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ART 499

### Let's Play: A Senior Project

If I had told anyone 10 years ago that some of the richest people in the world made their living by playing video games on the Internet, people would have thought I was crazy. But this is very much a reality today, where the number one most-subscribed-to YouTuber is PewdiePie, a Let's Player worth 12 million dollars, with over 40 million subscribers and 10 billion views and counting. Let's Players are YouTubers that capture footage of a game, as well as their related (or sometimes unrelated) commentary. Often times they will also use a webcam to record their visual reactions. This is the type of YouTube channel I set out to create with this project. My significant other, Matt Silverman, and I have always enjoyed playing games together and frequently exchanged banter whilst doing so. Thus, the channel OTPlay was born. Creating a YouTube channel is a comprehensive way to use what I learned as a New Media Production major, in all processes. It required pre-planning such as scriptwriting and/or storyboarding, production via use of audio and visual recording equipment, and most of all post-processing, using editing programs such as Adobe Premiere, Photoshop, and Audition.

This semester, I have managed to produce one full Let's Play (with over 40 videos), started two other Let's Plays, and made three live action videos. The result is 34 subscribers and 1,000 views, so far. Although I do hope these numbers grow before too long, I am confident in the direction the channel is heading and it has received only positive feedback so far in the form of comments and private messages. One original goal

of this assignment was to upload at least one video per week for the entire semester, and I am proud to say that not only did I meet that goal, but the majority of weeks, I surpassed it with as many as six videos on a given week. A lot of YouTubers upload videos every day, but for the sake of my current schedule, I opted for just Tuesday and Thursday uploads. In addition to using YouTube as a medium to reach subscribers, I also incorporated other social media. Social media beyond YouTube is essential in creating a successful channel. As it stands, OTPlay has a Facebook page and Instagram account, with a Twitter coming soon. I make sure to post to Facebook every time I uploaded a batch of videos, both to make the people who “like” the page aware of it, and to hopefully allow new eyes to see the channel itself. What helped the most was sharing these posts to my personal Facebook account, because friends are more likely to support you than complete strangers. And if you have their support, they might tell a friend about it, and that friend will tell their other friend, and so on. Networking is as important for maintaining a YouTube channel as it is with everyday life. While most of my videos have yet to take off, some notably have.

Interestingly, my most popular video so far is not part of a Let’s Play, but rather a live action cooking video. There are likely two reasons for this. One, the video is based around an of-the-moment game called Undertale, and many people actively search for content related to it every day. Another is that it incorporated cosplay, which makes it stand out from similar videos by other YouTubers. Though live action videos are time-consuming to produce (especially if they involve costumes), it’s proven well worth it, and I have plans to make many more following this semester.

This project taught me a lot about being a YouTuber, and I look forward to continuing this channel long after school ends. It's exciting finally being able to use all the tricks and tools I've been learning during the past four years to produce new media in a satisfying and even enjoyable way. YouTube and its audience will always be evolving, and thanks to the things I learned at UT, I know I can count on myself to evolve with it.