

Serious Stuff Gamers Do

Linking gamers in with serious games...

Why???

- We look at what games can do
- We look at what game technology can do
- We look at what game developers can do
- But we don't often look at what gamers do
 - For inspiration
 - For technology applications
 - To learn ourselves
- So the goal here is some categorization
 - Some observation
 - Some conclusion
- We also want to widen our sense of what is serious about games

Process

- Lots of reading and collecting
- Actually playing games
- Categorizing and taxonomy
- Thank you blogs!
 - Alice in Wonderland
 - Kotaku & Joystick
 - Game Set Watch & Game Girl Advance
 - YouTube & many others
- Lots of thinking... (does any of this matter?)

So What Do Gamers Do?

- Play games
- Produce media about, from, and with games
- Teach themselves and others about and with games
- Self motivate interests in other domains because of games
- Communicate with each other & increasingly socialize with, and because of games
- They sometimes turn games into work
- Protest & create new forms of activism
- Modify games, creating new games, and/or experiences
- Create comedy far more than games do
- Mold a new culture that revolves around games

So to Summarize...

- Play, Produce, Teach & Motivate, Work
- Socialize, Communicate, Activism, Culture
- These are all the things we're here for right?
- Are Serious Games just a focusing, amplifying, or acceleration of these game by-products
- If so we must get a better focus?

Playing Games

- Gamers are serious about playing
- They spend a lot of time learning about games
- Some get incredibly good at games
 - Professional Gamers
 - Korean Starcraft Players (National TV)
 - CPL, World CyberGames
 - Human performance issues?
- Some begin being transgressive players
 - Both as players and builders

Tricking It



Documenting Great Gameplay

■ Quake Done Quick

- <http://speeddemosarchive.com/quake/qdq/>

■ Half Life 2 Done Quick

- <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-7597745302270855580>

■ Geometry Wars

- <http://www.joystiq.com/2006/02/16/video-of-1-geometry-wars-score-16-6-mln/>

■ GotFrag (esports)

- <http://www.gotfrag.com/>

Gamers Build Stuff

- Fan Sites
- Fan Art/Fiction/Stuff
- What can I make with this game?
 - Bored with game -> what else can I do
 - Machinima
 - New games/mods
 - Third party applications (legit/illegit/hacks)
 - Other stuff?
 - e.g. Guitar Hero Sequencer

Guitar Hero Sequencer

- <http://www.myfavoritebutton.net/guitar.html>

GameBoy Music Scene & Game Radio

Congratulations if you answered b), for the GameBoy is undergoing a remarkable renaissance as a cult music-making machine in nightclubs across Europe. It might seem odd that DJs and techno bands from Sweden to Austria would abandon conventional mixing decks for a hand-sized games console. But that would be to underestimate the hacker community's determination to make consumer appliances do things that their manufacturers never intended.

In-Game Photography

- Some games include photography
 - Shenmue e.g.
- Project Gotham
 - “you can set focal length, aperture, shutter speed, exposure, saturation, etc, during race or replay.”
- www.internetlandscape.it/arenae/
 - ARENAE features war photos from videogames taken to look like real war photos
- Morrowind Photographers Guild
 - mpg.planetelderscrolls.gamespy.com/

Daniel on Flickr

- CounterStrike Photography

Mod Games/New Experiences

- Mutations > Slight changes for new games
 - e.g. Rocket Arena
- Full on Mods > Major changes > Full Conversions
 - CounterStrike > Becomes bigger than Half-Life
 - Eula Compliant > Total Hacks
- Architecture Mods
 - Falling Water
 - London Eye

Interfaces...

- World of Warcraft
 - XML + Lua Interface Design

Teach Themselves & Others

- Gamers spend time learning
 - (often from other gamers)
 - MMP Games specialize in this
- Walkthroughs
- Training Runs
- How-to Videos
- Peer-to-Peer
 - How much takes place at RL gatherings (e.g. School)
- Creation of Resources & Tools (Collaborative)

Map WoW

- <http://mapwow.com/>
- GoogleMaps API with WoW Content

Motivation Into Other Areas

Communication & Socialization

■ Guilds, Clans, Teams

■ MMPs to Play with Kids/Distance Relationships

- The baseball pro/gamer uses the game not only as a way to relax after pitching six and a half innings, but also to keep up with his kids while on the road. "My son Gehrig and I play together when I'm not working and he's not in school."
- Does this change the notion of visitation rights?

■ Steinkuehler & Williams

- "The games served as a fun, neutral place where people got to know each other, at least a little bit — sort of like a coffee shop or a pub, the researchers note.

■ LAN Parties

Protests & Activism

- Using gamer networks to get a message out
- Using games to create protest/messaging media
 - French Riots with Machinima
- In-game protests
 - America's Army
 - Naked Gnomes
- Creating donor/activist networks
 - GetWellGamers + Child's Play

French Riots

- Machinima created with The Movies (Activision)
 - By Alex Chan

He made it with English subtitles "to correct what was being said in the media, especially in the United States, who linked what was happening, the riots, to terrorism and put the blame on the Muslim community," said Chan, a practicing Buddhist

"People are beginning to find uses for it that we didn't even think about when we designed the game," Lionhead's chief designer and CEO Peter Molyneux said.

America's Army

- Joseph DeLappe
 - Associate Professor at the University of Nevada Reno
- “A lot of times I'm completely ignored. More often than not I am vote-kicked.” Sometimes gamers ask him if he's a soldier, or try to start up a dialogue with him. Other times they'll just shoot him.
- “I think computer games are a blast, totally seductive and totally escapist entertainment, but I'm kind of questioning that escape.... I'm at once fascinated by it and attracted to it, but I think we need to ask serious questions about it.

Naked Gnomes

Games as Work

- Teamwork, Collaboration, Competition
 - Xbox Live High Scores & Kudo Points
- MMPs
 - The grind...
 - Running a Guild
 - Weekly Officer Meetings
 - Leadership, HR, tracking players, assessments, training, policies
 - Google Ads, Public Diplomacy (<friends of canada>)
- Dynamic Markets
 - Virtual Profiteering
 - Julien Dibbel

Dynamic Markets

The background of the slide is a solid dark blue. In the lower right quadrant, there are several faint, white, wavy lines that resemble stylized waves or a dynamic pattern, adding a sense of movement to the design.

Health?

- Guitar Hero Customer Comment:
 - “I love Guitar Hero and actively recruit friends to play. In addition to loving the game, it's actually improved my health. I have carpal tunnel and I'm also missing bone in my wrists. Any moderately high stress on my hands, or repetitive motion, would trigger pain, numbness, and hand cramps. Playing Guitar Hero, I began with a 5 minute stamina in-game before my hands were hurting, stiff, and useless. Within a week I got to a 30 minute stamina, and that's when my hand just starts to feel funky. I've had less pain in general since playing the game. Thanks for helping make everyday tasks (like writing a page of notes for class) less painful than before =)”
- PopCap Games Customer Comments
 - Helps me relieve stress
 - Takes my mind off other things
 - Relax
 - Use it or Lose it
- DDR
 - User Testimonials on Losing Weight
- The Meaning of Life & Death
 - "If a gamer dies in the real world, no one in the virtual community has a way of knowing what happened to their online friend," said Spaight, vice president of game developer Rapid Reality. "Does it just blink out of existence? Gamers will eventually need to think about what should happen to their avatar if they die in real life."

Comedy & Sarcasm

- Comedy barely exists in games...
- Comedy in games exists heavily in the game community
 - Machinima
 - Red Vs. Blue
 - Penny Arcade
 - User Posts
 - Commentary
- What does this mean?

Creating Gaming Culture

- Avid->Hardcore->Enculturated
 - The growth of gaming culture
 - Marketing tie ins, licensed merchandise
 - Collectors, COS Play
- People are proud to be gamers now
- Mainstream media is now reinforcing this
- Coca-Cola Marketing to China with WoW
- Gaming Culture is in the Lords of DogTown Phase

Conclusions

- Gamers are already doing serious gaming
 - More so than the rest of us!
- Serious Gamers inspires new game ideas and new serious games
- The amount of time, detail, energy, and pure ingenuity from gamers is incredibly high
- Game developers are increasingly competing for the attention of the echelon of gamers driving these types of activities
- Gamers drive the theory of the unintended
 - Which is a critical underlying driver of serious games