



Swiss Safe Games Guide

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Games as a leading medium - opportunities and challenges

Games have experienced a sharp rise in the last twenty years. They have become a globally respected cultural asset and the entertainment medium with the highest profit. Games offer an incredible number of opportunities for society. They are already used successfully beyond gaming in the context of medical therapies, in the communication of political issues, but also in the solution of scientific problems, as in the case of Citizen Science, and generally for the transfer of knowledge and as a medium of communication.

However, as with any medium, there are numerous advantages and disadvantages. People or groups can hijack games with evil intentions. Since its foundation, the Swiss Game Developers Association (SGDA) has been working to ensure that its members are aware of these pitfalls and assume responsibility to society when developing games.

The Swiss Safe Games Guide (SSGG) is aimed at game developers and designers. It shows what extremism is and how this is expressed in games or which elements can risk being misused by extremists for their purposes. Game developers can use the guide to get an overview of the essential information on the topic in a short time. The guide is an aid to the development of games that are free of extremism.

A strong game community as part of games

Communities are essential in combating extremism. This is because it influences the communication culture in a game and is also very important in curbing problematic behaviour.

Communities are an integral part of every game today. Exchanges in digital and physical channels are part of today's fan and pop cultures. In addition to the actual gaming experience, they are an expression of cohesion and interest in a common theme: the passion for a particular game or game culture, in general, holds them together.

Healthy communication culture, strong community

A community consists of different actors. This diversity is reflected in how a healthy communication culture is cultivated. Ideally, communication in the game community is respectful, age-appropriate, and promotes fair play.

Both bottom-up and top-down initiatives characterise the communication culture in the community. Two goals are at the forefront: first, to create an environment where newcomers and experienced gamers have positive experiences inside and outside the game. Secondly, the initiatives guide game developers and gamers to ensure that gamers are exposed to age-appropriate content.

Game ratings, such as the PEGI (Pan European Game Information), are good examples of promoting positive community communication based on a self-declaration system. The categorisation based on PEGI helps to determine the suitability of a game, especially for children and young people (Game age ratings explained). This is important because when children “engage with things they are not emotionally ready for, it can have long-term effects on their well-being” (Dr Linda Papadopoulos).

Furthermore, it is essential also to consider in-game communication. People with dishonest intentions can always use a multiplayer game with a low age rating to contact minors or vulnerable people. It is essential to know that games played online with other gamers are not affected by these classifications. Committing to a healthy communication culture on different levels is crucial in countering the growing toxicity problem.

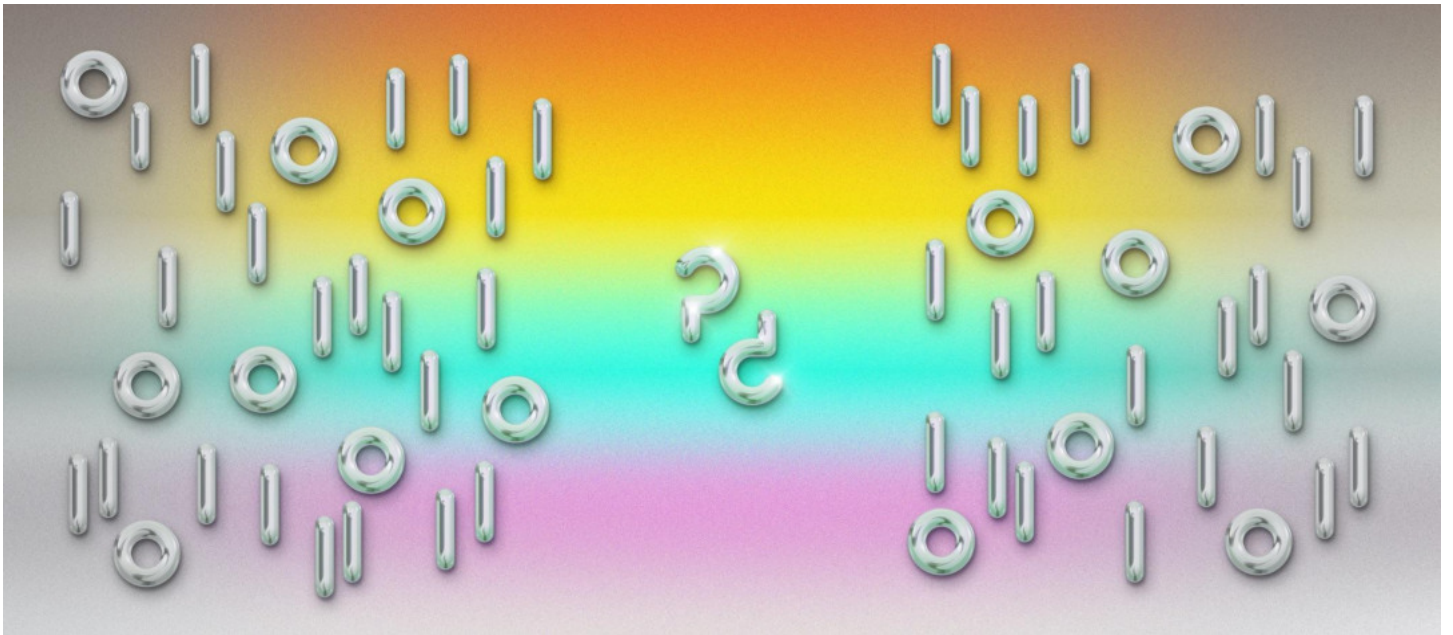
GG! Good Game! Do's & Don'ts - unwritten rules

Unwritten rules of conduct and communication contribute to a healthy communication culture. These are based on the gamers' own experiences and contribute to a respectful interaction among gamers, or in the vocabulary of games: GG!: Good Game!

Interestingly, despite the variety of games available, these do's & don'ts all have a common foundation. They help to create an inclusive environment by emphasising patience and understanding for newcomers. At the same time, aggressive language, cheating and leaving in the middle of a game are explicitly mentioned as actions to be avoided and are considered unfair.

Here are some general rules for gamers of all ages:

Do's	Don'ts
Play by the rules	Cheat
Give new players a chance to learn the ropes	Set yourself above newcomers (Noobs)
Learn how to mute other players or yourself	Send spam in chat
Highlight the winners of the game (GG)	Insult the winners after losing the game



Toxicity as a problem

Most of the community and gamers behave correctly and do not pose a problem. But unfortunately, some people or groups stand out negatively and poison the gaming experience of entire communities.

Despite attempts to foster a positive and respectful communication environment, online gaming communities are not immune to social problems. For example, hate speech and extremism are common issues that can be seen across different platforms. Additionally, the language used in games is always evolving. Sometimes this evolution can either reduce or eliminate the source of harm or signal that the behaviour has become a part of the culture. For example, the phrase "Kill yourself!" may have evolved to "KYS" as an expression.

Toxicity can take many different forms, such as 'name-calling, racism, stalking, hate speech, insults, explicit language, swatting (calls to emergency services with false reports of violent crime), flaming (hostile online interactions involving an exchange of abusive messages or flames between users), physical threats and doxing (disclosure of sensitive information about a person) (Ewalt Blair). Racism and sexism are also mainly used to spread toxicity and contaminate gay communities (Ghosh).

Disruptive or destructive behaviour can go unchecked if no resources are available to deal with such situations. Bystanders can become unintentional accomplices when left without a choice or feel pressured not to intervene. When such behaviour

is normalised, gamers are less likely to turn against abusers for fear of being targeted themselves.

What can cause toxicity?

Communication Discord

The newness of online environments and anonymity in these spaces has resulted in a lack of established social norms within video games, unlike those long established over time in face-to-face interactions. This lack of norms can lead to a lack of self-regulation among gamers and cause confusion and conflicts.

The absence of nonverbal cues in online gaming exacerbates these challenges. Additionally, when players do not have to deal with the social repercussions of their actions, they are more likely to engage in inappropriate behaviour. The anonymity provided by online spaces can also lead gamers to assume that everyone in their group shares the same views and values, which can further decrease empathy and devalue individuality.

Online games are not typically created to facilitate ongoing interactions between players, making it difficult to establish relationships and trust with other gamers. Instead, players often engage in battles and competitions where one mistake can harm someone they've just met. Interactions tend to become hostile quickly and without reason, leaving little opportunity to build trust and benefit from the favourable exchange.

Looking closer at undesirable behaviour

Undesirable behaviour can have multiple roots, such as a lack of understanding of cultural differences, immaturity, the desire to provoke others, conforming to community norms, retaliation, or taking justice into one's own hands. In addition, how players behave in a game is influenced by their understanding of what is expected of them and their fellow players.

Below are just some effects of such behaviour towards gamers:

- Gamers may feel harassed by other players who can access their game statistics or additional personal information. Additionally, third-party websites collect data from API interfaces and share information about gamers.
- Revealing the specifics of behavioural software, such as punishment systems, can encourage players to push the limits of the software, which can lead to

using it as a tool to harass others or to develop automated systems for large-scale attacks.

- Less experienced or new players may be blamed more, as their actions are more visible, or they are assumed to make more mistakes.

Does the dose make the poison? What we can do against toxicity

Games, like other media, can be used as a platform to spread hateful content and extremist propaganda. Game developers and publishers are therefore taking active steps against this. They want to ensure that community members are protected from toxicity and are not harassed during the gaming experience. However, emerging toxicity harms the game and can even damage the reputation of the game developers. In the worst case, gamers turn away from the game, causing it to lose popularity in the community.

In most cases, a game's community gives no cause for complaint. Game developers and publishers think they are safe and do not take a decisive approach to prepare for an emergency. At the same time, it is important not to intervene hastily in gamers' communication and restrict freedom of expression.

However, the commitment and effort against emerging toxicity should not be underestimated. For example, the gradual transition from healthy to negative communication makes it difficult to act decisively on the toxicity problem. Furthermore, due to the vast amounts of texts, images and videos, and content created, daily monitoring and, if necessary, deleting them requires many resources. Without it, there is a risk of economic damage and a risk of damage to the personal reputation of the game developer.

Countering hate speech and extremism

There is no one-size-fits-all solution against hate speech and extremism. Instead, the problem must be tackled at different levels and by combining several instruments. Below are some approaches in more detail.

Legislation

The first level of combating hate speech and extremism can be done through state laws and regulations. They set the rules on what harmful content are prohibited and which are not.

However, it is essential to note that games are usually played in numerous countries with different political systems. For example, in certain countries, laws restrict freedom of speech to oppress citizens. As a result, content may be allowed in one country but considered hateful in another. These legal differences pose a challenge in implementing this approach.

Guidelines

Game developers and publishers should be aware of the scope of the problem as early as the development phase. The same applies to forums, chat rooms and moderation of content/communities. Guidelines for the community are an excellent way to start addressing the issue.

A Code of Conduct can establish clear guidelines and expectations for gamers and game developer staff and provide a framework for consistent enforcement. It should be easily accessible and clearly presented, using simple language, and providing illustrative examples rather than an exhaustive list of rules. This will help gamers understand the expectations and show them how to adjust their behaviour if they make a mistake. It should also capture the spirit of the rules and not just focus on listing specific dos and don'ts.

In-game resources

Provide gamers with the necessary resources to report instances of toxicity in-game actively. It is important to provide gamers with the resources needed to report instances of toxicity in-game actively. The ease of access to reporting features, the variety of reporting categories, and the language used in the reporting process all play a role in gamers' expectations. Showing gamers that their reports are valued, and meaningful can help to increase accountability. Providing specific, actionable feedback in the form of warnings or penalties can also make it clear to gamers what their responsibilities are, reducing the number of appeals and decreasing the rate of repeat offenders.

Content moderation

Content moderation is a way to identify and remove hateful and extremist content. Its use mainly covers social media and forums and, to a lesser extent, games. An example of such is the use of word filters, where specific words or phrases are marked as to be immediately removed. At the same time, such blocked words can also limit how gamers with a particular marginalised can identify with one another and further burden these groups.

A disadvantage is the difficulty of recognising nuances in communication. It is difficult to categorise some behaviours as either problematic or acceptable. There is a blurring of the lines between activism and harassment, friendly banter and offensive mockery, and banter between strangers and friends.

Education

How individuals are introduced to digital environments and the actions modelled by caregivers can significantly affect their ability to navigate these environments and interact appropriately and respectfully with others. Young people must be taught how to be respectful and empathetic towards others, handle frustration, and understand the importance of teamwork in online games. Additionally, it is essential to provide a safe space for them to discuss their online experiences. The norms and expectations of specific online communities and genres can influence acceptable behaviour. Therefore it is necessary to promote diversity in online environments while allowing for self-expression and a sense of community.

Standing up against toxicity

Detect offensive content, flag, and identify user sources before disciplinary action is taken.

Implement systems to reinforce polite behaviour and set community standards for how gamers interact with each other during the gaming experience.

Increase transparency between game developers and gamers.

Regularly revise reporting systems to more accurately identify and, if necessary, punish behaviour that gamers consider toxic.

Encourage parents to talk to their children about the issue early and regularly so that they can recognise hate speech and know what to do if an incident occurs.

Where appropriate, choose a tool to filter swear words and moderate content with child-friendly game settings.

Reward positive and constructive behaviours.

Collect data and track trends regarding harmful content and user groups.

Game developers take note!

Disruptive behaviour is rooted in various factors. While game developers cannot consider all factors, awareness of these issues and collaboration with other stakeholders can contribute to effective solutions.

Game design

Certain elements in games can foster negative behaviour. Identifying these components can provide game developers with guidance on what areas they should pay particular attention to avoid provoking unfavourable interactions between players. They also encourage knowledge of the processes that give rise to problematic patterns.

Competitive situations can foster a hostile attitude or a negative interpretation of others' actions. Unnecessary sources of conflict such as zero-sum resources can create hostility between players, particularly for strangers who have not yet had a chance to build mutual trust or a common understanding. This can make it difficult to establish peaceful interactions.

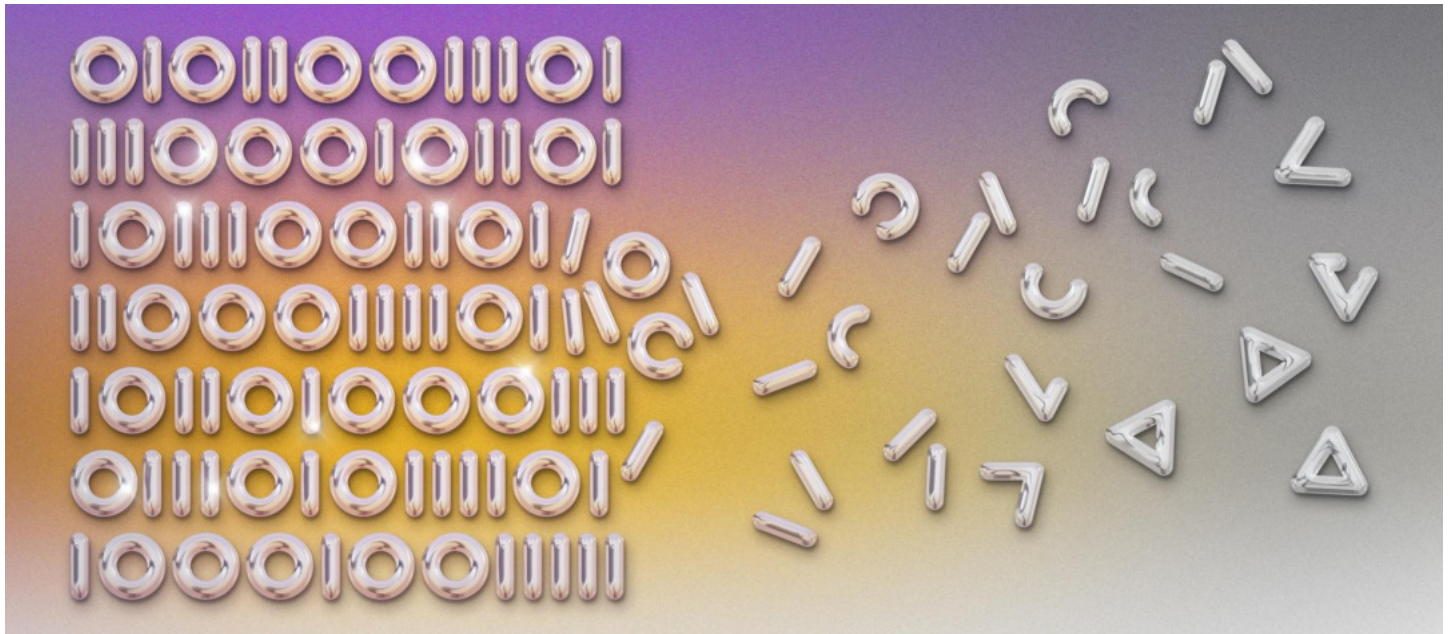
Games can also provide incentives for exploitation and transgression, such as when game developers create situations that encourage players to optimize their gameplay, but then punish them for doing so, such as through spawn camping or smurfing. This can create tension and make it difficult for players to enjoy the game. Developers should aim to create opportunities for players to succeed and help them develop healthy and constructive habits and avoid creating mechanisms or goals that disrupt other players intentionally or through regular use.

Theme & tone

The theme and tone of a game can greatly affect the behaviour and characteristics of the community that forms around it. They also play a role in determining how anti-social behaviour is handled within the game. It's important to consider how the game's tone and theme can influence player behaviour and create an environment that promotes positive social interactions.

Games that focus on negative behaviours such as cheating, stealing,

ambushing, or robbing can create a challenging environment for players to interact with one another, and can make it more difficult for them to develop positive social behaviours. However, games that promote social behaviour and empathy are more likely to foster healthy social interactions among players. Additionally, game characters' personalities can also influence players' thoughts and behaviours. Over- or under-representation of certain groups of characters in games can also have negative consequences, as it can lead to gatekeeping and send the wrong message about who belongs in gaming communities.



Games in the light of criminal law

Although games take place in a digital, virtual world, gamers and game developers, do not find themselves in a lawless space. Therefore, it is logical to consider games and game behaviour in the context of criminal law. In this context, the main criminal provisions in computer games will be explained below, and it will be shown where the borderline of behaviour permitted under criminal law lies.

Representations of violence

Article 135 of the Swiss Criminal Code, which contains the prohibition of violent depictions, is particularly important for game developers and designers. A wide variety of acts are prohibited, including producing and marketing violent depictions. The article of the law refers to particularly cruel depictions in which the infliction of severe physical and psychological suffering (on humans or animals) is the main focus. These depictions must be forceful and seriously violate the elementary dignity of human beings. Consequently, not all depictions of violence are covered by the criminal provision, but only the most brutal ones. The threshold of what is punishable is accordingly high. Since games can fall under the provision of the law, the production and marketing of particularly cruel games are punishable. The mere consumption of the content, however, is not sanctioned.

Defamation offences

The Swiss Criminal Code makes attacks on a person's honour punishable by law. In legal terms, honour is essentially understood as a person's reputation and sense of

being a “decent” person. Not every negative expression or behaviour towards a person is punishable. Instead, the statement must be of some consequence. If someone is merely called a bad gamer or an unfair gamer, the threshold of a punishable violation of honour is not reached. Moreover, the statement must always refer to a specific person and not an undefined group. Offences of defamation can be committed in different ways. First, defamation and character defamation (Art. 173 and 174 SCC) are among the punishable forms of conduct. Anyone who expresses or spreads untrue (defamatory) facts about a person are punished. In contrast, the offence of defamation (Art. 177 SCC) punishes defamatory statements. In computer games, defamation offences are committed primarily in chats or online forums in the form of insults.

Threat

The law provides a penalty for those who put anyone in terror or fear by making a severe threat (Article 180 SCC). However, it depends very much on the circumstances under which the statement is regarded as a serious threat. Thus, even threats that are not meant seriously are punishable if the perpetrator pretends to be able to influence the occurrence of the threat. In any case, the threat must be capable of frightening the victim and therefore be of a certain severity. Serious or less serious threats of any kind in online forums or chats can thus be considered threats in the eyes of the Criminal Code.

Coercion

The offence of coercion is, to a certain degree, more severe and far-reaching than the threat. In this case, someone is forced to engage in a specific behaviour through the use of violence, the threat of serious consequences, or “other restriction of freedom of action” (Article 181 SCC). In a virtual game environment, coercion by force or restriction of freedom of action is generally not possible, as the offence must be directed against a (real) person. However, the commission of the offence by “threat of serious disadvantages” is probably more important. As explained in the previous section, the threat does not necessarily have to be meant seriously, and the disadvantages envisaged must be of a certain severity. For example, a gamer who threatens another gamer to force them to engage in a specific (real-world) behaviour is committing a crime.

Terrorising the population

According to Article 258 SCC, anyone who threatens or feigns danger to life, limb or property and thereby terrifies the Swiss population is liable to prosecution. The perpetrator must publicly convey the impression that a real or fictitious danger exists. As a result, a larger circle of people must feel threatened, which is why the

threat must at least appear serious. In this respect, a certain seriousness of the act is also assumed here. However, a sharp dividing line between the permissible and the impermissible cannot be drawn. In the game environment, scaring the public can be committed, for example, through messages in computer games. For instance, in games with radical right-wing content, a real threat to members of certain ethnic groups or denominations may be communicated. This can meet the criteria of Article 258 of the Criminal Code and have criminal consequences for game developers. However, the threat must be taken seriously, so the threshold for criminal behaviour in this example is relatively high. The criminal offence is fulfilled in the case of serious, threatening statements via mass media.

Public incitement to crime or violence

Anyone who publicly incites to commit a crime (or offence involving violence against people or property) is punished under Article 259 SCC. The incitement must be insistent and thus suitable to induce the recipients to commit a criminal offence. Furthermore, it must be made public, which is the case if the call is directed at a larger or indeterminate group of persons. The conduct is also punishable if the call is not complied with. A public call in the virtual world to commit a crime in the real world is generally punishable. Thus, corresponding incitements in computer games, chats or online forums can have consequences under criminal law.

Racial discrimination

Racial discrimination in connection with computer games is currently particularly explosive. Article 261bis of the Criminal Code makes racial discrimination a punishable offence. It covers behaviour that disparages or discriminates against people of a particular ethnicity, race, religion or sexual orientation. The penal provision covers the most diverse forms of conduct, which in principle, must take place in public. Incitement to hatred and discrimination, the dissemination of discriminatory ideas and, in general, discrimination or disparagement are punishable. Here, it depends very much on the individual case whether a behaviour is punishable or not. After all, the act or the statement must have a certain gravity. In the context of games, the development and publication of computer games that incite hatred and discrimination or serve to disseminate discriminatory ideas, for example, are associated with consequences under criminal law. In addition, caution is required in chats and online forums that are publicly accessible.

Extremism in the context of this guide

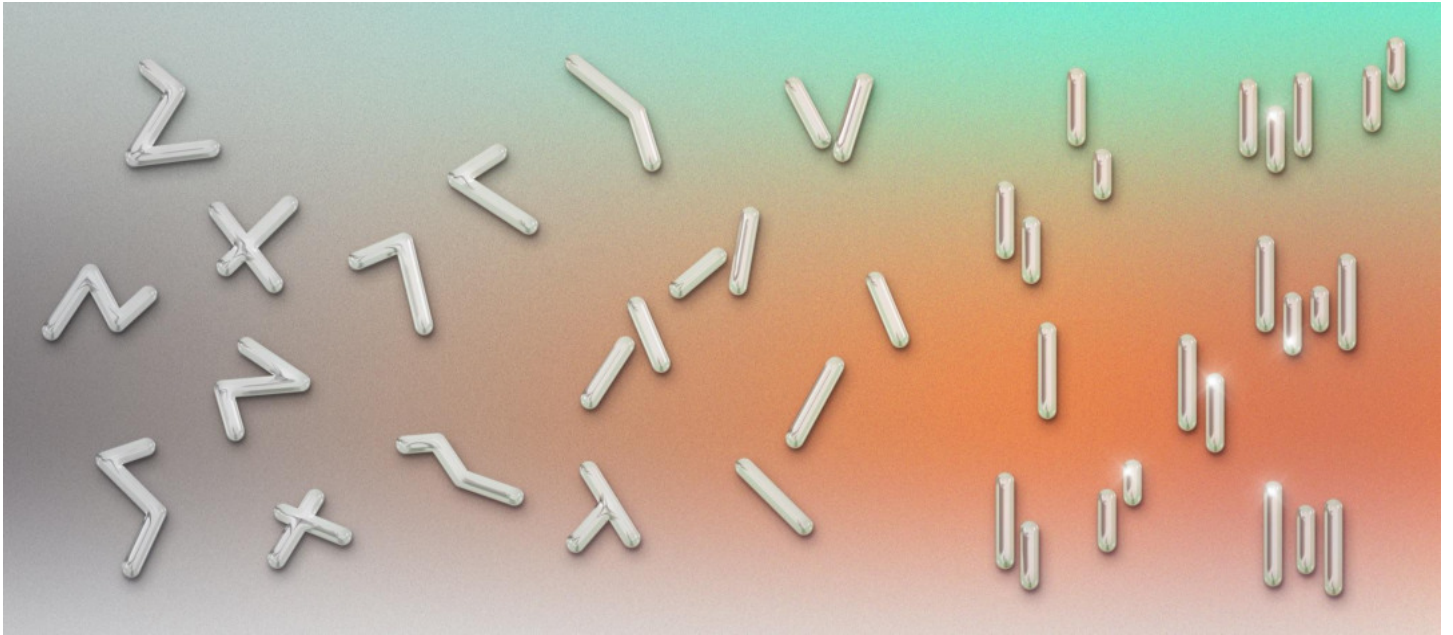
The Swiss Safe Games Guide is based on an absolute definition of extremism, in line with the Federal Council's position.

"The Federal Council understands extremism to mean those political directions that reject the values of liberal democracy and the rule of law. In general, movements and parties, ideas and patterns of attitudes and behaviour that reject the democratic constitutional state, the separation of powers, the multi-party system and the right to the opposition are described as extremist.

Extremists substitute the distinction between friend and foe for political opposition. Consequently, they strictly reject other opinions and interests and believe in particular, supposedly irrefutable political-social goals or laws." (The Federal Council)

"Extremists do not describe themselves as such. On the contrary, they and their activities exploit the achievements of the liberal democratic order, which they oppose: among other things, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly and legal protection.

What remains decisive is the rejection of fundamental democratic values and principles of order, not the political fringe of extremist ideas." (The Federal Council)



Radicalisation, extremism, and propaganda

Understanding radicalisation processes, detecting radicalisation

Radicalisation is a process in which a person adopts increasingly extreme political, social or religious aspirations, including extreme violence. In this way, individuals or groups increasingly adopt an extremist value system. The path here can go from a neutral position to sympathy, the justification to endorsing extremist ideas and actions. (Zurich Cantonal Police – Prevention Department)

Different reasons can lead to people becoming radicalised. The process of radicalisation is neither straightforward nor predetermined. Certain individual, collective, social and psychological factors can favour its triggering. One event alone cannot explain the radicalisation process. Instead, it is the result of the coincidence of an individual life path with a value system that justifies violence – which can be reinforced by a perceived threat to identity or morality and further fuelled by social networks, both physical and virtual. It is often difficult to say with certainty why a person becomes interested in radical movements because there is no typical profile of persons susceptible to radicalisation. (Swiss Security Association)

Online radicalisation cannot be decoupled from offline events, and a separation of digital versus 'real-world' is not very useful because internet use is an increasingly natural part of everyday life. The offering of the internet and (alternative) social

media theoretically enable self-radicalisation independent of offline contacts, i.e. only based on published content – without personal interaction. In practice, however, this process is limited. (Sophia Rothut, Heidi Schulze, Julian Hohner, Simon Greipl & Diana Rieger)

Certain conditions can promote vulnerability to radicalisation. These are so-called push factors. With reference to the target group of this guide, the combination of the following characteristics should be mentioned in particular:

- Identity crises
- Political, socio-economic or social fears and frustrations
- Individual and collective experience of discrimination, hostility, and humiliation, for example, due to religious affiliation or origin
- Social discontent/indignation at the unfair treatment of others
- Lack of social integration

What to do in the event of an incident?

Step 1

Look out for possible characteristics of radicalisation. See also chapter: Understanding radicalisation processes, detecting radicalisation:

- a. Document the incidents. This will make it easier to keep track of and will help you if you need further help later.
- b. Check if you need support yourself.

The earlier you recognise a radicalisation process of a person or group, the sooner you can take responsibility for monitoring and influencing. The more advanced the radicalisation, the more likely you should seek support and share this responsibility.

Step 2

Talk to a trustworthy person, preferably someone involved in game development. Collect the information that seems to be of relevance.

Step 3

If you conclude that indications of radicalisation are hardening or need further support, you can contact the Swiss Game Developers Association SGDA. With the person in charge at the association, you can check whether additional support is required from a contact or counselling centre or even the police according to the respective jurisdiction – see *Contacts*.

Specialist agencies may be able to help you accompany people who are vulnerable to radicalisation. They can provide other perspectives or advice on developing counter arguments.

The primary goal is to help the concerned person maintain a critical attitude and build a positive identity.

Step 4

Depending on the situation, the police may take preventive measures. The task of the police is to maintain public peace, order and security. To this end, the police also work preventively: in cooperation with the population, they take measures to detect and prevent possible criminal offences at an early stage. (Zurich Cantonal Police – Prevention Department – see *Contacts*)

Good to know

In Switzerland, organised efforts by a group to abolish democracy, human rights or the rule of law are insufficient to trigger preventive measures by the intelligence service. To achieve these goals, a group must also commit, promote or advocate acts of violence. (The Federal Council)

Extremism-free games

Extremist groups also use online content for their purposes. They even use games to spread their ideologies. Various forms of extremism can be promoted through propaganda with relevant information carriers. Be it in digital form, for example, in social media or paper form, or through direct contact. Classic forms of extremism are in alphabetical order:

- Jihadism,
- Ethno-nationalism,
- Left-wing extremism,
- Monothematic extremism,
- Right-wing extremism.

Understanding extremism

A wealth of violent extremist propaganda material is available online. Vulnerable persons may come across it by searching or be actively pointed out by others.

Extremists do not describe themselves as such. On the contrary, they and their activities exploit the achievements of the liberal democratic order, which they oppose: among other things, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly and legal protection.

Not everything that is extreme is also extremist: the decisive factor for extremism is the rejection of fundamental democratic values and principles of order, not the political fringe. (The Federal Council)

Narratives

A narrative is a story that creates meaning. Within a grouping of people, it creates meaning by propagating important values, usually in an emotional way. Naturally, this is appealing to the proponents of these values.

Not every narrative is extremist: the narrative refers to an ideologically shaped opinion or fact, often internalised as an easy-to-memorise formulation and slogan. In extremist groups, certain narratives are constantly repeated, deepened using lectures and writings, presented graphically appealingly, and thus solidified. Nevertheless, almost all radicalised people increasingly adopt extremist narratives, which are politically, socially or religiously influenced.

Should people from your environment increasingly use such ways of thinking and speaking, codes, abbreviations or arguments, this can signify progressive radicalisation.

Examples of individual narratives of certain forms of extremism

Jihadism

Islamic extremism is a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam to establish an Islamic society based on corresponding values. When this intention is pursued using violence, it is referred to as jihadism. Examples of narratives are:

"Be a martyr; come to Paradise!"

"The warriors of God do not love life, they love death!"

"Only Götzenanbeter want democracy!"

Left-wing extremism

Left-wing extremism includes communist and anarchist currents as well as ideologies described as revolutionary, which pursue calls for resistance against state structures and institutions. In addition, left-wing extremists call for the fight for an egalitarian society. Applications of violence can be directed against material assets,

against security authorities, as well as representatives of the economy or politics. Examples of narratives are:

"Overcoming fascism by fighting the oppressive state!"

"Anarchy against capitalism!"

"We fight against Nazis – Smash right!"

Right-wing extremism

Right-wing extremism manifests itself in xenophobia, racism or exaggerated nationalism, with the belief in inequality legitimising violence. Calls for or exercise of violence are accompanied by demands for stricter laws and consistent action on the state and the forces of law and order. Calls for structural violence through exclusion can result in the expulsion or annihilation of groups. Examples of narratives are:

"Holocaust is an invention, it never happened!"

"Our cultural identity is under threat – stop the great exchange!"

"The purer the race, the clearer the path!"

Symbols and scenes

There is no exhaustive list of banned extremist symbols in Switzerland. Even established and unproblematic symbols, icons, logos, trademarks, etc., can be used by extremist groups and are thus not forbidden. The decisive factor is whether they violate penal norms, for example, the penal norm on racism. In extremist circles, codes consisting of numbers or combinations of letters are also used to manifest the extremist ideology.

Extremist scenes can move online as well as offline. Virtual or other online offerings can accelerate radicalisation dynamics by increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of potentially radicalising communication processes. Extremist groups make use of the full potential of online offerings. Multimedia content, such as videos, podcasts or memes, is produced with high effort for specific target groups. (Sophia Rothut, Heidi Schulze, Julian Hohner, Simon Greipl & Diana Rieger)

In Switzerland, violent extremist scenes are composed in different ways. The left-wing extremist scene, for example, can be divided into two main currents: Anarchism and Marxism-Leninism. The violent left-wing extremist scene continues to be oriented towards international and national daily news and is well-networked internationally. These networks are also partly visible in violent actions.

The violent right-wing extremist scene usually behaves conspiratorially and is reluctant to use violence in Switzerland. This is in stark contrast to the developments

in other countries, especially Germany, although there are many connections.
(Security Report Switzerland)

Detect propaganda

Recognising extremist propaganda is not always easy, as often credible arguments are given on the surface, invoking the right to freedom of expression. Often there is no direct call to violate the law. There are several forms of propaganda: from lectures at events to information carriers, digital as well as analogue.

There are hardly any limits to the dissemination of digital content: propaganda can be spread directly from device to device and via groups or forums, social networks, media platforms, encrypted channels, etc. Extremist groups use some portals. While extremist groups create some outlets to propagate their ideologies, others use established platforms. Even media and other channels without extremist references can be misused for extremist propaganda work and, in some cases, reach a large circle of recipients. Individual extremist groups use digital possibilities extensively and professionally.

Extremist propaganda often contains the following three elements, which can be recognised, assessed accordingly and named as follows:

1. Propaganda usually claims to highlight a “grievance”. It identifies those supposedly responsible for the grievance and does this with the help of emotions, such as the reference to innocent sufferers. It thus reflects who is good or bad, perpetrator or victim.
2. Propaganda shows a possible solution to the identified problems: The identified grievances are to be eliminated through personal commitment or struggle by individuals using violence.
3. Propaganda then calls on the addressees to act. Inaction is discredited concerning the supposedly right cause, and the prospect of winning is held out. Depending on the ideology, the gain can be both individual, for example, with the individual potential of paradise in the hereafter, and social, for instance, in paradisiacal conditions in this world.

The police and customs authorities seize material that may serve propaganda purposes and whose content specifically and seriously incites violence against people or property (Jürg Marcel Tiefenthal). Suppose such material is disseminated via the internet. In that case, FEDPOL may, after consulting the FIS, order the deletion of the website in question if the propaganda material is located on a Swiss computer or recommend that a Swiss provider block the website in question if the

propaganda material is not located on a Swiss computer (Art. 13e para. 5 letters a and b BWIS) (The Federal Council).

Concept of an enemy

Extremist propaganda creates enemy images or serves narratives that promote them. Creating or serving victim narratives establishes a reason to legitimise its extremist worldview. By creating images of the enemy, violence is legitimised to carry out this violence then.

Dehumanisation

As with all stigmatisation processes, extremist propaganda attempts to depersonalise communities as a first step. Tendentially, in a second step, these groups classified as hostile are then disparaged or dehumanised. This can be observed, for example, in the designation of the migrant population as a “cancer”. Security forces are described as “thugs of the state” against whom any means is justified. Fellow human beings degenerate into worthless infidels who must be fought.

Contacts

Swiss Game Developers Association SGDA

www.sgda.ch

Swiss Security Network SSN

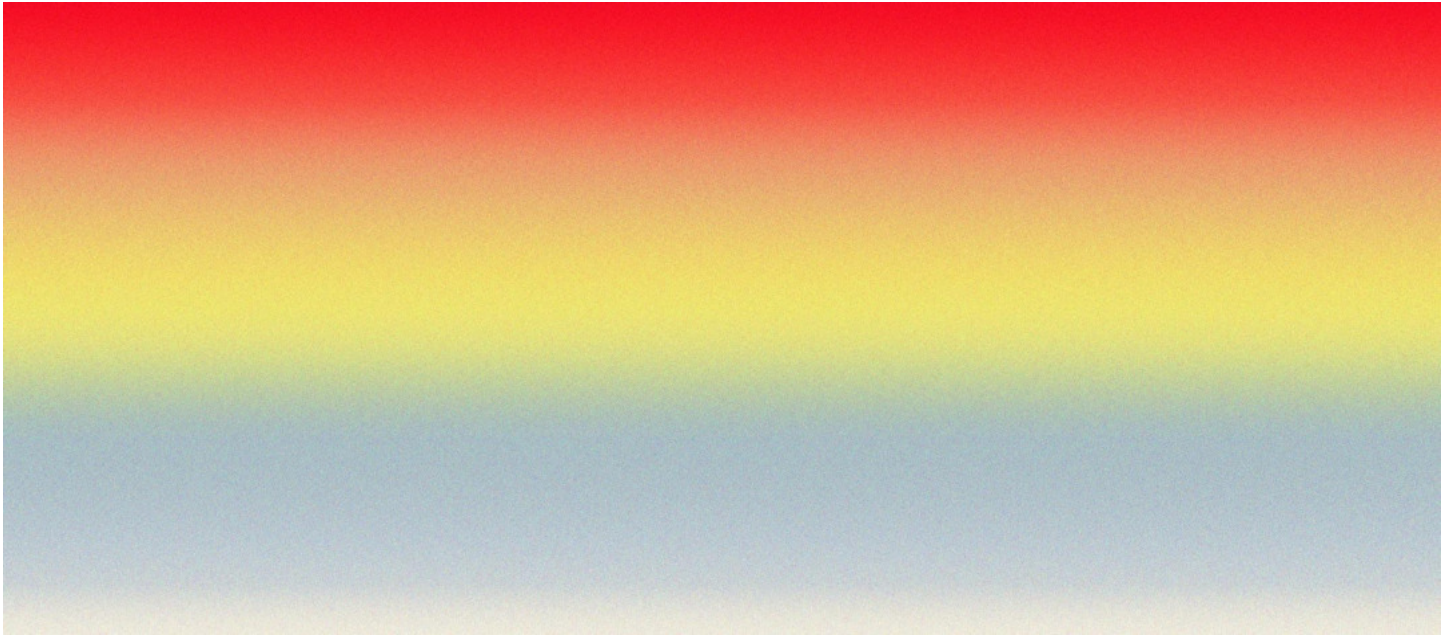
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