Project Utopia

A brief description of an ideal society and the potential role of serious games
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My idea about an ideal society is in principle a very simple one; it is a society in which *everybody* enjoys life. For me this means that everyone would rate his/her life with 10 out of 10. The reality is however significantly more complex; there are many factors that contribute to the enjoyment of lives, and often times the enjoyment of some comes at the cost of others, who will thus enjoy life less.

One of the most important factors contributing to the human enjoyment of life is in my opinion having a great childhood. If you are happy as a child, you will have a more solid basis of becoming happy as an adult as well. To become happier as a child, I believe it is important that a child should always enjoy what he/she is doing. Especially in Western society, one of the places where children spend most of their time is at school. Thus, if we want children to be happier, I believe it is important that they should enjoy school. However, many children dislike a lot of the things they do at school. For instance, many children do not like doing math or reading a serious history book. This is exactly where serious games can help.

Serious games can help making learning a more enjoyable experience. I believe serious games are potentially able to teach the same things in the same amount of time. However, instead of having to use a static textbook, one can play a dynamic game which is also focussed at being enjoyable. If this turns out to be true, this means that children can potentially enjoy all the time they spend learning. This can result in a significantly larger part of a child's life being enjoyed as well as children learning more than they used to, which can make children happier in general.

Besides teaching about traditional theoretical topics, serious games can also influence how people, including children, think and behave. For example, serious games can help in making people, and more importantly children, more collaborative. Social activity is in my opinion also an important factor of happiness. It can also result in people helping out other people, making life more enjoyable for everyone. If children learn to collaborate better early in their lives, they have the potential to grow up to be more collaborative adults than we currently are. I believe that this collaboration is essential in creating a better world for everyone to enjoy.

Besides making people/children more collaborative and teaching about traditional topics, I believe serious games can help in many other aspects of creating a better world. More examples in which I believe serious games can play a role are: teaching about parenthood, about the importance of creating a sustainable world, about staying healthy, about the importance of certain laws, and so on. I believe all of these things can contribute to making the world a more enjoyable place for everyone.

I do not believe that serious games are the solution to all the problems preventing our society from being 'ideal'. I do however believe that serious games can play a significant role in making many of these problems easier to deal with, thus contributing to a world in which everyone can enjoy life.