

Going Hybrid!

A handbook for game development
communities & hubs

Interreg
Baltic Sea Region



Co-funded by
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RESILIENT ECONOMIES AND COMMUNITIES

BSG-Go



Created by



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with contributions from project partners from BSG-Go.



About this handbook

This handbook has been created in order to offer best practices around hybrid collaboration & business - for game development communities and community facilitators to learn and get inspiration from. The recommendations are based on various pilots and test environments carried out by the project partners in 2024.

Project Information

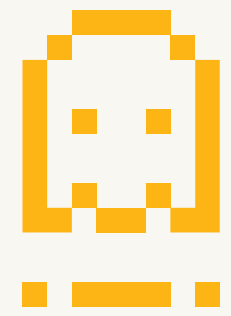
“BSG Go! Scaling-up Baltic Sea Game Support” Interreg BSR Project # C002

BSG GO! explores and pilots promising solutions to shape a resilient support environment for emerging and growing game developer studios and as a result minimise the threat they face in times of crisis.

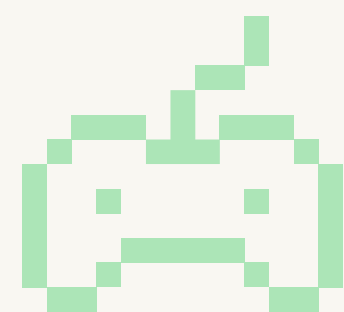
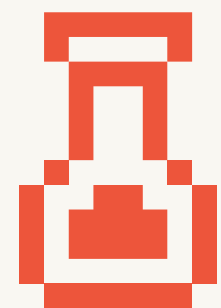
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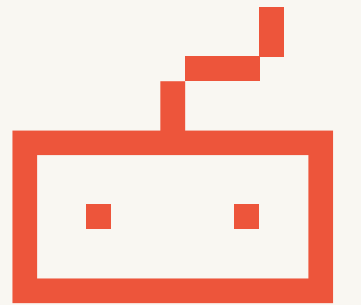
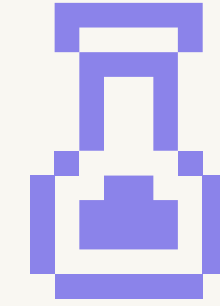
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Introduction

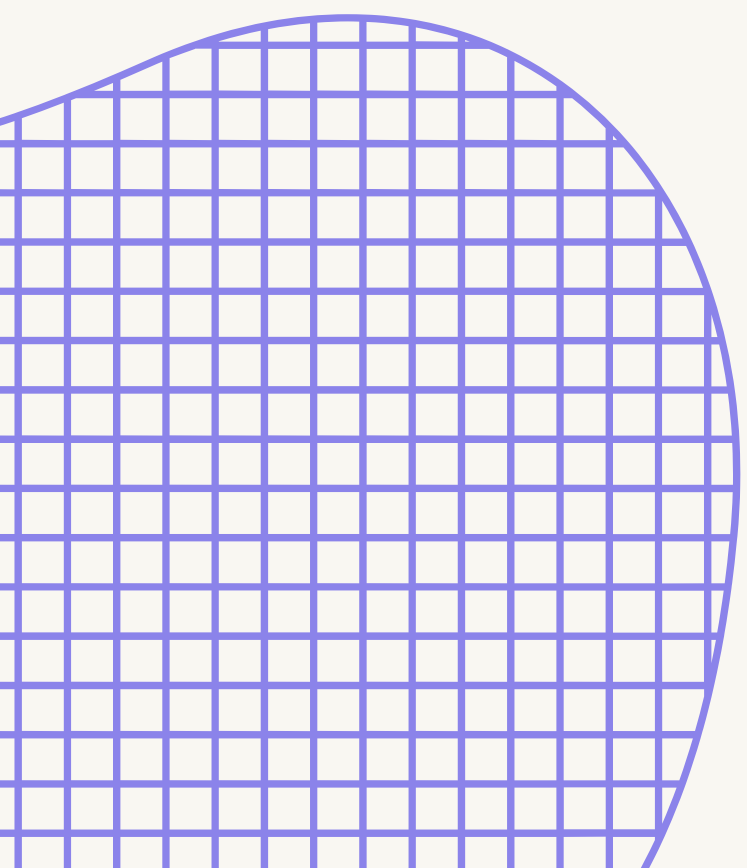


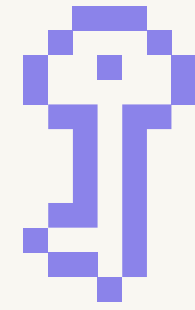


This handbook is primary for game development hubs and community facilitators to learn and get inspiration from in regards of planning and running hybrid communities.

It's based on experience and learnings gathered from various hybrid themed pilots carried out in the BSG-Go project, run by Game Habitat as part of exploring how hybrid solutions can contribute to resilience in the games industry. The handbook also includes learnings contributed from project partners' experiences who also been running hybrid themed pilots.

The handbook touches on three main themes:
Hybrid Events - Business in hybrid spaces - Hybrid work environments



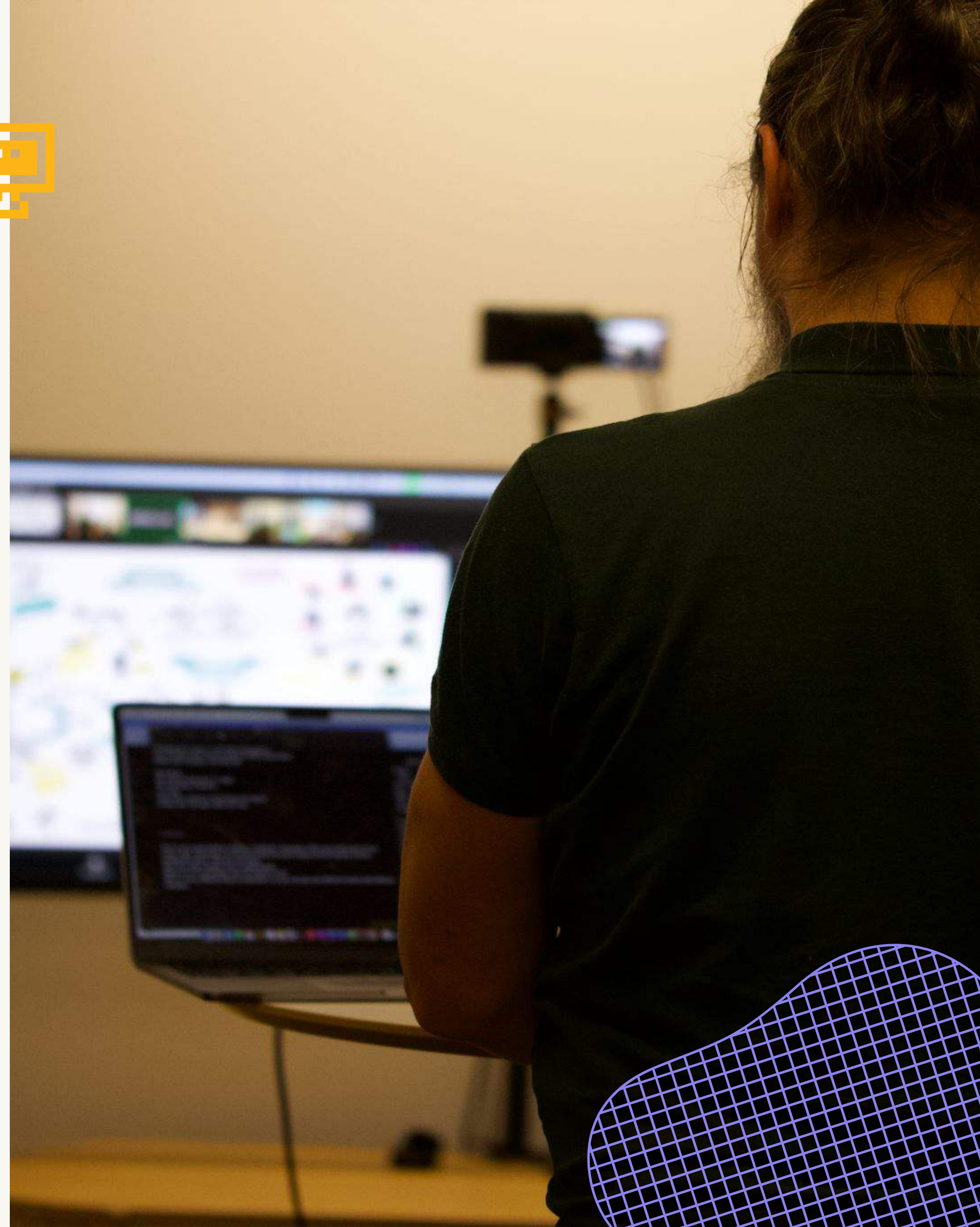


Going hybrid

Why and how can hybrid be important for enabling resilient communities?

Hybrid setups promote accessibility, environmental responsibility, and diverse interactions — all essential elements for building resilient, inclusive, and sustainable communities!

Through our pilots we set out to explore how we can use digital tools to make sure online audiences and interactions feel as valuable as onsite interactions. Can we use hybrid tools to translate physical community elements of value into a online/hybrid space?



Reasons to go hybrid

Enhanced accessibility and inclusion

Hybrid models allow people from diverse backgrounds to participate, regardless of physical location.

This inclusivity might be of extra importance for various groups, e.g. neurodivergent individuals, those with social anxiety, people with family responsibilities, socio economic situations and those with physical limitations.

Financial limitations to accommodate for travel expenses are also removed.

By removing the necessity of being physically present, hybrid setups create a more inclusive environment where individuals who might struggle with traditional participation barriers can still engage meaningfully, enriching the community with varied perspectives and experiences.

Environmental sustainability and resilience

Hybrid setups reduce the need for extensive travel, thereby lessening the carbon footprint associated with gatherings and connections.

By facilitating global connectivity without the environmental toll of physical travel, these setups contribute to more sustainable networking and community-building.

This also strengthens resilience, as communities remain adaptable to disruptions like pandemics or environmental challenges that could limit in-person gatherings and meetings or financial challenges that put a limit on travel and conference expenses.

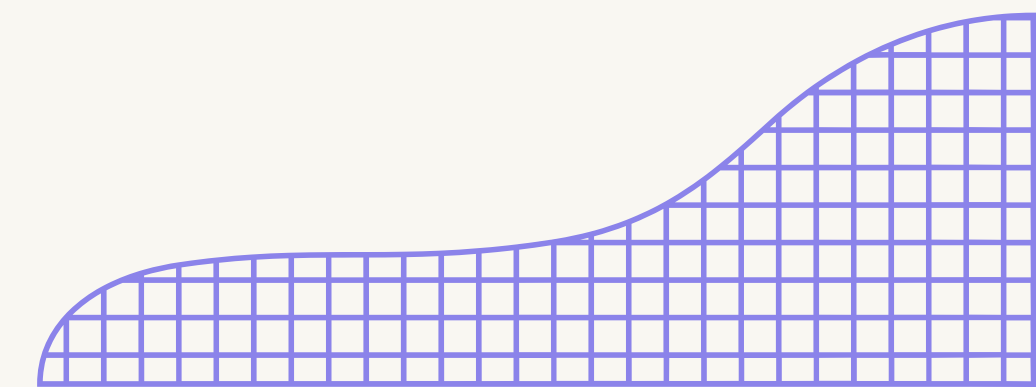
Without the need to travel to physical locations, business opportunities (investors, publishers etc.) and knowledge (speakers etc.) are accessed to a larger extent!

Fostering diverse and organic community growth

By bridging physical and digital spaces, hybrid setups create unique flexible opportunities for people from different regions and backgrounds to connect, fostering a more diverse and rich exchange of ideas.

This can lead to a broader spectrum of creativity and innovation, as hybrid environments allow for new, creative ways to interact, share content, and build lasting connections that may not emerge in purely local or virtual-only settings.

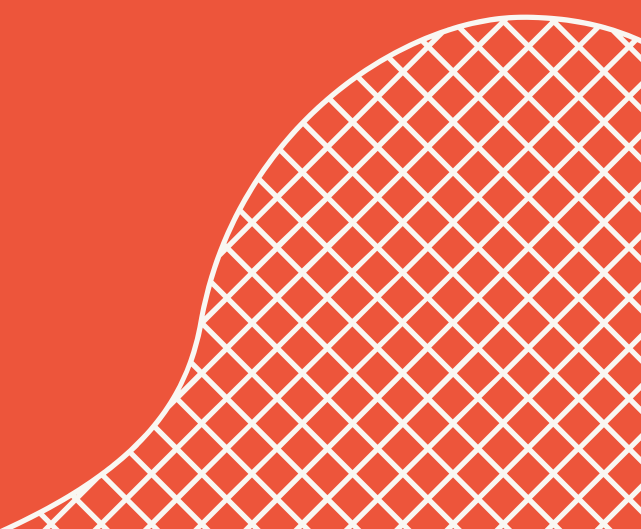
This diversity strengthens the community's foundation, ensuring that it remains adaptable and vibrant



Chapters

- 1. Hybrid Events**
Best practices, tools, etc.
- 2. Business in hybrid spaces**
Hybrid pitching and investment relationships etc.
- 3. Hybrid work environments**
Remote teams & hybrid workplaces, challenges, tools for solutions..

- 4. Outro**
Ending notes, handbook made by.



Hybrid events

Chapter 1

Hybrid varieties

Variations of the hybrid event format



‘Watch party’

Offering the social context to an online event as well as the opportunity to access online content streamed from another location.



Onsite/Online audiences combined

Running an in-person event in a physical space - while also offering participation from anywhere via a virtual/online space tapping into your event!



Feeding content from onsite into virtual space

Opportunity to provide content in forms of talks, panels, keynotes and interactive sessions to an online audience OR a physical audience located elsewhere.

Hybrid event highlights

Three main things to keep in mind

1

Understanding the complexity

Hybrid event productions are more in-depth and complex than onsite or online only events.

A truly well executed hybrid event is not just a regular, physical event with a layer of online participation. In practice is basically producing two parallel experiences, with the same content and the idea to merge multiple audiences into one.

It adds the need for understanding how to make sure both audiences are tended to and how they're invited to engagement and interaction. And it requires much more planning and logistics. 'Production' in hybrid events includes physical event space setup and preparation, sound, vision, streaming and audience interaction.

Communicating the complexity towards your intended audience is also important to keep in mind. How can you best market and explain a complex event for people you wish to join? From experience of running hybrid events and satellites that are connected to a bigger hybrid event, we found that having a **local focus** on the content YOU are running/contributing with (rather than marketing a bigger hybrid event) is more successful in terms of attention from your audience. Let the fact that your local event is part of something bigger be a background add-on, instead of trying to communicate the complexity with the risk of confusing your audience.

Hybrid event highlights

Three main things to keep in mind

2

Technical producer

A dedicated producer to take care of the technical side of things only is key.

Make sure you have one person in the production that fully focuses on the technical execution of the event. Timings, streaming, sound and camera connections and all things technical should be this person's **only** focus.

That the technical side of things run smoothly is of high importance for the overall quality of the event - which will be affecting both onsite and online experience from an audience as well as speakers perspective. Since hybrid events involves both onsite and online attendees, the already existing complexity requires the technical producer's full focus - and therefore they shouldn't be distracted by anything else during the event.

Hybrid event highlights

Three main things to keep in mind

3

Quality & inclusion

Make sure to tend to your online audience as well as the onsite participants.

A designated moderator for both spaces should be considered. A hybrid event means you in practice have two audiences, but you want them to feel as ONE. For example - and **online moderator** can make sure that the Q&A in the online chat is tended to, spark engagement by encouraging questions, welcome the online space audience and catch comments, feedback or technical disruptions in the online experience. Similar for the onsite space, a person who can focus on the overall experience in the physical space and feel the energy in the room is needed for high quality in the overall production.

To make sure you have a qualitative camera, sound, stable internet connection and good lighting will make all the difference! Especially the online experience of an event will be directly affected by this. Make sure you make people joining in the virtual space feel you also made efforts in the event production for them - and don't fall in the trap of just streaming whatever is happening in the physical event space - if you truly want to go hybrid.

Event logistics to keep in mind

Prepare, prepare, prepare!

- Start with planning the format, content and involved partners. This will inform you what technical needs you have and what team you need to build to deliver the event. This also helps you plan for plan B (and C), should technical disruptions take place during the event. *See more about hybrid event team roles on upcoming slides.*
- How do you need to interact with the equipment during the event? Will it disrupt the event somehow - in the physical room you're streaming from or even within the camera reach (therefore visible to the audience in the live stream)? Where is your technical producer placed? A station in the back, with easy access to everything they need?
- What does your "stage" look like? Make sure it's tidy and inspirational and thought through for the spectators. Set up and prepare beforehand.
- Where are the speakers/host placed in the room your streaming from? Does it make sense to what is caught on camera? Do they move in a way in the physical room that makes them disappear from the online audience view, or block something on the presentation if standing in front of the backdrop screen? Test and mark up an area for where the speakers can move!
- Where is the onsite audience (if there are one) located in the room? Are they visible? Do they block anything for the online audience view?
- Is the camera fixed or do you have multiple cameras enabling you to vary between camera views and angles? Multiple camera angles can improve the production quality and make the stream feel more alive for an online audience - but is also adding complexity to the technical production of the event.
- What light setup do you have? Are mood lights, spotlights etc. placed in a way that creates good visibility, not blinding the audience and create a pleasant atmosphere for the audience? Good lighting is key for an overall professional feel of the event!
- Be mindful about the risk of delays in live streams! Especially in bigger collaborative productions with live audiences online and satellite locations who need to sync their programs and schedules with you.

Event logistics to keep in mind

Continuation...

- Whilst the emphasis may appear to be on the in-person side of things in a hybrid event, it's crucial that logistics are tended to ALSO when it comes to the virtual component.

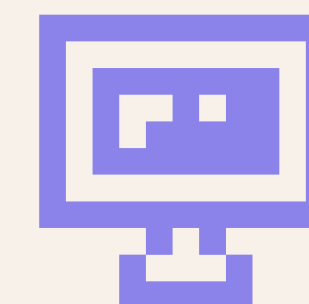
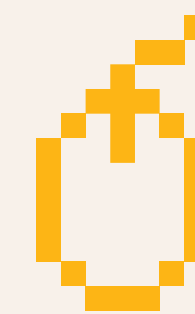
For example, the logistics team need to ensure that understanding of technical needs/kit for participating in the hybrid event (all partners) to participate is understood and delivered on time for set up and testing prior to the event.

Having remote speakers? What platform or tool is used for them to call in to your stream and does their sounds/camera/presentation work also on your end as well as the audience(s)?

- The best approach to plan for logistics is to understand everything that will happen at the hybrid event and work from there. Make sure all involved partners & contributors requirements are met.
- Mind the camera placement and therefore the view for your audience : what can the viewers of the stream actually see? For example:
 - ◆ Audience phone screens? (be mindful of security/integrity)
 - ◆ Litter, loose cables and other distraction in the physical space?

Most importantly - TEST everything before showtime!

Run tests and exercise events to check your stream view, sound and camera connections and switches before you're going live! Have a colleague move around your stage, speak into the mic. This will help you set up a stage that looks well, and be prepared with connections and sound levels and quality settings that (in theory) works for showtime!





The amount of participants directly influences the type of hybrid event that you would want to be doing. For example, planning a workshop style event with 200 people means that before the event, the setup has to allow for enough breakout rooms so that separate work groups can be formed.



Breaking the ice

Make your audiences feel like “one”

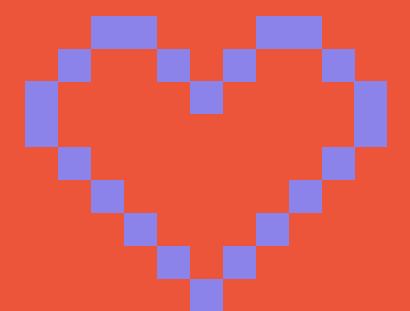
Getting the in-person and online participants to talk to each other is key. Even if they are Having any sort of icebreaker helps a lot.

Splitting up the audience into smaller hybrid groups for breakout sessions, by mixing online and in-person participants for a small amount of the event time can be very useful!

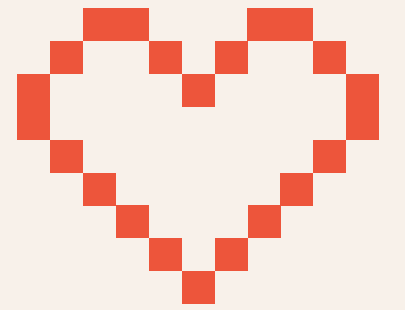
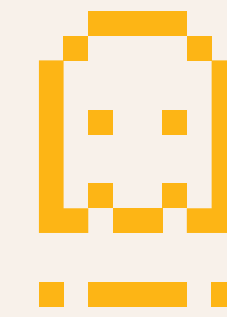
While true for regular “offline” events as well, meeting multiple times increases interactivity. Once people get to know each other, they are much more likely to break the “online” barrier.

Avoid prolonged lectures. Input has to be short as otherwise, it is difficult to captivate people from remote locations. Encourage your audiences to be alert and involved quickly and engage them with the other participants.

Online collaboration tools such as Miro have a big influence on how work can be done during hybrid sessions. Having seamless integrations via the right tools makes everything so much smoother. Nothing is more disruptive than having to wait for someone to get out their slides while the others cannot participate in the task.



The hybrid event team



What skills and roles do you need to build the right hybrid event team?

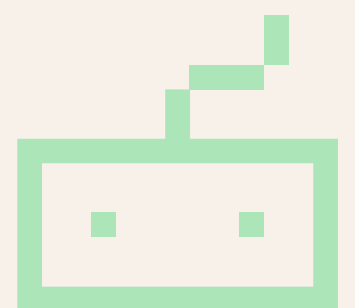
Going hybrid when organizing events comes with extra complexity in terms of planning what roles and resources you need to cover all necessary functions. Producer, Onsite practicalities support person (overall fixing, coffee/refreshments, check-in/welcoming people, etc..) as well as program host and technical producer. Online moderator?

During our pilots, we tested running hybrid events with a small team and a “plug-and-play” approach to simplify setup and enhance community activity. While feasible, this method is not advisable, as it demands highly experienced staff, especially for the online experience, which is less forgiving of errors than onsite events. Though experience can enable one person to handle more, it assumes that someone in the staff is able to gain that expertise for the specific setup and additionally doesn’t eliminate the unpredictability of live production, where additional hands are often crucial. Over time, improved processes may reduce team size needs, but readiness for live challenges remains essential (equipment issues, internet going down etc.).

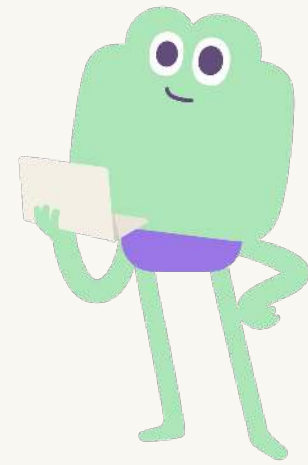
Allow for focus

It’s important to plan for extra staff when running hybrid events. This is because the psychological complexity of being both event host on stage and running smooth technical execution PLUS have the producers’ needed eyes on the overall look is **strongly recommended to avoid**. The technical producer has a focus on the “virtual” production and ideally nothing more. Mixing the two producers roles will confuse and stress things. Ideally don’t combine **producer** and **host roles** in bigger productions either - they are both very active roles that equally needs full attention to delivery well. It’s about allowing for mind space and focus for all essential functions in the hybrid event production.

What roles and how many people you need for the various roles (or if some can be combined) really comes down to the size and complexity of the event, and - the experience of your technical team.



Roles in a hybrid event team



Event producer

Overall responsibility and the power to get things done. This person needs a complete overview of everything that is to take place and can step in and problem solve as needed.

Being the bridge between all other functions and make sure the event goes smoothly from planning, set up to organization on the event day!



Event host/moderator

The social host on stage! Opening the session by welcoming everyone (online & onsite), introducing speakers and moderating Q&As.

This role is very active with a task that requires focus - so this person should not be distracted by other tasks during the event. They should fully focus on performing on stage - by tending to the content, the audience and simply deliver the social, hosting and welcoming aspects - to deliver the content as intended.



Technical producer

Technical producer on site oversees and executes the technical elements and content of the event.

Responsible for the virtual space and delivery of the online elements from a technical perspective: hardware, software and other tech needed for the digital element of the event.

Technical producer is here to ensure that the Event host can focus on the content and the audience, making the technology somewhat invisible. The Event producer is the bridge between the two, keeping the eagle eye perspective.



Online moderator

Responsible for the virtual audience - make sure they are tended to, are involved in the event, spark engagement and can pick up on feedback or issues arising in the online space.

Keeping an eye on and moderating incoming questions and comments from remote attendees (and inviting them to do so!), share comments from the chat in the onsite space/Q&A session, oversees 'the tone' making sure that online event space follows Code of Conduct, discover technical issues.



Runners

Because of the complexities of hybrid event (especially bigger events), the Event Producer needs runners that they can depend on for practical support onsite.

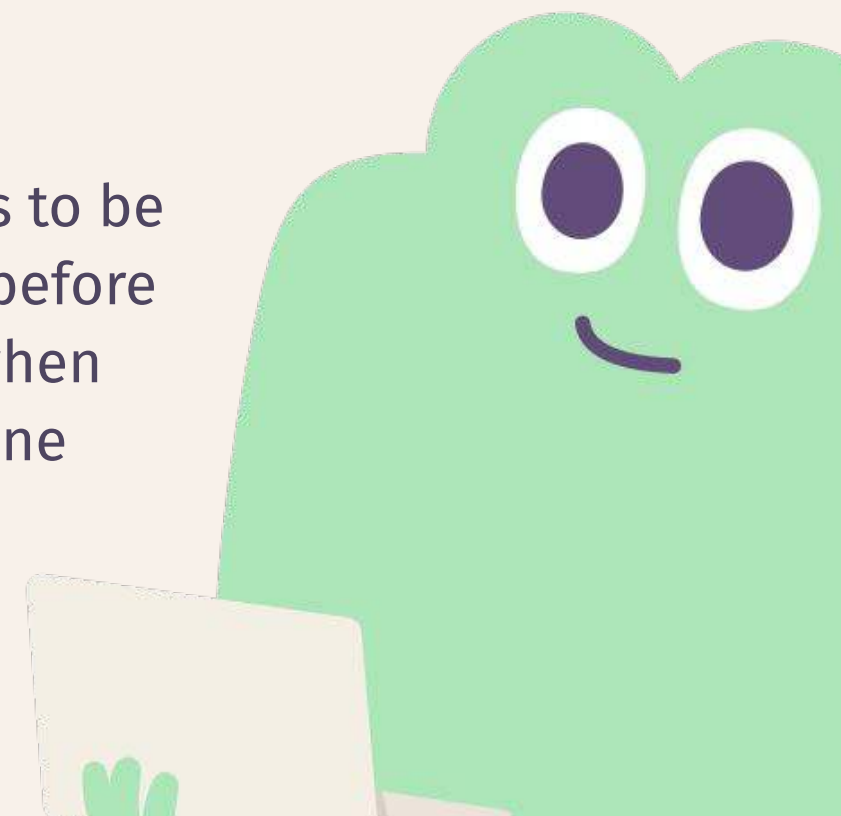
Runners will support with many small - but important - things, such as; ensuring that speakers are set up with microphones, mics handout to audience during Q&A, tend to unexpected events around the venue that might disturb the program/stream, preparing refreshments for onsite audience.

Event moderation

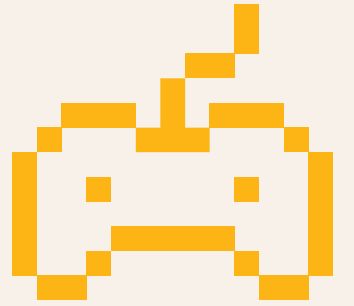
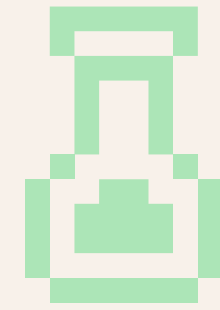
Especially in a hybrid event setup, the main moderator/host on stage need to be equipped with the right mental focus and technical support to deliver a good experience for all audiences (onsite as well as online).

A couple of things to keep in mind:

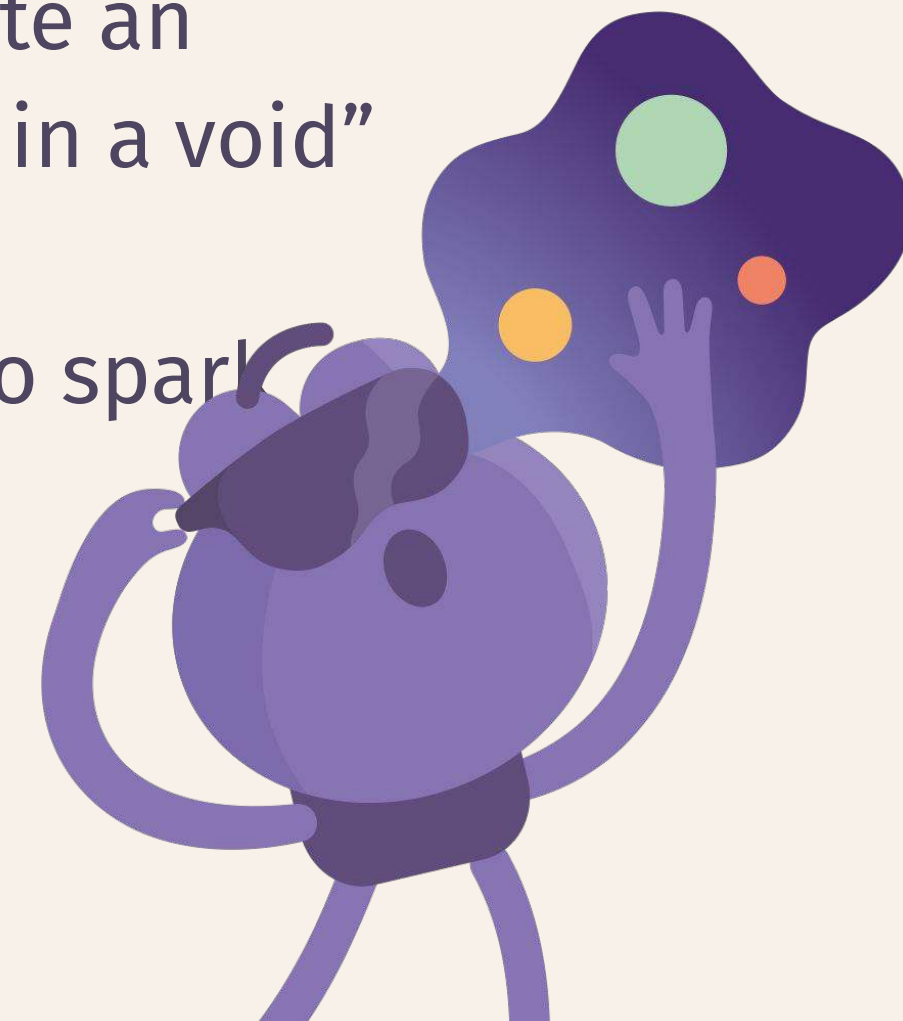
- It might not be clear where to look as a moderator. With audiences potentially being spread out in the same physical room as oneself, parallel with an “on screen” audience. Meaning one wants to look in the camera to address viewers online - but might naturally be tempted to turn away from looking directly into the camera to instead face your own backdrop screen where the online audience/remote speakers are displayed. Find the balance of alternating between camera and physical audience to make sure everyone feels included! And don't turn your back against the onsite audience/the camera.
- A TV moderation screen in front of the moderator, to support with presentation notes (e.g. Google Presentations set to “presentation view”) will help to stay focused and face forward!
- **Prepare and practice!** Clear instructions, clear timing of the various parts of the program will be most important to make the overall feel of the event program feel coherent and well executed. The event moderator, who likely are in charge of the hybrid program as a whole will in their role need to keep timings and “handovers” to potential satellites, online speakers, onsite speakers and other content elements happening in various spaces where the hybrid event takes place. If this is not clearly stated and accessible information for the moderator before and during the event - it'll very likely
- Support needed from other event staff to pick up on errors, delays and other things happening (especially in the online space) that needs to be communicated to the moderator and address/adjusted to if needed.
- Something like a storyboard or stage directions can be a useful tool. An online audience feels more distant than a live audience, and risk that the moderation efforts drop energy with the direct feedback one can feel in the room from a physical audience. Entertainment value (such as length of talks, visualisation, fun factors, variety etc.) are very important to keep an online audience interested.
- Always (!) test functions like sharing slides and videos to be accessible/visible for all audiences simultaneously before hand. However, with tech being tech, sudden errors when you're live - no matter how much testing has been done before - can happen. A plan B should be in place.



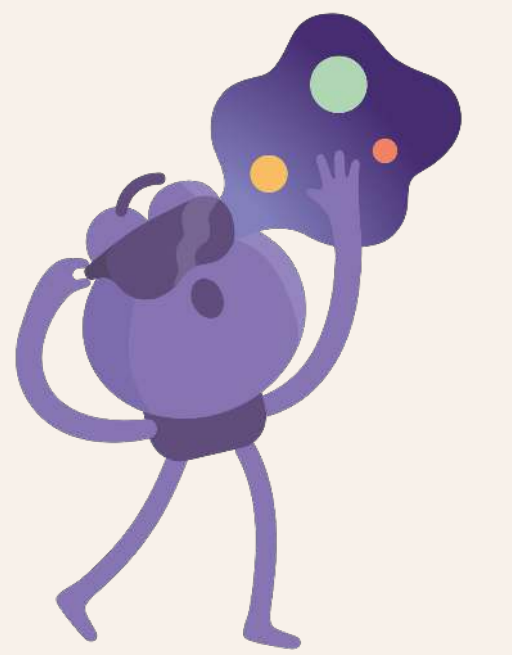
Sparking virtual audience interaction



- Make sure to include your online audience in openings, welcoming, and Q&A sessions.
- Ask questions and ask for comments and feedback related to what's happening in the program - to be shared in a moderated way
- To avoid chaos or awkward communication when online participants are joining in : make sure to communicate clear “rules” for the online audience in the beginning of the event so they know how they can interact with the rest of the audience
- Clarify rules about if microphone and camera being enabled or disabled for remote attendees - and *when!* Depending on size and purpose on the event - you might want different policies regarding attendees ability/liability to be heard/visible.
- Cams and mics completely turned off among the majority of the online audience might create an atmospheres of “lurkers in the back” or a demotivating feeling for presenters to “speak out in a void” which can lead to decreased sense of interaction and engagement.
- To implement a reaction function (applause, clapping hands emojis etc.) is a nice addition to spark engagement and the feel for “happenings” online.



Sparking virtual audience interaction pt.2

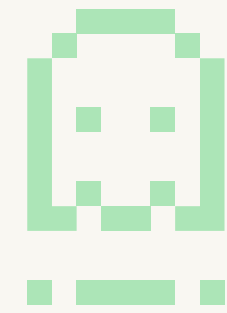


- Make sure that your online audience can see the questions asked by others - to keep interactive feel for remote attendees as well as remove risk of the same question being asked multiple times.
- *Mind the details!* Small interactions can help create an inclusive hybrid environment. E.g. mentioning of and displaying logos of partner sites provides a feeling of belonging in the event - no matter where they are joining from.
- In addition to the host/moderator - assign a designated **online moderator** to tend to the online audience, incl.;
 - ◆ Say HELLO, invite and remind online audience to ask their questions and make comments on content in the chat.
 - ◆ Use poll tools to spark interaction.
 - ◆ Curate incoming chat questions and take a slot during the Q&A onsite to either;
 - ◆ Read out chosen questions in the microphone
 - ◆ invite specific online individuals to ask their questions themselves (address them by name - open call for online, vocal question will get messy)
- During Q&A, encourage people asking questions to state their name and where they come from

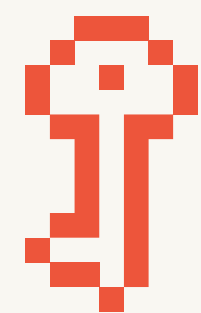
Hybrid Event Categorization Matrix

A tool to help you understand your needs and plan your hybrid event.

A matrix model for a more general categorisation of hybrid events, as well as designed a technical setup for the planned hybrid event pilot.



The matrix is based on the two factors that are necessary for creating a hybrid event - the degree of broadcasting, and the degree of interactivity, as the hybrid event needs to both broadcast information (video, audio, slides etc.), but also allocate channels for the online participants to feed back into the event - the interactivity.



Hybrid event categorization matrix v. 1.1

Increase in workload / resources needed

Degree of broadcasting

<p>Cat. 2 - Broadcast event Managed Stream Video production Self-managed interactivity</p>	<p>Cat. 4 - High Quality Hybrid Event Managed Stream Video production Managed interactivity</p>
<p>Cat. 1 - Basic hybrid event Automated stream No video production Self-managed interactivity</p>	<p>Cat. 3 - Interactive event Automated Stream No video production Managed interactivity</p>

Degree of interactivity

Increase in workload / resources needed

Cat. 0 - Pure on-site event
No stream
No video production
No interactivity

Expanded description of categorization elements

Stream type / Video production	
No stream	No live-streaming or recording of talk/event
Automated stream	Event is streamed using presets and static camera(s) with limited human interaction and as automated as possible. Recording for later usage also possible
Managed stream + video production	Event is streamed with a specific person assigned to this only for the whole event. The person is responsible for audio/video quality and video production using transitions and multiple cameras.

Expanded description of categorization elements

Interactivity	
No Interactivity	No interactive online elements at the event.
Self-managed Interactivity	Interactivity to the degree of opening up f.ex. chat or other built in online functionalities attached to the streaming platform, but with limited monitoring, and no content specifically for the online part of the audience
Managed Interactivity	Full hybridization with a person attached to monitor online elements, ensure interaction between online and on-site locations and engage online audience. Unique content or interactions available to the online part of the audience.

Expected staffing for event types

(all number are minimum)

Cat. 0	2 staff at beginning, end, and during transitions. Remainder can be handled by just one host, if strictly necessary
Cat. 1	2 staff at all times. One main host One supporting person to handle start, end, transitions, and assist with setup and possible technical issues.
Cat. 2	3 staff One main host One assisting (as with Cat. 1) One prod. manager monitoring stream quality and handling video production
Cat. 3	3 staff One main host One assisting (as with Cat. 1) One 'activator' to engage, activate and monitor online participants, as well as connect them with the on-site event and vice-versa.
Cat. 4	4 staff One main host One assisting (as with Cat. 1) One 'activator' (as with Cat. 1) One prod. manager (as with Cat. 1HQ)

Pilot Case Study: Sustainability Nexus

A hybrid whole day conference focusing on sustainability topics in games, with content streamed online from various locations and onsite/hybrid interactive breakout sessions happening locally at various locations.

Case study at Game Habitat's DevHub event space in Malmö:

- Main location (Stockholm studio, Business Sweden), satellites in Malmö (Game Habitat), and Berlin (BGZ) Cologne (Spielfabrique), with external speakers calling in from Denmark and Finland
- Streaming platform for the event: [Coeo](#) (digital event platform) with Zoom as stream backend.
- Total of viewers of the Sustainability Nexus conference was 140 ppl

Setup and content at DevHub hybrid event space incl.;

- Watch party of the online stream on Coeo platform, with an onsite audience
- Presentations from Game Habitat and sustainability experts/consultants from U&We, creators behind the new climate calculator tool for game studios, feeding live stream into main stream on stream with audience at Game Habitat as well.
- Hybrid workshop (online and onsite participation) after the mainstream



Hybrid events: Technical solution

The Hybrid event equipment for the Event space

In designing the equipment setup for hybrid events, our primary ambition was to create a unified, efficient, and cost-effective solution that integrates in-person and streamed productions together as seamlessly as possible.

The goal was to establish a system that allows for easy deployment and operation: a mobile streaming setup that can be connected to cameras and audio mixers with relative ease. By prioritizing "bang for the buck," the aim was to deliver a high-quality experience within a reasonable budget.

The resulting setup largely achieves these goals, with remote-controllable audio proving especially powerful, enabling a single operator to manage both in-space and stream audio effortlessly.

However, the setup does have limitations, particularly in redundancy; the lack of backup components means that equipment failures, such as broken cables or microphones, can significantly affect the stream quality.

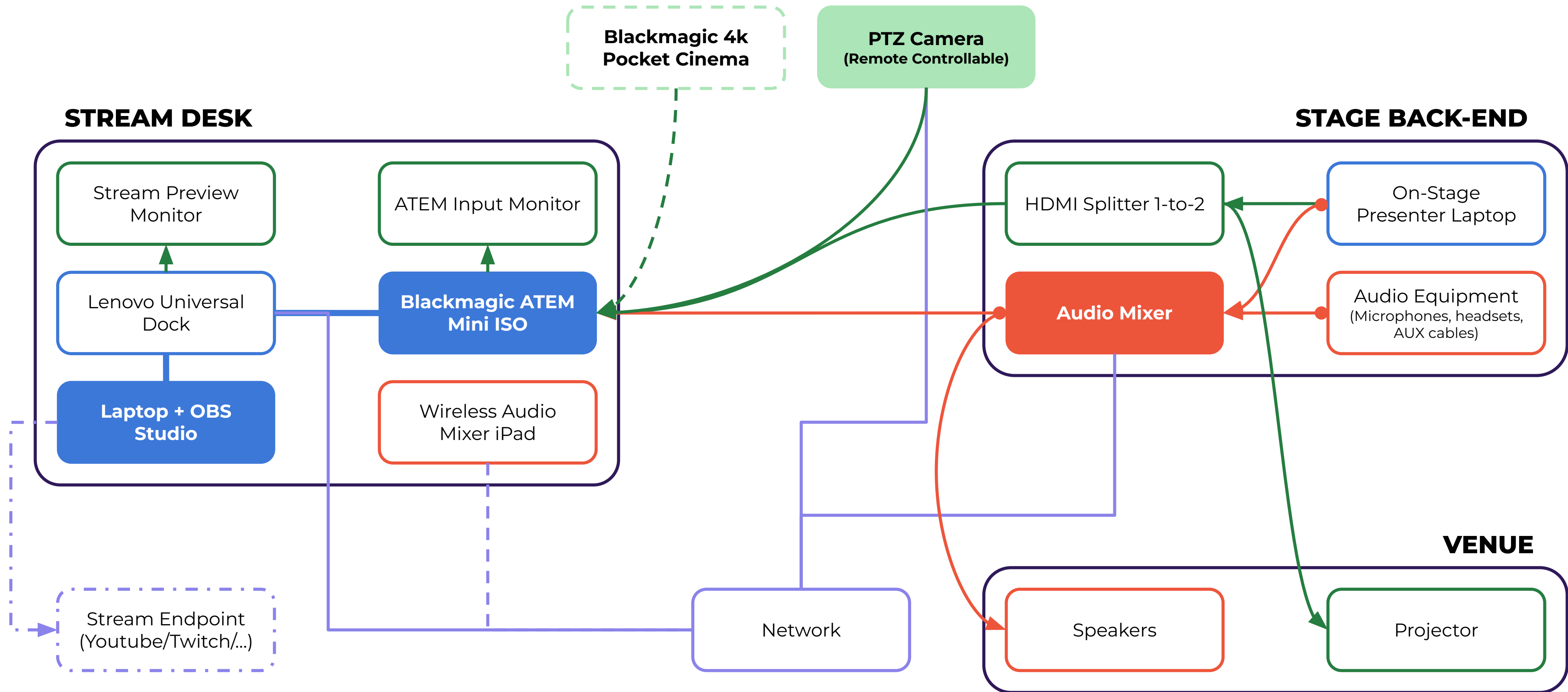




Technical producer corner during live stream



Tech Setup @ Game Habitat's Event space



- Wireless
- HDMI (Optional)
- USB-C
- Ethernet
- HDMI*
- XLR/AUX

*Depending on the room size, extenders/repeaters might be necessary when transferring HDMI over long distances

Tech Equipment Highlights

Stream Desk



iPad

Apple iPad 10th gen.

6 290 SEK

Primarily used for controlling the Audio Mixer, but can be used for other purposes as well.



Video Mixer

Blackmagic ATEM Mini Pro ISO

4 792 SEK

Essential for mixing various video sources, from cameras to presenter's laptop screen and Audio Mixer output. The mixer can be connected to a computer as a video input (when streaming from OBS Studio), but also has built-in streaming capabilities for simpler productions.



USB-C Dock

Lenovo ThinkPad Universal USB-C Dock

6 290 SEK

Connecting the stream preview screen, the video mixer to a laptop with one cable, which also provides power and wired Ethernet. Simplifies and reduces setup time required.



Video Mixer Preview Monitor

Beetronics 10 inch monitor, metallic

3 099 SEK

For seeing previews for each source connected to the video mixer.



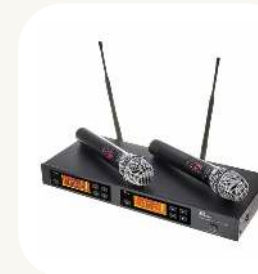
Stream Preview Monitor

LG 27" 27MS500 IPS 100 Hz

2 590 SEK

For seeing preview what's visible on the stream. Turned towards the stage.

Audio Setup



Wireless Microphones & Receiver

the t.bone free solo Twin HT 823 MHz

4 385 SEK

The wireless microphones are useful for a Q&A and for a smaller scale session



Ambience Microphone

the t.bone EM 800 Stereo Set

4 385 SEK

Ambience microphones are a nice-to-have feature in order to capture audience reactions for the stream. Can also be used as a emergency back-up.



Audio Mixer

Behringer X Air XR18

8 100 SEK

The mixer is very versatile. The XR18 can be controlled via an iPad, which is essential when working with limited amount of people. The same mixer can be used for outputting to both the stream and the PA system, with individual controls for each.

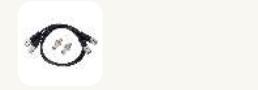


Wireless Headsets & Receiver

the t.bone free solo Twin PT823 HeadmiKeD

6 200 SEK

The wireless headsets are very useful for the speaker to be able to move around freely



Cameras

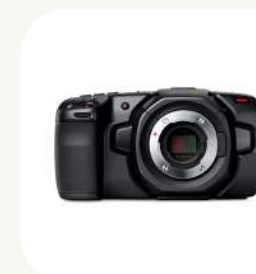


PTZ Camera

Sony SRG-A12

42 484 SEK

The PTZ camera is extremely convenient for freeing up hands when there isn't so many people part of the production. The AI-powered tracking is very useful for keeping the speaker in frame. Remote control is very useful for changing the angle, zoom, focus and so on.



"Secondary" Camera

Blackmagic Pocket Cinema Camera 4K

13 032 SEK

The secondary camera is very useful when used as the default "establishing shot" camera which frees you to remotely control the PTZ camera, looking for close-ups, changing the tracked person and so on. BMPCC4K was chosen for its versatility.

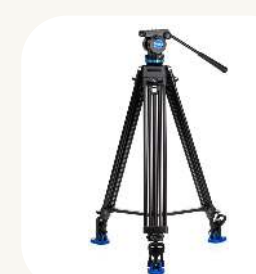


Wide-angle Lens

Panasonic Leica 12-35mm

11 990 SEK

Giving some range with its focal length.



Tripod

Benro KH26P

2 392 SEK

Used with the secondary camera.

Additional hybrid event costs

Plan for the extras if you need them.

Refreshments for onsite audience - Are you providing coffee, tea, lunch, snacks, drinks, breakfast?

Venue costs - Are you renting a space to organize the event?

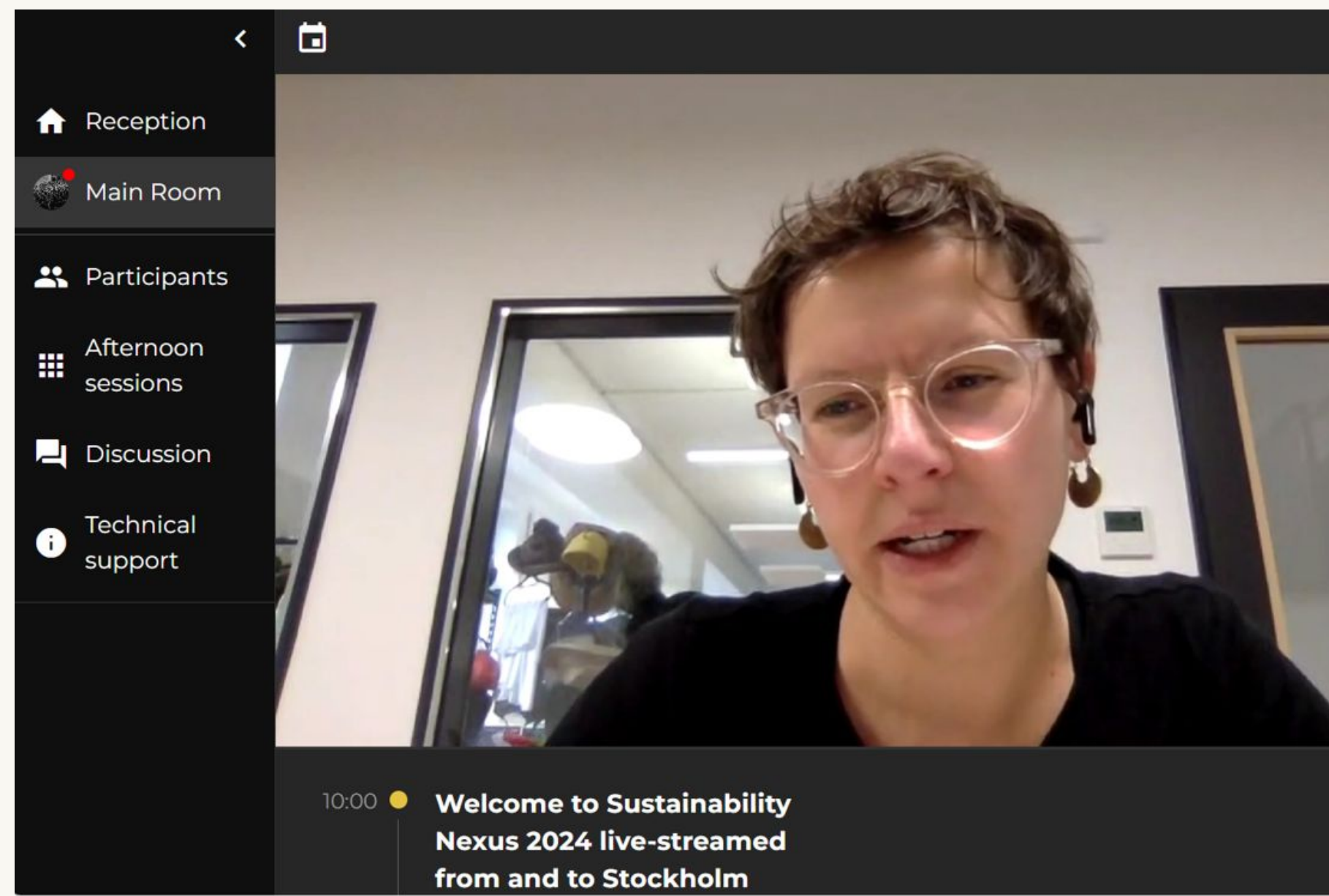
Decoration & scenography - To set up a good and inspiring stage!

Speaker/moderator gifts - If you're having external speakers/moderators, are you giving them a little something as a thank you for their efforts? A flower bunch, sweets, other?

Attendees goodie bags? If you want to treat the attendees with a little something too.

Consider for EXTRA inclusion of your online audience - Can you treat your online audience with similar things as your onsite attendees? E.g. a voucher to get some refreshments picked up for their online, remote participation? A QR to access any other assets that can contribute to the feeling of an immersive, connected experience or "belonging" to the event?

A link to some themed background music playlist or video, goodie bags for pickup at a specific location prepared by you as an organizer can make a huge difference in the sense of belonging. You can be creative with this! Small things can truly add that little extra spark to their experience no matter where people join your event from!



Images from various Sustainability Nexus's locations and printscreen from Coeo platform

Business in hybrid spaces

Chapter 2

Online pitching - part of a hybrid business approach

In this part of the Handbook, we will be looking closer at hybrid pitching - or rather online pitching as a complement and/or replacement for physical pitches, thus resulting in a hybrid mix for the whole of the process from original pitch to signed deal, taking place over several meetings/pitches.

Based on the results from the hybrid pitching pilot, we can point to three main areas, where having an online component in your pitching process has advantages:



Does not require travel

This can be an advantage, both with regard to time usage as well as money usage. In addition, it offers a business opportunity with very low environmental impact - especially if it can replace long air travels.



Increased reach

Especially for the publisher/investor group, online pitches allows them to reach teams, that they would otherwise not have access to, as it removes many of the barriers that teams would face to go to f.ex. GDC. But it also applies to the developers, who are able to meet publishers and investors outside of the conventional physical meeting opportunities, where the investors calendars are often swamped with requests

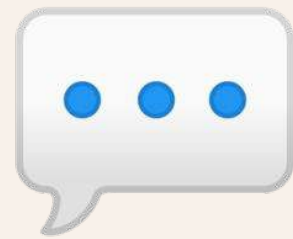


Increased flexibility

Online pitches are not bound to a specific time and place the same way as the physical business events are, and thus offers up a lot more flexibility. Both in the original planning, but also allows for rescheduling etc. In addition, online pitches can act as an overflow catch from physical events, where the calendar is full, but there is a mutual interest to meet at a later point.

Limitations of online pitching

While online pitching has several advantages, there is also a consensus among both the game developers, investors, and publishers that have participated in the pilot, that there are limitations to the online format. The vast majority agree that the online formats can only replace *some* of the meetings and/or pitches, and thus a hybrid business setup utilizing both online and physical meetings offers the best of both Worlds. The most significant issues with online pitching are:



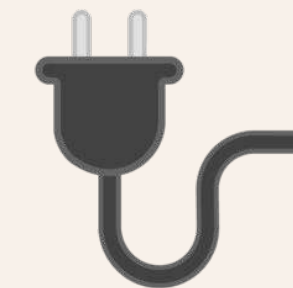
Less natural conversation flow

Online mediated conversations do not flow as easily as physical ones, as technical limitations and less established rules around online conversations can hamper the natural conversational flow, that comes more easily at physical meetings.



Difficult to read body language

Being confined to a limited video image, that may even be further limited by technical issues (stuttering, resolution lag etc.), makes it more difficult to pick up on the body language, than constitutes a large part of physical interactions.



Details lost due to technical limitations

Bad connections, bad camera, bad lighting, bad sound. Online pitching comes with some technical pitfalls that can result in details getting lost in the technical transition, resulting in a bad experience - or certainly not as good as a physical meeting.

Structure of an online pitch

An online pitch should also have a slightly different structure. Given that online pitches have some challenges in the informal areas of inability to read body language or pick up on small details, it is recommended that online pitches leave a little more room for post-pitch follow up questions and discussions, as this is usually the part, where the parties get to know each other, and this will need a little more time in the more limited online format*.

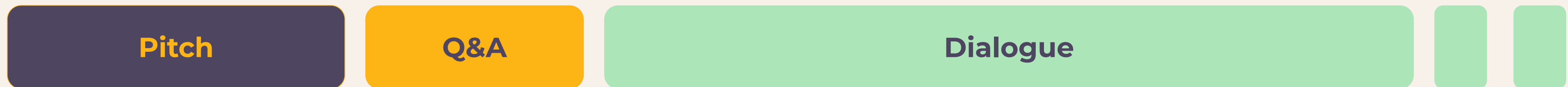
Online meeting



Conference speed-dating



Planned face-to-face meeting



*The models are based on conversations with Amsterdam-based pitch coach and creator of The Pitch Canvas, David Beckett.

Technical considerations

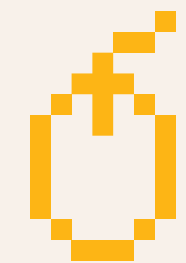
As noted earlier, one of the issues of online pitching is details getting lost due to technical limitations. Thus it is important to consider your technical setup for online pitches. However, it is also important to work towards a solution that does not overcomplicate things, and introduces new sources for technical issues.

Based on our work on the pilot, we have identified the following considerations that we believe all would benefit from considering



Platform agnostic solution

Based on the data we have gotten during the pilot, we can conclude, that there is no specific platform that are dominating. While Google Meet and Discord are the most used, there are also wide usage of Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and sporadic use of other platforms still. Thus, it's important to create a solution that can be used with all of these platforms.



Easy to use

The technical setup should be easy to use. Best case scenario, would be something that can be used with a no or only minimal instructions. Otherwise, usage of the technical solution will end up being dependent on having technical personal stand-by.

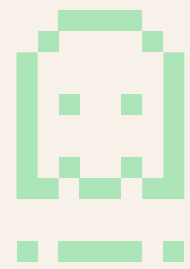


Tangible quality improvements

The setup should aim to get the biggest improvements with the the least effort, and be careful not to get lost in technical nitty gritty. The setup should also consider non-technical issues such as physical environment, lighting, placement of camera & attendees etc.

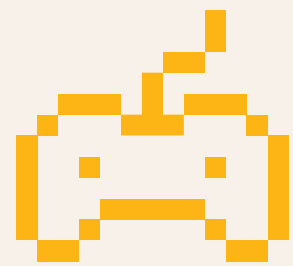
Preparation for a pitching session

In addition to the technical setup and preparations, there are also a number of preparatory steps that can be made in order to make the best possible use of the setup. These can be conducted either as part of a collective pitching sessions, as was the case in the pilot, or as individual preparation before individual online pitches.



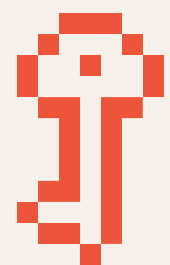
Test the technical setup

It's always worth to do an internal technical test before any important pitch. Even more important is this if this is the first time you are using the setup. And even if the setup has been used before, it's worth doing a check, since the more advanced setups have more points of failure.



Practise pitching in the online format

As the format for pitching is somewhat different from pitching in a physical meeting, it is a good idea for the pitcher to practice how the change to an online format changes the pitch, and also to practise with the specific platform chosen for the pitch as specifics for f.ex. screen sharing, audio control etc. are different from platform to platform.



Preparation builds anticipation and confidence

Preparation in itself is a good idea, no matter what the format, as it both installs a feeling of importance in the session, and also builds confidence in the teams, when their practise makes them feel well-prepared

Pilot case study at Game Habitat's DevHub

Pitching studios from Malmö, Sweden and Berlin,
Germany

- Malmö based studios pitching in DevHub's hybrid studio
- Berlin based studios pitching online (De:Hive)
- Remote publisher panel
- Malmö based onsite audience in separate room for internal feedback (Haven program studio participants)
- 6 pitches á 30 min + 30 min feedback pr. team
- Feedback form from panel + pitching studios
- Additional data through survey from Tartu Science Park.

Investor participants: WINGS Fund, Raw Fury, Tencent

Developer Participants: Blackdoor (SE), Odd Dreams Digital (SE), Revolver Moustrap (SE), Svargames (SE), Selkies Interactive (DE), Aldamami (DE)

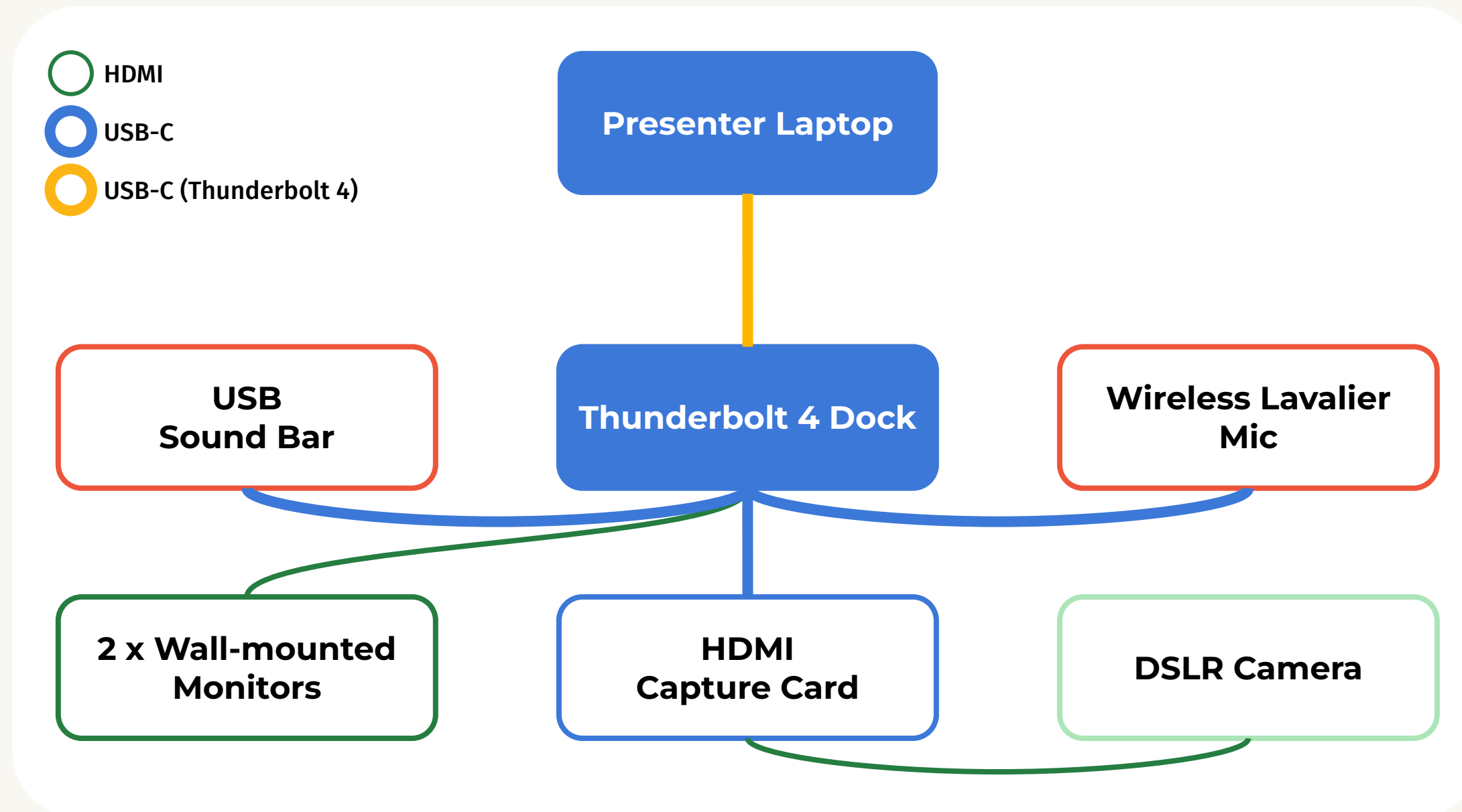
Survey repondents: Maru VR Productions OÜ (EST), Sealion OU (EST), Acode Studios OÜ (EST), Placeholder Gameworks (EST)



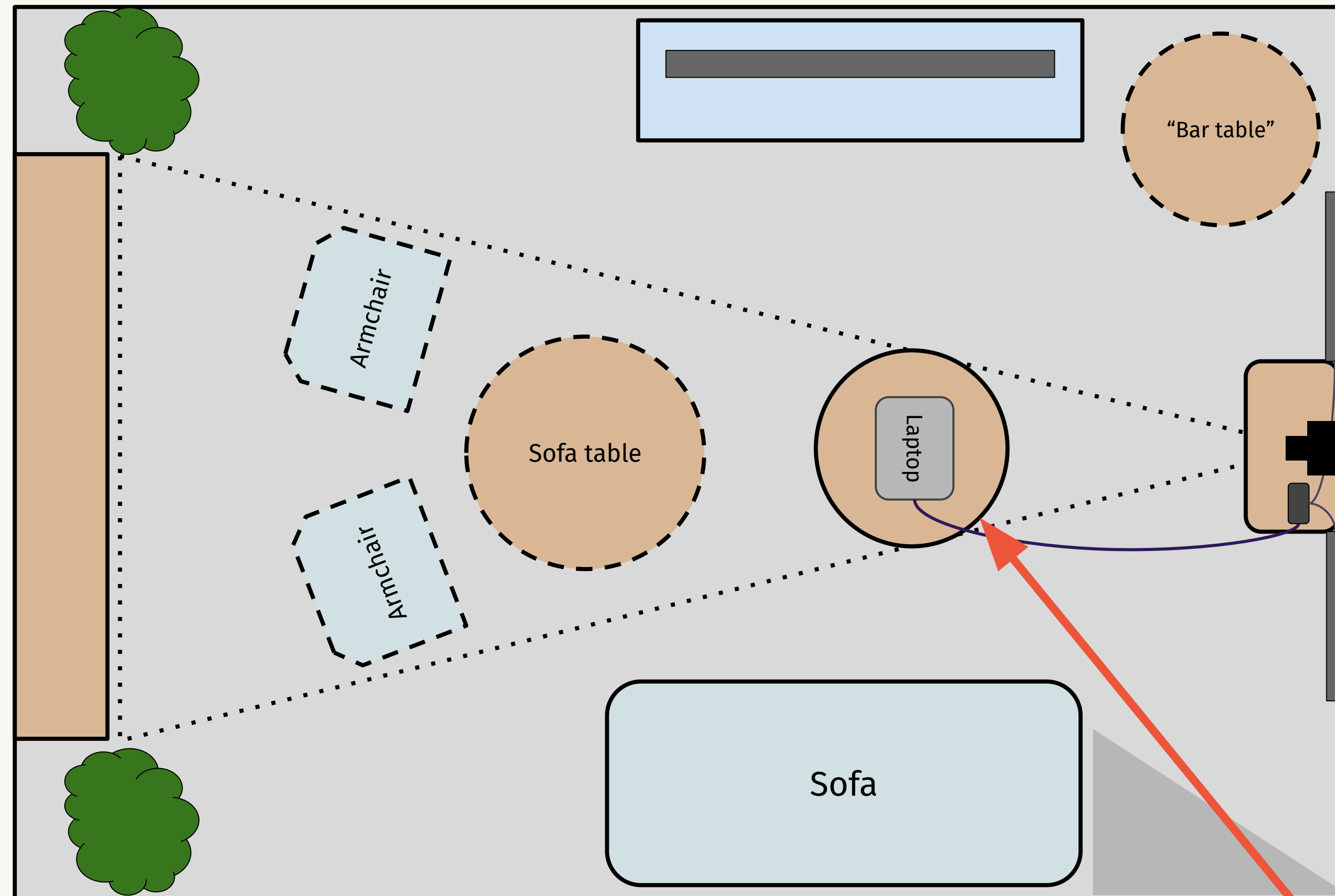
Pilot: Technical solution

Online pitching PLUG & PLAY room at DevHub

The ambition for this solution was to have a setup, where by just plugging in one cable to your laptop, you would get access to devices that would allow you to have a high quality online pitching/presentation session.



Hybrid lounge layout @ Game Habitat's DevHub, Malmö



Nice-looking bookshelf for
backdrop (games, merch etc)

Height-adjustable camera rig
on a table, far away for depth,
and adjust for different FOVs.

Sound bar on a table, giving
an audio source for hearing
the other end of the call.

Wireless wearable lavalier
mics for giving high quality
audio for the call.

A round "bar table" on wheels,
easy to move in and out when
used by the presenter.

Hybrid work environments

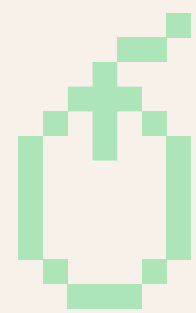
Chapter 3

Adjusting to a new reality

In the post pandemic society - almost all organizations are now facing a “new reality” where we have to adjust to run our businesses in some form of remote or hybrid organization. This is of course also true for the games industry, where a digital way of working on a global market is already implemented since long. It’s not uncommon with employees spread out remote across various time zones even and flexibility regarding time and location for your work has increased.

This comes with many opportunities - but also many challenges. This chapter explores how to meet this *new normal* in the best way?

The findings in this chapter are based on the main pilot HR Network (self supporting network as a tool) as well as the projects own experiences from collaborating in a hybrid setup amongst project partners.



Pilot: Supporting our local community

Among our closest community we've seen studios adjusting where the wishes and needs for meeting flexibility requests from employees are high up on the agenda and becomes a question of employer branding/competing for talent. But that the need for the in-person interaction to foster relationships and healthy company culture remain important to accommodate for.

Companies are sharing the big challenges with setting up physical workspaces and teams that can accommodate this complex hybrid company - where you are neither fully onsite or fully remote. And the headache seems to lie exactly here - when it's not one way or another. And also findings tell that the same challenges occur no matter if its a small team or a big size company.

Perks of hybrid are often mentioned as worklife balance (where employees are allowed more flexibility to adjust their work hours with everyday life) and being able to adjust to people's individual needs are strongly connected to employee satisfaction.

Challenges on the other hand are focusing around creating fair policies for all (and risk for conflict or irritation), effective communication and accessibility to colleagues, effective leadership and finding ways to uphold the feeling of togetherness and relationships that social and in person interaction creates.

Our main pilot in this area this year have been exploring the best way to support companies who are facing these challenges on their journey to adjust to the new hybrid workplace reality.

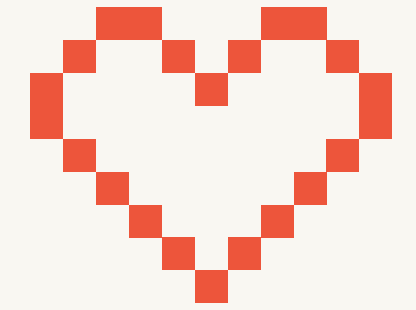
HR Network as a tool for co-creating solutions

A tool for self-supporting community

As we recognized that the ambition to finding best practices for meeting these challenges would be hard since all all companies have their own individual setups, realities etc. we found that the best tool was to create a **platform** for the companies to *become self-supporting*. The **HR Network** turned out to be a fantastic tool for community building and long term sustainable support, besides providing us with insights about challenges and support needs connected to hybrid work. The nature of the HR network is a self-supporting network of peers, that with a little nudge from us enables the studios to have a context for co-creation of tools and solutions to meet joint industry challenges. As they all face similar challenges - they can via the network help each other tackle them and share ideas and experience on solutions.

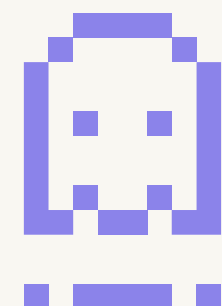
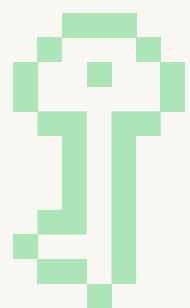
The network is about creating a space for peer to peer discussions and support. During the pilot we ran workshops where we invited HR, Talent Acquisition and Studio head representatives to discuss topics related to Hybrid & Remote workplaces. The network enables crowd source solutions, via various methods such as the HR meetups but also a direct source for us as support organization to get better understanding of needs and also scale our efforts by e.g. share surveys to other studios/regions for coordinated knowledge sharing of best practice.

The nature of the HR meetups can be run as hybrid meetings as well. We've used the sessions to invite relevant external experts from other locations to join online, in the session where there expertise is relevant to the topic. That way we can access valuable assets, source of information and knowledge to the group - without limitations on geographical location.



Pilot workshop format

- **HR Meetup** : Themed “Remote teams & Hybrid workplaces”
- 1,5 hour sessions
- We ran several sessions due to high engagement and great need to vent and discuss with peers.
- Simple format - focus on letting the attendees reflect, share and discuss.



Agenda/content for session:

- Introduction round - *Who are you, what do you do?*
- Sharing round to set context - *What's your current stance on hybrid/remote?*
- Workshop 1 - What are the 3 main challenges with hybrid workplaces?
- Individual reflection
- Sharing individual notes with group (post its)
- Discussions on each topic raised
- Bundling all notes to the 3 main topics
- Moderator document and share findings with all attendees as foundation for upcoming follow up workshops
- Additional follow up workshops focus:
 - ◆ How to solve the identified challenges?
 - ◆ Testimonials from guest speakers with experience in the field - best practices.



Why HR network?



Stronger region - together!

Knowledge sharing, peer support and openness with industry **competitors** > colleagues, to develop as a regional industry together. Here & Now + Long term.



A mutual platform

A platform to get together around joint challenges and assets.
Invite external experts.
Effective for relevant updates & opportunities.



Important input source

A great way for hubs & clusters and other orgs of a supporting nature to keep up to date on where to focus one's support efforts!
*What does the community need?
What's happening at the studios right now and what is to come?*

**Learnings from the
project's own hybrid work**

**Reflections on
Hybrid collaboration
& productions**

Reflections on hybrid collaborations

Hybrid collaboration is definitely a very powerful tool - but the importance of coupling it with in person meetings cannot be understated. To balance up online collaborations mainly happening via digital tools (such as online meetings, Discord chats etc.) with in person meetings is crucial to build relationship and create a dynamic to improve and give distance / remote collaborations a much higher chance to succeed.

In the case of the BSG-Go project, we've worked mostly online in various constellations and platforms and projects. Meeting regularly in person during retreats, conferences and sessions has been important to be able to carry out the work of the project's many pilots during the rest of the year. Especially the Sustainability Nexus event was an example of a complex production where various partners worked together to co-create a hybrid event, from various parts of the world , with elements of in-person, online and hybrid activities.

Even if only the organisers of the hybrid events have met previously in person, it already changes the entire dynamic of setting up the event. So while hybrid events and collaborations can be great to connect locations that would otherwise be unable to collaborate, starting it off in-person makes an incredible difference. In general of course, working together a lot can eliminate the online barrier but working only online can be difficult. And lastly, interaction is absolutely necessary. Our shared experience is that hybrid events, meetings and collaborations tend to become tricky when they feel too one-way-communicative and not allows for dynamic discussions with a clear goal and structure. However, as soon as people get to talk to each other, new ideas emerge and the whole session feels a lot more complete. The key take-away is that hybrid events should be used in conjunction with in-person offline events, as this is often when we have come up with the best results.

Highlights for successful hybrid collaborations

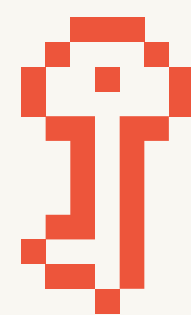
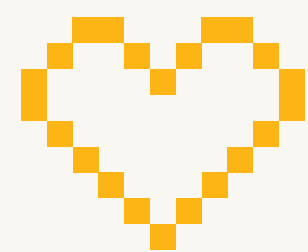


Clear ownership & project management

Effective hybrid collaboration requires clearly defined ownership and robust project management practices.

A well-organized approach ensures that all stakeholders are aligned and that potential barriers are minimized.

This goes for the project as a whole but as much for the projects within the project (events etc.)



Centralized overview & production workflow

Shared and Visual Communication: A single, centralized platform for all relevant information should be established and maintained.

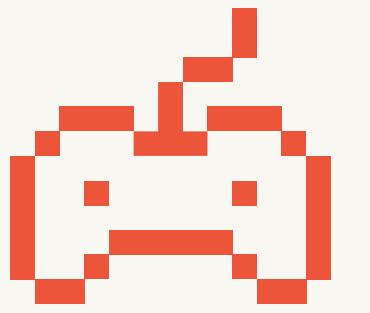
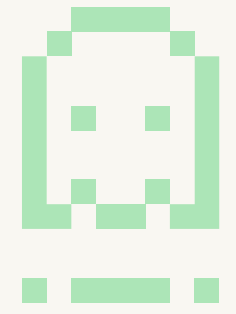
This platform should serve as the source of truth for project updates, event details, and meeting materials. Ownership of this platform must be clearly assigned to ensure timely updates and accuracy.

Communication

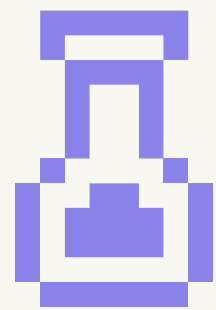
Hybrid meetings can hinder full participation if feedback loops and discussions are not inclusive. Ensure that discussions are structured to encourage active participation from all stakeholders, regardless of location. Establish clear protocols to minimize barriers for joining discussions and accessing feedback loops. Agree on communication policies, platforms and language accessible to everyone.

Foster a culture where feedback is given and received in a constructive manner! Regular and summarizing updates sent to everyone involved is crucial to make things super clear in a complex collaboration such as multi-hybrid events involving various partners in the execution.

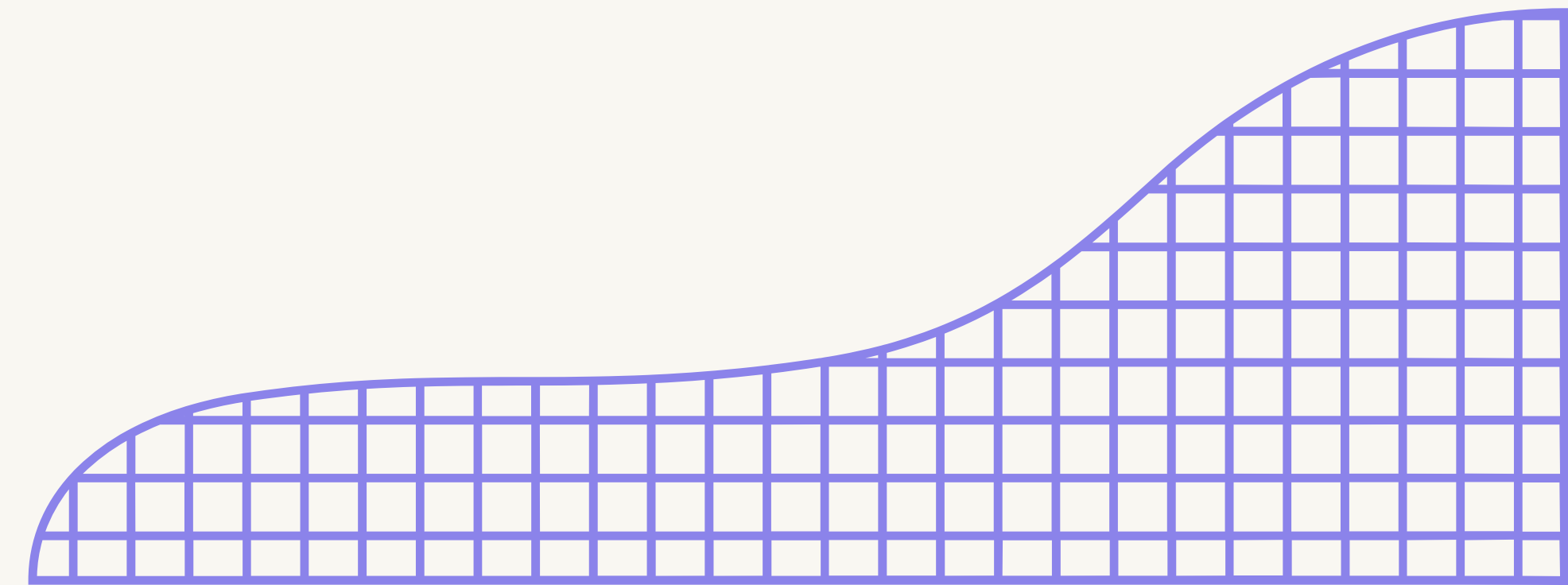
Exploring new ways of hybrid works / inspirational



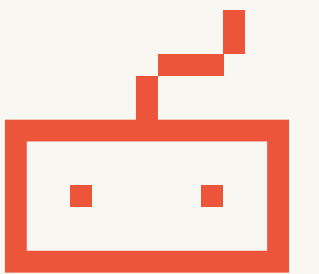
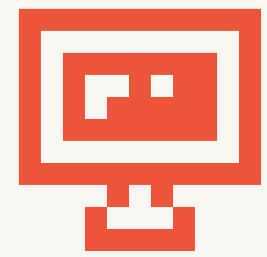
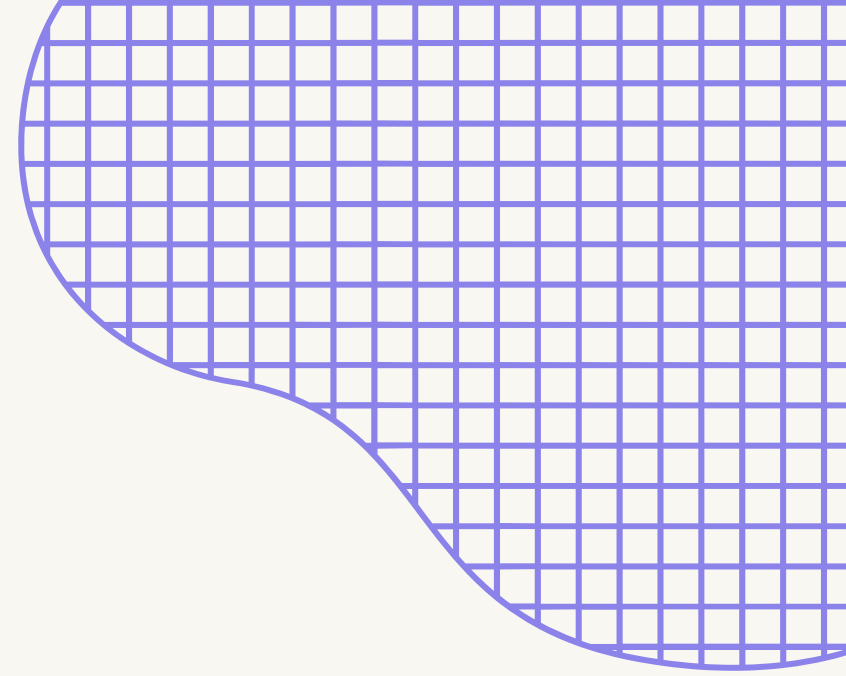
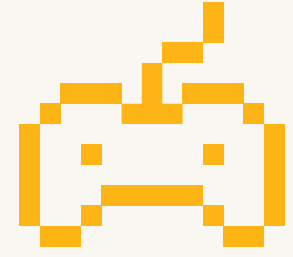
- *Meandering syncs.* One hour meetings, each day, at the same time. Basically no other internal meetings. Works especially well for distributed remote teams looking to minimize meeting time and maximize production time, while maintaining high pace in terms of solving issues needing a team or manager mandate. Can also function as a social aspect, or to build company culture. Syncs are complemented with Slack or Discords chats for quick on the fly issues. [Case study](#).



Bonus finding

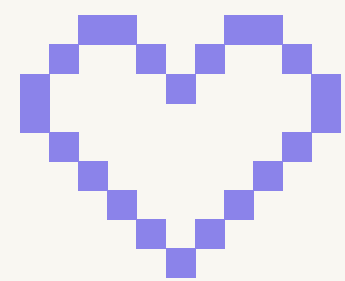


Outro



Good luck!

Feel free to reach out to us to brainstorm or discuss ideas with us regarding your hybrid solutions. We're happy to help!



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Created by

**Game
Habitat**

This handbook has been created as part of the BSG Go! Interreg-BSR project with contributions from project partners including;



