"Yes, I Cheat, but Not Blatantly": The Use of Macros in Racing Games as Transgressive Play

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks recourse to the concept of transgressive play to examine cheating behaviour in racing games, and to analyse how cheating is received and reacted among gamers from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Mainland China. The game play analysis subjects Tencent's *QQ Speed* and its international equivalent, *Speed Drifters*, to close scrutiny. This paper draws on interviews conducted with gamers from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland China, with the aim of delving into their narratives regarding different types of cheats they used/ came across in games. The research is also supplemented by the author's personal observation. This paper suggests that the narratives provided by the interviewees generally revolve around two tensions: the tension between human and nonhuman, and between technology and authenticity. Sometimes problematic as these tensions remain, they are strongly felt by gamers, in that they reflect how technological change is considered and how competitiveness is celebrated within the gaming community.

Keywords

Auto clickers, cheating, emulators, macros, *QQ Speed*, racing games, *Speed Drifters*, technology, Tencent, transgressive play

INTRODUCTION

Few with a stake in Tencent's online racing game *QQ Speed* can escape ─ loyal players like myself least of all ─ the recent official announcement from the game company that they were starting to target and punish players who use macros to cheat in the game (QQ Speed 2021). The announcement seemed to be a concomitant of players' concern over and dismay at the increasing use of macros by some players. However, the concern and rage have been deep-seated, only to be triggered and to resurface after two of the most popular *QQ Speed* streamers on DouYu got involved in a fierce quarrel on June 27, 2021. One streamer accused the other one of using macros to achieve impressive results in the game, leading to the accused streamer posting a video on Bilibili to prove his innocence (17_Xtreme 2021). In the video, not only did he record himself playing on an iPad Pro, he also placed his feet on the desk to prove he was not cheating at all. Amusing as it may seem, it is a sensible decision nonetheless. In racing game communities, as well as in many other game communities, it is usually an ultimate insult for one to be called cheater, as it oftentimes represents a complete omission of one's sweat and tears shed for the game. As an avid mobile game player and an experienced macro user (which technically makes me a cheater), I am eager to explore the rationale behind such hostility towards cheating with macros in digital games.

Equally important is to ask, why some cheating behaviour is tolerated or even encouraged when kept within certain limits yet some would outright drive the cheated berserk; and how cheating is given various social meanings by cheaters when we look more closely at the typology of cheating activities. These inquiries are central to the study of cheating in digital games, only more so because of the expansion of new platforms and social network sites — as well as to the emergence of new gaming devices, software, and technological interfaces. Cheating has been around in video game culture for a long time, almost as long as the history of video games. But cheating today has become so strongly developed that it has turned into an organised (though underground) business industry, where cheats are sold and distributed on specialised markets and digital platforms (Tidy 2021). Altogether, they not only engender new types of cheating behaviour and expedite the circulation of the technical know-how to cheat, but also result in pronounced shifts in players' attitude toward and reaction to cheating in games. Understanding cheating as an evolving and important aspect of digital game culture and of the development of the greater game industry, then, enables us to also understand that players cheat for reasons other than, adapting anthropologist Gerald Mars here, to "stay loose in a tightening world" (1982, 182).

This paper seeks recourse to the concept of transgressive play to examine cheating behaviour in racing games, and to analyse how cheating is received and reacted among gamers from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Mainland China. To conduct this research, my game play analysis subjects Tencent's *QQ Speed* and its international equivalent, *Speed Drifters*, to close scrutiny. Moreover, this paper draws on 20 qualitative interviews conducted with gamers from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland China in 2021, with the aim of delving into their narratives regarding different types of cheats they used/ came across in games. The research is supplemented by an observation based upon the author's experience of having played the games for nearly three years; of making related content on YouTube and Bilibili; and of currently being a moderator/ administrator for a popular racing game streamer on DouYu. This paper suggests that the narratives of my interviewees generally revolve around two tensions: the tension between human and nonhuman, and between technology and authenticity. Sometimes problematic as these tensions remain, they are strongly felt by gamers, in that they reflect how technological change is considered and how competitiveness is celebrated within the gaming community. The paper consists of three sections. "Cheaters and Rules" is a discussion of how cheaters generally position themselves in games. "Cheating as Transgressive Play" develops the notion of cheating as transgressive play. "Too Perfect to Be a Human" is a sharing of my research findings on how gamers receive and react to cheating. Amongst the cheating behaviour in the games, I focus mostly on the use of macros.

CHEATERS AND RULES

It is almost impossible to talk about cheating without first giving the discussion of rules an entrée. All games have rules, and they are the constituent elements of games. Each game is governed by a particular set of rules that make itself distinct from other games and from other parts of life. As Parlett (1999) suggests, a game has two defining components: ends and means. The former refers to the notion that a game is a contest, with a goal one can attain, whilst the latter refers to the game equipment and rules. What remains at times paradoxical, perhaps, is that the rules are what regulate and restrict players' behaviour in games, and are what at the same time appeal to and draw in players. To play a game is thus a demonstration of players endeavouring to maximise their chances of attaining certain goals while they are dealing with carefully structured rules.

The establishment of rules manifests itself into an order — an order that, when accompanied by the act of playing, carves out a ludic space, or what Johan H. Huizinga calls "magic circle" (1949[1938]). Within this magic circle, the rules of normal life are not supposed to intervene, or the play world simply crumbles away. As Huizinga notes, "[A]s soon as the rules are transgressed the whole play-world collapses. The game is over. The umpire's whistle breaks the spell and sets 'real' life going again" (ibid. 11). Nowadays, the line drawn between the virtual world and the "real" world may not be very clear-cut because of the influence exerted by paratexts, given that prior to the release of a digital game, there is an abundance of online update reports, rumours, advertisements or even content leaks that shape potential players' experience and build up their foreknowledge before they start playing. But when it comes to cheating, Huizinga has provided an apt description that helps us understand the relation between cheaters and rules:

> The player who trespasses against the rules or ignores them is a "spoil-sport." The spoil-sport is not the same as the false player, the cheat; for the latter pretends to be playing the game and, on the face of it, still acknowledges the magic circle. It is curious to note how much more lenient society is to the cheat than to the spoil-sport. This is because the spoil-sport shatters the play itself. … He robs the play of its *illusion* (ibid. emphasis in original).

The spoilsport acts in defiance of the rules blatantly. On the other hand, the cheater secretly skirts around the rules but maintains the façade of playing normally. In digital games, very often a cheater needs to conceal his/her moves and pretends to be a *normal human*, for fear that one suspicious move should suffice to reveal a trace of *artificiality* in front of the trained eye, inevitably betraying his/her presence as a cheater. The pretence kept up by cheaters will also be elaborated below, and I would even suggest, the cheaters are sometimes more aware of the existence of rules than non-cheaters.

Having keen awareness of rules and being able to fake at playing normally do not proclaim the innocence of cheating, precisely because cheating, after all, is a way of playing that alters the experience of game play of non-cheating players to different degrees, not to mention the losses it can potentially incur from a game company's perspective. Cheating in digital games comes in many forms. At one end of the spectrum, there are relatively less destructive ways of cheating, including the use of strategy guides and walkthroughs in print or on websites, cheat codes, and colluding with other players in games (see Consalvo 2007). At the other end of the spectrum, there lie exploits and hacking, such as altering the game's code and other means of technological manipulation that leads to the reappropriation of systems, software, or hardware (see Ludlow & Wallace 2007, Chapter 13; Milburn 2018).

CHEATING AS TRANSGREESSIVE PLAY

The use of transgression as a connotation of subversive, uncompromising aesthetic forms and practices has been frequently brought up by academics in the fields of visual arts and film studies (see, for instance, Cashell 2009; Grønstad 2012; Aldama & Lindenberger 2016). The fact that transgression has drawn more attention in discussions of arts and films does not mean the history of digital games is devoid of transgressive acts, not to mention that the meaning of transgression in games does not directly derived from art and film studies. Cheating in digital games can indeed be traced back as early as the 1950s, when a group of MIT students shouted "information wants to be free" with their first developed multiple-access user system computer program (see Turkle 1984). At that time, hacking was deemed to be a means to decentralise power, to achieve techno-liberalist ideals, and to fight against big corporations and governments. Such an ethos has been passed down and can still be found, for instance, in some cyberpunk franchises like the Wachowskis's *The Matrix*

Trilogy (1999-2003). Of course, hackers also abound today, but some are already "domesticated" and work in big tech companies as cyber security experts; and cheating in games does not necessarily embody a hacktivist ethos. Revisiting these origins and transformations led us to realise transgression is by no means still but rather subject to change.

However, if transgression implies that one has to "go beyond the bounds or limits set by a commandment or law or convention [and] to violate or infringe" (Jenks 2003, 2), then cheating in games seems to be a good exemplar as it possesses the capability of disrupting an established order, challenging what was once considered normal and conventional. This paper argues that cheating is transgressive in two manifest ways: it challenges *the idea of play* and *the way to play*. First, cheating at times affects non-cheaters in an annoying way, so such so that it calls into question the general idea that play is "an absorbing … activity that provides enjoyment and a suspension of self-consciousness and sense of time" (Brown & Vaughan 2010, 60). This is not to say cheating has always been transgressive enough to make the experience of game play fall apart, but as we now shall see, play itself is capable of delivering deplorable and emotionally disturbing experience. Second, cheating means the gamer ─ though acknowledging the existence of rules ─ is playing in a way that does not completely conform to the intended game design. His/Her play style demonstrates a sense of reluctance or a struggle against what Aarseth (2007) would describe as the "implied player" of the digital game.

TOO PERFECT TO BE A HUMAN

One Game, Two Servers, and the Typology of Cheating

Two mobile games and their players will be examined closely in this paper. Both games are very similar in terms of graphic content and the ways to play, but show remarkable differences when it comes to cheating behaviour. *QQ Speed: Mobile* (henceforth *QQ Speed*) was developed by TiMi studio group and later published by Tencent in late 2017. It is a 3D racing game featuring two major modes ─ "speed racing" and "item racing" where players race in race cars to compete for victory. The game provides a huge variety of map choices, some featuring Chinese and foreign historical landmarks, whilst some others being fictional sites. The game has over 200 million registered players worldwide and was one of the highest-grossing games in Mainland China (Heikkinen n.d.). At the same time, *QQ Speed* is also an e-sports, with professional tournaments known as S-League being held on a regular basis. In light of its popularity, Tencent decided to launch an international version to target overseas players; *Speed Drifters*, therefore, was distributed in early 2019 by Garena, a Singaporean game publisher and developer. In short, *QQ Speed*, commonly called "the China server" (*lufu/ guofu* 陆服 / 国服), mostly targets players from Mainland China. On the other hand, *Speed Drifters*, often called "the international server" (*taifu/ guojifu* 台服/ 国际服), aims at players from Taiwan, Hong Kong and many other Asian regions (see Table 1). One rather intriguing difference that should be highlighted is that, generally, my informants described to me that there are more hackers on the international server but more macro users on the China server, to which I will return later.

Game title	*QQ Speed: Mobile*	*Speed Drifters*
	(aka the China server 陆服/ 国服)	(aka the International server 台服/ 国际服)

Developer/ Publisher/ Distributor	Developed by TiMi studio group and published by Tencent	Distributed by Garena
Launch Date	Dec 2017	Jan 2019
Game type	Multiplayer online mobile game	Multiplayer online mobile game
Players	Mostly from Mainland China	Mostly from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand, etc.
Common cheating behaviour	1.) using macros 2.) using physical auto clickers	1.) hacking 2.) teaming with hackers

Table 1: A comparison between QQ Speed and Speed Drifters

After interviewing my informants and gleaning figures from the websites of *QQ Speed* and *Speed Drifters*, I find that there are currently three main types of cheating behaviour in the games. The first type is simply hacking, which involves modifying the game data files or game's code to change the game properties. Hacking works this way: it usually takes a player one to two minutes or even more to reach the finish line, but with hacks, one can reach the finish line in a few seconds, literally. Hacking, however, is very easy to be detected by the game's anti-cheat system. On top of that, both *QQ Speed* and *Speed Drifters* have a replay system allowing players to rewatch their previous matches, so that they can report suspicious players.

The second type of cheating is the use of phone screen clicking aids, also known as physical auto clickers (*wuli liandianqi* 物理连点器). A physical auto clicker is a device being attached to a mobile phone or tablet, and its main function is to reduce the amount of keystroke a player has to perform. A player can figure out in advance the key combination that s/he will be using in the game, and then input the orders in the clicker, so that when the player presses a specific button, the clicker will be triggered to perform the recorded actions automatically. In other words, a physical auto clicker allows the gamer to execute a series of actions with ease, and sometimes at a speed that no human being can catch up manually. One advantage of using a physical auto clicker is that it is not easy to be detected by an anti-cheat system, because its operation does not require opening any software while playing the game.

The third type of cheating is the use of macros (usually called *hong* 宏 by players who speak Mandarin Chinese), which is what I will mainly focus below. Despite not being physical, macros are similar to physical auto clickers in many ways. Macros nowadays are found in many game emulators, keyboards, gaming mice, and even some gaming phones. Moreover, macros are more powerful and accurate than physical auto clickers, as the former are able to record a longer series of keystrokes and carry out the order at millisecond accuracy. Similar to auto-clickers, macros are difficult to be detected by anti-cheat systems, but can be caught by trained human eyes. Interestingly enough, macros were not designed to assist gamers in cheating in the first place. Back in the 1950s, software macros were invented to ease the burden for software engineers and programmers so that they could engage in programming tasks less tediously (see Holbrook and Stanley 2014). Macros were starting to get popularised and severely

exploited by video game players only after the 1980s, a time when keyboard macros and mouse macros came to the fore. In this study, when I use the term "macro users", I refer to players who play *QQ Speed* or *Speed Drifters* with an emulator. In other words, contrary to ordinary gamers, who play the mobile game on a mobile device, macro users play the mobile game on their desktop or laptop using a keyboard.

As I have noted earlier, it appears to be incomprehensible that in two mobile games that are basically identical, we can observe different cheating patterns. My informants from Hong Kong and Taiwan (who play on the international server) generally consider hacking to be the most annoying and common form of cheating they have encountered while playing the game. They are also deeply disgusted by hackers; they expressed clearly that they could hardly stand a chance facing a hacker in games. They also consider using physical auto-clickers or macros as cheating behaviour, but that they are trivial compared to blatant hacking. On the other hand, my informants from Mainland China do not find hacking to be a major issue that affects their experience of game play. In fact, most of them described to me that they never met one hacker in the game. Nevertheless, my informants from Mainland China generally look down on players who use auto-clickers or macros; they believe their existence is highly detrimental to the game ecology of *QQ Speed*. On the China server, macro users are sometimes addressed as "macro boys" (*hong hai er* 宏孩儿), a derogatory label also mischievously referencing a fictional character in the Chinese classical novel *Journey to the West* by Wu Cheng'en.

The difference in cheating patterns can be explained, but to do so we must begin with the foregrounding that digital game players and the broader game industry, together, open up a wide range of gaming experiences. As Consalvo (2007) notes, "Just as players exercise agency, they aren't doing so in a vacuum. … [V]arious industry elements work to constrain certain readings or activities, promoting certain ways of seeing gameplay and ways of playing that are valued over others" (2). This is to say, what it means to be transgressive or a breach of conduct is also highly situated and negotiable, and such situatedness should be examined not just from the player's perspective, but also by taking into account the industrial, institutional and place-based factors. To better understand why there is a discrepancy in my informants' understanding of cheating behaviour, I argue that the difficulty with setting up a new game account plays a major role. A great majority of Chinese digital games require logging on to WeChat or QQ, both of which are owned by Tencent, who launched an anti-addiction system that adopts ID verification and, in July 2021, they introduced the facial scan to prevent minors from using their parents' ID information to play digital games. In Mainland China, therefore, it is rather troublesome to set up an extra game account if one takes into consideration how many procedures one has to go through. This explains why people seldom use hacks on the China server, because cheating blatantly will result in a permanent ban easily. Outside Mainland China, players can register a game account using simply their phone numbers or email addresses (as in the case of the games distributed by Garena), meaning one can set up as many accounts as possible to test and experiment with hacks.

Skilful (Human) Players in Crisis

Beneath the notion of cheating as transgressive play is another valid concern: What exactly is cheating — or more specifically, the use of macros — transgressing in the case of the said racing games? This paper suggests that the use of macros has radically challenged the status of skilful players and encouraged critical reflection on technological change. With increasing applications of macros in *QQ Speed* and *Speed Drifters*, I have come to observe that nowadays, players cannot boast about their racing results or skills without adding some caveats. Usually, gamers who play without using

any cheats are likely to stress that they are ordinary players (*putong wanjia* 普通玩家) or "players using only hands" (*chunshoucuo wanjia* 纯手搓玩家). Instead of treating these labels as a form of self-clarification, I consider them personal statements made to disavow technological automation. Such identification with that which is considered corporeal and natural is an attempt to frame an opposition against technological amateurism.

Suffice it to say that playing digital games is an everyday experience for many people on a global level. Discussions about cultural industries, online fan communities and video game communities usually put great emphasis upon affective underpinnings, stating how the industries and fan culture "evoke passion and loyalty among fans, providing a model of affective engagements that facilitate emotion, enjoyment and the integration of products into users' identity positions" (Sandvoss 2015, 358), or advocating how players' social interactions are facilitated by an outburst of online platforms, which produces at ease collective contact experiences in the current digital era (see Lin & Sun 2016). What is less discussed, perhaps, is that even within a single game community, there can be a complex hierarchy. Consalvo (2007) proposes the concept of "gaming capital", suggesting that it is futile to discuss players as a whole in an abstract sense:

> [W]hat we know about players can change over time, and be dependent on such elements as player skill or age. Likewise, even the most linear game can be experienced in multiple ways, depending on a player's knowledge of past games in that genre or series … All of that knowledge, experience, and positioning helps shape gaming capital for a particular player, and in turn that player helps shape the future of the industry (ibid. 4)

Read in this light, it is important for us to understand that players come in many types within a gaming community. In the case of *QQ Speed* and *Speed Drifters*, apart from competitive racers, there are players who prefer to be collectors ─ who consider collecting virtual items to be their primary source of pleasure. Some players are social players ─ who enjoy chatting and making friends with others. It should, however, be noted that gaming communities built upon skill-based and competitive games like *QQ Speed* and *Speed Drifters* have a tendency to advocate competitiveness. The level of intimacy a player has with other players is heavily dependent on how skilful and competitive that player is. Many of my informants who use macros talked about how this is for them to remain competitive within the community. Cheating is an effective means for competitive game players like them to represent themselves as skilful, talented, and hard-working members in the game community and to maintain their social status.

The emergence and exploitation of macros in racing games have closed the distance between amateurs and skilful players, which places the position of the latter in jeopardy. Skilful players who pride themselves both on the gaming prowess and on the perseverance to seek strategies for gameplay optimisation suddenly come to the realisation that their venerated position becomes shaky because of macro users. This existential crisis has been well captured by an informant of mine, who used to be a national record holder (*guofu xuanshou* 国服选手):

> Macros users are everywhere … I used to practise at least four hours every day, and the skin on my hand was even rubbed off. It once took me a week to break the national record. Macro users can break the national record easily. No one can compete against them. ~ Qiao Nan, 17, from Mainland China

现在满街都是宏 … 以前我每天花至少四小时练图，手都破皮了。刷国服时刷了一星期才有。开宏狗每次百分百出弹射，跑得比国服还快。谁扛得了?

Qiao's feeling is shared by a number of my informants, who used to enjoy an exalted status within the gaming community. In fact, that status was guaranteed both by a steep learning curve required to gain noticeable improvement in the game and by a restricted circulation of the technical know-how to use macros, which put up formidable entry barriers for one to become a top-class player. For many of my informants (self-professed gamers), the circulation of macro technology has introduced an influx of mediocre gamers now capable of rivalling them or even eclipse them as skilful and hardworking players.

Although there are signs that ordinary players are getting intimidated by so-called mediocre gamers who use macros, it appears to be simultaneously counterintuitive and self-contradictory that many of my informants told me that it is usually the case that good players are more likely to cheat in digital games. As much as using macros is considered cheating, most informants agree that the use of macros involves skills. Macro users generally play on keyboard, which involves using seven to ten fingers (playing on a mobile device usually requires two to four fingers), which makes many believe playing on keyboard is a skill one has to master before using macros. In my research findings, playing a mobile racing game on keyboard is considered a difficult task that only talented and fast-learning players can handle:

> Let me ask you this, which type of students will cheat? Usually the above-average students, because they're smart enough to want more, but their ability doesn't allow them to achieve more at this stage. That's why they resort to cheating. Bad students don't have to cheat. It doesn't make any difference if they cheat; they're just that bad. […] The same goes with using macros in [*QQ Speed* and *Speed Drifters*]. ~ Chian Yi, 21, from Taiwan,

Chian's account attests that on the spectrum of cheating behaviour, some forms of cheating are considered more skilful in status than others. In my study, using physical auto-clickers are more skilful than hacking blatantly, and using macros is more skilful than using auto-clickers. Being viewed as more skilful does not render that form of cheating more "natural"; it simply provides the possibility that some features associated with using macros dovetail with the fact that competitive game communities are more inclined to fetishise good skills and talent.

From what has been established, we have found that within the racing game community, playing without cheats is characterised by an authentic quality, whereas using macros is usually associated with technicality and technological automation. Such distinction manifests itself more clearly in my informants' narratives regarding ordinary players and macro users. Some of my informants are indeed experienced macro users, and they are fully aware of the bitter hostility towards the use of macros. Therefore, they sometimes disguise themselves as ordinary players. When I asked specifically about how they are able to do so, their responses are:

> Your drifts can't be too speedy. Normal humans don't have that kind of reflexes. 出弯不能太快，因为正常人没那手速

> Try to be a bit clumsy, like a human. 动作不能太流畅，得像个人

Don't play in a way that's silky smooth 丝滑; otherwise, you're acting like a machine. 机器

Slow down everything. No need to rush or be aggressive. Play slowly, like a normal human.

Add some variety in your macro settings, because if there's a high consistency in every drift, they [other players] would suspect.

To compare their accounts with how ordinary players think of macro users, I also ask my informants who have never used any cheats that how they can detect a macro user. Some of their responses are:

If his operations are so clean and fast, he must be a "macro boy".

Just check his reaction time between his moves. If it's too inhuman, then he must be a macro user.

Check the speed every time he drifts. If it always stays at 160km/hr, then he's not a normal human player.

See if the player makes mistakes. If all the moves are too perfect, it must be a product of high technology. 高科技产物

If the record is too fast, it is achieved with macros. No human beings can approach that kind of extreme limit.

In the conversations with my informants, we see a tension between ordinary players as humans and macro users as nonhuman. Another tension that I have found frequently while conducting the interviews is the one between technology and authenticity. I asked my informants (only the non-cheating players) how they would compare ordinary players with macro users in general. These are some of their responses:

Macro users are merciless racing machines 无情跑图机器. They don't get tired. They can always perform at the highest capacity. … Ordinary players can't reach that level; they're just normal humans.

Ordinary players rely on authentic skills; macro users rely on their expertise in technology.

When ordinary players race, their operations aren't perfect, but you can see they're authentic. When macro users race, their operations are neat and highly consistent 乾淨和有一致性. That's because the technology does all the automation work for them.

CONCLUSION

My interviewees may have erroneously conflated technology with complete automation, with machine, with macros, and occasionally, with skills. Nonetheless, their comments underscore racing game players' assumptions and perceptions of the ways humans interact with digital games. Very often for players, to play fair and square implies one has to rely totally on the biological body. The idea of playing with one's body in a digital ludic space can sometimes be so entrenched that the player becomes oblivious to the fact that the phone or tablet s/he is using is a technological device, and

that his/her gaming skills would not have materialised in the absence of that device. The case study presented in this paper is, of course, by no means exhaustive, as there is still an array of cheating means emerging not just in racing games, but also in other types of digital games, which then constantly reshapes player experience and the gaming community. When my interviewees told me about their experiences, I sensed also the confusion arising from their discomfort with cheating technology getting more and more sophisticated. I believe such confusion stems not so much from technology itself, but from the fact that technological advancement has come to challenge us to re-define and re-position ourselves in relation to the changing world in which we live. In many cases, this is by no means a pleasurable experience, and this is understandable. But it is equally significant to, under these circumstances, rethink not only cheating, but also rethink other technological changes, and how these changes are able to open up new vistas for new types of cultural and social expressions as reflected in today's digital game culture.

It is equally important to note that the use of macros to cheat, as a social practice indicated by this paper, is never confined to *QQ Speed* alone. Some other racing games I have dabbled with, such as Nexon's *KartRider Rush +* (2020) and Ubisoft's *Trackmania* (2020), are, too, faced with similar problems. This is not a coincidence as imitating popular games has been a tactic deployed by many game companies. *QQ Speed* has long been compared to Nintendo's *Mario Kart* series as both games share marked similarities in terms of game mechanics (see Chiu 2020). It is, however, not this paper's intention here to prove or argue if *QQ Speed* is outright cloning *Mario Kart*, but that it is common for digital games belonging to the same genre drawing inspiration from other games. So far, there has not been sufficient literature aiming to locate similar cheating patterns in similar racing games, and therefore, this paper hopes that more academic attention could be directed to the phenomenon in the future.

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