

Theorycraft Collaborates With Players Using AccelByte Development Toolkit



Theorycraft Games is an independent game studio on a mission to make deep, 10,000-hour games that are just better when played with friends. Theorycraft was formed in December 2020 by a founding team that includes Joe Tung, Mike Tipul, Michael Evans, and Areeb Pirani – former studio leaders at Riot Games, Bungie, and Blizzard Entertainment. Collectively they led the development of games such as League of Legends, Halo, Destiny, Overwatch, and VALORANT.

Theorycraft's first game in development, codenamed *Project Loki*, is a group adventure, a competitive sandbox, and a highlights factory, all at once. It's a blend of genres players have described as "League meets Apex meets Smash."

Challenges

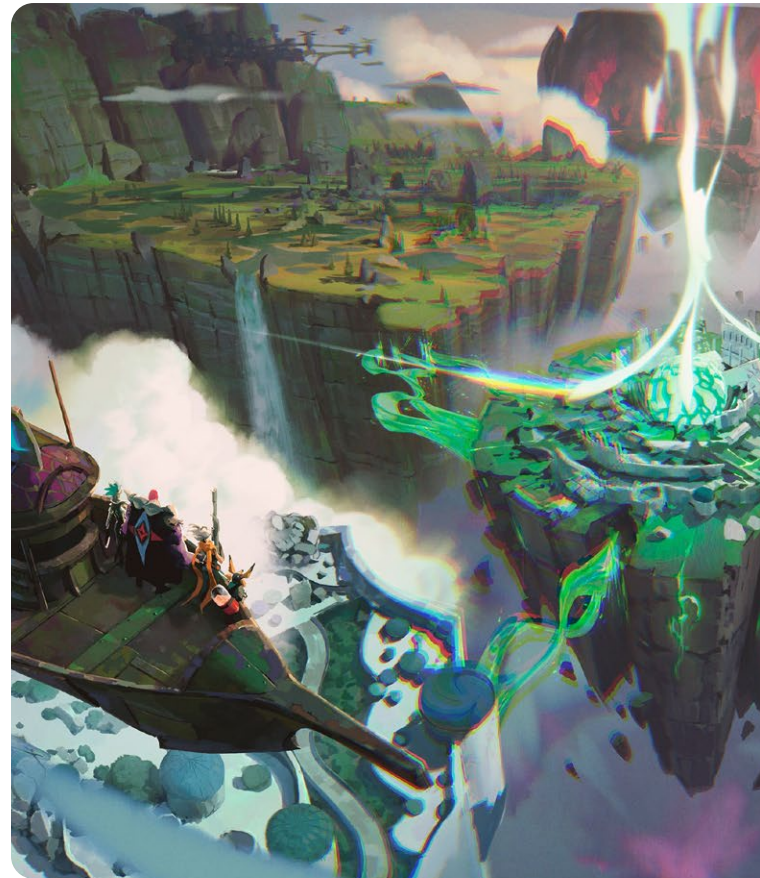
Theorycraft's primary challenge lies in maintaining a small organizational size while striving to achieve significant milestones in game development. This dynamic presents obstacles in effective communication, teamwork, and streamlined processes, particularly during the research and development phases.

Theorycraft needed a partner capable of assisting them in their development objectives while adhering to their preference for a small-scale setup. After evaluating numerous options in the market, they chose AccelByte due to its established presence in the industry and its ability to provide a comprehensive suite of services that aligned with Theorycraft's requirements.

The challenge of balancing between staying small and leveraging the capabilities of a reliable partner with a proven track record in delivering scalable software was crucial for Theorycraft. This balance allows them to concentrate on core game development while relying on external expertise for other aspects.

Theorycraft has adopted a live-service development philosophy, which posed challenges in conducting external playtests and gathering iterative feedback. As a smaller company, obtaining a diverse audience's voice was initially challenging, leading Theorycraft to explore avenues like Twitter, Discord, and community engagement to bridge this gap.

Engaging with the community on a regular basis is important for Theorycraft. While it allowed them to establish personal connections with players, answer questions, and observe reactions to features, it also required managing expectations, incorporating feedback effectively, and discerning valuable insights amidst varied opinions and suggestions.



"We've wanted to build a game in partnership with players. It's been great to get a chance to do that. A humbling lesson is that we had a lot of swagger out of the gate about how fast it would take. Getting the game right and making it something people will love in the long run is more important and has taken us a little longer. Luckily, we have AccelByte to help. AccelByte's offerings are very robust, which ensures stability and reliability, and contributes to a positive user experience for Project Loki players."

- Michael Evans, CTO

Solutions

AccelByte Development Toolkit

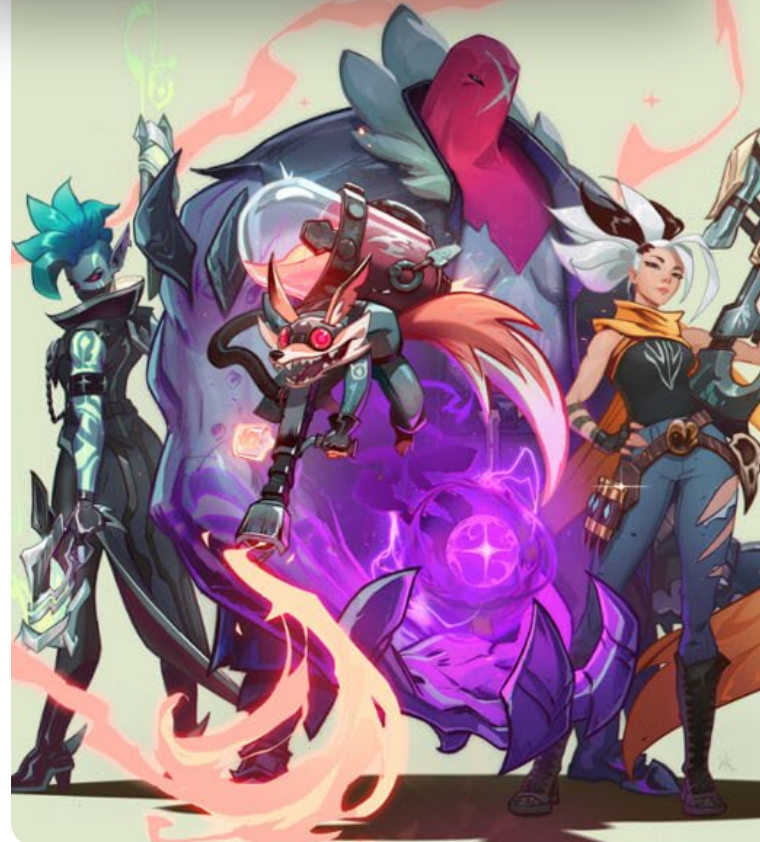
Theorycraft has built Project Loki *with* their players from the very beginning. As soon as it was possible Theorycraft started running biweekly playtests to better connect with their players and gather feedback. “At a big company, you might debate feature choices, reach a fork in the road, and debate that for months. At Theorycraft we can put that in the build, see how players react to it, and then go from there. It is often very telling about what is going to work. This does not replace the need for a design vision or a sense of what the game you’re making is but having those two together lets you execute in a better way,” shared Evans. AccelByte helps them do it.

Internally they migrated away from their Python-based internal distribution and implemented AccelByte Development Toolkit (ADT) to help get builds into the hands of their players faster to help with gameplay iteration. Theorycraft takes the core functionality of ADT which is designed for use in the development phase between engineers or internal/external teams. The Theorycraft team developed it further to suit the use case for the playtest flow to their community. AccelByte and Theorycraft have worked collaboratively to reach this state where they’re now using ADT for twice-daily playtests distributing builds to all of their players.

AccelByte Gaming Services: Monetization

Like any other MOBA game, items are an important and useful aspect of the game. Theorycraft wanted to make Loki successful in this area by integrating with our Monetization service. One of their implementations is using our Store functionality in which in-game items are stored for easy management. Theorycraft also needed a virtual currency for *Project Loki* which AccelByte was able to provide with an easy setup so the Theorycraft team can focus on the core gameplay.

Project Loki is planned for release on Steam, which means case entitlements are a must-have feature for the studio, so that players can buy items directly from the Steam store with hard currency. AccelByte helped with this partnership and the integration of Neon Pay as their payment platform, allowing them to expand their payment methods so players have more freedom.





ACCELBYTE

PROJECT
LOKI

THEORYCRAFT

CUSTOMER STORY

Results

The partnership with AccelByte facilitated **accelerated development timelines**. By leveraging pre-existing solutions and infrastructure, Theorycraft could focus more on core game development, reducing time spent on building and maintaining ancillary systems. Theorycraft was able to achieve its objectives with a smaller team, saving them the work of **at least three full-time developers over at least a year**, saving considerable time and resources. This streamlined approach contributed to a more efficient development process and **quicker iteration cycles**.

Using AccelByte also prevented the need for shortcuts that might have been necessary had they pursued development independently. AccelByte's comprehensive suite of services provided Theorycraft with the flexibility to **pivot swiftly in response to changing requirements**. Whether addressing authentication needs or incorporating specific features, AccelByte's solutions were readily available, enabling Theorycraft to adapt to evolving project demands.



"We really enjoy the partnership with AccelByte. It's been great working together. Like any company like yours, there are lots of people working together to build this great product. We appreciate all the hard work and how open everyone has been to getting it done for us and responding to our needs. It's been a valuable relationship to have while developing a game."

– Michael Evans, CTO



To learn more about AccelByte's solutions

REQUEST A DEMO

hello@accelbyte.io