How a band of ragtag researchers changed gaming

Faith McGee and Natashia Tjandra

Agenda

01_Inclusivity in games

The current state of things.

02_How we got started

What we did to get things rolling and the issues we faced.

03_Making the 1% increases count

Reaching goals are about small incremental changes .

04_The future of gaming has already happened

How we can take what other companies have done and apply them.

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The current state

1 in 3 people on the planet play video games

(Source WePC)

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The average gamer is 16 years old.

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The Average Gamer

Average Age

34 y.o. Men

36 y.o. Women

The average gamer owns a house and has kids.

(Source: ESA)

Identify as Women

45% of US gamers identify as women

(Source: Statista)

People of Color

Black and Latinx youth in the US spend more time per day on both mobile games and console games than white youth.

(Source: Techcrunch

Income

People who make more than 90k are slightly less likely to purchase video games

9% compare to 12% of the pop making under 90k
(Source: Earnest)

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46 million disabled gamers in the US

(Source: AbleGamers)

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In the industry

According to the 2020 international game developers association Annual Survey of game developers, 29% of respondents identified as having one or more disabilities versus U.S working population of 26%, according to CDC 2019 data:

- 15% psychiatric or mental illness

- 8% intellectual or learning disability

- 7% physical disability

- 5% neurological disability

- 4% visual impairment

- 2% hearing impairment

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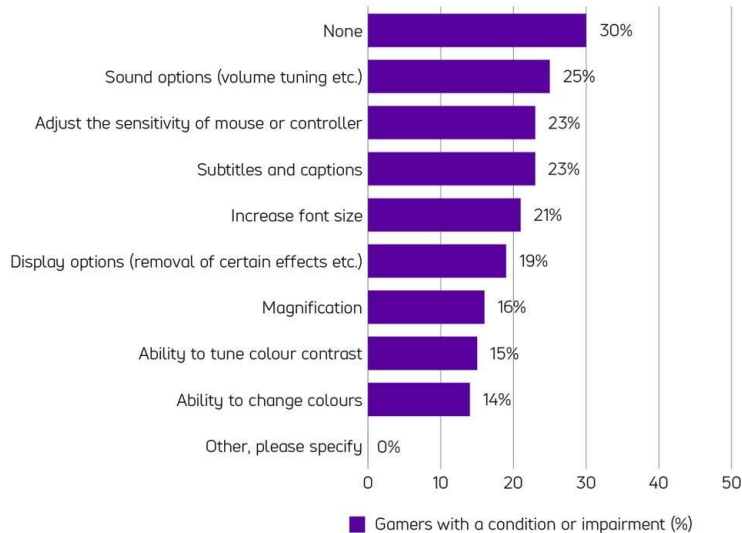
Women in the workplace

1 in 4 women have
a disability

Lack of diversity means...

2 in 5 disabled gamers have purchased games they haven't been able to play due to poor accessibility. This means that the information available about accessibility pre-purchase often isn't clear or specific enough, or it's not reaching the people who need to know about it, according to a 2021 survey by the British organization, Scope.

Features that gamers with impairments or conditions use

Feature	Percentage
None	30%
Sound options (volume tuning etc.)	25%
Adjust the sensitivity of mouse or controller	23%
Subtitles and captions	23%
Increase font size	21%
Display options (removal of certain effects etc.)	19%
Magnification	16%
Ability to tune colour contrast	15%
Ability to change colours	14%
Other, please specify	0%

■ Gamers with a condition or impairment (%)

The "market doesn't want accessibility features excuse"...

UNCHARTED

Over **⅓** of the players for Uncharted 4 use the one-handed control option

60% of players for Assassin's Creed: Origins turned on subtitles.

95% of Assassin's Creed: Odyssey players left subtitles on.

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#1 Takeaway

Hire from underrepresented groups so your employee population should mirror your customer base

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#2 Takeaway

Leverage your employees to help with making inclusive products
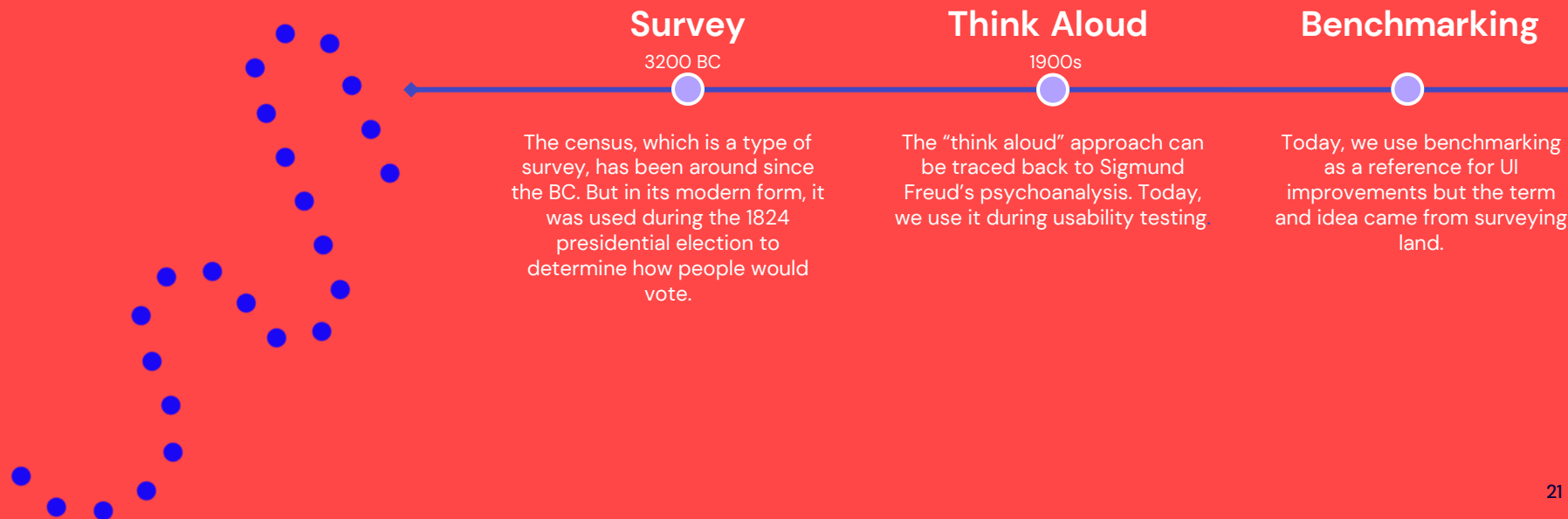
#3 Takeaway

Figure out your customers are using the product and use that insight to build on your product
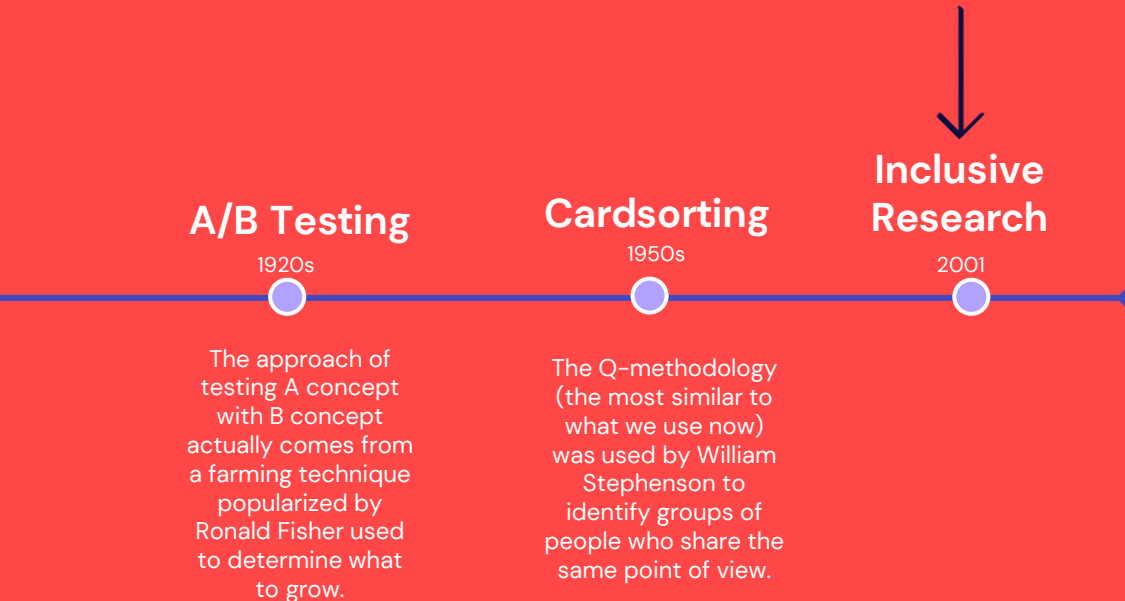
How we started a revolution

But first...what is inclusive research...

Inclusive Research is comparatively new

A brief history of the development of research methodologies.

Survey
3200 BC

The census, which is a type of survey, has been around since the BC. But in its modern form, it was used during the 1824 presidential election to determine how people would vote.

Think Aloud
1900s

The "think aloud" approach can be traced back to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis. Today, we use it during usability testing.

Benchmarking

Today, we use benchmarking as a reference for UI improvements but the term and idea came from surveying land.

Inclusive Research is comparatively new

A/B Testing
1920s

The approach of testing A concept with B concept actually comes from a farming technique popularized by Ronald Fisher used to determine what to grow.

Cardsorting
1950s

The Q-methodology (the most similar to what we use now) was used by William Stephenson to identify groups of people who share the same point of view.

Inclusive Research
2001

Coined by Jan Walmsley in an article published in 2001, it was originally designed to describe a family of methods to research people with learning and intellectual disabilities.

Today, inclusivity encompasses much more than just the discussion of physical or cognitive disabilities, but touches on much more nuance of the human experience.

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What makes a product inclusive?

- Code that adapts to users' technologies and needs – code is product's DNA

- Content that meet the needs of varying groups e.g. gender form fields that accept all genders

- Consideration for context. Is you user moving through life using both hands all of the time to complete tasks? No.

- Opportunities to customize the interface e.g. dark mode

- Design that offers a high tolerance for errors

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A streamlined approach to a more inclusive product

Inclusive Workplace

Diverse Hiring

Diverse Perspectives

Inclusive Products

Now, how we started a revolution

Where we started from...

Where we ended up...

Where are you starting from?

Inclusivity Maturity Model

06	Embedded	Is embedded in every part of the organization. Key differentiator in the the market. Products boast resiliency and adaptability, which appeal to a wide market.
05	Engaged	Becomes one of the core tenets of the organization. C–level executives oversee implementation.
04	Committed	Critical and senior stakeholders including Project Managers and Product Owners are involved in ensuring its implementation.
03	Invested	Considered very important and a great strength to increasing market share. Formalized programs roll out. An Inclusive Design lead is present and in–house resources ensure it is implemented throughout the product life cycle.
02	Interested	Interested in ad hoc implementation in product development but not uniformly productized across product suites or as a formal strategy.
01	Unrecognized	Not considered important in the product development lifecycle. Diversity and Inclusion live on as separate HR and company initiatives.

Business Strategy

Strategic Goals

Strategic Programs

Projects

Workstreams

Products

Are you an explorer? Or do you design with underrepresented groups?

In 2020, 6.1% of Microsoft and Google employees self-identified as disabled, and 3.9% at Facebook, according to Fast Company.

26%
U.S. adults have a disability

Underrepresented groups should be with us as part of the product development process in each phase.

According to a Twitter poll conducted by Arron Chu of Fast Company, people were asked this question and overwhelmingly voted "No."

"If you are a Disabled person and are in roles in the "downstream" of a product life cycle (ex. customer service, QAs, professors) do you feel you have enough decision making power to change the product you deliver?

91% No 9% Yes

Start with your team or build a group.

Get your elevator pitch down... you're going to need it

Start with a team charter (that will change in time!) that people on the team feel at least 80% about and can be memorized.

This is your sales pitch about the team and what you do and don't do! You are going to use this to gain support for investment in inclusive research at your company.

Team Charter

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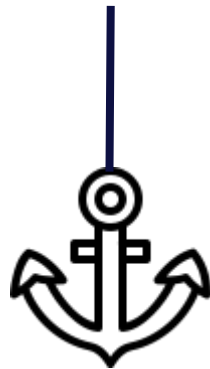
Build an army of advocates from all levels, connect with your story
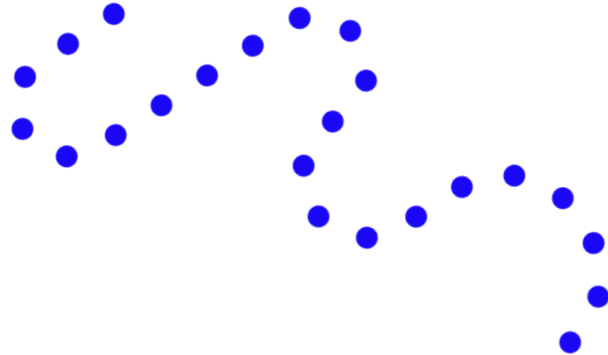
- Only 5% of people remember statistics after they are shared so offer stories!

- Average attention span is 8 seconds

- Tailor your group's story to the discipline or group you're talking to

- What do you want people to do after you tell your story, be clear on a mission.

Also fact, you are not alone!

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Turn the workplace into a place where underrepresented groups thrive

It's not enough to open the doors and invite underrepresented groups in.

We can't change our workforce until we change our tools to be in line with inclusive design. Through advocating underrepresented groups, we have made accessibility needs a requirement for all new vendor procurement.
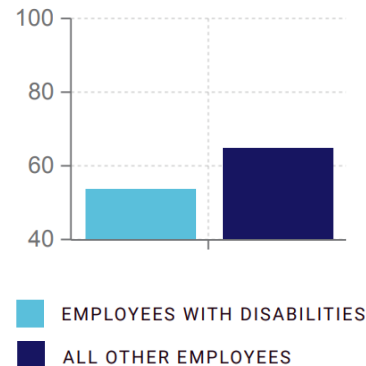
We'll only get accessibility products when we require it.

Mercer's "State of Disability" Survey

"My company creates an environment where people of diverse backgrounds can succeed." -8
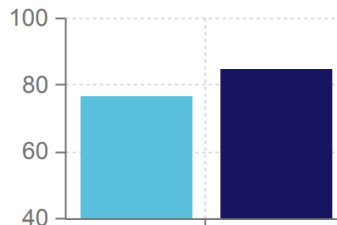
"I am appropriately involved in decisions about my work." -11

EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES
ALL OTHER EMPLOYEES

To-Do List

☑ Partner with IT and HR

☑ Quantify employee needs

☑ Prioritize technology needs

☑ Advocate for using vendors who are WCAG 2.0 AA compliant

34

Design Systems

Your company may be using a design system or a component library. By advocating for this system to follow accessibility best practices, you are opening jobs to not only build the product but for more customers to be able to use it.

68%

Companies use a design system to build digital products

Our story
We made sure that our Design System not only meets accessibility best practices but also considers people who are neurodivergent and speak English as a second language to name a few of the considerations.

Get training to all areas of the company

Leverage Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to help share their perspective across the organization. Chances are there are great folks who would love to share more about disability culture + be part of the design process.

Align with Human Resources to find out their main objectives and how you can support Diversity and Inclusion Programs.

Less than 5% of companies investigate the employee experience of those with disabilities, according to asset management firm, Mercer.

#1 Takeaway

Audit your employee tools and advocate for using enterprise tools that are WCAG 2.1 compliant, or influence the vendor's roadmap

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#2 Takeaway

Find out how your product is being built

#3 Takeaway

Advocate for training for all areas of the company

1% wins will add up

Prepare for the long haul. An inclusive product, an inclusive workplace will take a while, so celebrate the **small wins**.

Case Study FIFA

We shared with leadership the difficulties that gamers with disabilities were having using their connectivity tool for understanding their connection issues.

Leadership were moved to quickly put our accessibility recommendations in the following sprints. GOOOOOOOOAAAAAL!

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Case Study EA PLAY

We partnered with our Accessibility Director to map out the customer journey for people with disabilities coming to EA events.

We were able to get buy in after socializing journey maps to make the registration process accessible and help make major improvements to reduce friction at events.

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Case Study Design Library

Our design partners, including EA Brand team, have made inclusive design a top priority so we have been working closely with them to build branding guidelines and component library that is flexible enough to be used across *employee* and *player experiences* that is accessible and user friendly.


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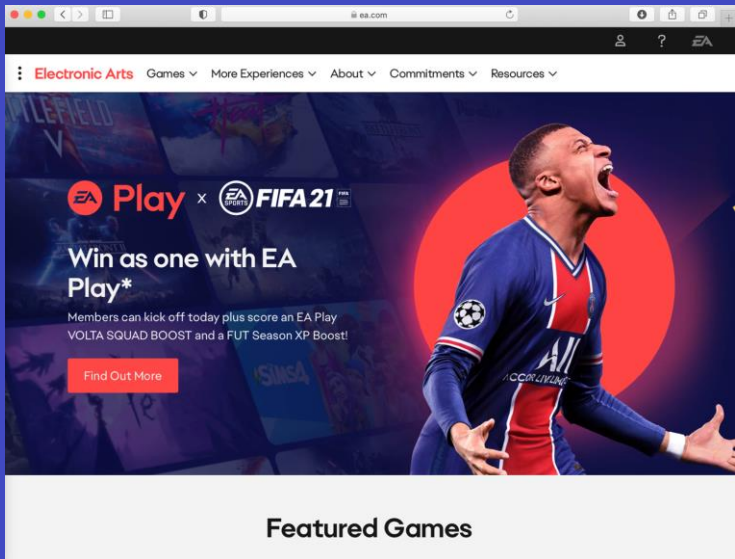
Case Study Research Repository

We highlight educational and best practices for Inclusive Design in our Research Repository.

In democratizing data, we also express purpose in spotting cultural inaccuracies for people with disabilities, representation issues, biases, stereotypes, and problematic language.

We are proud to partner with a diverse team that don't represent the dominant culture- disabled, people of color and non-native English speaking - engineers for implementation.

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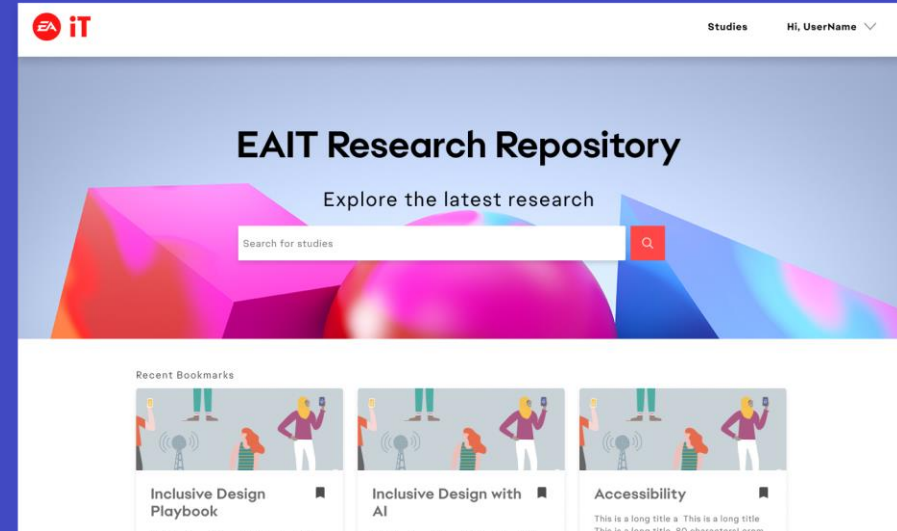
Case Study Vendors

We influenced vendors to include accessibility into their product launch roadmaps...some even moved up the launch of accessible features by several quarters.

During vendor assessments, we included inclusive design framework as a criteria for stakeholders.

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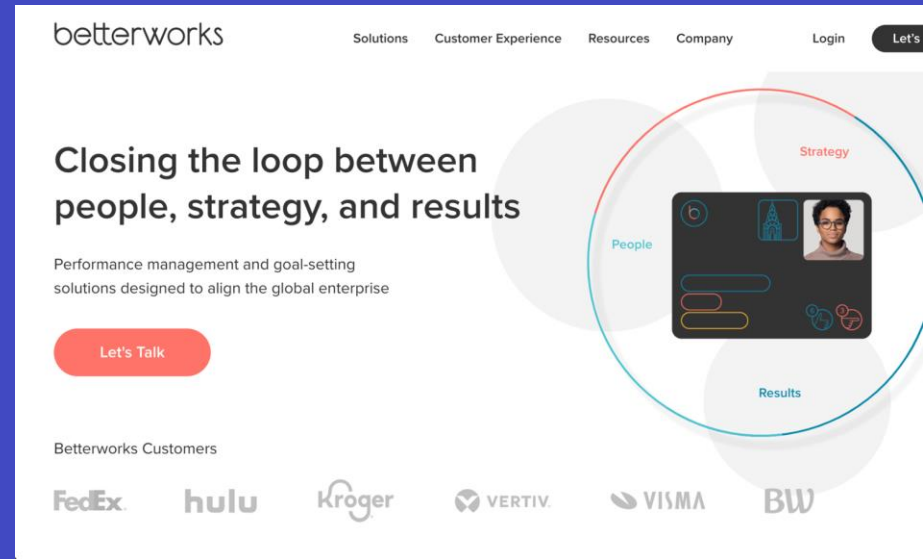
The future of gaming has already happened ...to other companies

Inclusivity is top of mind in 2021

2020 was a big year for all of us, and while we have lost a lot, we have gained new perspective.

During the unifying cultural experiences of Covid 19 and the Black Lives Matter movement forced all humankind to take a hard and long look at how we currently address the needs of people, and not just some people, but EVERYONE, just as everyone is affected by the losses incurred during the last year, and as inequities are exposed in the systems meant to serve us.

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Fri, March 12, 2021, 2:44 PM · 3 min read

Government of Canada invests to increase equity, diversity and inclusion in research

Canada NewsWire

SurveyMonkey

Top Tech Companies Join Forces to Push for Diversity and Inclusion at Vendor Organizations

SurveyMonkey leads effort along with 23andMe, Age of Learning, Box, Chime, Eventbrite, Genesys, Headspace, Intuit, Leaf Group, PagerDuty, Slack, Tile, Tinder, Upwork, and Zoom to add diversity, equity, and inclusion metrics to vendor selection and renewal processes

UCSF Participant Recruitment
Clinical & Translational Science Institute

Home > Tutorials > Diversity in Research Participation: important

Diversity in Research Participation: why it's important

You Can Make an Impact!
Diversity in Clinical Trials

Companies are moving forward to diversify their employees

Neurodiversity Inclusion Program considers the outreach and hiring process for people who are neurodivergent to help remove friction and ensures support and mentorship is available.

In 2020, Starbucks opened its first Inclusive Design Cafe in Korea. This cafe not only designed the store and layout for people with disabilities but also trained baristas in basic language.

Companies are hiring for "Inclusive Design" specific research, design and product roles.

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49

57% of video game players in the U.S. between the ages of 6 and 29 will be people of color in less than 10 years.

(Source: Techcrunch)

Where is the gaming industry headed?

More investment in content for games

Female gamers purchase more microtransactions than other add-ons. This is likely due in part to their interest in brands offering customized/personalized products

(Source: Global Web Index)
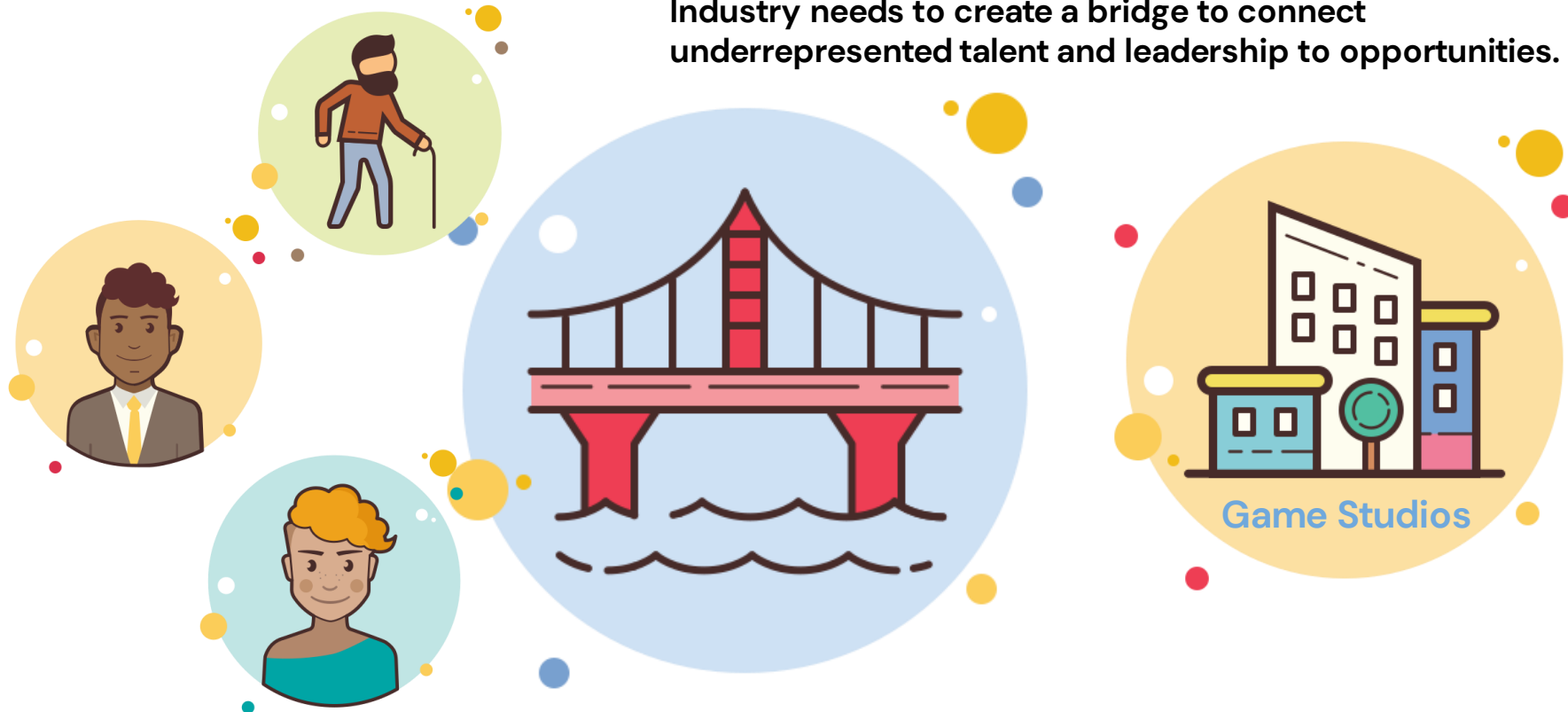
More games that appeal to older audiences

From 2018 to 2020, there as been a 32% increase in players between the ages of 55-64
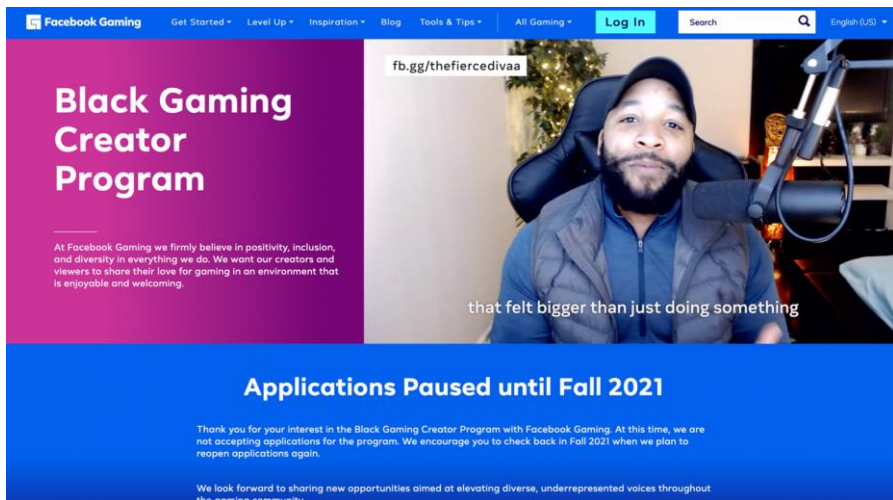
(Source: Global Web Index)

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Creating a bridge to the talent pipeline

Industry needs to create a bridge to connect underrepresented talent and leadership to opportunities.

Game Studios

Some bridges

Black Gaming Creator Program by Facebook

Software Engineering Virtual Experience Program by EA

So, is that it?

Please check out our
Inclusive Research Playbook

Faith McGee
Former Quantitative
Research Manager

Natashia Tjandra
Sr Manager – Research,
Player & Employee
Experience

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Sources

https://www.recruiter.com/i/corporate-diversity-should-mirror-both-population-and-customer-base/

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