

# What makes a video game great? There's now a scientific way to stop GUESSing

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*Fortune* magazine noted in February 2016 that sales of video games in 2015 in the United States reached \$23.5 billion, "a 5% jump over 2014, according to the Entertainment Software Association." More than 1,000 new games are released each year. Although sales and user reviews might point to gamer satisfaction, consensus is lacking in what exactly constitutes a "good" game. Now there is a scientifically validated means of gauging satisfaction, the Game User Experience Satisfaction Scale, or GUESS.

As described in their upcoming paper in *Human Factors: The Journal of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society*, [human factors](#) researchers Mikki H. Phan and Barbara S. Chaparro of Wichita State University and Joseph R. Keebler of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University developed the GUESS to help game developers and researchers gather quality feedback from playtesting and game evaluations.

The comprehensive multiphase study examined questionnaire responses about more than 450 popular commercial games from more than 600 gamers. Phan et al. found that the GUESS can be used with players at any experience level and with a variety of entertainment game genres to assess satisfaction on nine subscales:

- Usability/playability
- Narratives
- Play engrossment
- Enjoyment

- Creative freedom
- Audio aesthetics
- Personal gratification
- Social connectivity
- Visual aesthetics

Phan and colleagues are gathering data to further validate the GUESS and explore its use across multiple game genres. "We're very excited for practitioners and researchers to start using the validated GUESS," the authors noted. "This tool has the potential to become the standard when measuring [video game](#) satisfaction."

To further that goal, they have made the GUESS available under under a Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-ND 4.0) License. The instrument can be freely copied and redistributed in any medium or format for any purpose as long as it passed along unchanged and in whole, and appropriate credit is given.

**More information:** "The Development and Validation of the Game User Experience Satisfaction Scale (GUESS)" *Human Factors: The Journal of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society*, 2016.

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