

Date: January 19th, 2017

To: Graduating Seniors Majoring in Technical Communications

From: Dean LeClaire

Subject: Writing Patch Notes in the Workplace

Patch notes, also known as Change Logs, are commonly seen in the videogames industry and this memo will describe the expectations for writing and formatting this style of document.

The Purpose of Patch Notes and their Audience

Patch Notes are pieces of communication that document changes made between different versions of a product. In videogames, patch notes show the changes between different versions of the game. These changes often include:

- New Content
- Balance Changes
- Bug Fixes
- Improvements to the Overall Game Experience

Patch notes are a direct way of communicating these changes to the people playing the game being updated. Good patch notes build goodwill with your existing player base, potentially bring back veteran players, and even introduce new players to your game.

The Structure of Patch Notes

At its most basic form, patch notes are a simple series of softly formatted text on a page. Because patch notes often have news about content or game fixes, basic formatting is sometimes sufficient, such as in the Star Citizen patch notes (Baier Of Red, 2017). Other times, more heavy formatting is required, such as in the Astroneer patch notes (Joe, 2017). You will note from these examples that companies vary of style guidelines for the notes they produce. Generally, patch notes should follow this structure:

- Patch Note Title
- Version Number
- Date of Release
- Changes Made
- Developer/Publisher Comments

Note that developer comments are often found throughout the document.

The Content of Patch Notes

All patch notes must contain a list of changes being made to the game. Patch notes may also include such things as known issues (Baier Of Red, 2017), developer comments, notes for a different platform that the game is on (Blizzard Entertainment, 2017), and visual enhancements (Joe, 2017). For most patch notes, the more detailed information, the better. Regardless of the density, readability should be the priority of the document.

With this information, you will continue to do great things in your careers!

References

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