

New Games Settings — HEROWATCH Case Study



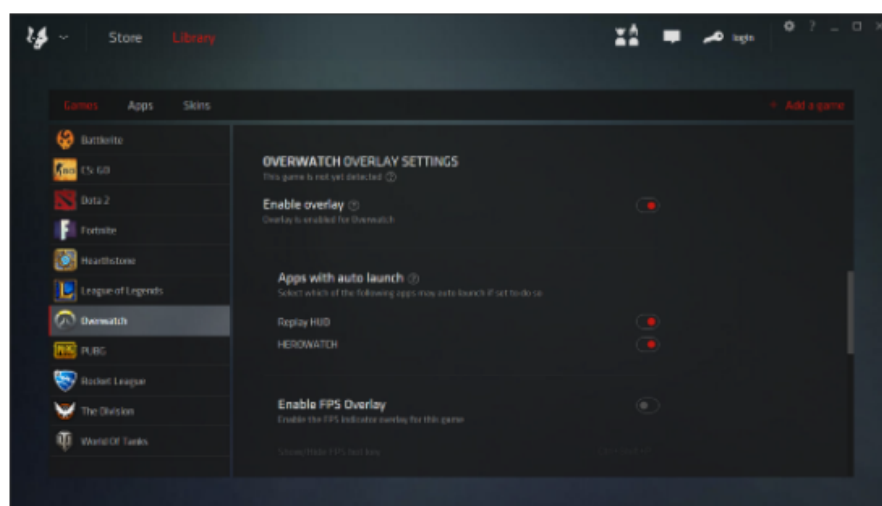
Yuval Gelbard [Follow](#)
Apr 10, 2018 · 5 min read



For newcomers — welcome! The Overwolf blog sets itself a target to share development experiences of overlay apps for PC games being developed with the [Overwolf SDK](#) for gamers.

Overwolf users want to be able to control their gaming experience. We've been working on addressing requests and feedback made by Overwolf users regarding the need to control Overwolf, apps and in-game experience in a clear easy way.

Overwolf users now have the ultimate control panel from which they can control each game and its supporting apps separately.



From the app developer standpoint, there are several changes which you can control via the API in order to get the user's preferences, so you have the ability to customize your messaging inside the app.

We've prepared this case study with the [HEROWATCH](#) team while following [the new game settings documentation](#) which available on the [developers website](#).

Example — Auto Launch Permission is Off

When Auto Launch Permission is set to Off for the HEROWATCH app (for the game Overwatch), HEROWATCH will not auto launch when the match begins.

We want to make sure that the user:

- Detects the issue
- Knows why this happened
- Understands he can change it
- Have an easy way to change it



To answer the points above we:

- Add a clear visual sign. This would be in the form of text in this example (the “detects”)
- Add a tooltip for the broader explanation (the “why”)

The auto launch “permission” of HEROWATCH is set to Off, so the app cannot launch automatically even if auto launch is set to On. You can still launch the app manually from the dock at any time. Change the permission state to allow auto launch.

- Present a clear call to action to encourage him to change the setting (the “understands” + “way”)
- As apps can’t change the setting themselves, the action link will open the settings panel for Overwatch in the store.

Notes:

- This is the home screen of the app, which is available on Desktop — apps that have no desktop mode are forced to show this in-game, but in-game the user CANNOT access the store.
We recommend that all apps have a home screen for desktop, so they can communicate better with users and allow access to the necessary Overwolf components. See next example.
- Since this is just a “no auto launch” case, it makes sense to place this indication next to the Auto Launch setting, where we expect the user to check if he doesn’t remember his earlier choice to disable the permission.
You may also place this indication on your home screen or any other screen in which you believe the user will see it, as long as it does not disturb the user or the app. Consider to allow the user to dismiss this indication, if placed in a very noticeable location.
- You may come up with new and other ways to inform the user, and convince him to allow your app to auto launch, as long as you have his better interest and experience in mind.

Example — Overlay is disabled

When the overlay for Overwatch is disabled, HEROWATCH and any other app cannot work inside this game. Since an attempt to launch the app in-game is impossible, the only way for the app to communicate to the user the reason for which he can’t use the app, is from a desktop screen. Again, we want to make sure that the user:

- Detects the issue
- Knows why this happened
- Understands he can change it
- Have an easy way to change it

This time, since the app is completely disabled in-game (where its main value is), we chose to indicate this in a more visible, paramount way — on the home screen itself, as well as inside the Settings screen:



In this case, the warning stresses out not just the state of the overlay, but the result as well.

Notes:

- Without a desktop screen, apps can’t explain the user that the overlay is disabled and the reason they can’t enjoy the app.
- If you do have a desktop screen, that has a lot of value of its own, then a permanent warning may be unpleasant on the eyes and make the user feel bad about his legit choice.
- A more subtle warnings and indications may be used in the forms of icons, pop ups and animations. Example:



In this case we’d recommend that a tooltip will appear when mouse hovers the sign

Edge Cases

Some apps have a background process, which is usually a transparent window that is used to control the rest of the app and call other windows. This process **MUST** be terminated, when app is terminated. If not, then the app is actually “launched” and running without user’s awareness, and besides being a bad practice it also cancels the Auto Launch Permission capability, which prevents launch events if set to Off. Make sure you terminate app entirely, when user perform the respective action (usually “X”).

Summary

This is a major change for users and by following the case study [and documentation](#), you have a great opportunity to improve the error handling in your app. And now, through the new API additions, you have the ability to control your messages and understand your users preferences. [You can also read more about the user’s perspective in our knowledge base article for Overwolf users.](#)

. . .

Overwolf is an open apps platform for PC games. We support almost 800 games with our overlay technology and you can easily create your own in-game apps by using [the Overwolf SDK for free](#).

For more tips and strategies on how to improve your app, follow our blog! Feel free to contact us at any time with any question for more guidance and tips through the comments or by following us on [Twitter](#), or join us on [Slack](#).

Case Study Apps Gaming Tech Product



6 claps



WRITTEN BY

Yuval Gelbard

Follow

Senior product manager, Overwolf — responsible for making gamers happy, win more and boost company’s KPIs altogether.

More From Medium

Five Nights At Freddy’s Retrospection: Corrupted Nostalgia in Game Two



Priya Sridhar

Little Misfortune: Close Reading

Rachael Versaw in [The Startup](#)



Architects of Terror: How Blizzard North Designed the Ultimate Final Boss in Diablo and Diablo 2



David Craddock

Final Fantasy XV & Disability: Doing it Right

Taylor VanGilder



Finding Strength From Monster Hunter’s World’s Toughest Fight



Victor Lau in [SUPERJUMP](#)

Minecraft as an Adult

T.B. Chambers



The Science of Simulation and Shopping

Precious Osoba in [The Startup](#)



Mordhau: Pure Medieval PvP Chaos

Bram_B in [SUPERJUMP](#)



Discover Medium

Welcome to a place where words matter. On Medium, smart voices and original ideas take center stage - with no ads in sight. [Watch](#)

Make Medium yours

Follow all the topics you care about, and we’ll deliver the best stories for you to your homepage and inbox. [Explore](#)

Become a member

Get unlimited access to the best stories on Medium — and support writers while you’re at it. Just \$5/month. [Upgrade](#)

Medium

[About](#) [Help](#) [Legal](#)