

GameDay Planning



“You don’t choose the moment, the moment chooses you.
You only choose how prepared you are when it does.”

- *Mike Burtch, Fire Chief SJFD*



What is a GameDay?

An exercise where we place our systems + processes under stress

- Simulate catastrophic failure scenarios
- Controlled experiments in order to surface chaos
- Test every layer (from customer to back end) if possible
- Test not just code, but also processes, people etc.

Why do a GameDay?

- Failure is normal, we need to practice it
- Increase system resilience - “antifragility”
- Be proactive and prepared for incidents
- Find ways to reduce incident blast radius and mean-time-to-recovery (MTTR)
- Build a shared understanding within and across teams
- Grow our culture of a continuous focus on resilience

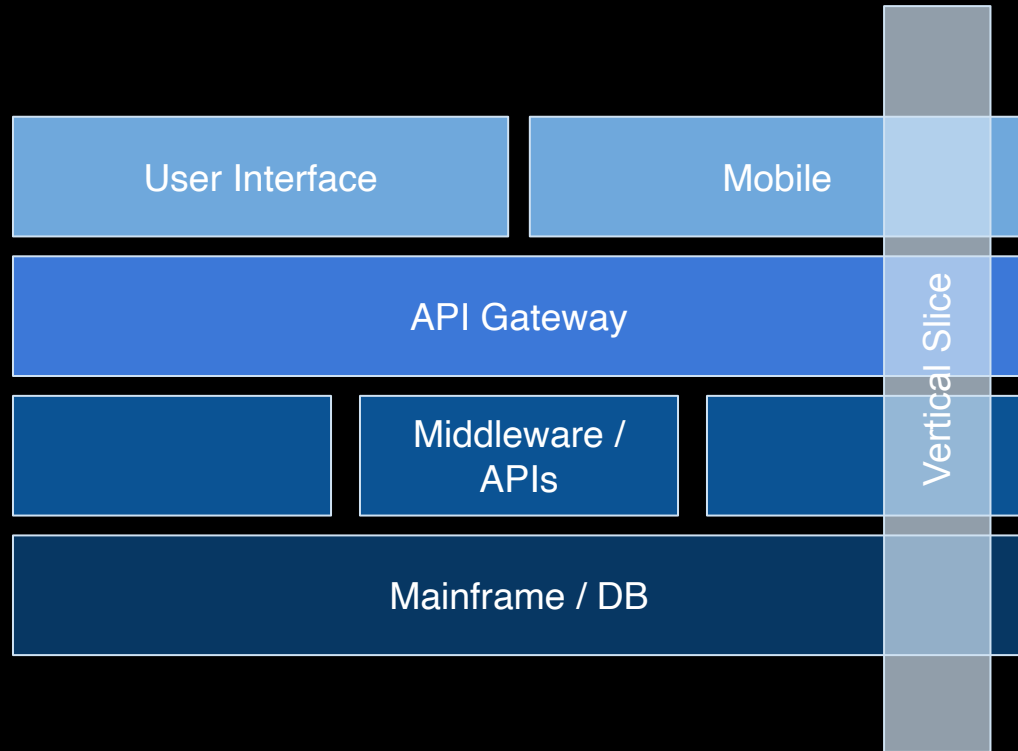
Services are managed + distributed across multiple organisational silos but are rarely tested holistically.

How is it different to a DR test?

	DR	GameDays
Driver	Process	Continuous Improvement
Approach	Run sheet + requirements	Loose plan + a little chaos
Focus	Infrastructure	Customer
Who	Operations	Cross functional, multi-disciplinary team
Assumption	System is built to a robust design	System is hazardous

What is the ideal scope for the GameDay?

- Full thin “vertical slice” from the mobile to mainframe
- Exercising the most used and highest value scenarios e.g.
 - Login
 - Check order history
 - Place an order
- Important to keep the preparation and execution feasible
 - Start small, experiment and iterate



High level logistics to organise

- Coordination team
 - <core team>, plus others from <other teams>
 - A project manager / coordinator
- Planning workshops
- Assigned roles / responsibilities
 - 2 people from each layer/team
- Funding / Timesheet codes
- Access to network, dashboards, key resources
- E2E environments configured with data prepared
 - Ensure that there is warning regarding any alerting which is likely to be triggered
- War room / workspace

Timeline

- Minimum preparation time: 1-2 months
 - In consideration in the number of teams, environments and projects to co-ordinate

Managing the outcomes of the GameDay

- Findings will need to be triaged and prioritised
- It is common to identify at least one major issue during a GameDay. Communication of any such issues will need to be handled appropriately.
- Presentations of findings should be planned to teams at all levels
 - Delivery teams responsible for each layer/component
 - Leadership team

Taking the learnings forward

- Principles & practices
- Culture
- Create a non-prescriptive maturity model / framework

No set way to do a GameDay; encourage experimentation and individuality.

Risks

	Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
1	<p>Wasted effort due to complicated nature of the preparation required</p> <p>If one components or part of the connectivity is not ready on the day There is the risk that the planned scenarios cannot be executed Which could result in wasted effort</p>	Medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong support from leadership• Fast action to resolve blockers• Engage a PM who has the necessary relationships
2	<p>Delays due to resource contention</p> <p>If project needs are prioritised over supporting the GameDay, There is the risk that plans and timelines will be impacted, Which could result in delays or jeopardising success on the day.</p>	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong support from leadership• Clear budget and access to TeamPlay codes

Risks

	Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
3	<p>Unstable environments on the day If it is not possible to achieve access to <u>stable</u> environments across the stack, There is the risk that the planned scenarios cannot be executed Which could result in wasted effort</p>	Medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vendors (e.g. IBM/ Telstra) on standby
4	<p>Not possible to secure access to dedicated environments If it is not possible to secure dedicated access to environments, There is a risk that other teams will be impacted by GameDay activities (e.g. intentional system outages), Which could result in loss of productivity.</p>	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning, coordination and communication across teams

Next Steps

1. Incorporate feedback and prepare this pack for distribution
2. Endorsement from leadership team
3. Creation of coordination team
4. Definition of scope
5. Plan workshops with broader teams
6. Run GameDay