

FACTSHEET

Games that make accessibility challenges or features part of their gameplay

Video games can be a powerful empathy tool

Video games, like cinema, can convey narrative and artistic emotions. But video games have the unique capacity to weave their meaning and theme through gameplay. Thus, creating gameplay that is inspired by or “emulates” disability can be a potent way to help players empathize with people with disabilities.

Games with blind mode/gameplay

A blind legend (Dowino, 2015)



(source: [google.play.com](https://www.google.com/play))

One of the first “high concept” games about disability. A blind legend is innovative because it really puts the players in the shoes of a blind warrior. The game doesn’t have any graphical rendering but focuses on sound spatialization using binaural audio. It allows people to play the game with their eyes closed, using touch input on a smartphone to control the character but navigating the game levels using only surrounding sounds.

Lost and Hound (Daisy Ale Soundworks, 2022)



(source: [Steam.com](https://www.steam.com))

The player takes the role of a scent hound. The gameplay is mainly about following scent trails to find bodies or help someone find their way etc. There are some visuals in the game, but no visual cue is used for the gameplay. Only the sound is used to represent the dog’s smelling sense. A humming that changes in terms of pitch and direction (3D audio) represents the scent trail. The dog’s master is there to help the player by giving indications (“you’re doing great, good boy !”). It makes the game playable by blind gamers.

Shades of Doom (GMA games, 2005)

Another game for blind gamers, but this one is more action oriented. It aims at providing a first-person shooter experience, using only your ears. The player plays as a FDN (Federation of Democratic Nations) officer who is ordered to investigate a high security research facility with which contact was lost 2 hours ago.

To navigate the game level and aim at enemies, the player will use the echo of their footsteps and the groans of the monsters. Their personal computer AI will also help them.

Games implementing sign language

Moss (Polyarc, 2018)



(source: gamesradar.com)

The PSVR game Moss is a virtual reality platformer game on PlayStation 4 and 5. The

player controls a mouse that has to fight, jump and solve enigmas. The game provides some guidance to the player. To make them available to hard of hearing gamers, the developers made the Mouse character speak to them using sign language. It reinforces the emotional link with the protagonist and gives an accessibility lesson to the game industry!

Games for deaf or hard of hearing (HOH) players (gameplay or features)

The Quiet Man (Square Enix, 2018)

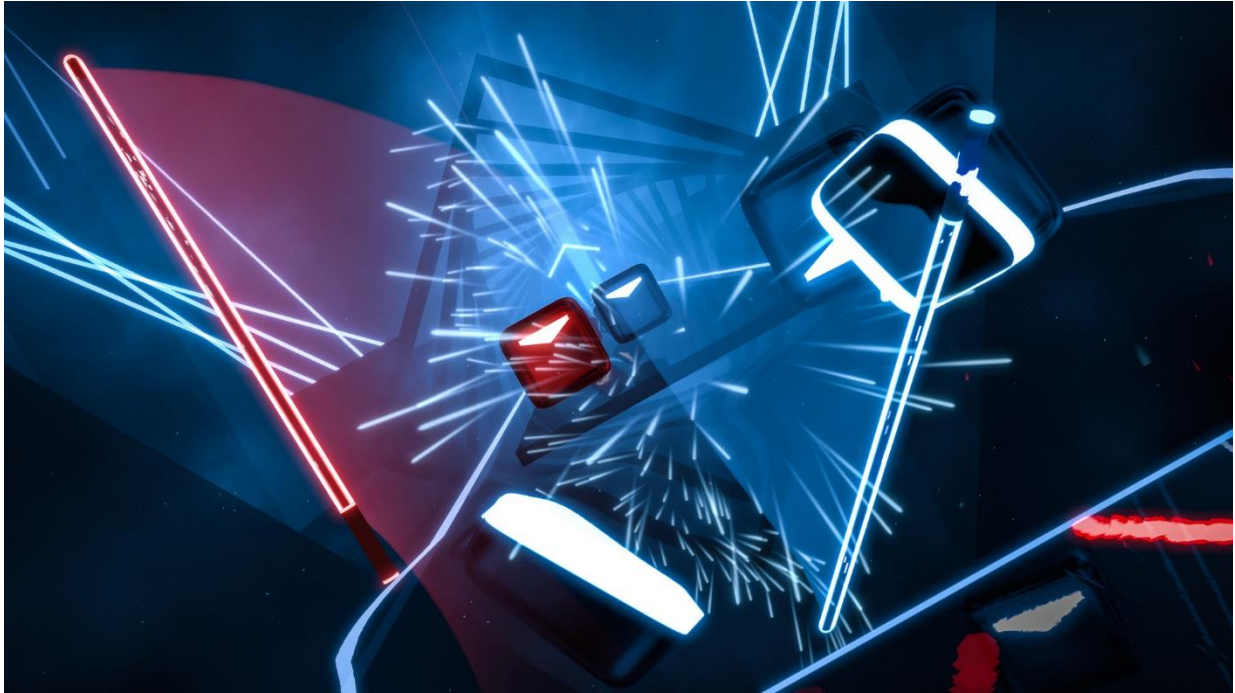


(source: [steam.com](https://store.steampowered.com/app/626540/))

It is the equivalent of the game “A blind legend” but for deaf players. The main character is deaf, and the game tries to mimic the feeling. The game tries to blend live-action movie sequences with gameplay ones.

The game’s ambition is laudable, but the final result is sadly not very good which is a shame since more games should feature characters with disabilities.

Beat Saber (Beat games, 2018) + Subpac



(source: steam.com)

Beat Saber is a rhythm VR game where the player has to slash cubes with lightsabers in a rhythm given by the audio track. The concept is surprising but works great and the game has sold more than a million copies.

[SubPac](#) is a device in the form of a jacket that permits people to feel the music. It uses three components to do so: it vibrates for skin receptors, puts pressure on muscle receptors and pulses vibrations for the bones and the inner ear. It allows deaf players to enjoy the musical theme of the games they play.

Weakless (Punk Notion, 2019)



(source: steam.com)

In Weakless, the player controls two humanoid tree-like characters, a blind one and a deaf one. It is impossible to control both characters at the same time and they must help each other, complete each other, solve puzzles and go through an adventure.

Hellblade (Punk Notion, 2019)



(source: [steam.com](https://store.steampowered.com/app/1056000/Hellblade_Senua's_Sacrifice/))

In Hellblade, the player plays as Senua, a female Pict warrior who recently lost her beloved husband. The main character is very special because she has a mental illness that blends reality and fiction. The game developers hired a professor of health neuroscience from Cambridge University as a consultant to depict the mental struggle as best as possible and make it playable in the actual gameplay. They succeeded so much that they received heartfelt messages from a lot of people. A mother even said that the game saved her boy's life because he could recognize his own disease in the game and went to the hospital. To learn more [check this video](#).

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The #Gaming4skills project has been funded with support from the European Commission. Its content and material reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Project code: 2020-1-FR01-KA201-080669

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