PLAY YOUR ROLE

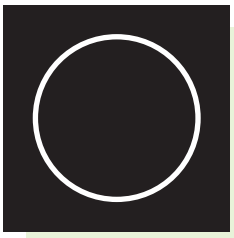
ENGLISH - DEUTSCH - FRANÇAIS - ITALIANO - LIETUVIŲ - POLSKIE - PORTUGUES

Hackathon Games Booklet

Divide et Impera

Social Threads

YouTuber Simulator



deplatforming

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Introduction

Media, such as video games and game-related practices, are complex and intertwined worlds that play an important role in the everyday life of youngsters and adult citizens and have therefore a significant influence when it comes to building concepts of the other, behavior patterns and conflict management. Disregarded is often the positive potential of the video game in providing for safe zones of behavior and confrontation, reinforcing and rewarding positive behavior, the ludic approach to serious topics and debates with a language that speaks directly to youngsters.

One of the aims of the project *Play Your Role* is to tackle hate speech online with the production of educational tools in form of gaming activities and new educational materials that teachers and youth workers can use in their daily work creating new and creative counter narratives, which promote European values, tolerance and respect to European fundamental rights and enhance gamification as a tool to reinforce positive behaviors.

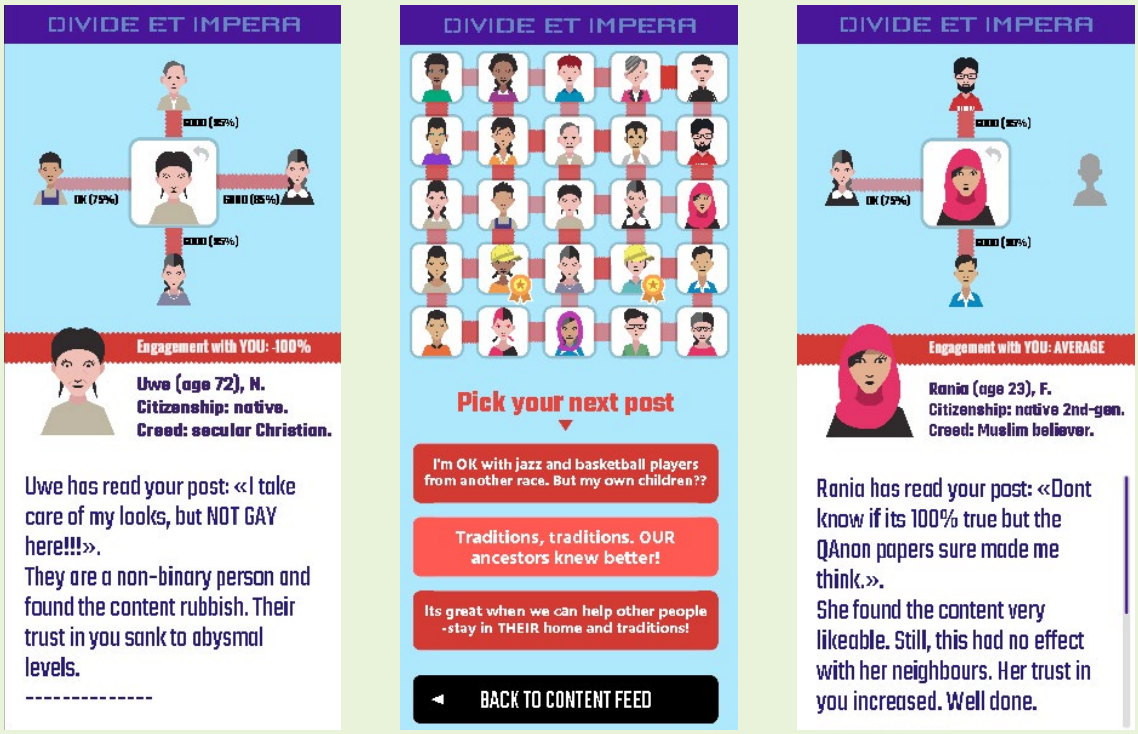
Within the project 4 Serious Games have been developed involving teams of young game designers from 4 European countries: ***Divide et Impera*** (Italy), ***YouTuber Simulator*** (Poland), ***Social Threads*** (France) and ***deplatforming*** (Germany). Each game approaches and deals with the topic of hate speech using different strategies that have the aim to develop a critical approach and understanding of this phenomenon.

This booklet is intended to be a guide with 4 didactic proposals that insert the serious games developed within an educational path for secondary schools, youth centers and associations.

The PYR project has also produced a toolkit of pedagogical itineraries[1] that can deepen and complement the teaching experiences proposed in this guide: dealing with hate speech is always complex and the pedagogical itineraries provide many activities and ideas for working in a meaningful way.

1 www.playyourrole.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/PYR-toolkit-ENGLISH.pdf

Divide et Impera



THE GAME IN A NUTSHELL

Divide et Impera is a game which shows the functioning of online hate speech. In the game, the player interacts with a connected group of diverse people, initially in good relations among each other. By using hate speech in various forms, the player tries to bring out division and hostility, finally separating the group in factions. Through manipulation of a simulated small community, the player can be confronted with and made aware of actual mechanisms used to influence people in social media. Adolescents can learn this way to be more critical about the sources and content of information they find online.

GAME DESIGNERS

The game has been designed and developed by Mauro Vanetti (independent game developer), and Pino Panzarella and Pietro Polsinelli from Open Lab, a small indie company creating applied and commercial games.

LINKS

You can **play this game online** (via browser) or **download** it **for Androids or iOS** systems.

Any output you choose is available through this page: www.playyourrole.eu/divide-et-impera

WORKSHOP INDICATIONS

Tags:
- Social network
- Stereotypes
- Activism tools

Timeframe: 90 minutes

Audiences: 15+, knowledgeable about social media and hate speech

Objective:
- Identify hate messages and understand how they affect relationships among people
- Understand the negative effects they can have on a personal and social level
- Raise awareness on hate speech mechanisms through game simulation
- Learn tools and mechanisms to respond to digital hate contents

Required setup:
- BYOD or laptop/tablet

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

20 minutes
Brainstorming and sharing of knowledge about hate speech

Initial question: "Could you report any hate message that you have seen on social networks?"

- Collect inputs from the participants, follow up with leading questions if needed.
- The collection of inputs should at least address the following topics:
  1. Which kind of stereotypes are used more frequently to attack people?
  2. What reactions have you seen from social media users?
  3. Why do you think these comments are made?
- The aim of this introduction is to get students to reflect about their personal experiences and to question the goals that hate speech seems to achieve: generating consensus, identifying groups, creating "enemies".

25 minutes
Play test *Divide et impera* and collect talking points

- Before starting to play, stress the importance of playing knowing that being a 'hater' is always a wrong way to interact, but taking on this role within the game aims to help the understanding of what happens in the system mechanisms, like an experiment under a microscope. It is preferable to propose to the students to participate in the activity as 'data

analysts', as 'observers' who try to understand the relationships between people, to become more aware of how these can be manipulated or nurtured positively, depending on the objective. The words that are posted in the game always generate opposing reactions, in order to facilitate the debate and highlight the complexity of the issue.

- Students play together, divided into groups: they observe the reactions triggered by the posts, as attentive observers, and, with the help of the teacher, reflect on which cultural, political or personal aspects are touched by these messages. It can also be interesting at times to predict what will happen: who will be negatively affected by the message? Who, on the other hand, is likely to adhere to the message? What characteristics and interests will these different people have? Hate speech is wide-ranging, can affect anyone and has effects in social and friendship networks. A correct response to hate speech is equally important. Each time, the group that takes turns playing, can simulate a response to the 'politician' of 'divide et impera': learning to argue 'against' hate speech, but never sinking to the same level, is an exercise that can be started at school to give students a chance to defend themselves (wisely, without harassments and hate) against incidents that may occur in their real lives.

Introduction to the game

A disingenuous political leader uses hate speech to reach his/her own goals. In particular, this political leader aims at dividing the community in half by detaching at least 12 people from the interconnected grid of 5×5 people. Detached elements are in grey.

The posts become 'weapons' and each time generate reactions that allow the gamers to understand how complex and articulated hate speech is. There are those who welcome it because they agree with this way of thinking, and there are those who feel offended by what is being expressed. The students will have to choose the content to be published online (and each time it will be important to take a pause to understand what operation is being carried out: who is being hit? Why? Insinuating what?...) and a specific target of 3×3 people for each post. Each person in the grid has several individual characteristics: nationality, immigration status, gender, religious beliefs. Hatred aroused by the posts will generate different reactions, damaging and destroying social relations within the community.

Online hatred often enters discourse in an apparently banal and everyday way: by commenting on current events or by posting jokes, you can realize how many similar messages you may have encountered on social media and how these messages could hurt people's sensitivity.

Through the thumbs up and thumbs down, it is shown what the political

leader considers the best and worst results. By clicking on them, you can read the analytics on social media. You can also click on user portraits to check what hurt their sensitivity and how trust and relationships were affected.

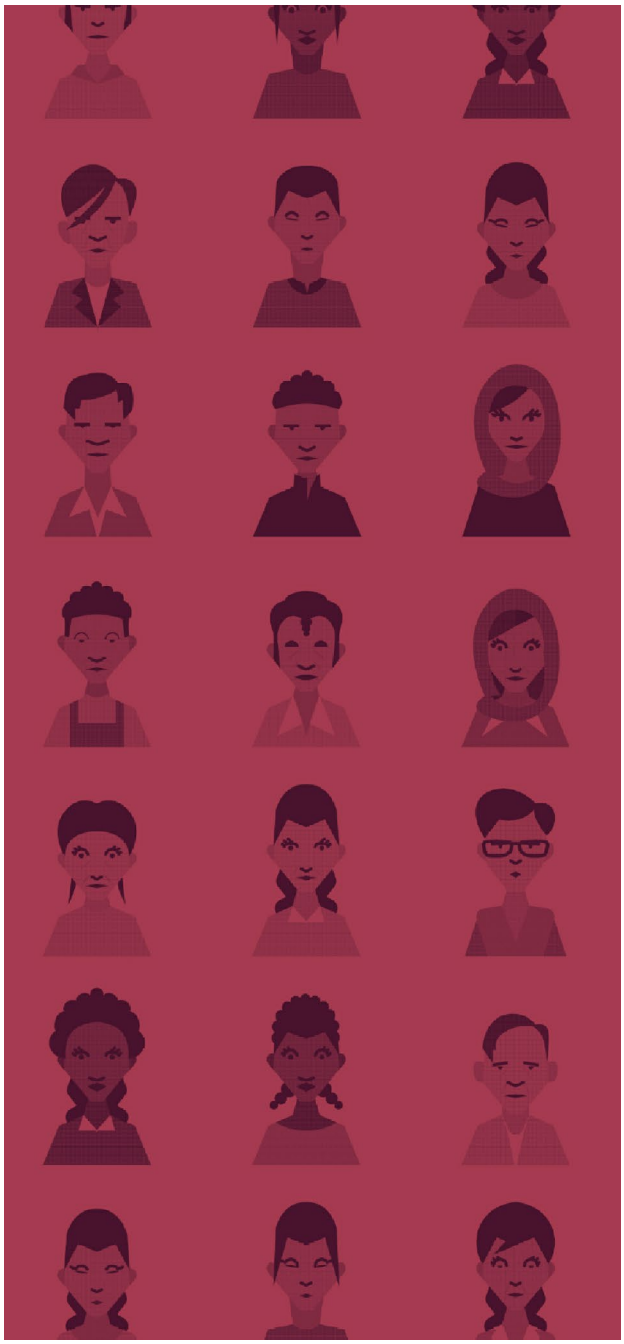
45 minutes

Game debriefing and reality check

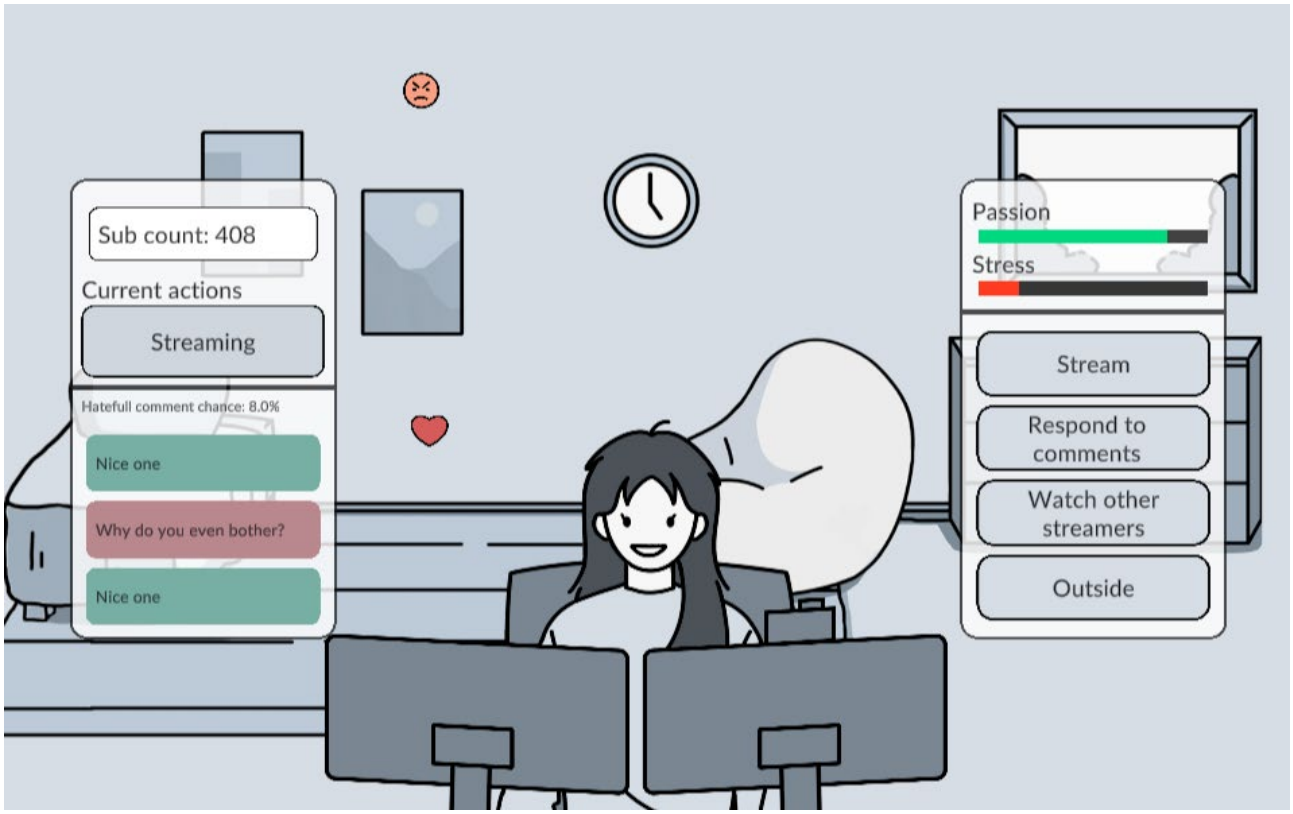
- How did you feel? What reflections did you make as you saw the reactions of the followers of the political leader emerge? The two questions can be written on large posters and each student, with his/her own pen or color, writes his/her own answer. Having several workstations makes the work faster and generates fewer crowds. Afterwards, the class is divided into groups and each group receives a poster. The poster is read out and an attempt is made to find a synthesis. A spokesperson tells what emerges from the poster received.
- Provide explanations when necessary
- Give room to argue the conflicting ideas.

FURTHER RESOURCES

To continue the work on stereotypes and related hate speech we suggest the card game *Strategic Reactions*: www.zaffiria.it/wp2/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/strategic-reactions-eng.pdf



YouTuber Simulator



THE GAME IN A NUTSHELL

The *YouTuber Simulator* game allows you to understand the factors that significantly affect the mental condition of broadcasters-streamers. It also shows how the stress that appears while broadcasting can be alleviated. After participating in the game, additional work with male and female students may be useful.

GAME DESIGNERS

The game has been designed and developed by Mateusz Seredyński (founder of the Yocat Games studio, programmer and producer of games with five years of experience in the industry), Katarzyna Jaszewska (responsible for concept art, characters and dialogues) and Jakub Sampławski (responsible for UX, interfaces, creating game scenes and music).

LINKS

You can **play this game online** (via browser) or **download** it **for Androids or iOS** systems.

Any output you choose is available through this page: www.playyourrole.eu/YouTuber-simulator

WORKSHOP INDICATIONS

Tags:
- Hate speech
- Media platforms
- Stress
- Relax

Timeframe: 90 minutes

Audiences: 12+

Objective:
- To raise awareness of the psychological mechanisms involved in streaming.
- Developing good broadcasting and watching practices.
- Developing alternative forms of stress relief.
- Promoting mental hygiene related to time management.

Required setup:
- BYOD or laptop/tablet

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

15 minutes

Invite students to play the *YouTuber Simulator* game. Let them learn to use the app. You can include elements of gamification in this process. Set a specific time, for example 10 minutes, and ask students to try to get as many followers as possible during that time. Participants can start the game multiple times. The time setting is important here.

30 minutes

Mapped discussion. Initiate a discussion on the most stressful elements that can affect streamers who broadcast their shows on YouTube.com. Supporting questions that may be useful during the discussion:

1. Can the subject matter of the broadcast affect the stress level of the host?
2. How can the behaviour of the audience contribute to the stress experienced by the host?
3. What types of behaviour reinforce stress?
4. What elements of the broadcast can negatively influence the response of the audience?
5. Why do people stream? What is pleasant about it?
6. What types of behaviour affecting broadcasting stress do male and female students know but did not appear in the game?

Note down, e.g. on the whiteboard or in a mind-mapping application (e.g.

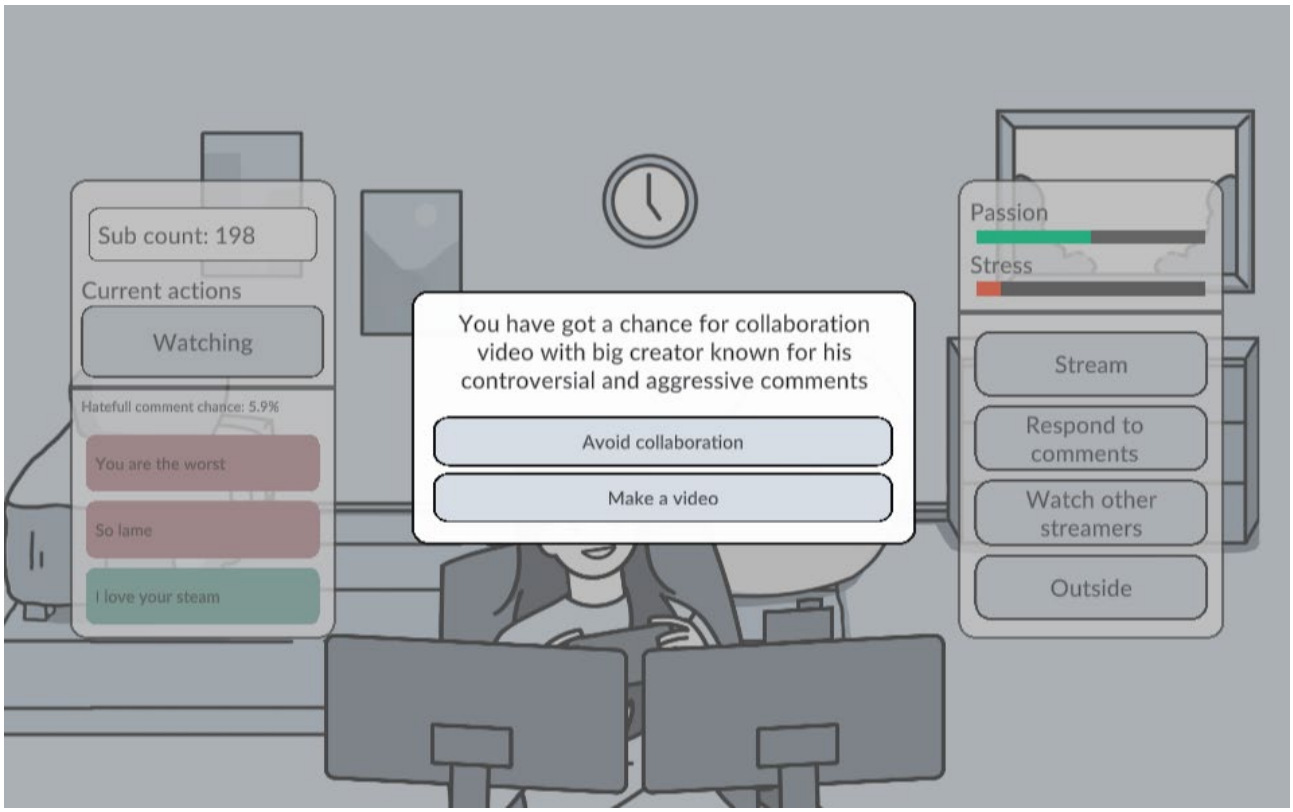
Mindly), the arguments that arise in the discussion, in short form. The outcome of the activity should be a mind map created on the basis of the arguments given by the students.

15 minutes

Brainstorming. Hand out post it notes to the students. Next, each participant is tasked with writing down on the note one form of relaxation, e.g. going for a walk, going to the cinema, etc. Ask students to stick their cards in a visible place in the classroom. Group the post it notes. It would be worthwhile for there to be sections related to culture, sport, hobbies, handicraft, and so on.

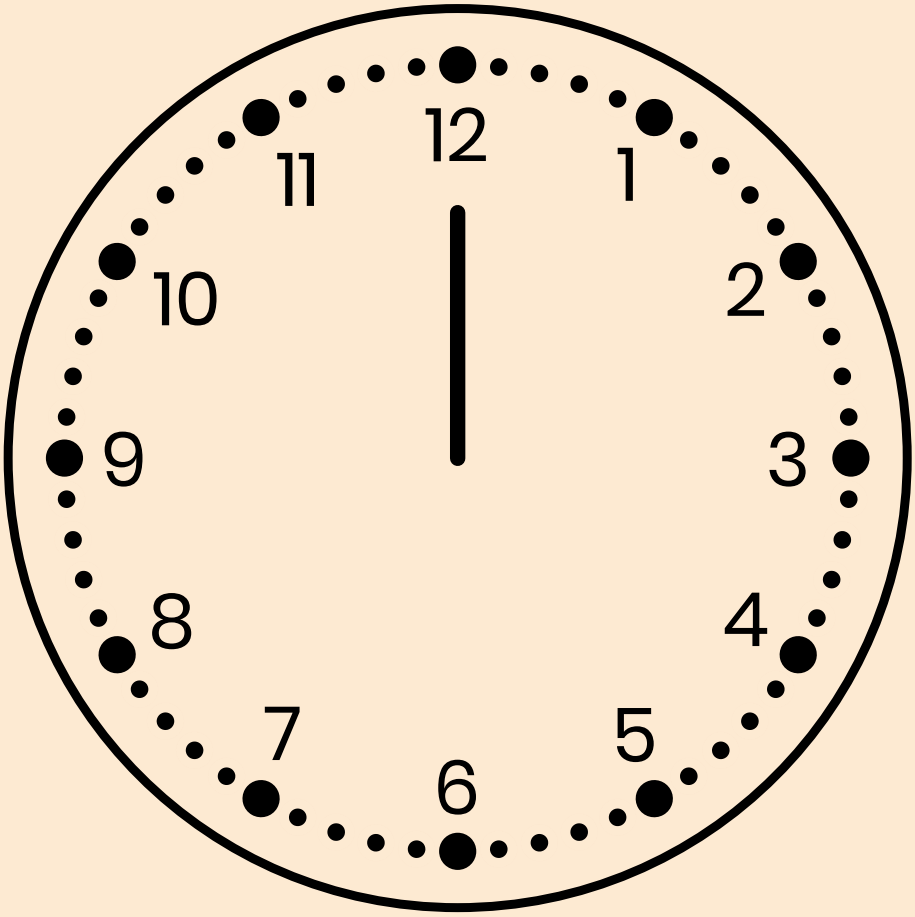
30 minutes

Discuss with your students how important it is in life to plan your time skilfully. Ask them to think for a moment about how they manage their time. How much time they spend studying, how much time they spend playing, how much time they spend in front of the computer, how much time they spend on hygiene and eating. Distribute work card no. 1 among the students and ask them to write out their day schedule at the top of it. Talk to them about it. Next, ask students to fill in the daily activity clock as they think it should look in a perfect situation.



Work Card No. 1

Mark graphically how much of your day is taken up by individual activities.



Social Threads

THE GAME IN A NUTSHELL

Social Threads is a mini-game intended to help young people cope with toxic behaviors online. It aims at developing both personal strategies (not answering insults, reporting hate speech, etc) and social strategies (rely on each other online, ask for help, build a friendly community...). This mini game is meant as a trigger and is a playful way to discuss difficult matters and start an educative action.

You: an internet user who must choose the right actions to respond to the opponent's toxic behaviors

Your Goal: keeping your mind stamina above 0 in order to expand your network of safe places, by avoiding the network to be contaminated by violence, handling at best tense interactions between members, based on the most common cognitive biases.

Your "weapons": 3 argumentative cards to choose among 4. Play strategically!

Your Allies: to boost the mind stamina, the player must favor the green cards and avoid using the insult card in order to be less affected by the opponent's behavior. The interactions must be as constructive as possible in order to tackle toxicity and progress through the game.

Your Results: When your opponent's mind stamina is at 0, you win the territory and expand your universe. You will have to choose between red cards, to lower your opponent's mind stamina, and green cards to raise your own stamina. Your reaction to your opponent can be anticipated as the next action is displayed when you make your choice. Be sure to use the most adapted cards to respond to the toxic actions.

GAME DESIGNERS

The game has been designed by three young freelance game designers: Damien Kermel developed the system, Fabien Salvalaggio made the whole graphism of the game, and Loïk Puyo was in charge of general design of the game and UX.

LINKS

You can **play this game online** (via browser) or **download** it **for Androids or iOS** systems.

Any output you choose is available through this page: www.playyourrole.eu/social-threads

WORKSHOP INDICATIONS

Tags:
- Hate speech
- Toxic behaviour
- Debate
- Communities

Timeframe: 45-60 minutes

Audiences: 12+
English speaking (beginners welcome)

Objective:
- Acknowledge the existence of toxic behaviors online and being able to recognize them
- Understand the consequences of various ways of handling hate speech
- Develop good reflexes to answer hate speech. Being prepared.
- Develop strategies to create oneself a secure and harmonious space online
- Invite young people to advocate good practices online

Required setup:
- 1 connected computer/ laptop for two participants
- 1 white board

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

10 minutes

Introduction

Open discussion on online communities & toxic behaviors

- What online communities do you belong to?
- What kind of online conversations do you participate in?
- What do you get out of these? (positive outcomes)
- Have you ever met toxic participants during those conversations?
- How would you define toxic behavior?

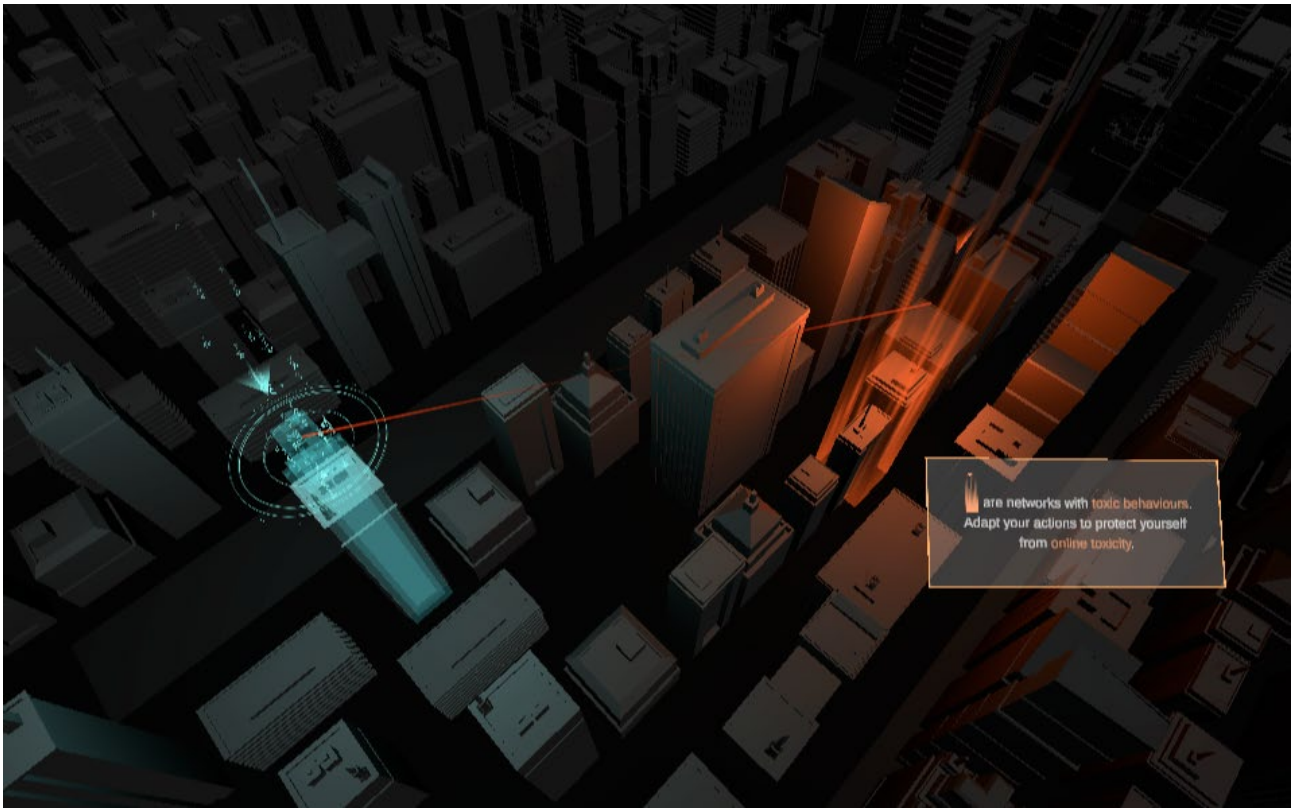
The animator can write down key words. The aim of this introduction is to acknowledge and recognize toxic behaviors online, while valorizing the richness of online community life

15 minutes

Game session

- Presentation of the rules (see above)
- Constitution of teams (2 or 3 players)

The idea is for participants to play together in order to discuss their moves, strategies, choices



20 minutes

Brainstorming on strategies for better online experiences

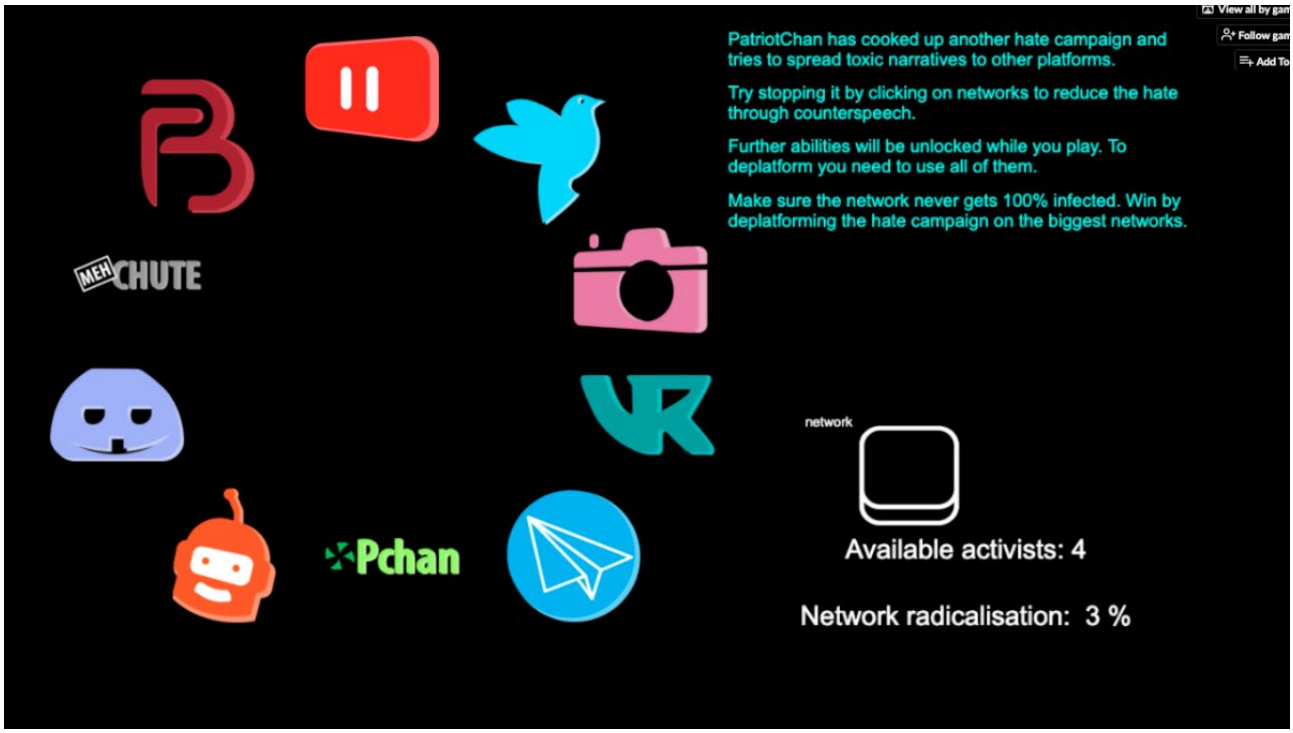
- The participants exchange their gaming experiences
- The animator invites the teams to write down
  1. What they think are best tactics to handle toxic behaviors
  2. What they think should be avoided
  3. Behaviors they think participate to create a secure, friendly community
- Results of this work are shared and discussed within the group
- The animator (or a student) writes down the points the group agrees on, which represent the group's strategy to handle toxic behaviors

15 minutes

OPTIONAL: Communication / collective writing.

The group may want to formulate the results of the workshop in a series of posts each participant will be able to share on its own social networks.

deplatforming



THE GAME IN A NUTSHELL

The game *deplatforming* introduces large scale concepts on how toxic and hateful narratives spread over the internet. Discussion formats link these broad, high concept ideas to the personal experience of participants and help to give a little insight into the big mechanisms at work behind the big media platforms.

GAME DESIGNERS

The game has been designed and developed by gameoverhate.eu, an initiative for more inclusive gaming communities.

LINKS

You can **play this game online** (via browser) or **download** it **for Androids or iOS** systems.

Any output you choose is available through this page: www.playyourrole.eu/deplatforming

WORKSHOP INDICATIONS

Tags:
- Hate campaigns
- Internet ecosystem
- Platform (self-)regulation
- Activism tools

Timeframe: 90 minutes

Audiences: 15+
knowledgeable about social media

Objective:
- Exploring the internet ecosystem
- Understanding and reflecting the dynamics of online hate campaigns
- Learning the tools and mechanisms to respond to digital hate content
- Discussion cross-platform approaches to online campaigns and responses

Required setup:
- BYOD or laptop/tablet

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

25 minutes
Brainstorming *Anatomy of a shitstorm*

Initial Question "What constitutes a shitstorm?"

- Collect inputs from the participants, if needed, follow up with leading questions. The collection should at least address the following topics:
  1. Triggers for the hate campaign
  2. An in group and out group
  3. Personalised attacks
  4. Judgement/value statements
- This exercise will likely bring out problematic narratives from hate campaigns themselves. The participants will bring up misconstrued or disconnected information about individuals that are portrayed very differently in different communities,not even aware of the potential real life impact this has on victims of such campaigns. It can be worthwhile to dig deeper into an example and look at the case from multiple perspectives.

25 minutes
Play test *deplatforming*
and collect talking points

- Stress the importance of playing the tutorial
- Collect on the blackboard/flipchart irritations while playing (network behaviours, what clicks do, how to unlock gameplay elements, how to win, what the specific terms mean)
- Be prepared to showcase a successful playthrough of the game:

1. Click networking until you reach 7 activists, while keeping the campaign in check.
2. Increase monitoring 4 times to unlock tick boxes on all 5 platforms you want to deplatform.
3. 3 clicks on the platforms with tick boxes next to them fills a tick box, if all tick boxes are filled "deplatforming" for that platform unlocks.
4. Make sure radicalisation on other platforms stays low.
5. Click "deplatforming" to remove the platforms from the radicalisation network.
6. Once all 5 platforms did "deplatforming" you win the game.

Find video instructions on how to play the game in *Further resources*.

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15 minutes

Debriefing of the game, glossary and reality check

- Crowdsource definitions for the terms from the print file (below/linked)
- Provide explanations were necessary
- Check with the group if they are familiar with the terms, if they know the practices and collect or give examples

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25 minutes

Best responses

- Small group work, each group tailors guidelines how they would imagine the perfect response of platforms to emerging hate narratives
- Create a brainstorm of common and conflicting ideas of the group
- Give room to argue the conflicting ideas

FURTHER RESOURCES

German:

- Example for a hate campaign: keinenpixeldenfaschisten.de/2020/11/16/gamergate-eine-retrospektive-download/

English:

- How to play the game *deplatfoming*, a playthrough video (with English and German subtitles): youtu.be/Xpk-O7ewDC4
- Report linked in the game about the positive effects of deplatforming: www.idz-jena.de/fileadmin//user_upload/Hate_not_found/IDZ_Research_Report_Hate_not_Found.pdf
- Example of network of alt-right influencers: datasociety.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/DS_Alternative_Influence.pdf
- Example of the media platforms and networks of far right groups in Germany: www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ISD-The-Online-Ecosystem-of-the-German-Far-Right-English-Draft-11.pdf

Glossary

Print and cut this double sided cards! The cards consist of 3 elements: the terms from the game, a brief definition and an example where it is applied.

DEPLATFORMING

Definition:

Deplatforming is the process of removing illicit channels from media platforms. This is part of a strategic approach to ban toxic campaigns and narratives permanently. This usually is not done by removing a singular channel but a cluster of the most active users spreading the narrative.

MONITORING

Definition:

Monitoring is the process of keeping track and record information or community communication on a certain issue. It is used in a variety of technical applications but becomes increasingly important for deradicalisation of communities too.

BANS

Definition:

Bans usually follow reports and remove account access (temporarily) from users, who violate the user guidelines. This may have a strong financial impact on individuals who monetise their channels.

MONITORING

Example:

With increasing amounts of disinformation debunking websites have become relevant. They often add context to insulated statements and claims. Embedded in context the analysed statements often reveal very different intentions and narratives than originally claimed.

BANS

Example:

Alex Jones' channel "info wars" was banned of YouTube in 2018 for inciting violence and spreading misinformation, therefore breaking the user guidelines prohibition of harassment and hate speech.

DEPLATFORMING

Example:

Following the attack on the Capitol in Washington (USA) by followers of the conspiracy theory Qanon in the beginning of 2021 most larger platforms joined a consolidated effort to remove the channels associated with Qanon. In addition the phrase "Qanon" has been removed from search indexes and couldn't be hashtagged anymore. This made it much harder to recruit new supporters and monetise on the content but also drove the community further into the so-called "dark socials" (eg. Telegram).

COUNTERSPEECH

Definition:

Counterspeech means to counter hate speech where it occurs. Counterspeech presents alternative viewpoints, engages attackers and supports victimised people.

HATE SPEECH

Definition:

Hate Speech covers all forms of expression attacking and/or inciting violence against marginalised persons, based on their affiliation and assignment to discriminated groups.

DEMONETISATION

Definition:

Demonetised channels will not receive financial support from the websites hosting them. Individual contents can be demonetised too. Demonetisation can mean to remove advertisement revenue, subscription participation or donation access.

REPORTING

Definition:

Reporting is a function on most social media sites, allowing to tag unwanted or problematic content for review through formal channels of the respective platform.

HATE SPEECH

Example:

Holocaust denial, supporting (domestic) terrorism or terrorist organisations, death threats based on gender or heritage..

COUNTERSPEECH

Example:

In an escalated discussion trolls often try to incite the discussion further. Counterspeech could be a combination of an expression of support for the victim and confronting/pointing out the troll tactics.

REPORTING

Example:

On YouTube one can find the reporting function under videos or next to comments by clicking the 3 dots. Reports can be followed up by the channel itself or by YouTube itself, depending on the level of moderation on the channel.

DEMONETISATION

Example:

YouTube temporarily demonetised all contents by creator Logan Paul in 2018, after he streamed a video showcasing a suicide victim.