

Wii Sports **&** **Guitar Hero III**



Video Games as Simulation, Story, and Sport

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Questions to Explore

- ❑ What attracts us to a game?
- ❑ What motivates us to continue playing a game?
- ❑ Progression of a gamer's experiences and their viewpoints of a game

The Games

□ Wii Sports

- Five Main Sports: Tennis, Baseball, Bowling, Boxing, & Golf
 - Pro Status (1000), Max Possible Skill Level (~2000)
- Training Modes – Three per Sport (15 total)
 - Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum Medals
- Fitness Test – age between 20 and 80

□ Guitar Hero III

- 71 Playable songs
- Four Difficulties: Easy, Medium, Hard, Expert
- 1X to 4X multipliers; Star Power: 2X to 8X
- NEW: Boss Battles

Frameworks for Considering Games

□ Caillois' Game Classifications

- Agon (Competition)
- Alea (Chance)
- Ilinx (Vertigo)
- Mimicry (Pretending) - ??

□ Jenkin's Spatial Narratives

- Evocative Spaces
- Enacting Spaces
- Emergent Narratives

Initial Attraction

□ Wii Sports

- Fun in social settings
- Chance to feel like I'm playing a sport (*mimicry*)
- Prove I am good and can compete with others (*agon*)

□ Guitar Hero

- Chance to act out dreams of being a rock star (*mimicry*)
- New outlet for practicing and making music
- Prove I am good and can compete with others (*agon*)
- Social Experience

Simulation and Narratives

□ Guitar Hero III – Career Mode

- Go from venue to venue, play sets, earn money to buy instruments/characters/etc.

“The band starts out as a neighborhood sensation, before hooking up with a record producer named Lou at one of their shows. After a successful music video hits the web, the band travels to England, and then performs at an island jail (despite Lou encouraging them to 'sell out'), which ends up boosting the band's popularity. As a result, they are invited to headline the Desert Rock Tour festival. After a botched performance in Japan (thanks to Lou) they attempt to break free of their contract with Lou, who then reveals himself to be the Devil and the contract as ownership of their souls. The band is dragged down to Lou's "Inferno", where the final showdown comes. In this final showdown, the player must defeat Lou in a boss battle to earn back the band's souls, and the title of 'Guitar Legend'.”¹

□ Boss Battles: Tom Morello, Slash, &...

- Lou the Devil on “The Devil Went Down to Georgia” (**evocative narrative**)

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guitar_hero_iii

Simulation & Narrative

□ Wii Sports – Baseball

- Coincidentally, I started to learn Wii baseball as the MLB playoffs started
- I felt like I was enacting the Red Sox's ALCS and World Series runs (**enacting spaces**)
- Use Mii's to create custom teammates (me, celebrities, cartoon characters, real players)
- Leveled up to better opponents ~ playing better teams as you move on in the playoffs

□ NEXT UP:

Casual:Serious Gaming :: Mimicry&Narrative:Competition?

The Games Reexamined - AGON

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□ Guitar Hero III

- Four Difficulties: Easy, Medium, Hard, Expert
- 71 playable songs
- **STAR POWER**: 2X to 8X
 - Squeezing
- 3 to 5 stars on songs, FC's (Full Combos)
- Tournaments: WSVG judges on difficulty, accuracy, & *style*

Online Communities

□ ScoreHero.com

■ Leaderboard website

- 100,000+ registered users, 10,000+ users with uploaded scores for GH2 on PS2 alone, including best players in game
- \$2000 donation by Harmonix CEO & Founder, GH3 preview first released through ScoreHero

■ **Videos** of top scores; brag to the community

- Caillois' concept of spectator sports as a form of **mimicry**

■ Discuss strategies and techniques

- optimal star power paths, videos of fingering, etc

■ Leagues, Rivalries, Tournaments, etc.

□ Wii Sports equivalents:

- elitescores.com, cyberscore.net

The Gamer's Progression

- Mimicry, Simulation, and Narrative are usually what draws people into games at first
 - Sports Games: mimicry -> narrative
 - Adventure Games: narrative
- Agon is what keeps them hooked
- Player's gaming careers go through "phases" from casual to hardcore
- How to differentiate and determine length of phases?
 - A good start would be to look at demographics of gamers

Conclusion

- ❑ Simulation/Narrative -> Agon
- ❑ Complexity and Challenge enhance Agon (and thus replayability)
- ❑ Social Communities enhance replayability