

SERIOUS GAMES IN A SOCIAL CONTEXT

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KEYWORDS

serious gaming, education, game development

ABSTRACT

This paper provides ...

INTRODUCTION

... ever get the feeling that life's a game with changing rules and no clear sides, one you are compelled to play, but cannot win. Welcome to gamespace. Gamespace is where and how we live today.

serious issues

- awareness – world problems / social dilemma(s)
- education – language / mathematics / history
- health & wellbeing – skill(s) & remediation
- experience(s) – playful application(s)

awareness – game(s) / arg(s) / dilemma(s)

education – reference(s) / www.mijnnaamishaas.nl

problem(s) – health / remediation(s)

skill(s) & remediations

- team up – www.girlsinc.org/gc/page.php?id=6.2
- dangerous situation(s) – www.ditto.com.au
- communication method(s) – www.webwisekids.org
- muscle rehabilitation – on the move
- physical exercise(s) – www.silverfit.nl
- fitness – www.virtuagym.com
- overcome fear(s) – www.vrphobia.com

games that depict everyday activities such as communication, social negotiation, caring for elements or characters that are part of a game world, or stabilizing precarious situations have become extremely popular with female players.

BASIC CONSIDERATIONS

serious games as social technology

- target(s) – which (group of) people?
- sponsor(s) – who initiates/pays?
- goal(s) – what behavior(s)/pattern(s)?
- instrument(s) – by what means/technology?

health games

- fitness – www.virtuagym.com
- elderly care – www.silverfit.nl/en
- diabetes – www.gripsugarkids.nl
- learn to fall – nos broadcast (nl)

awareness

- world hunger – www.food-force.com
- carabella goes to college – www.privacyactivism.org
- real lives – www.educationalsimulations.com/products.html
- refugee(s) – escape from woomera
- eye witness – www.mic.polyu.edu.hk/nanjing
- university politics – www.virtual-u.org
- sudan – www.darfurisdying.com

THEORY BACKGROUND

(casual) game mechanics

complex adaptive systems

essential game theory

A/B	cooperate	deflect
cooperate	R/R	S/T
deflect	T/S	P/P

T = temptation, R = reward, P = punishment, S = sucker

A/B	cooperate	deflect
cooperate	live/live	coward/girl
deflect	girl/coward	dead/dead

chicken: $T > R > S > P$

- prisoner(s) dilemma: $T > R > P > S$

- chicken: $T > R > S > P$
- leader: $T > S > R > P$
- free loader: $R > T > S > P$
- war(s) of the sexes: $R > P > T > S?$

gamification dynamics

- appointment(s) – in which you must succeed / in time
- influence & status – achievement(s) / I want this!
- progression(s) – towards completion(s) / monitor(s)
- communal discovery – cooperation(s) / reward(s)

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

1. introduction(s) – the team & finding (y)our topic(s)
2. theoretical background(s) – narrative(s) & human(s)
3. miscellaneous – pitch / design(s) & gamification(s)
4. game design workshop(s) – express (y)our idea(s)
5. student presentation(s) – concept(s) & plan(s)
6. reflection(s) – ethical aspects of serious games
7. final presentation(s) – concept(s) & prototype(s)

basic exercise(s)

- project utopia – brief description of ideal society and potential role of serious games
- moodspace – exercise in visual rethorics, preferably in unity

final project(s)

- prototype(s) – with sufficient documentation
- concept design – with elaboration of narrative(s) and visual design
- trailer – promotion clip, with documentation and business plan
- reflection(s) on societal impact – with sufficient motivation and depth

deadline(s)

[R/X]: session 2 – online presence / portfolio(s)
 [U]: session 3 – project utopia
 [M]: session 4 – mood space(s)
 [C]: session 5 – concept(s)
 [E]: session 6 – essay(s)
 [P/T]: session 7 – final project(s) & peer reviews

PROJECT UTOPIA

- environment(s) – facilitator(s), infrastructure ...
- system(s) – organization(s), incentive(s) ...
- rule(s) – code(s) of law, civic order ...
- (moral) value(s) – utility, behavior(s), ethic(s) ...

WORKSHOP DESIGN

case study: civic order(s)

- (y)our player(s) ... ?
- what super power(s) ... ?
- invitation(s) – message(s) !
- (mini) game – mechanic(s) ?
- nudge(s) – re-enforcement(s) ... !?

LET'S BE SERIOUS!

In one of my first papers on this topic Serious, I observed that – ICT is not a (simple) game. When speaking about civic order(s), a similar phrase might be either taken as an understatement or even as a warning, given the need expressed all over the world to guide and control (or nudge) the behavior of citizens, in urban areas as well areas threatened by the effects of consumerism, with as a dramatic example the rural areas of the countries I recently visited, China, where pollution due to production and consumption is a number one threat. The China Dream workshop, in which I participated at the end of my stay in China, and in general the activity of JUCCE¹ is one of the many attempts to deal with such problems, due to, according to many, the rise of a larger and larger middle class as a consequence of the astounding economic growth. What ideals, dreams or aspirations should the people becoming part of this *middle class* have, and how can we bring about such ideals, or, put more plainly, what civic values should be emphasized and promoted to contain consumerism and to lead people to a better life, in which they still enjoy their well-deserved luxury, in good health, which is another latent threat underlying unconstrained consumption.

Our question, as addressed in this paper, is how can we deploy serious games to counteract problems of personal health, order in public spaces, and in general civic behavior that leads to a sustainable society.

- urban – (un)safety in urban environment(s)
- climate – climate change and energy consumption
- fitness – (social network) support for sport and fitness
- media – prevent(ion) of media and information overload
- scenario(s) – emergency / rescue in public area(s)
- communication – exchange(s) in private/public space(s)

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper we have reported on our

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¹www.jucce.org

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