

Article 2: How UX helps Gamers

Just as the user experience is crucial to the navigability and success of any app or website trying to sell a product, in the past few years, user-generated data has become imperative to the game development process. Designers have realized that with a better comprehension of their players' psychology, they will almost always produce a more intuitive interface and, as a result, a more enjoyable game. Recently, games like *World of Warcraft*, *Persona 5*, and *Destiny 2* have been lauded for their attention to details, as players and games reviewers have noticed improvements in the overall aesthetic, menu formatting, and intelligent interactions in the newer versions. These enhancements keep players engaged with the animation while remaining in control of their anime's journey, resulting in a better 'user experience' and thus, a more loyal fanbase.

UX is a necessity to all design teams, even those with a “fixed vision.”

Despite the obvious relationship between UX and the playability of a game, many design teams are hesitant to include UX data in their process from the very beginning, as they feel it will hinder their vision or contradict the original intention of the game. Furthermore, some designers think of UX as “just another opinion,” devoid of informed criticism or too subjective to be useful to the interface development process.

However, while designers may have the knowledge and dedication necessary to turn their imagined game into a reality, they are often extremely invested in the individual mechanics and visuals of the game they have spent hours designing. As a result, they are more prone to miss the flaws or cognitive friction that may appear even in the final stages of design, due to overly-complex or confusing aspects of the interface or rules explanation. Designers also lack the distance necessary to view the game through the eyes of a novice or a casual player with different psychological instincts and motivations. Though a good UX can result in a game that challenges its players and builds a loyal fanbase, bad UX can impact the **fun** of the game as soon as the player opens the loading page.

UX specialists should be involved in the design loop from day one.

To avoid running into conflicts late into the development process, game designers should invest substantial time and energy UX specialization, or the careful analysis of player feedback throughout many different iterations of the game. UX specialists have acute knowledge of the psychological and neurological reactions players are having both on a moment-to-moment level on and a holistic scale, allowing them to synthesize this information and suggest improvements for a contextually better game in the end. Playtests, onboarding reviews, and full playthroughs should be held throughout the three core stages of the design process, from Concept and Ideation to Design and Pre-Production Phase to Production, when usability should be at its highest standard [2].

By calling on UX experts to assist with game development, designers can ensure that they are producing the most learnable, playable, and ultimately emotionally satisfying game, without sacrificing too many of the design components or intricate interface qualities that they worked hard to create. With the help of an objective UX assessment, designers can roll out a top-quality, critically well-received game that both they and the players enjoy.

Sources:

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[2]

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