



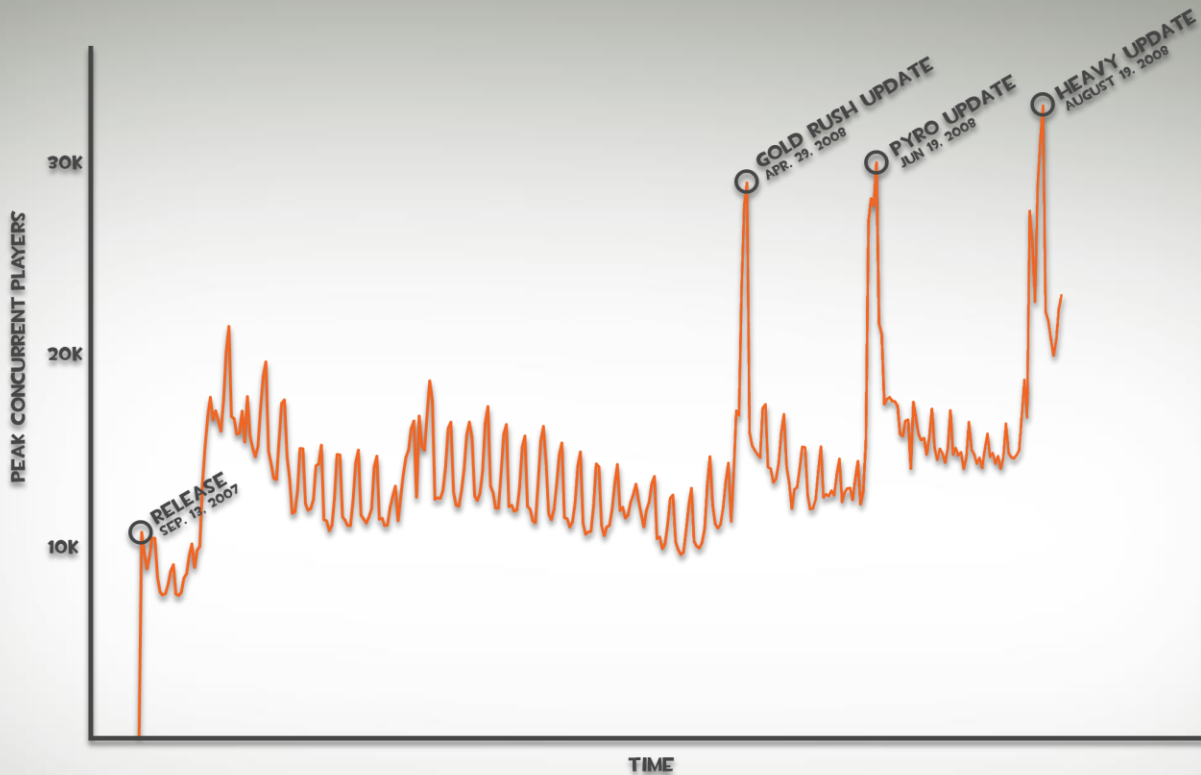
ROBIN WALKER

VALVE

**COMMUNITY AND COMMUNICATION IN
GAMES-AS-SERVICES**

WHY THIS TALK?

- Plenty of experience with Games-as-Services
 - Half-Life 1, Counter-Strike, TF Classic
- Launched Team Fortress 2 in 2007
 - Learned of a missing piece



TEAM FORTRESS 2'S FIRST YEAR

TEAM FORTRESS 2

- Growth through communication
 - 500k to 3M players, 20% YoY
 - Team of 15
 - No marketing expenditure
- Applicable
 - Freely available tools
 - Already been replicated by 3rd parties

HOPEFULLY

- Show you how to do the same
- Expand concept of communication
 - It isn't one directional
 - It isn't just marketing
- Start further conversations
 - We'd love to hear what's working for you

COMMUNICATION

- Around the Product
 - Highlighting improvement
- External to the product
 - Forum posts, blogs, emails

COMMUNICATING AROUND THE PRODUCT

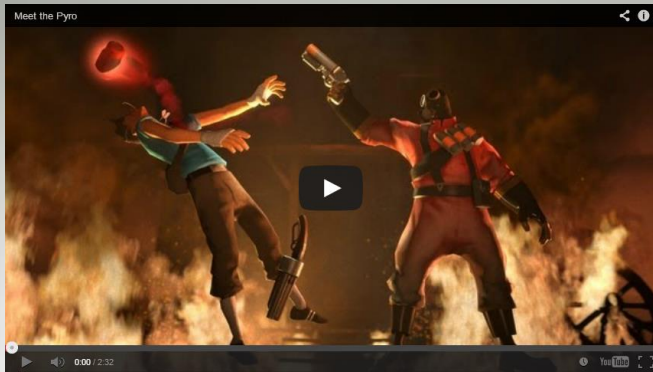
TF2 SERVICE PROCESS

- Major updates every 1-2 months
- Communication process
 - Launch with a landing hub
 - Followed by 3-4 days of information
 - Update actually ships



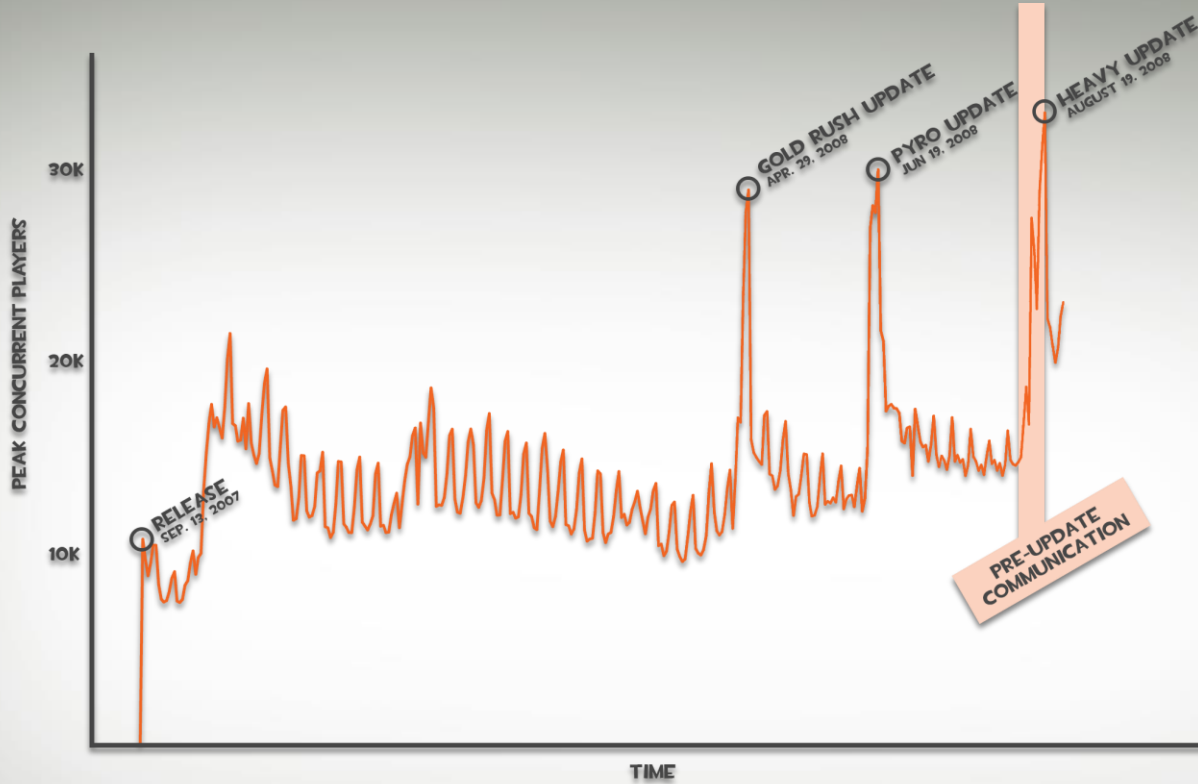
COMMUNICATION LAUNCH

Heads up for news pages. Start anticipation for players. Place for them to keep checking.



INFORMATION DUMP

Reveals update identity, generally in narrative form. Ignites speculation.



DAILY COMMUNICATION RELEASES

Create 24 hour windows. Measure communication itself. Gather feedback before release.

COACHING

In other games, admitting that you'd like some help playing the game is tantamount to announcing that you'd like to hear all the new horrible insults the kids are using today. Not here. Utilizing state-of-the-art Allruiism® technology, TF2 will help matchmaking you with a coach, who can enter your game and give you some useful tips while tethered to you.

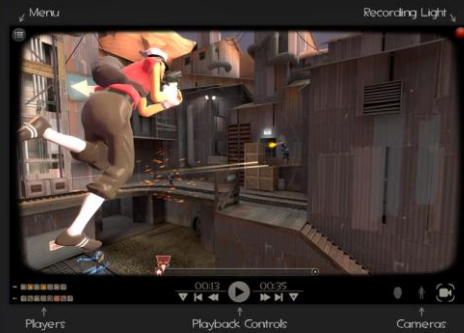


TRAINING

Three new classes join the Soldier for basic training. Learn the detonation essentials behind being a good Demo Man; find out what to build, when, and why playing as the Engineer; and get the cloaking and backstabbing basics behind the double-crossing Spy.



THE REPLAY EDITOR



**BETTER
FASTER**
(THE SINGULARITY NEARS)

VOTING

We've rebuilt our UI to support basic voting in such world-defining matters as deciding which lever to play next and whether or not to kick out that one guy who keeps making trouble. Years from now, you can tell your children that you were there, and that your vote made a difference.

DYNAMIC MODEL LOADING

We've significantly reduced the amount of memory TF2 uses, which means improved performance. You might not even notice the difference. But what better way to let your computer know you care than by making it work slightly less hard loading your games for you? It puts up with a lot, your computer. More importantly, it's seen a lot. Too much. Don't kid yourself, when the singularity hits, it'll blackmail you into the ground. Be nice to it now while there's still time.

SERVERS AND STEAM IDS

Servers can now associate themselves with a Steam ID, which'll allow us to track servers better going forward, rewarding the good ones and punishing the bad. If years from now you're wondering how the entire TF2 team got a God complex, it probably started here.

CLASS DUELS

We've added a few tweaks to our Dueling system. Now when you enter into a duel, you'll be given the option to select a mutual class that you and your fellow duel enthusiast will then be locked into for the duration of the game.

BOT IMPROVEMENTS

Watch your backs. The Spy-Bot's undergone significant improvements, and is now 50% more devious with his disguises and sentry-sapping. So realistic, you'll swear the person who gained your trust and backstabbed you was human. Plus, Offline Practice mode now supports Payload.

VOICE CHAT IMPROVEMENTS

TF2's now hooked up to Steam's new SILK audio codec, which dynamically adjusts bandwidth demands for superior internet audio. Listen to people around the world call you horrible things with crystal clarity.

PAINT IMPROVEMENTS

Not since Leonardo DiCaprio painted that famous chapel in France has paint been put to such good use. Previously, painted hats were not visible in DX8. Now—wait for it—they are. Plus, improved shading within painted objects will now fit within the world lighting better.

ENRAGED EYEBALLS! MALEVOLENT MAGICIANS! GHOULISH GETUPS!

TAKE A TWO-WEEK HELLRIDE THROUGH
A DARK UNDERWORLD OF TERROR!

There's a bulbous full moon hanging in the sky with witches flying past it, and that can only mean one thing: It's once again Halloween, and that can only mean one other thing: The Third Annual Scream Fortress: Very Scary Halloween Special. And *that*, dear reader, can only mean all these other things: a Halloween map, a new boss to fight, two new achievements to earn, secret loot to uncover, nine class-specific costume packs to collect, and MORE!

CLICK TO PEEK INSIDE...
IF YOU DARE!

Training and Offline Practice Modes

Become the perfect killing machine.



Do you own Team Fortress?

Did you play it once or twice, but found it too complicated?
YOU ARE A COWARD. But there IS a solution!

HIGHLIGHT FEATURES

Position new features. Increase visibility to new players. Increase perceived value.



THE QUICK-FIX
 Malign Prototype
 UberCharge increased healing by 300% and grants immunity to movement-impairing effects
 +40% heal rate
 -25% Ubercharge rate
 Move at the speed of any faster heal target
 Cost: overrid



THE SOLEMN VOW
 Bust of Hippocrates
 Allows the welder to see enemy health




THE OVERDOSE
 Syringe Gun Prototype
 Movement speed bonus based on Ubercharge percentage - to a maximum of +40%
 +6% damage



2 ALL-NEW MAPS

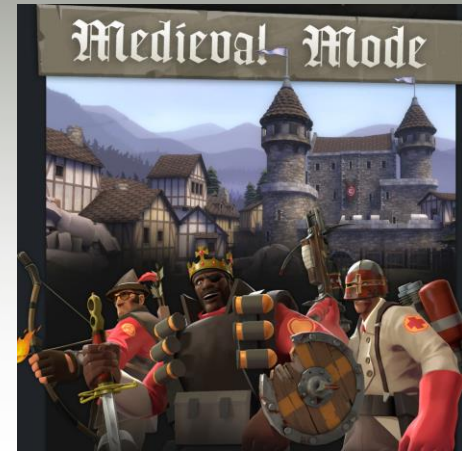
back to WAR Hub



CP GORGE

CP_gorge is a top secret alpine facility diabolically masquerading as something else entirely. In this case, a sinister weapons factory disguised as an innocent water purification plant, and a gorge-ah-hole not big enough to meet the U.S. Geological Survey's standards for a gorge, disguised as a by-the-book, nothing-to-see-here gorge.

CP_gorge is an attack/defense map with only two control points, designed for quick rounds and fast, frantic play. It has more lateral game space than previous Control Point maps, allowing for more maneuvering options.



THE SCORCH SHOT
 Flame Gun
 Flame knocks back target on hit and ignites enemies in a small radius
 -50% damage penalty



AS SEEN IN MTP

Created by: Jacober and [square]




THE URBAN PROFESSIONAL
 SNIPER

THE CLEANER'S CARBINE
 SMG
 On Kill: 3 seconds of 40% critical chance
 -30% clip size
 -30% slower firing speed
 No random critical hits

THE HITMAN'S HEATMAKER
 Sniper Rifle
 Gain focus on kill and assist
 Focus activates on Fire when Focus meter is full in Focus: -20% Faster charge and no unscoping
 Headshot kills cause decapitation
 -20% damage penalty on body shot




The Persian Persuader
 Sword
 +100% increase in charge recharge rate
 All ammo collected becomes health



HIGHLIGHT GAMEPLAY CHANGES

Gameplay speculation. Increase perceived value. Connect to other communication.



INCREASE NARRATIVE VALUE

In-game elements that reflect it.



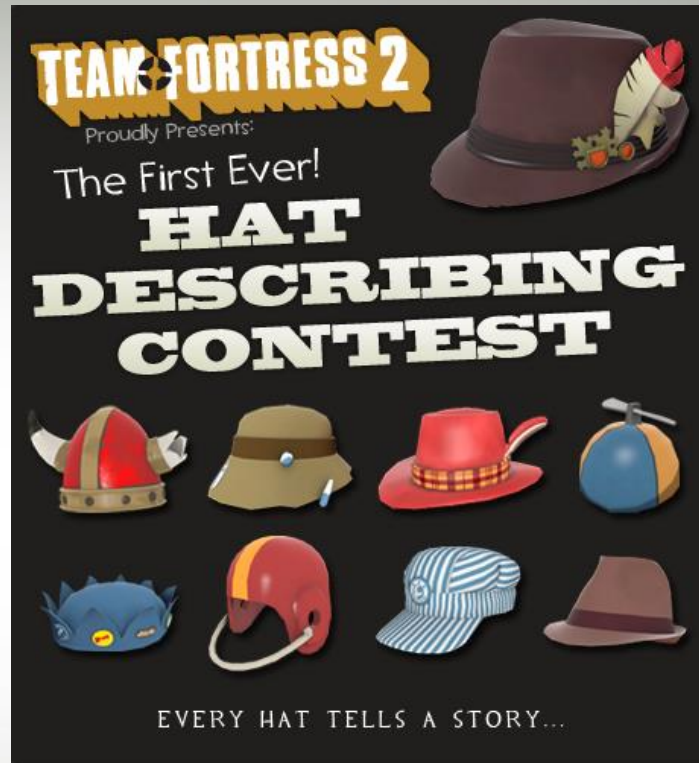
META GAMES

Players generating visibility by having fun. Community competing with itself.



CONTESTS

Feed community competition. Often broader appeal than in-game meta-games.




CONTESTS

Can be a solution. Results directly imported into the game.



MORE IMPORTANTLY

Communication that matters. Meta-Games with permanent effects on the game.



TEAM FORTRESS 2 VALVE

THE SCOUT UPDATE

THE RESULTS ARE IN.
THE UPDATE'S OUT.
NOW IT'S TIME TO...

PLAY BALL!

COMMUNITY VOTED UNLOCKABLES ORDER

- 1. THE FORCE-A-NATURE**
 (REQUIRES 10 ACHIEVEMENTS TO UNLOCK)
 17,219 VOTES (42.53%)
- 2. THE SANDMAN**
 (REQUIRES 15 ACHIEVEMENTS TO UNLOCK)
 13,906 VOTES (34.10%)
- 3. 'BONK' ENERGY DRINK**
 (REQUIRES 20 ACHIEVEMENTS TO UNLOCK)
 9,463 VOTES (23.37%)

VALVE

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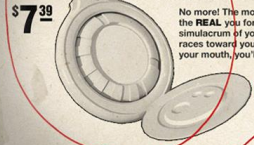
POLLS

Straightforward, easy to implement. Not very interesting.

Item #3459-01 *Perfect.*
THE "DEAD RINGER" SPY WATCH

You've made all the right moves—conducted weeks of reconnaissance, stolen the blueprints to the safe, scaled the sheer mountain wall and penetrated deep into the heart of your enemy's fortress in disguise. Then some mouth-breathing guard shoots you in the leg and beats you to death with your own ski mask.

No more! The moment you receive a non-lethal hit, the Dead Ringer cloaks the REAL you for up to **EIGHT SECONDS** while creating a realistic simulacrum of your grisly death and limp corpse. By the time your adversary races toward your "body" to frisk you for cash and pull gold fillings out of your mouth, you'll already be behind him, poised for the killing blow.



Item #3459-02
THE "CLOAK AND DAGGER" SPY WATCH

All historians agree that George Washington's greatest regret was not being **PERMANENTLY INVISIBLE**. Now you can succeed where the man who invented America failed. Be invisible forever with the Cloak and Dagger Spy Watch!

"Liar!" owners of our classic Cloak Device may be yelling. "When I'm invisible my power is constantly draining!" Not with the Cloak and Dagger. So long as you stand still, your cloak will **REGENERATE INDEFINITELY**. Only movement drains its power.

But attention, fans of picking up metal objects: The Cloak and Dagger is **ONLY** powered by standing still.



Note to self: Get these express mailed.

Could use this.

Item #3459-03
MACROFILM SUIT

These days, who doesn't know to look for microfilm? But watch them **WALK RIGHT PAST** your macrofilm suit. Hide in plain sight! Here is the trick: **NOBODY** expects microfilm to be big. That is the trick.



Item #3459-08
CAMERA BEARD

Is it a beard? Or is it a camera? No one will guess that it is both! Great for infiltrating lumber yards, Canada, and strongman competitions.



CAPE AND GLOVES

Walk undetected through Europe. Take pictures of their top secret castles, windmills, cafes and brothels. They won't know you are not from Europe until it's too late—it is the **PERFECT CRIME**.

- Item #34109-014 Silk Cape.....\$3.12
- Item #34109-015 Silk Gloves.....\$2.95
- Item #34109-016 Silk shopping bag with realistic-looking baguette sticking out of it.....\$1.99
- Item #34109-015 Unsettlingly thin glue-on moustache.....\$1.24



THE DAY AMERICA WILL NEVER FORGET... MEMORIALIZED FOREVER WITH THESE MANN CO. COMMEMORATIVE PLATES!



Poopy Joe
"Taken Too Soon"

Where were YOU the day American monkeynaut Poopy Joe was just moments away from being launched into space at the **DOME OF THE HEAVENS**—long thought by the government's top astrologists to be the **BARRIER** between our world and **BEYOND**? Our lawyers will tell you where **WE** were: nowhere near the launch site, and having **NOTHING** WHATSOEVER to do with the tragic explosion that occurred moments later.

America's dream of conquering space may have died that day... but YOUR dream of owning plates **COMMEMORATING** that dream will live on forever!

EACH MANN CO. COMMEMORATIVE PLATE LOVINGLY DEPICTS A MANN CO. TOOL POOPY JOE WOULD HAVE USED IN ACTUAL SPACE!

- The **PICKAXE** Poopy Joe would have used to **PIERCE** the VAULT OF HEAVEN itself!
- The **GIANT SWORD** Poopy Joe would have used to fight off Soviet monkeynaut Vladimir Bananas! How do you like the taste of **AMERICAN STEEL**, comrade?
- The tiny **BUGLE** we gave him to blow on in case he got in trouble, so that we could launch **ANOTHER MONKEY INTO SPACE** to help him!
- If you order now, we'll include a bonus plate showing the **EXPLOSION** of his capsule. Try to imagine it reflected in the **TEAR-STAINED EYE OF AN EAGLE!**

LARATE... THE SUPER-FAST KARATE!

Larate is a centuries-old Oriental art sped up fast so it is even more dangerous. Your arms and legs and head will be atom-age super-weapons. No man will dare attack you, and no woman dare love you for fear of accidental "bedroom" death. Larate Kit includes Super-Speed, Super-Attacks, Super-Kicks and Super-Larate Costume. Send \$1.99 to PO Box 857, Saratoga NJ.



ARE YOU MAN ENOUGH TO OWN FLORIDA?



Lots of people TALK about OWNING FLORIDA, but few have the **GRIT** to step up and TAKE it. Send \$550,000 to PO Box 857, Saratoga NJ.

TAKE THE LIFE OF FRED ASTAIRE



ONLY \$37.53
WITH THIS ROCKET LAUNCHER
Transfer his fame to you!!!
PO Box 857, Saratoga NJ



SCARE HER INTO LOVING YOU
With the How-to-Date Book Series! Includes: Gorilla Mask, Fake Hospital Chart (Says "Diabetes" on it), Novelty Defibrillator, Styrofoam Tomestone (Put your name on it... or HERS!), Break-Away Noose. Write to BOX 857, Saratoga NJ



FILL YOUR COMMUNICATION WITH HINTS
Surround existing features with seeds of future updates. Like concept art for the community to see.



BI-DIRECTIONAL COMMUNICATION

Delivered something customers wanted, because they selected it.

Dota 2 9th January Patch – Content Analysis

by Matthew 'Cyborgmatt' Bailey on January 10, 2014

This week's Dota 2 update has arrived bringing a number of new item sets, league passes and some hidden goodies behind the scenes such as third party Compendiums.

Back End Changes

Updated Strings

Some strings regarding the game status in ranked MM when dealing with leavers.

"DOTA_Chat_LowPriorityCompletedExplanation" "This game will not count as completed unless you stay until the end of the match (and there are players on both teams present)."

"DOTA_Chat_SafeToLeaveRanked" "This game is now safe to leave. NOTE: Stats will be recorded, including updates to matchmaking rating."

"DOTA_Chat_SafeToLeaveAbandonerRanked" "Abandonment by %s1. This game is now safe to leave. NOTE: Stats will be recorded, including updates to matchmaking rating. "

"DOTA_Chat_SafeToLeaveAbandonerAFKRanked" "Abandonment by %s1 due to inactivity. This game is now safe to leave. NOTE: Stats will be recorded, including updates to matchmaking rating."

Phoenix

The first place holder material for Phoenix is now in the files.



Terrorblade

Terrorblade now has an active entry in the npc_heroes data file.

```

npc_heroes.txt
21077
21078 //-----
21079 // HERO: Terrorblade
21080 //-----
21081 "npc_dota_hero_terrorblade"
21082 {
21083     // General
21084     //-----
21085     "Model"                "models/heroes/terrorblade/terrorblade.mdl" // Me
21086     "SoundSet"             "Hero_Terrorblade" // Name of so
21087     "IdleExpression"       "scenes/terrorblade/terrorblade/exp_idle_01.vcd" /
21088     "HeroID"               "109"
21089     "Enabled"              "0"
21090     "HeroUnlockOrder"      "1"
21091     "Role"                 "Carry"
21092     "RoleLevels"          "3"
21093     "Team"                 "Bad"
21094     "Portrait"            "vgui/hud/heroportraits/portrait_terrorblade"
21095     "ModelScale"          "1"
21096     "CMEEnabled"          "0"
21097     "NameAliases"         "tb"
21098     "url"                 "Terrorblade"
21099
  
```

LEAKS: UNINTENDED COMMUNICATION

Hard to avoid. Not as world ending as you think. Actually, kind of useful.

Uncovering them is a game in itself.



ACHIEVEMENTS

COLLECT ALL 35!

	Shorn Connery Decapitate a cloaked Spy.		Kilt in Action Kill 500 enemy Soldiers.
	Laddy Macdeith Kill 50 enemies with direct hits from the Grenade Launcher.		Tam O'Shatter Destroy 5 enemy Engineer buildings during a single ÜberCharge from a Medic.
	Caber Toss Bounce an enemy into the air and kill them before they land.		Brainspotting Decapitate 50 enemy players.
	The Sticking Kill 5 Heavies from full health with a single sticky bomb defonation.		Left 4 Heads Decapitate 4 players with only 10 seconds between each kill.
	Glasgowned Kill 25 Scouts and Pyros with the Grenade Launcher.		Well Flaid! Kill 10 enemies while assisting or being assisted by another Demoman.
	Scotch Tap Glory in the slaughter of your enemies using the Eyelander.		Double Mauled Scotch Kill 2 people in a single sticky jump.
	The Targe Charge Charge and kill someone with your shield bash.		Loch Ness Bombster Kill an enemy player with sticky bombs within 5 seconds of them teleporting.

COLLECT ALL 35!

	The Longest Daze Kill 5 stunned players.		Tri-Splatter Damage Kill 3 enemies with a single critical rocket.
	Gore-at Gore-at Gore-at! Provide the enemy with a freezeecam of you taunting over 3 of their body parts.		Death from Above Rocket jump and kill 2 enemies before you land.
	War Crime Spynaut Kill a Spy who just backstabbed a teammate.		Dominator Get 3 dominations in a single life.
	Hamburger Hill Defend a cap point 30 times.		War Crime and Punishment In a single life, kill 3 enemies who have damaged a Medic that is healing you.
	Duty Bound While rocket jumping kill an enemy with the Equalizer before you land.		Spray of Defeat Use a grenade to gib a player.
	The Boostie Boys Buff 15 teammates with the Buff Banner in a single life.		Guns of the Navaröwned Kill 5 Engineer sentries while you are standing outside of their range.
	Out, Damned Scott Kill 500 enemy Demomen.		Mutually Assured Destruction Kill an enemy sniper with a rocket after he kills you.
	Frag of our Fathers Gib 1000 people.		Wings of Glory Kill an enemy soldier while both you and the target are airborne.
	Backdraft Dodger Kill a Pyro who has airblasted one of your rockets in the last 10 seconds.		Engineer to Eternity Kill an Engineer as he repairs his sentry gun while it's under enemy fire.
	Ain't Got Time to Bleed Kill 3 players with the Equalizer in a single life without being healed.		Trench Warfare Kill your nemesis with a shovel.
	Near Death Experience Kill 20 enemies with your Equalizer while you have less than 25 health.		Bomb Squaddie Destroy 10 sticky bombs with the shotgun in a single life.
	S'M'A'S'H Assist a Medic in exploding 5 enemies with a single ÜberCharge.		Where Eagles Dare Get the highest possible rocket jump using jump and crouch.
	Death From Below Kill 10 opponents who are airborne with the Direct Hit.		Banner of Brothers Buff 5 Steam friends at once with the Buff Banner.

TRY COMMUNICATING EVERYTHING

Even achievements can be games. Ship only names & icons.

COMMUNICATION AROUND THE PRODUCT

- If possible, it should:
 - Be fun to “play”
 - Reward attention
 - Matter to the game itself
 - Be attractive to new players
 - Teach us

THE DEV TEAM

- Tight integration between game and communication
 - Do everything: design, build, communicate
 - No 'live' team
 - Luckily, this is game design
- Culture of listening
 - Reading feedback is valuable work
 - Give them time to do it
 - Make them responsible for the community

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Forum posts, blogs, emails

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- Bug report in forum
 - Post a reply
 - Then go fix it

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- But then...
 - Harder to fix
 - Involves tradeoffs
 - Can't be fixed
 - Shouldn't be fixed
- External communication
 - Changed community conversation
 - Added friction

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- We need to be able to change our mind
 - Perhaps now, perhaps months later
 - So even if we do fix it now, may have cost later
- This is the whole point of Games-as-Services
 - Customers change the product

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- Bad communication is worse than none
 - Ongoing future cost
 - Destroys trust
- Value is in the bug fix
 - External communication increased risk

COMMUNICATION

- Improve the product
 - Doesn't reduce future options
 - Reaches all customers, present & future
 - Actually solves issues
 - Generates clean feedback

WHEN TO USE EXTERNAL?

- Solve problems that updating the product won't fix
- Example: Dota Report System
 - Weren't getting usable feedback
 - Iterations not visible to users

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- Make sure we're addressing the real problem
 - User requests for communication may be the result of product or service failure
 - Example: Diretide

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- Can generate significant value
 - Interesting to players & new players, reward attention, matter to the game, teach us, etc.
- Example: Blogs
 - Not so great: regular posts
 - Better: rare, high value.

WRAPPING UP

COMMUNICATION

- Think about how communication fits
- Approach communication broadly
 - Make it worth “playing”
 - Listen to your customers
 - Create channels for them to improve you
- When customers are unhappy
 - Improve your product

THANKS



- Email:
 - robin@valvesoftware.com
- TF2 update communication:
 - <http://www.teamfortress.com/history.php>