

# Game design observation

**Insurgency: Sandstorm** is a first-person shooter video game aiming (pun intended) for realism – not as much as the Arma series, but arguably more than something like the Counter Strike games. For me personally, it struck a nice balance between the boeing-cockpit-like controls of Arma and the bullets-shoot-from-player's-eyes simplicity of Source engine games, which might have contributed to me having over a thousand hours on it. Despite it being a game about guns, I will not be focusing on them. Instead...

One realistic element that I find very intriguing and yet very underrepresented in multiplayer games that I encountered is **proximity chat**. In Insurgency: Sandstorm, when you push the button to talk over the microphone, your voice can be heard not only by your teammates over the radio that everyone is using, but also by any close-enough enemy who can just hear you talking. This can lead to some pretty hilarious situations of your communication giving you away in stressful situations, or by you being able to pin-point an enemy's location thanks to his voice-chat comradery with his team. However, this is still not what I want to talk about...

The game also contains **voice-lines** which you either trigger from a selection wheel (think along the lines of "The enemy is in that building!") or they are responses triggered automatically (when a grenade lands in your vision, your character usually exclaims something like "FUCK THAT'S A GRENADE!"). These voice-lines are also guided by the laws of proximity, meaning they can also affect the gameplay if either side of the given match is listening out for clues. Almost there...

One of the systems in Insurgency: Sandstorm is **suppression**. When you're under fire, not hit, but the bullets are whizzing by, this has a negative effect on your character: less stamina, shaky hands, tunnel vision, all the fun parts. And here is the catch: being under suppressive fire influences your proximity voice lines.

This means that instead of calmly, militaristically relaying information, the voice lines become erratic, stuttery, full of emotion. So instead of "[Requesting a gun run on this location.](#)" you get "[The jet! The one that goes BRRRRTTT!](#)", in place of "[Negative.](#)" you have "[WHAT?! / Are you kidding! / I fucking can't!](#)", "[Fire chemical mortars.](#)" becomes "[Use the gas! Fucking fire there!](#)". And I just think that's beautiful.

Closing remarks: the jet does in fact go brrrttt, [see for yourself](#).