

Video Games

Introduction

Who I am- Dan Vilter
A Homeschooling Parent
Entertainment Professional
Techno geek- with lots of computers

What this session is about

The heart of Video Games
A look at possible thoughts and processes during play
Confronting fears about video games
A look at a few games

What this session is NOT about

A search for "safe" games
Determining how much time "on the computer" is healthy

Video Games are Games

Strategy and role playing games have been apart of our societies since we've had societies

Chess
Go
Tag

Video games are the games of the current media

Computer is an interactive medium

People play –

no civilization without it
with a high level of emotion and fantasy
Playing Catch-becoming sports hero
involves high levels of stimulation
We learn by doing-rat & human studies

Progression of media

Great great grand parents–Newspapers
Great grand parents–Radio
Parents and grand parents–TV
Today computers are second nature

Natural experience

Kids use and understanding–nonreaders use
Communication medium

Environmental bias against it

Biased towards what you grow up with
Reading or even TV is much more acceptable
"he is just a zombie in front of it"
Parents are unsettled by kids becoming excited about the unknown

"Homing" instinct catches moving objects-TV in Bar

It has become increasingly more transparent

We have moved from the mechanics towards a more natural experience

Hunt the Wampus vs. Kung Fu Superstar-iToy:Play
technology—uses a camera to capture movement that
controls the game
Terminal line commands vs. immersive PS II, Nintendo,
or Xbox

It is just so darn Flexible

Can react to choice that a player makes
Ability to adjust

Users set up the kind of game they want
Programming learns a players style
It can change at any moment like an ever
changing Chess board that takes advantage of
the players situation.
Concept of Levels and redoing what has just
been mastered

Is planned to be replayed

Matthew's first 360 Game finished in one day
"It's very replayable"
Black and White -Playing as good guy then as
the baddest guy and understanding the
differences.-developing the understanding of
the gray world.

*Becoming a better play because of it
Seeing the other guys point of view*

**It is a social activity on multiple levels (not necessarily
face to face)**

*Players can play with 1,000 of others, the same game MMG
Small groups, same game, Gaming parties
Small groups, same game, through the internet
Individual play of the same game as peers
Players have the social reference of the gaming experience
Interaction during play. A group dynamic.
Communication during play
Part of a social network
Experiment with social interaction-in near anonymity
What Works
What Doesn't
How to handle others*

Music of Video Games

*Identify with many non-pop music styles
Philharmonic Concert of the music
First live orchestra concert for many
All age groups*

Energy and audience feed back at unprecedented levels for classical music.

What Users do while playing

Simultaneous thinking during game play (borrowed from "Your Brain on Video Games" by Steven Johnson [Discover 9/05])

MANUAL INTERFACE

To control the movements and actions of your on-screen character, you must memorize several dozen distinct button combinations on a video console handset or a PC keyboard.

That's a far cry from the simple jump-or-shoot interfaces of primitive arcade-style games.

CHARACTER VIEW

As the game progresses, you take in a shifting landscape of information about the virtual world, such as the sudden appearance of enemies, visual cues that suggest the existence of a puzzle to be solved, and overlaid interface elements that track your character's health.

INTERNALIZED MAP

Most games involve exploring vast worlds as you struggle to learn the rules. You must remember all the twists and turns you've made, or you'll get hopelessly lost.

BALANCING ACT

Playing complex games involves juggling multiple objectives, choosing what to prioritize and what to defer. The goals affect decision making on other conceptual levels: which buttons to press, how you interact with other characters, and which areas you choose to explore.

Regime of competence

Simple tasks build in complexity –dependent on the aptitude of the player

New studies suggest that video games build rather than diminish cognitive skills

**Tetris Players and Cerebral glucose levels in PET scans
Novice players struggling to comprehend the game – high glucose consumption
Month later after performance increase by a factor of 7 showed a decrease in consumption**

in much the same way a fit body uses less energy to get more work done than an unfit body

They push you to the edge of your abilities where you thrive. Not frustrated, not bored. On the edge.

The Tetris blocks speed up as you get better at manipulating them

Skills

Hand/eye coordination Yes, but it's not the point in gaming

It is not even a factor in the most popular series of "Sims" games where the player is juggling the activities of many characters

But then again...

Laparoscopic surgeons who played games for more than three hours a week made 37 percent fewer errors than their non-gaming peers

Visual perceptions tests of deaf subjects

A lab assistant who was an avid Video gamer scored off the charts

On dull test like find the color of the letter, how many objects.

In a study of White collar professionals, [John C Beck & Mitchell Wade: Got Game How the Gamer Generation Is Reshaping Business Forever]{Harvard Business School Press} 3 groups: frequent, occasional and non-gamers:

The gaming population turned out to be consistently more social, more confident, and more comfortable solving problems creatively.

They also showed no evidence of reduced attention spans compared with non-gamers.

They also showed an increased appetite for risk & unexpected leadership skills

In Games performance matters: they teach:

The star's role is to succeed

To be an expert

Failure is not the end of the world

Everything is possible

Trial and error is almost always best

Practice makes perfect

You can bond with those who share your experience- not necessarily your national or cultural background

Problem solving

Meaning

Probing

Discovery
Identity
Culture
Complex relations
Active critical review
Simulation
Tactics

Deductive reasoning
Logical evaluation
Budgeting

Violent Play

The majority of video games on the best-seller list contain no more bloodshed than a game of Risk.

We are a violent species

It has always permeated our societies

Homo sapiens have made war since the beginning. The latest theories speculate that the Neanderthals were driven to extinction by homo sapiens (us)

We would be the dominant species of the planet today without violence.

Gaming is a way we neutralize it.

There is a difference between Aggressive play and aggressive behavior

Without distinction the value of play is lost

University of Texas study found no correlation subject matter and level of aggressiveness

Truth about VG Article

Slides of Dept of Justice Statistics

Losing generated aggression

There is no REAL aggression in video games

Only digital enemies and victims

Real violence and something else

Grand Theft Auto stepped over a perceived line for many people when Cartoonish Animation Became realistic 3D animation

News footage vs representations

Almost all entertainment use elements of conflict and resolution to spin compelling storytelling experiences

Shakespearean tragedies

Catharsis

The three stooges- + Newer Reference

Bugs and Elmer

Addiction

USC researchers [Peter Vorderer and René Weber] were looking at brain activity using an MRI during play of violent video games Found them so entranced by the gaming that looked beyond the noise, confined space and discomfort that drove virtually all other subjects out of the machine.

Many studies show that VG playing triggers a release of the neurotransmitter dopamine

Dopamine plays a key role in exploration and reward

[Gregory Berns, a neuroscientist at Emory University School of Medicine]“The game world is teeming with objects that deliver clearly articulated rewards: more life, access to new levels, new equipment, new spells. Most of the crucial work in game interface design revolves around keeping players notified of potential rewards available to them and how much those rewards are needed.”

Dopamine is also involved in the addictiveness of drugs. “The thing to remember about dopamine is that it’s not at all the same thing as pleasure”

“Dopamine is not the reward; it’s what lets you go out and explore in the first place. Without dopamine, you wouldn’t be able to learn properly.”

Study subjects didn’t need to get out of the machine because the game stimulated the mind with dopamine to learn and explore
NOT BY SHORT CIRCUITING IT WITH EXTERNAL DRUGS.

Extreme cases grab the headlines and water down or eliminate the distinction.

[Dr Margaret Shotton, author of Computer Addiction? {coined the phrase}] says that playing video games speed up your neural pathways and that it allows knowledge to travel around quicker, thus speeding up judgments and decisions

Games to demo

Puzzle-360-Collumns-Matthew

-PC - Pinball-Rose

Racing-360 Burnout II-Rose

-PC -Track Mania-Matthew

Adventure-360-Camio-Rose

Turn Based Strategy-PC-Civilization IV-Matthew

God Game-PC-Sims II-Rose

Role Playing-360-Oblivain-Matthew

1st Person Shooters-PC-Call of Duty-Rose

-360-Perfect Dark Zero-Matthew

Topics to cover while switching between games

It’s an involved process that isn’t easily stopped or started.

In the 6th inning “we have to go. turn it off.”

Game play reaches into life subjects. Information questions about:

Specific WWII arms

What a Torrent is {P to P downloading protocol}

What Aloe Vera is – it was a healing herb in a game

Costs

Hardware

New Gaming consoles cost \$200 to \$600

Last generation cost as little as \$40 (\$60 for a game cube)

New Computers \$700 to \$7,000

Games

New Popular Titles \$20 to \$60 Each

Licensing fees help pay for the console

Last generation cost as little as \$5

Older edutainment can cost as little as \$.01

+shipping Amazon/Ebay/half.com

Compare costs

Movie tickets- \$10 for 2 hours of entertainment for one person with very little social interaction.

Classic Edutainment titles

Zoombinis

Thinkin' Things 1, 2, 3

Cosmic Osmo

Oregon Trail etc

I Spy

Spelunx and the Caves of Dr. Suedo

Living Book – Tortoise and the Hare etc

Reader Rabbit

Manhole

Sim City

Sim Ant

Sim Farm

Sim Tower

Sim Town

Sim Copter

KidPix