manufacturers are doing to make games more accessible for all. The poster will be a resource for game developers to see what type of documentation as well as to give another reason to make their games more accessible.

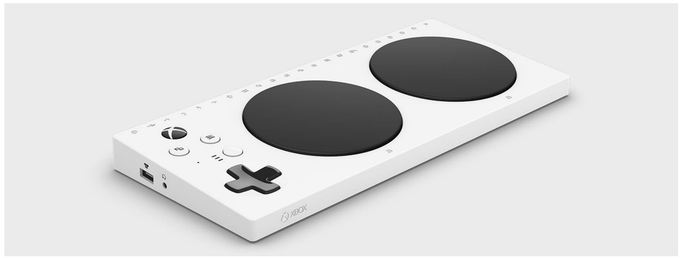

Figure 1.1

Research

- These case studies were questionnaire's that the researcher did to help the collect data. The two participants had a disability that effected their body. These were taken in the month of June 2018.
- Thomas Westin, a member of the IGDA accessibility club, that the researcher contacted that had three reasons why the developers do make their games accessible and two reasons why not the developers do not.
  - Reasons why
    - No game developer has ever said no to making their game accessible
    - Early planning by the developer
  - Reasons why not
    - Current development time of that game
    - Money

What game developers can do to make games more accessible?

- Planning stage
  - *Inclusification* – an PDF of accessibility options that the Ablegamers charity put together to help developers make their games more accessible
  - IGDA White Paper – an PDF by the IGDA of developers guidelines that they can do to make it more accessible
- Case studies
  - Customizable controls on games
  - Anna said that the *Uncharted* series in particular, a gamer reached out and said that they could not do the quick time events since then Naughty Dog has put an option in every one of their games since then.
  - Peter also quoted *Uncharted* for s different reason though, he quoted it for the lock on aim system where when an enemy is in range, the game will lock on to the enemy.

Case Studies

- Annapurna Saleem
  - Disability: Osteoporosis, major deficiency in muscle and motor coordination
  - What games does she play: all types of genres
  - Easiest games to play: 90's retro style
  - Why she plays games: to escape what she's physically not able to do and feel as if she is the character
  - Any hard controls to do in game: crouching
  - Any recommendations that she has for the developers: customizable controls for games
- Peter Lohr
  - Disability: Cerebral Palsy
  - What games does he play: sports
  - Easiest games to play: sports (Madden particularly) because it requires not a lot of button presses
  - Why he play games: to become the player
  - Any hard thing to do in game: control the camera and lock on to enemies
  - Any recommendations that he has for the developers: better method to control the camera and a player's reaction time measurement, to give each player an equal advantage

What are the game developers and console manufacturers are doing currently?

- Console
  - Both PS4 and Xbox have accessibility features on their systems (figure 1.2)
  - Xbox released an accessible controller (Figure 1.1)
- PC
  - Most games have customizable controls or use a client like Steam where the controls are customizable

Conclusion

By giving the developers two real life case studies, the researcher's hope was to convey both developers and hardware manufacturers are slowly getting to think about the disabled community, not as a niche but as a target audience. Customizable controls are here on both PC and consoles, but holding two buttons at once or crouching are still an issue. The developers have various resources at their disposal. Companies like Naughty Dog are solving that, but it took a disabled gamer to contact them.

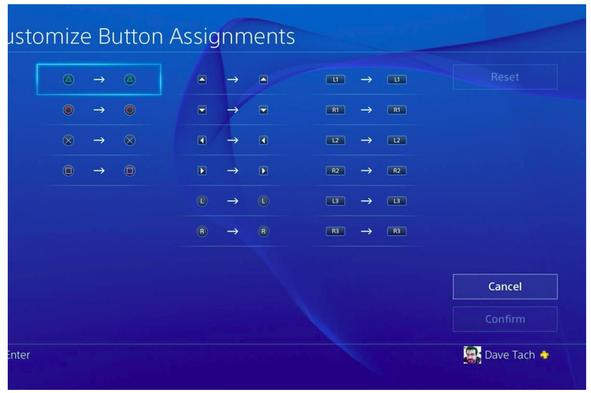

Figure 1.2

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