



PMU199 PLAYTESTING GUIDE

- Originally presented by Dustin Freeman, PhD

PLAYTESTING OUTCOMES

- Insights into how others respond to your game.
- Record of playtesting session:
 - Table of results (raw data):
 - Demographic info, responses to engagement & learning questions, open-ended feedback.
 - Synthesis/analysis of data

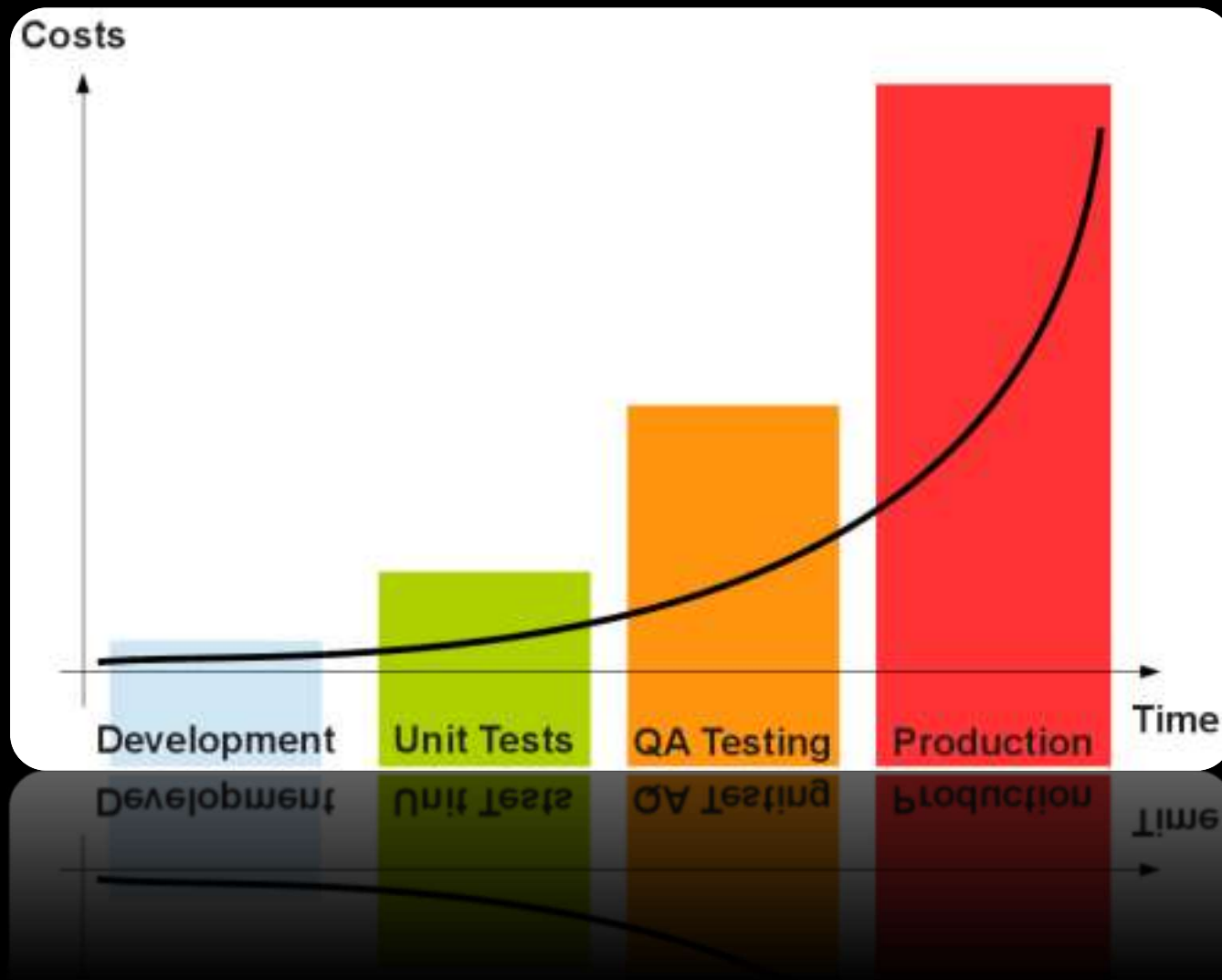
PLAYTEST STAKEHOLDERS

- you
- playtesters
- your market, eventual players of the game
- your boss, funding providers

WHY ARE YOU PLAYTESTING?

- Because you're not sure if your mechanic works in the game
- Because you're nearly done and want to find bugs
- Because your boss/funder asked you to

THE COST OF TESTING



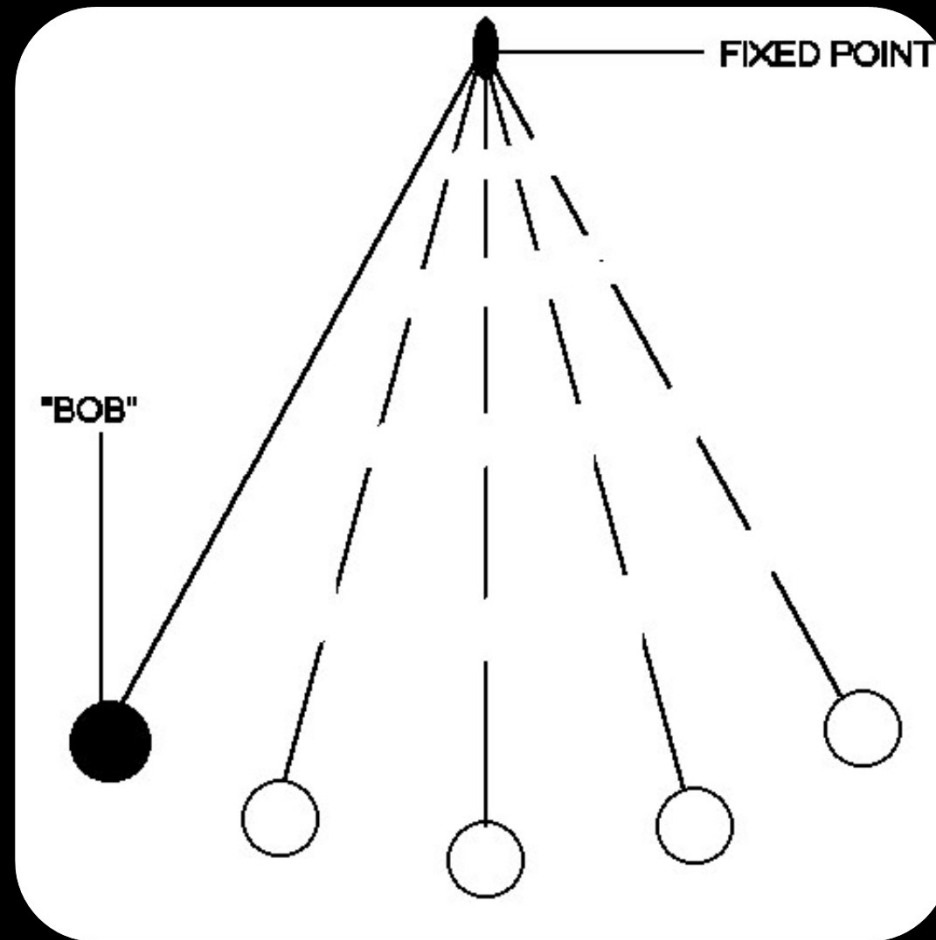
PLAYTESTING IS THE SCIENCE

- Go out into the world
- Make observations
- Interpret them
- Take action based on your interpretation

SCIENCE = RECIPE

- Understand where results came from
- Repeatability & Verifiability
- Falsifiability

MORE DATA = BETTER DATA



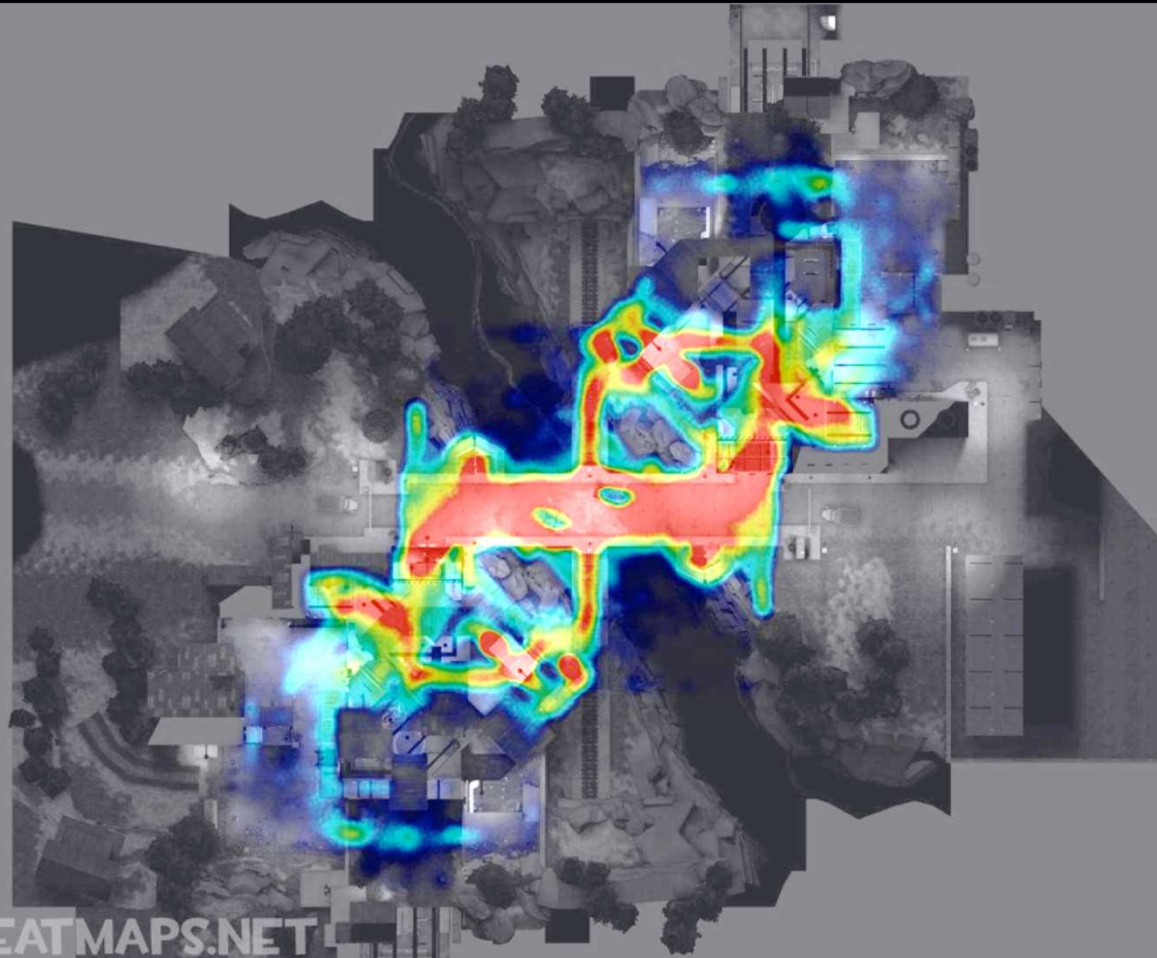
“INSTRUMENTS”

- Watching players
- Logging the game
- Spoken: “Think Aloud” or “What are you trying to do?”
- Post-game: Questionnaires or Interviews

GAME LOGGING

- Software QA stuff
- For finding bugs
 - i.e. where does the player break through the world
- Requires lots of playtesting
- Video Logging may be useful

VALVE TF2 HEATMAPS



TF2HEATMAPS.NET

SPOKEN

- “Think Aloud”
 - players need reminders
- Find out their intention; if they're confused it may not be obvious

POST-GAME

- Questionnaires are usually useless by themselves
- Use an interview to ask about the questionnaire

ANALYSIS

- http://theportalwiki.com/wiki/Portal_developer_commentary
- Portal Walkthrough With Developer Commentary:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4jXIGK_LwDk

PLAYTESTING FOR PMU199

- a *minimum* of one hour and 3 playtesters
- Analysis in your design blog, with link to your raw data.
- Hand in all your results with your final report.

REPORTING RESULTS

- Game Description
- Ingoing concerns and questions
- Procedure
- Participants
- Results
- Analysis
- Changes to make

REPORT

- Game Description
- Ingoing concerns and questions
- **Procedure**
- **Participants**
- **Results**
- **Analysis**
- Changes to make

SCIENCE!!!!

INGOING CONCERNS AND QUESTIONS

- If you have any expected results from the playtest put them there
- Any summarization of informal playtesting

RESULTS VS. ANALYSIS

- Results is a raw, summarized listing of what happened, without interpretation

GIVEN RESULTS, WE ...

- Analyze
- Changes

DON'T

- Use playtesting to verify that your game is “good”

DO

- Get specific results from playtesting
- e.g. the jump mechanic feels really fun - we should provide more jumping opportunities

DON'T

- Asking leading questions
- “Did you enjoy our fun starburst mechanic?”



DO

- Asking open-ended questions
- “How did you feel about the Starbust mechanic?”

DON'T

- Take your playtesters too seriously
- OR
- Change your game from playtest to playtest
 - Exceptions can be made if playtesting reveals ways your game is broken.



DO

- Keep it consistent



DO

- Avoid overfitting
- Kill bugs that have nothing to do with your playtest

DUSTIN FREEMAN

- Thanks to Dustin Freeman for input on these slides!

