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The Way You Make Me Feel: Play as Ludic Sins and Mixed Emotions

Enevold, Jessica; Hagström, Charlotte

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2

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LUDIC ASPECTS OF EVERYDAY LIFE

IT University of Copenhagen, Cube 4A05
Rued Langgaards Vej 7, DK-2300 Copenhagen

Timetable

10.00 - 10.15 Hello and welcome (incl. coffee and pastries)
10.15 - 10.45 Jaakko Stenros, University of Tampere
10.45 - 11.15 Jessica Enevold and Charlotte Hagström, University of Lund
11.15 - 11.45 Dan Dixon, University of the West of England
11.45 - 12.15 Espen Aarseth, IT University of Copenhagen

Lunch break

13.00 - 13.30 Seth Giddings, University of the West of England
13.30 - 14.00 Chad Chatterton, IT University of Copenhagen
14.00 - 14.30 Kristine Jørgensen, University of Bergen

Coffee break (incl. coffee and snack)

14.45 - 15.15 Anders Drachen, IT University of Copenhagen
15.15 - 15.45 Bjarke Liboriussen, University of Southern Denmark alumni
15.45 - 16.15 Douglas Wilson, IT University of Copenhagen

Games   Analog: Fuck You, It's Art, Game Studies Card Game, Dominion
             Digital: Left 4 Death 2, Wii
20.00 Dinner in the city (offered by the IT University of Copenhagen)

The seminar is organised in collaboration between
Center for Computer Games Research, IT University of Copenhagen and
Play Research Group, University of the West of England
For further info, contact wirman@itu.dk or call hanna at +45 277 179 17

TITLES / ABSTRACTS

Jaakko Stenros: The Border between Ordinary and Ludic

Games are separate from the ordinary life, yet a part of it. This ephemeral border has been called magic circle, protective bubble and interaction membrane. It is so strong that norms, laws and ethics recognize it, yet numerous things - experiences, players, activity designers, intentions, cultural capital etc. - pass over the border effortlessly, especially when the game becomes a site of work. This presentation charts the traffic that crosses the border.

Jessica Enevold and Charlotte Hagström: The Way You Make Me Feel: Play as Ludic Sins and Mixed Emotions

The following presentation is a playful conceptualization of the way gaming mothers talk about their gameplay - grouped into categories of "ludic sins". Although formally defined as a breach of moral code, sins or vices nevertheless enjoy the status of being ambiguously "practiced" and understood. Broadly interpreted one person's sin can be another person's pleasure, all depending on the eye of the beholder. Deeply engrained views of play and gender constantly surface as gaming is discussed by our informants - women between 30 and 60 who all play computer games. These views reflect a Western cultural heritage mixing devout and secularized ways and philosophies of life that color their conversation around play and player. To show how thoroughly everyday playing practices resonate with that heritage, we here present the way gaming, with which they have a very personal relationship, seem to make these women feel.

Dan Dixon: Everyday Aesthetics, Gameplay and the Ludic Life

Arguing for and against various aspects of de Certeau's Practice of Everyday Life this talk will explore the relationship between the practice of the everyday and gameplay. The focus of this exploration will be on the aesthetic nature of individual experiences, rather than wider socio-cultural aspects. The conclusions will reflect on both computer games and "pervasive" games (scare quotes intentionally left in).

This is intended as a development of my work on game aesthetics and intended to contribute towards a PhD I am working on in the area of mixed-reality and pervasive gaming.

Espen Aarseth: Does Game Studies Hate Play Studies?
How is the field of game studies treating play? Are we even interested in play, since we are always looking at play through the lens of game artifacts? I will argue that playing is very different from gaming, and might in fact be considered as an independent phenomenon all together. Should we accept Schiller's notion of play as the fulcrum of humanity, or adopt Gadamer's dictum that when we are playing a game, the game is playing us? Hence, to play is to live and be truly oneself, but to game is to submit?

Seth Giddings: Transduction in playful technoculture

Close attention to play in everyday life requires a rethinking of familiar categories: the real and the imaginary; texts and contexts; time and space; technology and culture; subjects and objects, and with videogame play in particular, the virtual and actual. This presentation will draw on very small-scale studies of videogame culture to describe aspects of the nature and constitution of the playful everyday. It will concentrate on the circulation and transformation – or transduction – of play objects and subjects through virtual and actual gameworlds.

Chad Chatterton: Place for place's sake

Kristine Jørgensen: The Sims 2: Almost Like Everyday Life

The Sims 2 presents a world that resembles our own everyday lives. It's an abstracted and caricatured version of it, in which the most mundane activity takes forever and everyone is observed and guided by a higher power.

This presentation will be a preliminary analysis of how empirical players interpret the gameworld in The Sims 2, with specific focus on how everyday life compares to that of the real world. I will pay attention to how the players see the world presented as a corrupted representation of reality, in which people are manic and irrational beings without self-consciousness. In this reality, the player has the world as his experimental playground, but at the same time the mundane activities reflect familiarity with everyday life. The presentation will conclude with a discussion about why this presentation of everyday life is accepted by players.

Anders Drachen: Patterns of Play

This is going to be about how we can use user behavior in games to define patterns of play. I will use a case study from Tomb Raider: Underworld, where we analyzed the behavior of about 1300 players, finding that 97% follow one of four specific patterns.

Bjarke Liboriussen: Plug and Play Capitalism: Notes on the Business Language of Globalisation

As the title indicates I won't be presenting a full-fledged paper but comment on the discourse surrounding IT-driven globalisation: how (individual) creativity and playfulness is tied in with IT-driven sophistication of supply-chains, outsourcing etc. Thomas L. Friedman's "The World is Flat" provides the main example and I take a look at related business best sellers as well.

Douglas Wilson: Find Games, Don't Design Them: Using Social Practices Against Themselves

What can we make of the game-like qualities of our everyday social practices? Can we transmute these game-like practices into full-blown, formalized games? For what purposes? In this presentation, Doug takes a look back at three conference games he designed with the Copenhagen Game Collective. All three games employ features of certain social practices in the hopes of satirizing those same practices. Whether or not the three games ultimately succeed, the intentions behind them – however naive - might help inspire alternative and useful approaches towards design.