

Session 8 – IMMERSION

Readings

Murray, 'Immersion'

Csikszentmihalyi, Flow

Concepts/Keywords

- immersion
- transitional objects
- liminal space
- avatar
- flow
- enjoyment

Goals

- Convey the complex concept of immersion, and its multiple meanings
 - Explore the ways/conditions for immersion
 - Understand that breaking immersion is OK
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IMMERSION

– Term: is recurrent in reviews, design vocabulary, it's more of a buzzword than a useful term

Q: What is immersion?

Murray: being immersed in environment, like being in a swimming pool
result of encyclopedic or participatory properties of digital environments

Immersion as Flow – activity that we enjoy, that we're engaged in.
(Flow – another misused concept)

Q: Why are immersion and flow so important to games?

(MIND – some factors are not covered by flow, just by immersion)

- Enjoyment and involvement
- Becoming somebody else
 - Avatars / masks
- Transportation/enchantment → liminal space: role of spoilsports
- Focus/self-drive
- Continuity of activity, even if it's a hard task

Immersion is also “threatening”

- separation from Real Life, losing touch with reality → although self-centered/schizo personality can prevent flow
- usually associated with a medium (Don Quixote, Comics, TV, Video Games)
- BUT not everyone is immersed in activities the same way; different people enjoy different things

Breaking immersion doesn't need to be traumatic, the 4th wall is a construct

(8) Components of enjoyment

- doing something that can be completed
- focus and concentration
- clean goals
- immediate feedback
- deep but effortless involvement (or at least it feels effortless), which separates activity from everyday life
- sense of control
- sense of self disappears (communal maybe) but stronger sense of self emerges after the activity
- altered sense of time

Q: Examples of flow doctrines

Q: How did the games on Tuesday try to achieve immersion? How did they fail?

- Duck Hunt
- Trespasser
- Odama
- Lifeline
- Virtual Boy

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