



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

BA COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

GAME THEORY & DESIGN

The Player's Expectations: What Players Want



Richard Rouse III: The Player's Expectations (Part 1)

- Why do players play games?
- What do players want?





GAME THEORY & DESIGN

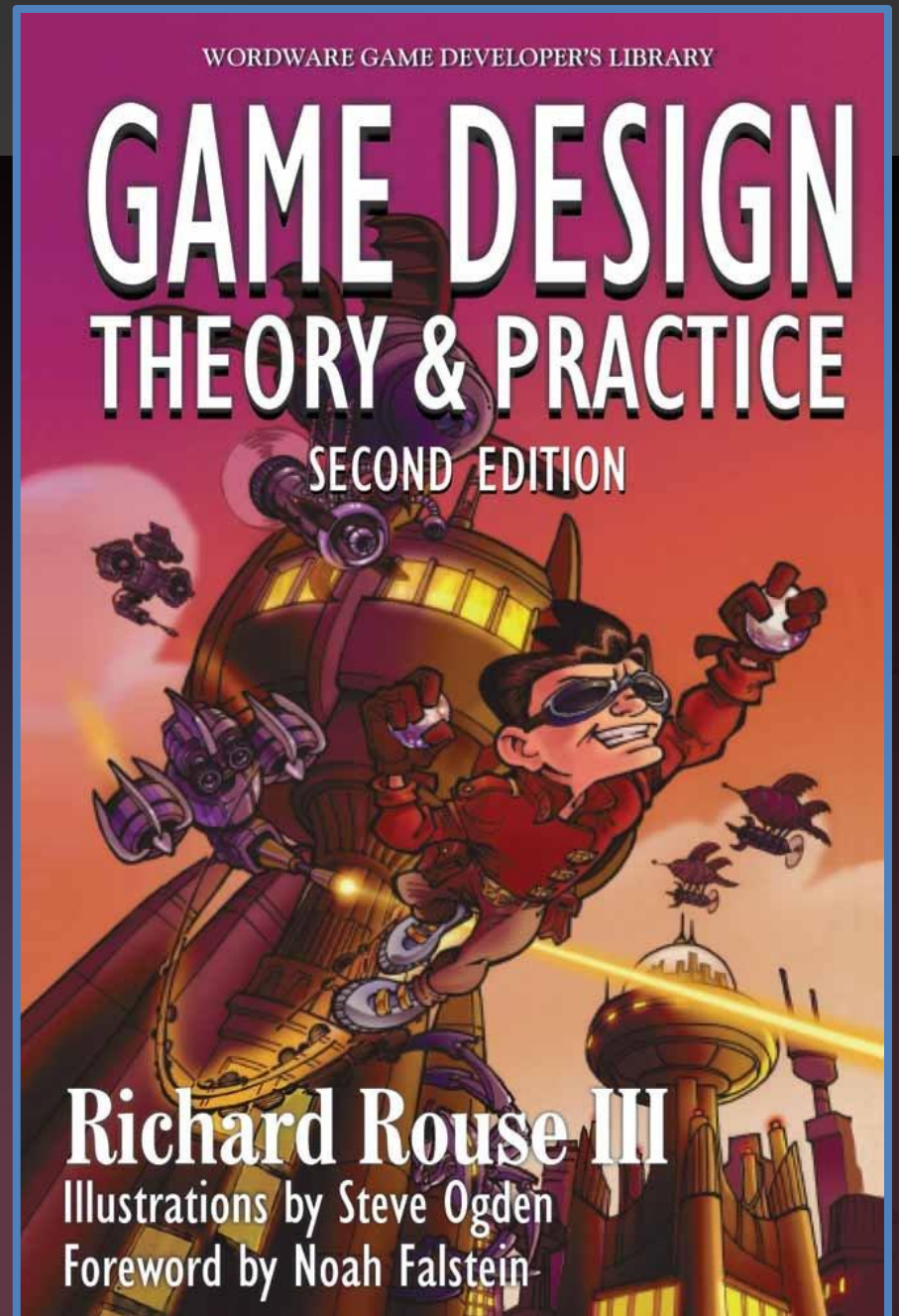
The Player's Expectations: What Players Want

Further reading:

The Player's Expectations

Richard Rouse III, Game Design Theory & Practice

(Available in **Y Fforwm Library**, SA1)





The Player's Expectations: Why Do Players Play Games?



normal job in
crazy ass world.

fixed position
- talking to
npc's





Why Do Players Play Games?

Video game designers spend a lot of time concerning themselves with **what players are looking for**.

They must have the ability to judge whether something is fun for themselves while also possessing an ability to **listen to opinions given by others**.





Why Do Players Play Games?

“Gamers generally do not want to buy a game that is only a clone of another game, a “new” game that offers old ideas and brings nothing original to the table.

Nevertheless, successful games can be useful, not for cloning, but for analysis.”

(Rouse 2005:2)



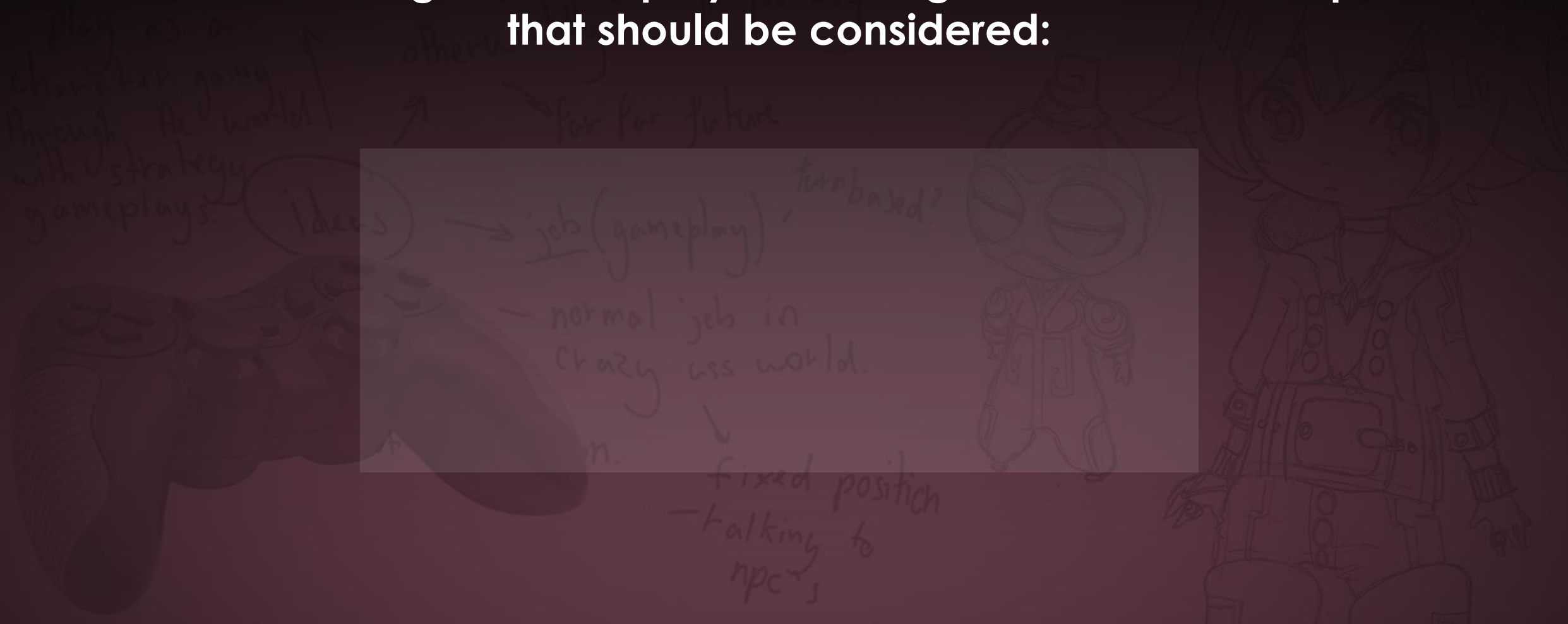
Why Do Players Play Games?

*“As game designers, we can look at the games that have come out previously, that we have enjoyed in years past, and try to determine a set of directives that explain **what compelled us to try those games** in the first place, and **why they held our interest** once we started playing them.”*

(Rouse 2005:2)



When considering what are players looking for, this is the first question that should be considered:





When considering what are players looking for, this is the first question that should be considered:

Why do players
play games?



Why Do Players Play Games?

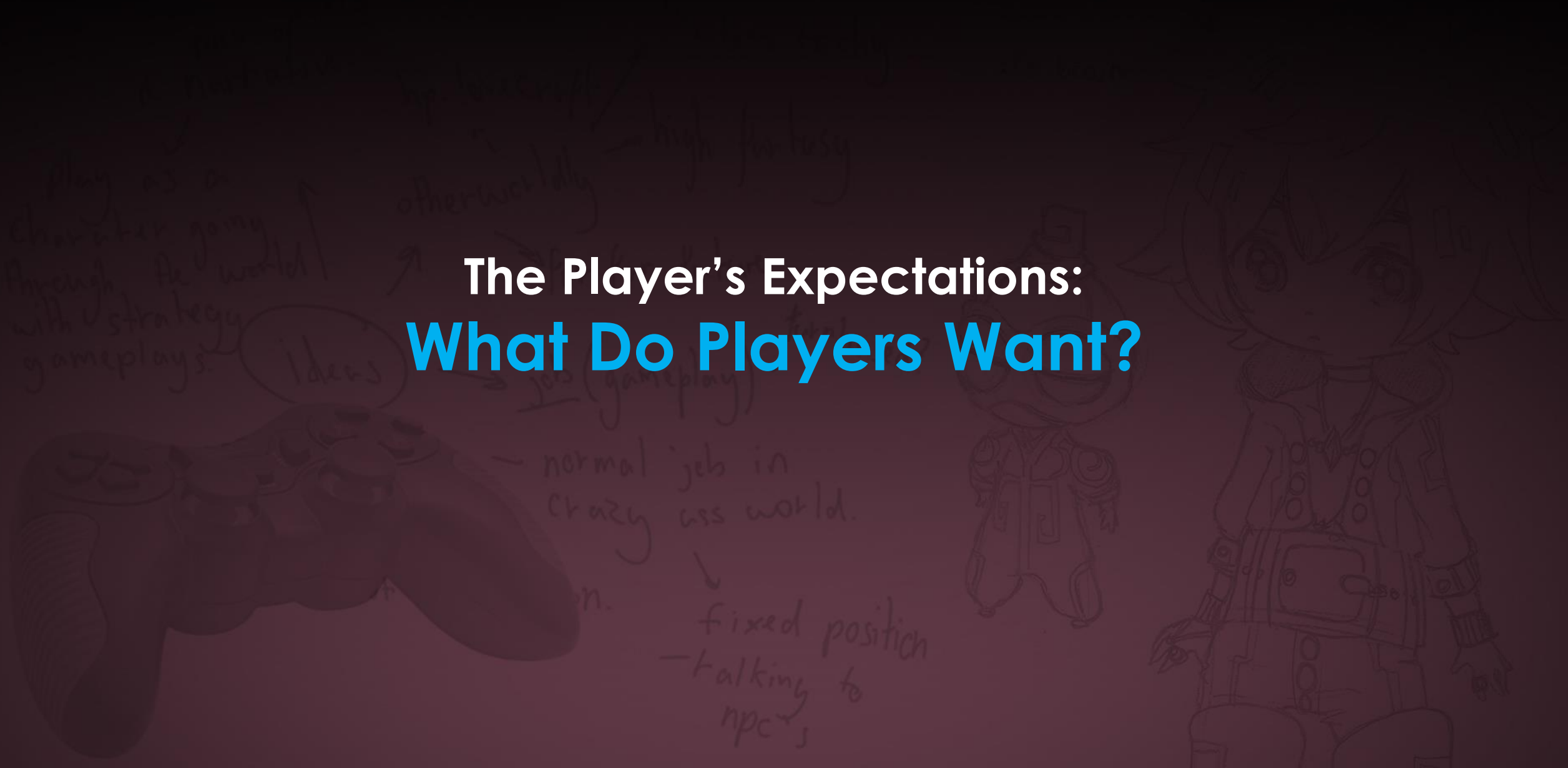
*“By **understanding** what is attractive about games that other media do not offer we can try to emphasise the differences that separate our art form from others.*

*To be successful, our games need to **take these differences and play them up**, exploiting them to make the best gameplay experience possible.”*

(Rouse 2005:2)



The Player's Expectations: What Do Players Want?





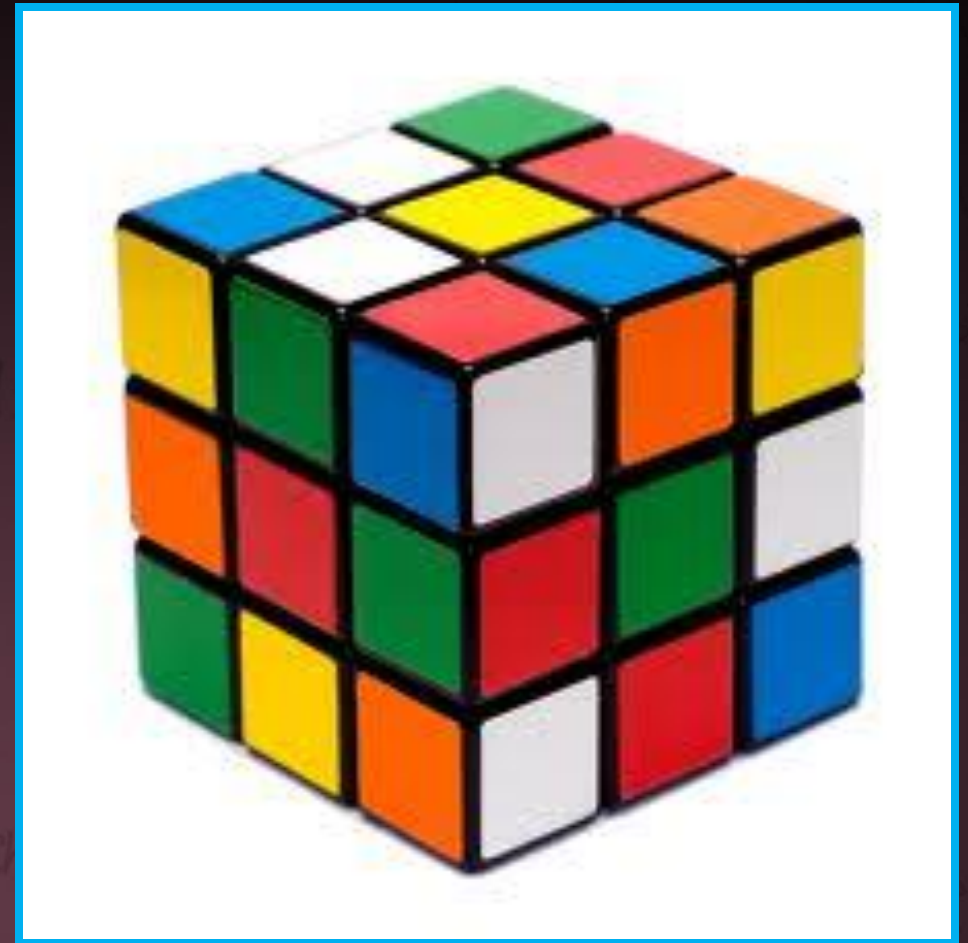
The Player's Expectations: What Do Players Want?

Players Want A Challenge



Challenge is one of the main motivations for playing single-player games.

Games force players to think actively and try out various solutions to problems they may encounter.





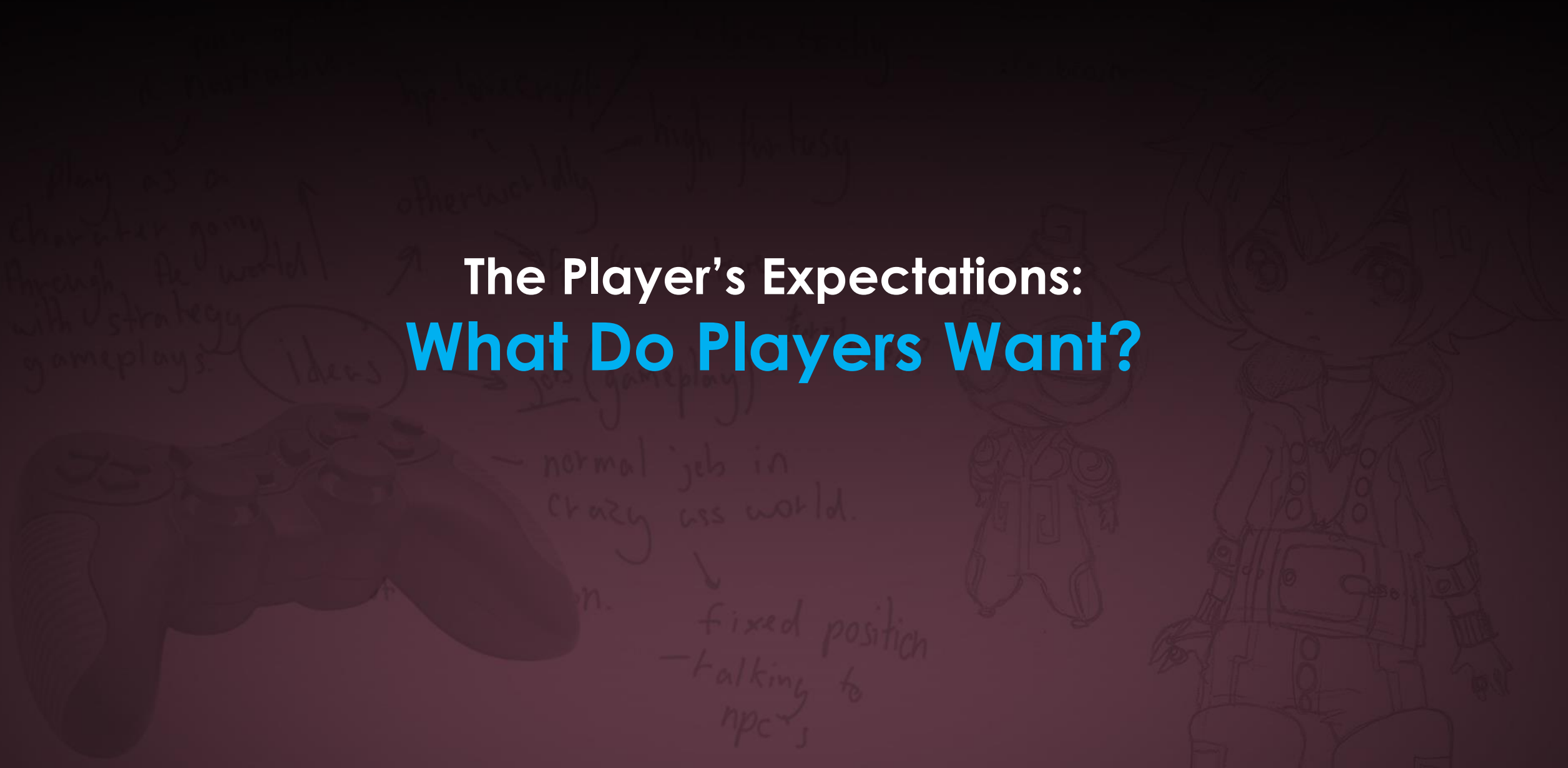
The Player's Expectations: What Players Want

Challenging games can be learning experiences and **players will learn from them, even if the learning is only within the context of the game.**





The Player's Expectations: What Do Players Want?





The Player's Expectations: What Do Players Want?

Players Want to Socialize



There are many different forms of multiplayer gaming, from **first-person-shooter** deathmatches to persistent world **role-playing games** such as *World of Warcraft*.

‘Casual gaming’ has also expanded social activity in gaming with family-orientated products on consoles such as Nintendo’s Wii as well as the explosion of social networking games in the 2010s.





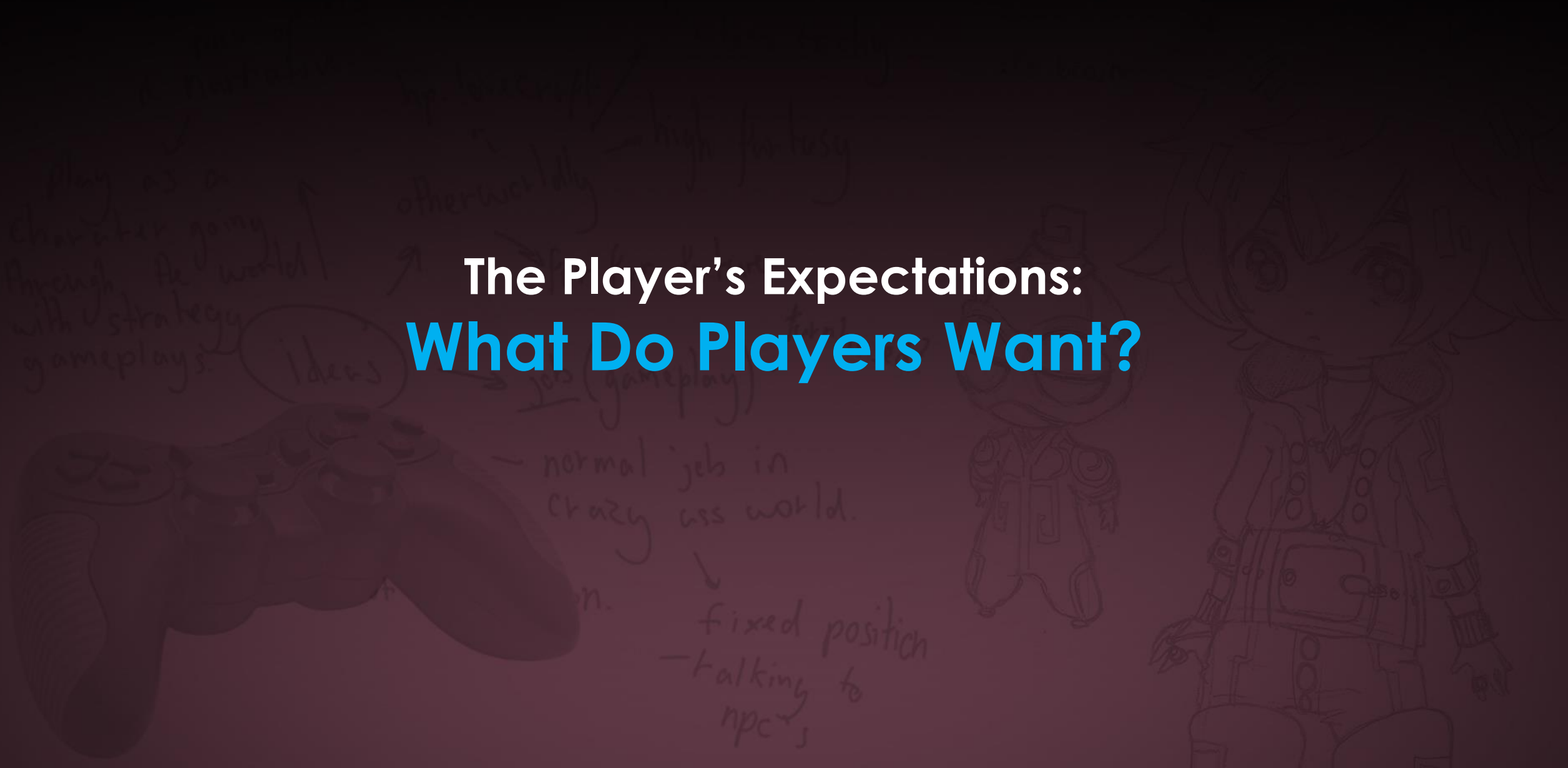
Despite being played by people in different parts of the world players still chat to each other via basic chat functionality or headsets.

An additional advantage of multiplayer gaming is that **human players are less predictable** than AI and this has been suggested as one of the most appealing aspects of multiplayer games.





The Player's Expectations: What Do Players Want?





The Player's Expectations: What Do Players Want?

**Players Want a Dynamic
Solitary Experience**



Some players want to social experience but others seek something dynamic that they can engage in by themselves.



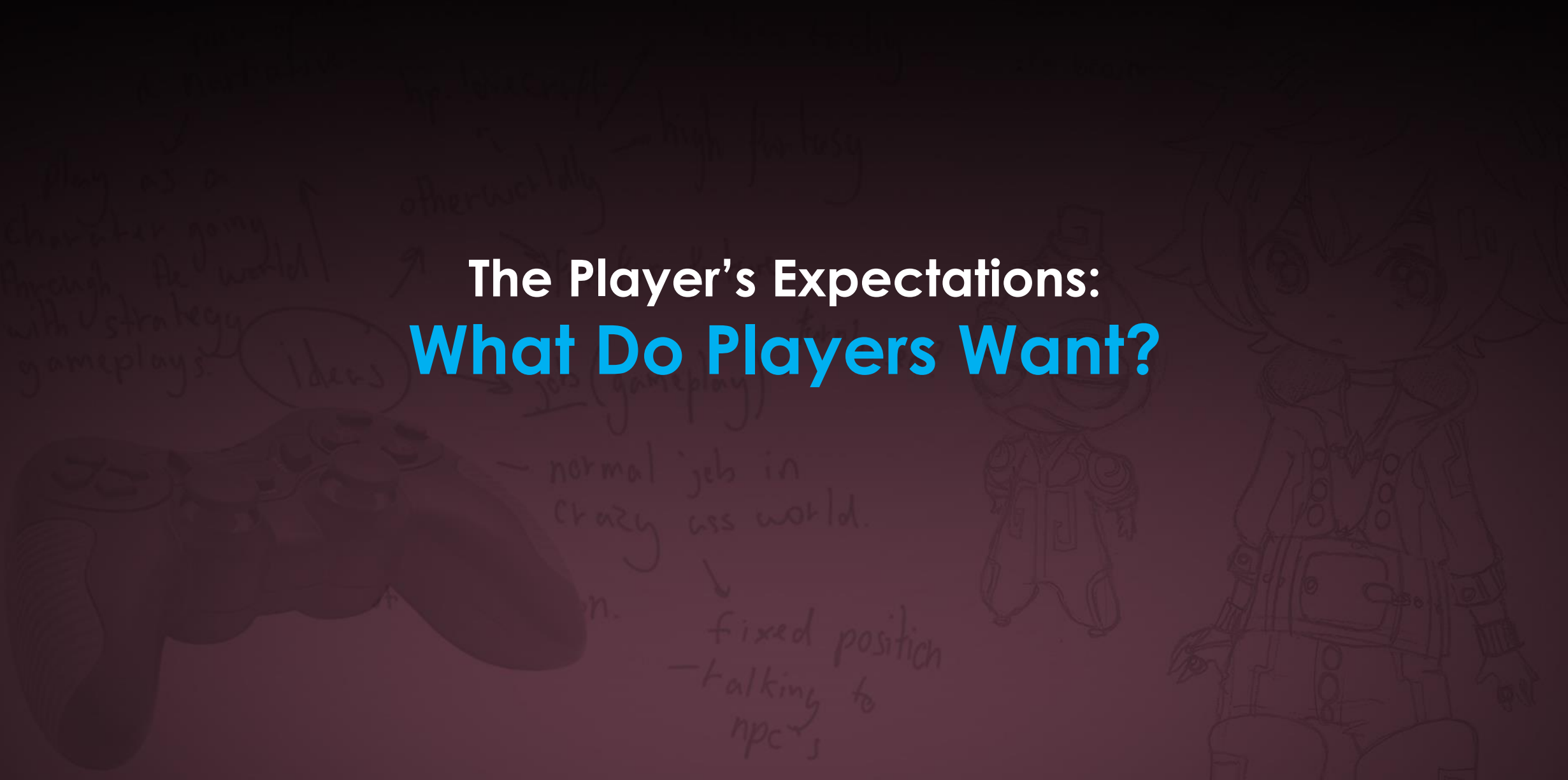


Games are different from other solitary experiences such as reading books or watching movies because they provide a form of **interaction**.





The Player's Expectations: What Do Players Want?





The Player's Expectations: What Do Players Want?

Players Want Bragging Rights



Players Want Bragging Rights

HIGH SCORES

RANK	SCORE	NAME
1ST	10000	BOB
2ND	10000	JNC
3RD	10000	SKT
4TH	10000	TBS
5TH	10000	MNM
6TH	10000	WKJ
7TH	10000	SVD
8TH	10000	WHO
9TH	10000	TRN
10TH	10000	JNC



CREDIT 0

Players play games to win respect, particularly in **shared experiences** and **multiplayer** gaming.

Even in single-player games, players will talk about how good they are at a particular game.



Offering incentives for players to brag about their achievements can significantly boost replay value.

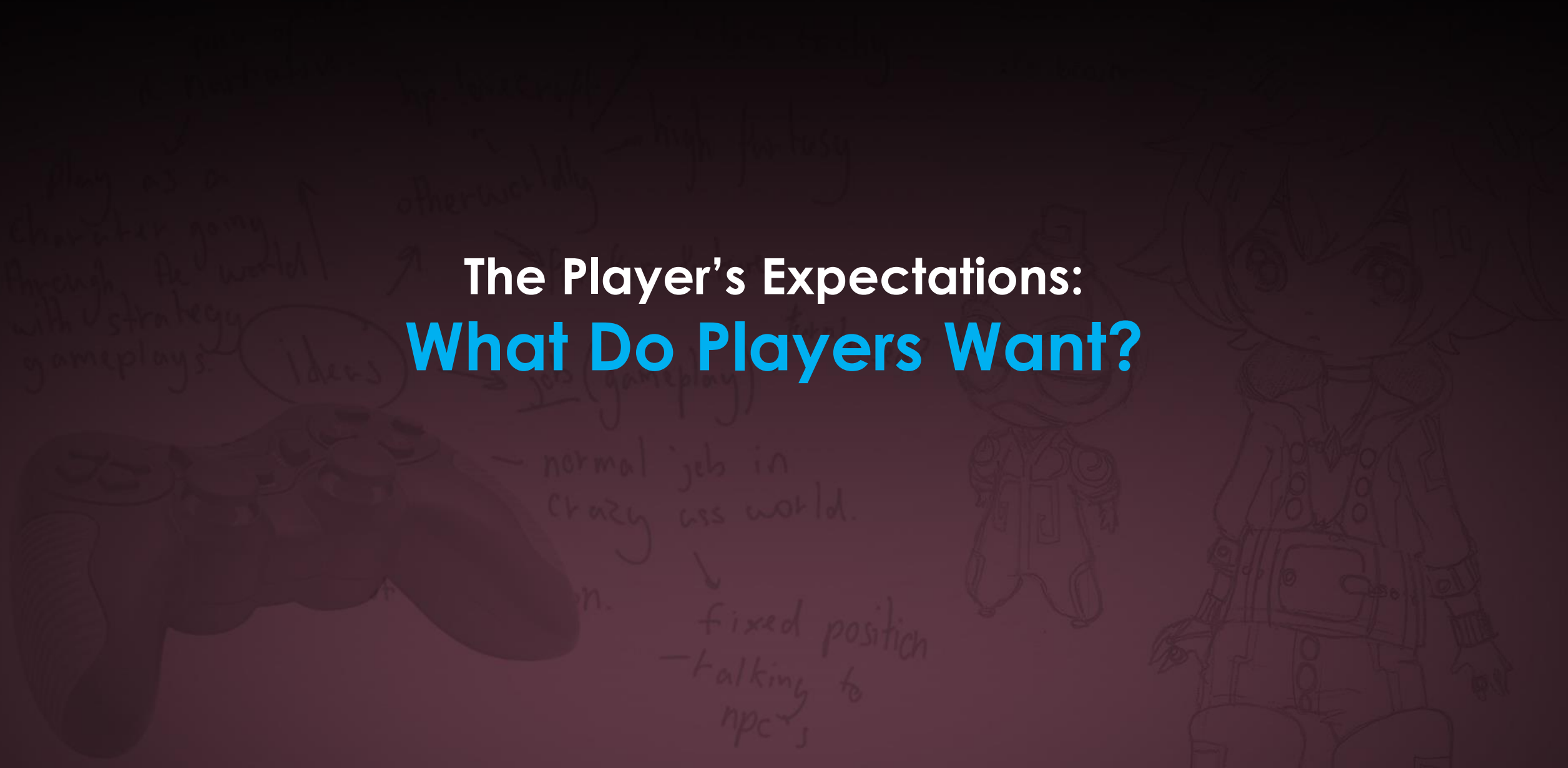
- High Scores
- Leaderboards
- Trophies

LEADERBOARD (LAST 30 DAYS)

	1. Unusual Bacon	G 65417	+3310
	2. The Little Moa	G 21500	+1740
	3. BrownMan	G 425515	+1695
	4. I RyanW I Ryan Wright	G 38322	+1635
	5. Greenskull Dan Hammill	G 88610	+1125



The Player's Expectations: What Do Players Want?





The Player's Expectations: **What Do Players Want?**

**Players Want an
Emotional Experience**



Players may be seeking some form of emotional payoff when they play a computer game.



The emotions that games can potentially evoke in players are **much stronger than in other media** where the experience is less immersive and less personally involving.



It may seem strange that players would play a game to feel horror, fear or despair but many people enjoy films, books and music with these same themes.



Emotional range is not something that has been explored as much as it could be in games.

“Game designers would be wise to concentrate on expanding the emotional experience in games beyond excitement and accomplishment, into more unexplored and uncharted emotional territory.”

(Rouse 2005:6)





The Player's Expectations: What Do Players Want?





The Player's Expectations: What Do Players Want?

Players Want to Explore



One of the main motivations for players of level-based games is the desire to explore new spaces and environments.



One of the main motivations for players of level-based games is the desire to explore new spaces and environments.

However, game exploration is **not** limited to spatial exploration.



The Player's Expectations: What Do Players Want?





GAME THEORY & DESIGN

The Player's Expectations: What Players Want

The Player's Expectations: What Do Players Want?

Players Want to Fantasize



People are attracted to storytelling art forms as **a form of escapism** – experiencing new worlds and activities different their daily life.

Games have the potential to be even more immersive than books or films because players can take an active role in a world of fantasy.

normal job in
crazy ass world.

fixed position
- talking to
npc's





People are attracted to storytelling art forms as **a form of escapism** – experiencing new worlds and activities different their daily life.

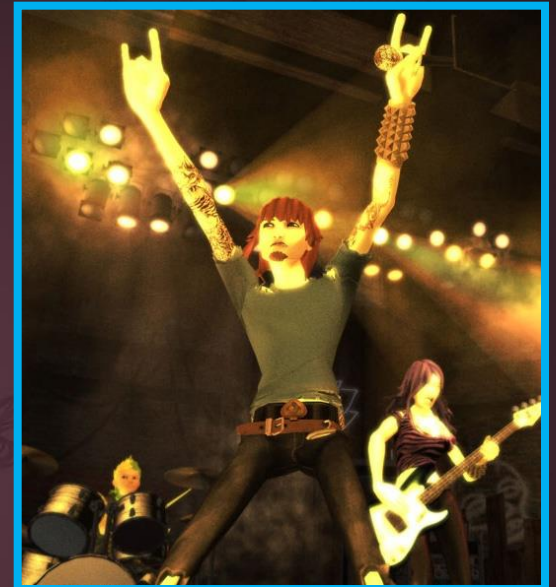
Games have the potential to be even more immersive than books or films because players can take an active role in a world of fantasy.

It is the **interactive element** of games that allow them to excel in providing a sense of escapism.



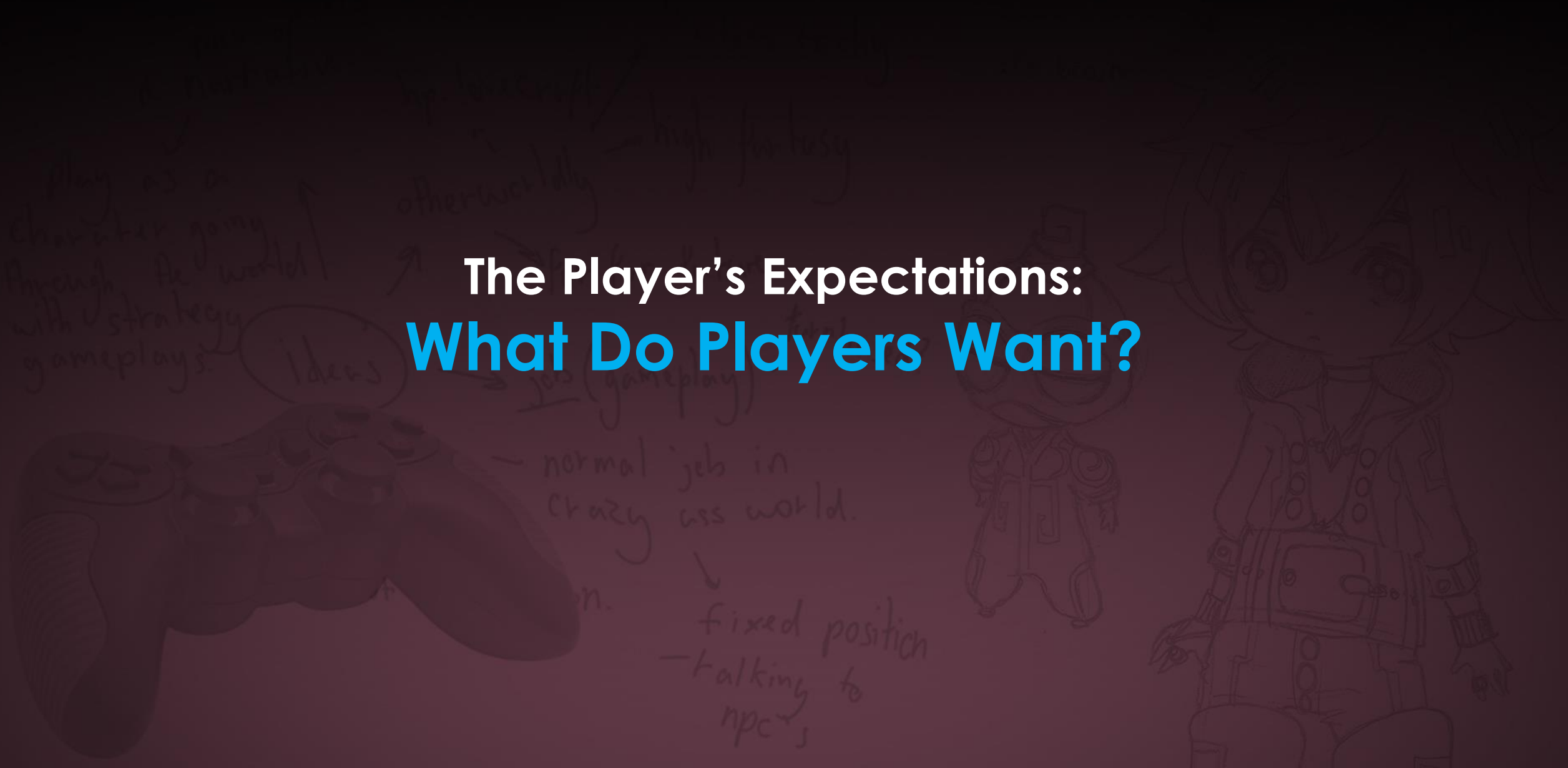
Other parts of fantasy fulfilment include enabling players to engage in socially unacceptable behaviour in safe environments, or making choices in historical games that provide alternative outcomes to our own reality.

Good computer games can **provide players with opportunities** to see the world through someone else's eyes. It is fun to role-play and it is fun to fantasize.





The Player's Expectations: What Do Players Want?





GAME THEORY & DESIGN

The Player's Expectations: What Players Want

The Player's Expectations: What Do Players Want?

Players Want to Interact



No other form of media allows the audience to be the **guiding force in the experience** they are having.

Game designers need to keep in mind the possibilities and experiences that games can provide when interaction is used **effectively**.





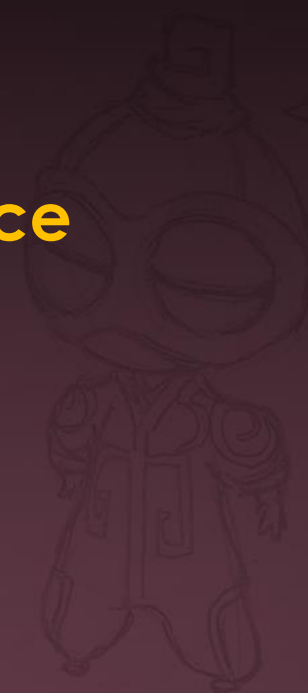
Engaging interactive experiences are incredibly effective at keeping a players attention.





What do players want?

- Players want a **challenge**
- Players want to **socialize**
- Players want a **dynamic solitary experience**
- Players want **bragging rights**
- Players want an **emotional experience**
- Players want to **explore**
- Players want to **fantasize**
- Players want to **interact**



fixed position
- talking to
npc's

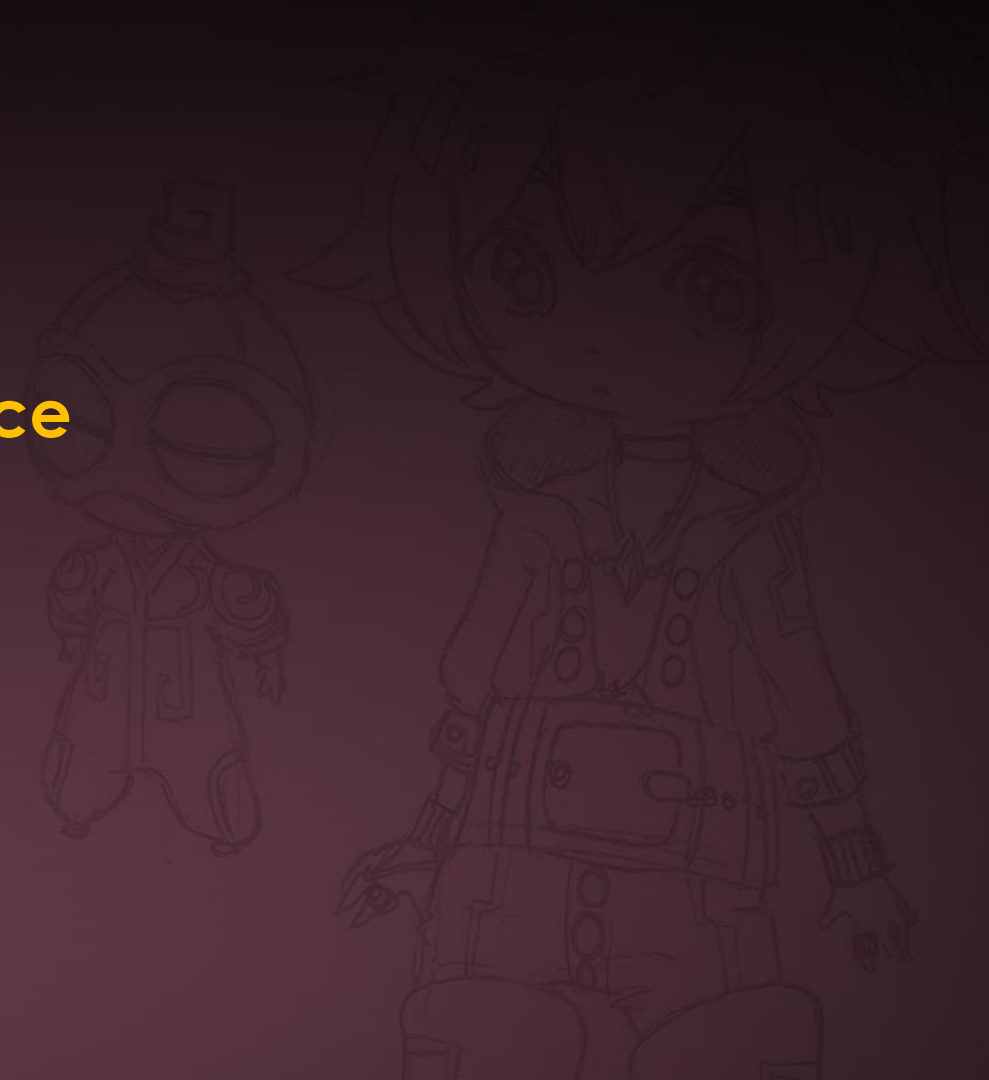


Any questions?



Discussion: Can you think of examples of the following in your own gaming experience?

- Players want a **challenge**
- Players want to **socialize**
- Players want a **dynamic solitary experience**
- Players want **bragging rights**
- Players want an **emotional experience**
- Players want to **explore**
- Players want to **fantasize**
- Players want to **interact**





Books

**Rouse, R. (2005). *Game Design Theory and Practice* (Second Edition).
Wordware Publishing Inc., USA**



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

BA COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

GAME THEORY & DESIGN

The Player's Expectations: What Players Want