

TECH1002-18 Social Media Innovation

Lecture Eighteen: Play & Gamification

Les Sins "Why feat. Nate Salman"

<https://youtu.be/-V5AY2d1h7Q>

1 Introduction

"The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honours the servant and has forgotten the gift" Albert Einstein

"Yet another incorrectly attributed quotation is being passed around the Internet, this time on Facebook."

<http://ianchadwick.com/blog/it-wasnt-einstein-who-said-it/>

"Steve Jobs reflects in Walter Isaacson's much-discussed biography of him, one of the best biographies and memoirs of 2011: "The people in the Indian countryside don't use their intellect like we do, they use their intuition instead, and the intuition is far more developed than in the rest of the world... Intuition is a very powerful thing, more powerful than intellect, in my opinion. That's had a big impact on my work. Western rational thought is not an innate human characteristic, it is learned and it is the great achievement of Western civilization. In the villages of India, they never learned it. They learned something else, which is in some ways just as valuable but in other ways is not. That's the power of intuition and experiential wisdom." <https://www.brainpickings.org/2012/01/11/intuition-vs-rationality/>

2 What are videogames?

- Keywords and concepts: cybernetics
- Videogames as new media
- A brief history of videogames: from HCI to social and serious gaming
- What do you think is the significance of videogames as media in everyday life?

'Computer-based entertainment software that use electronic platforms such as personal computers, or consoles involving players in physical or networked environments' (Newman, 2004, p. 27).

2.1 What are the Affordances and Constraints of Games?

"Although video games have attracted considerable criticism from the mainstream media, they nevertheless provide opportunities to engage in new forms of 'reading' and 'writing', new identities and new learning experiences" (Jones & Hafner, 2012).

Jones & Hafner Chapter 9 - Games, Learning and Literacy

<http://www.routledge.com/cw/jones-9780415673150/s1/resources/>

- Computer?
- Arcade?
- Handheld?
- Console?

2.2 Gaming Literacies

"Using media is a rather complicated affair that influences not just **how we do things**, but also the kinds of **social relationships** we can have with other people, the kinds of **social identities** we can assume, and even the kinds of **thoughts** we can think. When we talk about being able to **use media** in this broader sense, not just as the ability to **operate a machine** or **decipher a particular language or code**, but as the ability to **creatively engage** in particular **social practices**, to assume appropriate **social identities**, and to form or maintain various **social relationships**, we use the term 'literacies'" (Jones & Hafner, 2012, p. 12).

2.3 Gaming Tools

According to Jones and Hafner "the process of mediation and the tension between what tools allow us to do and what we do with them is fundamentally the same whether you are using pencil and paper or a word processing programme. What is different... are the kinds of affordances and constraints digital tools offer and the opportunities they make

available for creative action. In many ways, digital media are breaking down boundaries that have traditionally defined our literacy practices” (Jones & Hafner, 2012, p. 13).

2.4 Acceleration & Enhancement

Jones and Hafner point out that digital tools now allow us to work in different ways than we might have worked in the past. They have accelerated and enhanced our ability to work in the following ways:

Across time and space – we are no longer as dependent on being situated at a specific place of work in order to achieve many knowledge-based tasks, and contributors to that work may be scattered across time-zones and geographic boundaries.

Use of language – the manner in which we symbolise and interact is shifting, especially as it becomes possible to produce and distribute multimedia content in visual or audio forms so much more easily. This gives us the ability to manipulate images and sounds as easily as we can manipulate text. We therefore need to embed an appreciation for the skills of manipulating these forms of communication into our routines and practices.

Expert and amateur – with the rise of collaborative and collective forms of knowledge management and distribution we are no longer subject to the controlling influence of a small number of people who are regarded as experts. As the internet has been designed to bypass blockages and bottlenecks, this means that information is distributed more widely in a rhizome or web rather than as a system or pathway. This means that non-experts can contribute to the discussions and can find and use alternative sources if they are not satisfied with the traditional expert view.

Participation and consumption - to use the web effectively means that individuals have to have a level of competence to be able to produce and share content. Participating in small-scale or large-scale social networks is only effective when the participant is actively producing content and is engaged in the production process. This means that the literacy skills we require are not simply those of passive interpretation, but are geared towards being an active producer of content.

Authority of texts and remixes and mashups - if more people are able to engage and co-produce media material online then the role of the text as a complete and homogenised entity is undermined, and instead users engage with one another by sharing their remixes and the products of their cultural jammings. This may involve taking an established cultural form and reworking it, regardless of the copyright restrictions, and sharing it within networks of similar remixers and co-producers.

Weakening of work-based hierarchies – as the collaborative potential of the internet is practiced it becomes necessary to adopt different working practices that are less defined by systemic placement and are more clearly the product of contribution and the willingness of individuals to participate in a project. The formation of social networks, such as the open source movement, allows for the decentering of tasks, with a management process that is based on contributions to the common good as opposed to instructions from an executive form of management.

3 Videogames as new media technology

‘Videogames are the first popular computer-based medium’ (Lister et al. 2003, p.260)



<http://gamerhub.tv/articles/newzoo-says-gamers-will-reach-12-billion-by-2013/2013/05/24/>

4 Videogames as Mass Media

Lister et al. (2003)

- “Videogames have turned play into a mass medium
- Videogames are a significant new medium
- ‘Newness’ of human-computer interaction (HCI)
- There is a ‘cybernetic relationship’ with the machine and the pleasures of individual games” (Lister, Dovey, Giddings, Grant, & Kelly, 2003).

“We see videogames not as ephemeral digital toys but as offering distinct, perhaps unique, opportunities for engaging with and making sense of the complex and intimate relationships – networks even – between people and computer media and technology” (Lister et al., 2003, p. 277).

4.1 Cybernetics

Tennis for Two (William Higginbotham, 1958) http://youtu.be/6PG2mdU_i8k

4.2 Cybernetic Media Technologies

Loop of constant information and energy exchange, a circuit of constancy of action and reaction of a temporary situation of being ‘in the loop’ or ‘plugged in’ to media such as cinema or videogames

“The term cybernetics was coined by American mathematician Norbert Wiener in the 1940’s to denote “the entire field of control and communication theory, whether in the machine or in the animal. The concept arose out of his work on problems with gunfire control and automatic missile guidance for the American war effort in World War II, Wiener saw the control systems used in these devices not as a series of interlocking mechanical processes, but rather as a continuous flow of information” <https://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/mediatheory/keywords/cybernetics/>

4.3 The Newness of Videogames

‘Production becomes a combinatory and hybrid process that awkwardly invites the user to complete the commodity’ (Marshall, 2004, p. 104).

The way media is made and consumed has changed so that the audience (now the users) are much more central to the completion of the production process

5 Technology of Convergence

- Computers converged with television as videogames.
- Networked multiplayer gaming is the distinctive participatory culture of social media where videogames converge with the internet.
- Many people now see videogames as not just entertainment, but as tools for education and problem solving.

5.1 Video Gaming Children More Creative

“Researchers at Michigan State University, in the United States, found that playing video games was linked to greater creativity, regardless of the type of game played” <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/video-games/8868033/Video-gaming-children-more-creative.html>
http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2011-11/msu-vgp110211.php

5.2 Reading and Writing in Games

- Video games can be seen as a kind of complex text, which involves new forms of ‘reading’ and ‘writing’: not only in the world of the game itself, but also outside of games, in dedicated online affinity spaces.
- Video games are ‘embodied stories’ in which the player plays a central and active role, and the actions taken by the player can have an important effect on the direction that the story takes.
- Meanings in video games are highly multimodal and rely on visual, verbal, aural and textual modes. When players ‘read’ the game they combine the visual representation of the game world with written texts and subtle meanings created by colour and sound (e.g. music, sound effects).
- Many of the literacy practices associated with games actually take place outside of games, in online affinity spaces where gamers share texts associated with the game. Examples include walkthroughs, fan modifications and fan machinima. <http://www.routledge.com/cw/jones-9780415673150/s1/resources/>

5.3 Games and Identity

- Playing a video game involves three different identities:
- The real identity of the player in the real world.
- The virtual identity of the character in the virtual world.
- The 'projective identity', where players project their own values, hopes and aspirations onto the virtual character.
- Playing a video game can help players to understand different cultural models, by immersing players in a particular cultural worldview. Because of this it is important to critically evaluate the experiences one has when playing video games, and the taken-for-granted assumptions that frame those experiences.
- Playing a video game, especially an online multi-player game, can allow individuals to adopt identities and interact in ways that they would be unlikely to in 'real life'.

5.4 Games and Learning

- Some people argue that video games provide powerful learning experiences. On the surface, players learn to fly aeroplanes or manage theme-parks; more importantly, however, they also practice complex problem-solving skills and important social skills of collaboration.
- Compared to formal school contexts, the way that people learn when playing video games has much to recommend it: players are always operating at the edge of their competence, they learn by experience and information is presented 'just-in-time' when they need it (compared to school, where information is learned 'just-in-case' it is needed).
- Some people now believe that games that have a positive social impact should be designed, allowing players to 'fix reality'. Examples of such games include 'serious games' and 'alternate reality games' which simulate possible problems in the 'real world' and challenge players to solve them creatively. <http://www.routledge.com/cw/jones-9780415673150/s1/resources/>

6 A Brief History of Videogames

- Computer games
- Arcade games
- Console games
- Hand held games
- PC games

6.1 Video Game History Timeline

<http://www.museumofplay.org/icheg-game-history/timeline/>

<http://www.museumofplay.org/about/icheg>

Thumb Candy: Iain Lee's Brief History of Video Games (2004)

<http://youtu.be/UAo4CZTGFQQ>

6.2 Videogames: an Outline History 1958-2000

- Computer human-computer interaction (1958-1962) – convergence of games and computers – games become electronically mediated.
- 1972 – arcade and home console platforms – entertainment culture using an old technology – the television set for 'videogames' – computer games expand the entertainment capabilities of television hardware.
- Early 1980s home computers (Sinclair Spectrum) allow DIY games development.
- Late 1980s-1990s – new generation of consoles (replacement technologies) – Nintendo, Sega, Sony PlayStation – entertainment industry based around software production, distribution and hardware platforms.
- Early 1990s the development of handheld gaming (Nintendo Game Boy) – personalization and mobility of recorded music technology – transistor radio and the personal stereo (Walkman)..
- Cross-fertilization of games, sports and cinema as the videogames industry matures and becomes accepted as an artistically and commercially important medium.
- Entertainment brands, fan communities and subcultures.
- Genres of games link player expectations to new products that can be marketed and promoted.
- 2000s – online games – the internet is used to remediate videogames – massive multiplayer online games (MMOG) such as EverQuest (1999) and DIY web games using animation software and computer languages

7 What Next?

A story about the origin of videogames in computer cybernetics, to becoming a major form of entertainment, but what next for videogames?

“Although linear perspective painting and film may keep the viewer distant from what he views, in virtual reality the viewer steps through Alberti’s window and is placed among the objects of representation” (Bolter & Grusin, 2001, p. 83).

“The relative age of a technology is certainly a factor in its cultural meaning” (Bolter & Grusin, 2001, p. 87).

“The earliest games in arcades were not at all photorealistic; indeed, they just managed to break out of one dimension into the second” (Bolter & Grusin, 2001, p. 90).

“There was a vast difference between this graphic behaviour and the operations of a traditional computer, which manipulated symbols and presented its results only in rows of alphanumeric characters on the screen or on perforated printed paper. The game suggested new formal and cultural purposes for digital technology” (Bolter & Grusin, 2001, p. 90).

“Action games in arcades, on video units, and on computers have continued to require the user’s intimate involvement with the interface” (Bolter & Grusin, 2001, p. 91).

“In the 1980s, first arcade games and then video and computer games began to exploit three-dimensional graphics and so to define a space that could be continuous with the user. Designers could then make the games remediate not only the monitoring function of all video, but also the narrative functions of television and film” (Bolter & Grusin, 2001, p. 94).

“Interactive narrative games favour a single user with the time and the solitude to solve puzzles and make choices. These more thoughtful games remediate film rather than video” (Bolter & Grusin, 2001, p. 94).

8 Gameification

“Gamification is the concept of applying game mechanics and game design techniques to engage and motivate people to achieve their goals. Gamification taps into the basic desires and needs of the users impulses which revolve around the idea of Status and Achievement” <http://badgeville.com/wiki/Gamification>

“Gamification is the application of game elements and digital game design techniques to non-game problems, such as business and social impact challenges. This course will teach you the mechanisms of gamification, why it has such tremendous potential, and how to use it effectively” <https://www.coursera.org/course/gamification>

“Gamification [n]: the use of game design elements in non-game contexts. Gamification has tremendous potential in the education space. How can we use it to deliver truly meaningful experiences to students? Let us know what you think in the comments” <http://www.knewton.com/gamification-education/>

Extra Credits - Gamification - How the Principles of Play Apply to Real Life

<http://youtu.be/1dLK9MW-9sY>

8.1 Play

“Playfulness is a more important consideration than play. The former is an attitude of mind; the latter is a passing outward manifestation of this attitude. When things are treated simply as vehicles of suggestion, what is suggested overrides the thing. Hence the playful attitude is one of freedom” (Dewey, 1910, p. 162). (Dewey, 1910, p. 162).

8.2 Playfulness

“PLAY is older than culture, for culture, however inadequately defined, always presupposes human society, and animals have not waited for man to teach them their playing. We can safely assert, even, that human civilization has added no essential feature to the general idea of play”

8.3 HOMO LUDENS

“The high importance of this place and the necessity, or at least the utility, of play as a function are generally taken for granted and form the starting-point of all such scientific researches. The numerous attempts to define the biological function of play show a striking variation. By some the origin and fundamentals of play have been described as a discharge of superabundant vital energy, by others as the satisfaction of some "imitative instinct", or again as simply a "need" for relaxation. According to one theory play constitutes a training of the young creature for the serious work that life will demand later on. According to another it serves as an exercise in restraint needful to the individual. Some find the principle of play in an innate urge to exercise a certain faculty, or in the desire to dominate or compete. Yet others regard it as an "abreaction"- an outlet for harmful impulses, as the necessary restorer of energy wasted by one-sided activity, as "wish-fulfilment", as a fiction designed to keep up the feeling of personal value, etc”

http://art.yale.edu/file_columns/0000/1474/homo_ludens_johan_huizinga_routledge_1949_.pdf

8.4 Playful Digital Literacies

“Although digital technologies may be enabling modes of learning such as trial and error, it is important to look at other modes of learning in relation to these technologies” (Carrington & Robinson, 2009, p. 19).

“Many new technologies provide routes to playful activities, that is, to recreational, experimental and informal pursuits... although counter-intuitively, clear aims and goals are frequently part of online play. The texts produced are often very rich, creative and even subversive” (Julia Davies in Carrington & Robinson, 2009, p. 31).

8.5 Play for Social Problem Solving

“Games like World of Warcraft give players the means to save worlds, and incentive to learn the habits of heroes. What if we could harness this gamer power to solve real-world problems? Jane McGonigal says we can, and explains how”

http://www.ted.com/talks/jane_mcgonigal_gaming_can_make_a_better_world?language=en

“John Hunter puts all the problems of the world on a 4'x5' plywood board — and lets his 4th-graders solve them. At TED2011, he explains how his World Peace Game engages schoolkids, and why the complex lessons it teaches — spontaneous, and always surprising — go further than classroom lectures can”

http://www.ted.com/talks/john_hunter_on_the_world_peace_game

Linear Thinkers	Systems Thinkers
Break things into component pieces	Are concerned with the whole
Are concerned with content	Are concerned with process
Try to fix symptoms	Are concerned with the underlying dynamics
Are concerned with assigning blame	Try to identify patterns
Try to control chaos to create order	Try to find patterns amid the chaos
Care only about the content of communication	Care about content but are more attentive to interactions and patterns of communication
Believe organizations are predictable and orderly	Believe organizations are unpredictable in a chaotic environment

“We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them” Albert Einstein

Group Anmattaf (aka Baye) - Tinariwen

<https://youtu.be/Aaz2tOlxJgk?list=PL23F4148F016D0F95>

#diydmu

<https://twitter.com/hashtag/diydmu>

Ata Kak - Daa Nyinaa

<https://youtu.be/zW28iwlikq8>

9 References

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