

Session 13 – FICTIONAL WORLDS

Readings

Klastrup, A poetics of Fictional Worlds
Juul, Half-Real Ch. 4 (Fiction)

Concepts/Keywords

- Fictional worlds (fiction virtual worlds)
- “worldness”
- Incoherent worlds
- Persistent representation

Goals

Clarify issues of Fictional World vs. narrative
Prepare for discussion of simulation

FICTIONAL WORLDS

- While Narrative was a controversial issue, Fictional Worlds are a more or less agreed part of games → Fiction vs. Fictional World
- Not all games have Fictional Worlds, although they may evoke worlds
 - Bejeweled
 - Tetris
 - Checkers
 - (playing) Card games

Q: Examples of games without worlds or with weak worlds

- Worlds are a device for transmedia storytelling – same world can be incarnated in different media
 - A world can harbour different narratives
 - At times narrative is weak (Star Wars Racer)

Fictional World isn't a story, but the setting of a story (remember Chatman's story tree)

“Worldness” can be a way to determine the degree a game constructs a fictional world (prototype theory)

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Virtual Worlds (social space) are online fictional worlds

2 levels of worldness

- Spatial Properties
- Abstract (what's common to all Virtual Worlds)
- Navigable and Habitable (social)
- Persistent
- Virtual Worlds
- Online (social)
- Allows synchronous interactions
- between users (PvP)
- between user and world (PvE)

Why is persistency important?

- Leaving a trace → storytelling
- Feeling the world being “lived in”
- some offline games can have persistency in a playthrough
- some online worlds can have different instances of the world depending on their level (even in the same server)

Specific – what sets apart that world from others

Juul – Ways of creating worlds

- Graphics
- Sound
- Text (description)
- Cutscene (dialogue)
- Title, box, manual (jargon)
- Haptics – controllers – rumble (guitars, microphones, STEEL BATALION)
- Rules
- Player actions and time
- Rumors (urban legends, Battlezone)

Inconsistent worlds → rules & fiction clash

What makes something inconsistent? Is it realism? (3 lives in Mario?)

Planescape makes it part of the game

Save potions in ICO

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