

PRODUCT CONTEXT		MEDIA INDUSTRIES	
Publisher, developer, platforms	Ubisoft, independent French video game publisher; developed in-house by Ubisoft Sofia / Milan / Montreal studios; release 30.10.12: handheld PS Vita console, simultaneously with <i>Assassin's Creed III</i> (PS3). <i>ACIII</i> sells 3m in first week, <i>Liberation</i> 100k. HD re-release 15.1.14 (PS3, Xbox 360, Windows)	Production, distribution, circulation	Technological change
		Multinational development, typical of major game studio production ; simultaneous release with <i>ACIII</i> promotes PS Vita console (limited bundle pack marketed); pre-orders included promotional downloadable content . 2014 HD re-release, in <i>Assassin's Creed: Birth of a New World – The American Saga</i> , with <i>ACIII</i> and <i>ACIV: Black Flag</i>	PS Vita – Sony Interactive Entertainment aiming to combine big budget console experience with mobile gaming convenience (touchscreen, Wi-Fi, 3G, Bluetooth); <i>Liberation</i> brings <i>AC</i> franchise production values to handheld; digital distribution of HD console re-release (PlayStation Network, Xbox Live Arcade, Steam).
Industry context	Video games relatively new media form (Atari, Inc. founded, Magnavox Odyssey released 1972), with exponential growth , rapid technological development , construction of “the gamer” audience , challenges in regulation .	UK / global framework of media regulation	Impact of convergence
		Increasing standardisation with Pan European Game Information (PEGI) regulation, applied by Video Standards Council (VSC) in UK, since 2012 (previously BBFC); Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) in USA; both age and content guidance. <i>Liberation</i> 18 (multiple, motiveless killing; violence towards defenceless people).	PS Vita <i>Liberation</i> links to PS3 <i>ACIII</i> for bonus content; online connectivity allows DLC weapons, clothing, skins, equipment, multiplayer , all promoting engagement and identification with game.
Economic / Global context	Culturally / financially significant in 3 major territories (Japan, Europe, USA); releases of new hardware (PS Vita 8 th generation console) and software (<i>Assassin's Creed</i> 100m-selling multimedia franchise) are major economic events .	AUDIENCES	
		Targeting and construction	Technology, consumption and response
		Hand held PS Vita offers more casual gameplay; but relatively low console sales suggest niche audience rather than casual mobile phone gamers. Female protagonist may appeal to different demographic , offering female gamer identification	Convergent links (DLC, special features) between <i>Liberation</i> and <i>ACIII</i> aim to encourage purchase of additional hardware and adoption of new gaming habits – if gamers ‘buy-in’ to content
		Theoretical perspectives: Media effects (Bandura)	Fandom (Henry Jenkins)
Social / Cultural context	<i>Assassin's Creed</i> franchise has many ethnically diverse protagonists (“developed by a multicultural team of various faiths and beliefs); <i>Liberation</i> offers first female playable character : Aveline de Grandpre, French-African assassin in 18 th century New Orleans. Later controversy when 2014's <i>Unity</i> offered four male, no female, avatars in co-op multiplayer.	Are audiences targeted likely to imitate violence? How does the active role of the player affect this?	Online fan culture and communities provide supplementary experience
		Regulation (Sonia Livingstone & Peter Lunt)	Cultural Industries (Hesmondhalgh)
		Should individuals or industries self-regulate? Who should be responsible and make decisions?	<i>AC</i> , low risk franchise, software promotes hardware to large fan base .

