

RISK management in video game development PROJECTS



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RESEARCH TEAM



HAZEL'S WORK

Risk Management and Tacit Knowledge in IT Projects: Making the Implicit Explicit

- Identified risk in the field of Information Technology by extracting tacit information on risk from the project managers who held that vital information



HAZEL'S WORK

- Thesis published in 2003
- Studied 25 IT project managers in Hong Kong
- Used **Critical Incident Interviews** to extract tacit risk knowledge
- Qualitative text analysis performed on transcripts



GAMING INSPIRATION

- \$65 billion global revenue
- Reputation for vaporware
- Projects seem to eschew traditional success measures of schedule, budget, and performance



COMPARISON

	Schmalz, et.al. (2014)	Taylor (2003)
Location	United States	Hong Kong
Sampling	Snowball	Purposeful
Projects	Video Game Development	Enterprise Installation and Customization
Experience Level	Any	Min. 3 years
Interviews	8	25
Projects	Game Development	Enterprise Installation and Customization

2014 METHODOLOGY

- Snowballed sample.
- Performed "critical incident interviews."
- Recorded audio.
- Transcribed professionally.
- Coded transcripts qualitatively.
 - Hazel's term dictionary.
 - Two coders plus advisor review.
 - Two full coding passes.
- Analyzed results.

RISK SOURCES

Source (2014)	Source (2003)	Definition
Software Studio	Vendor	The organization employing the producer
User	Client	The end user or player
Partner	Client	An external organization exerting control
Contractor	Third Party	An external organization



RISK FACTORS

2014 Rank (2003 Rank)	Risk Source	Risk Factor	Interview Count (Project Context)	Project Count
1	Software Studio	Development strategy	8	10
2 (4)	Software Studio	Staffing	7	10
3 (1)	Software Studio	Schedule and budget management	7	8
3 (6)	Software Studio	Inadequate specification	7	8
5	User	Fun factor	5	5
5 (2)	Software Studio	Change management	5	5
5 (2)	Partners	Expectations	5	5
8 (6)	Partners	Trust	4	5
8	Software Studio	Top management support	4	5

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ANALYSIS

Contexts

- Project Context
- General Context

Rankings

- Number of projects including factor
(Project Count)
- Number of Interviews including factor,
project context only
(Interview Count – Project Context)



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DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Committing to the wrong development strategy. For example:

- Choosing the wrong development platform
- Incorrectly prioritizing work
- Implementing an inefficient project structure
- Failure to allocate time for quality assurance
- Insufficient prototyping before production.

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STAFFING

All problems with studio staffing. For example:

- Not enough staff
- Wrong skills
- Staff turnover
- Size of team
- Interpersonal issues among staff



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“Uh, no. No.”

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FUN FACTOR

Risks associated with producing a game which the intended audience does not enjoy playing. Includes audience willingness to be monetized.

GAMIFICATION

Game-like features in non-game products

- Scoring
- Badges
- Achievements
- Friendly competition

MITIGATING FUN-RELATED RISK

- Focus on prototyping and pre-production
- Cancel projects early (75%)
- External testing programs
 - Focus groups
 - Closed betas
 - Open betas
 - Downscale, low-cost initial launches (including “Canadian betas”)

FURTHER STUDY

- More producer interviews
- Studio case studies (including non-producers)
- Inventory and examination of producer skills
- “Gamification” and fun in other segments



SUMMARY (TL;DR)

Applied Dr. Hazel Taylor's methods and term dictionary to a new segment of IT project management

- Consumer focus exposes risk from Users.
- Entertainment focus exposes fun-related risk

THANK YOU !

Audience Survey: Risk Management in Entertainment Software Development

Was the presentaion fun?

Use 1 for not fun at all, 5 for really fun.

1 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 5

Was the presentaion easy to follow?

Use 1 for really easy, 5 for really hard.

1 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 5

Additional questions or comments: