Screen-recording: when shorter videos lead to more meaningful analysis

Jean-Luc Potte (Ubisoft HQ's User-Research Lab)
Video-recording is great... but time-consuming

A user-test with 16 participants playing for 5 days = 480 hours of footage
Video-recording is great... but requires context

Let’s suppose that during this 5-days test, player#11 stopped completing missions, picked up a car and instead drove for half an hour through your game world, without interacting with any NPC or object. He then resumed normal play.

What went through his mind during those 30 minutes?
Goal 1: Less data

Question: how can we reduce the size of our data set?

Answer: instead of recording everything, only start recording in reaction to an event in the game
Goal 2: only meaningful data

Question: how do we pick which events turn on the recording?

Answer: we don't. Instead, we train the participant to press a 'record' button whenever they perceive an event as especially emotionally impacting (+ or -).
Our approach

Semi-structured interview
The results so far

• Time spent on data treatment drastically reduced
• Each video comes with an explanation from the participant
• Issues that escape direct observation can be discovered
• Encourages feedback on player motivation
• Watching the videos help participants recall why they pressed the record button