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The field of the game studies

El campo de los estudios del juego

O campo de estudos de jogos

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Abstract:

Game studies have basically been conceived as an interdisciplinary field that has attempted to develop a broad framework for the study of games (this includes video games, board games and interactive stories). They have described the experiences of developers and the communities that surround them, as well as ontologies, methodologies, etc. However, it is necessary to continue researching around games, integrating new directions of studies with the intention of opening the field to new ideas and people.

KEYWORDS

Video games, Digital society, Game studies

Resumen:

Los estudios del juego han sido concebidos básicamente como un campo interdisciplinario que ha intentado desarrollar un marco amplio para el estudio de los juegos (aquí se incluyen videojuegos, juegos de mesa e historias interactivas). En ellos se han descrito experiencias de desarrolladores y de las comunidades que los rodean, así como ontologías, metodologías, etc. Sin embargo, es necesario continuar investigando en el área de los juegos, integrando nuevas direcciones de los estudios con la intención de abrir el campo a nuevas ideas y personas.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Videojuegos, Sociedad digital, Estudios del juego.

Resumo

Os estudos de jogos foram concebidos basicamente como um campo interdisciplinar que tentou desenvolver uma ampla estrutura para o estudo de jogos (incluindo videogames, jogos de tabuleiro e histórias interativas). Eles descreveram experiências de desenvolvedores, das comunidades que os cercam, bem como

Game studies can be seen as a stream of research on video games, digital games and games in general that arrived at the beginning of the 2000s with the rise of video games as a popular pastime, but also joined this boom by the fact that some academic journals have been consolidated (Stenros and Kultima, 2018). Conceived as an interdisciplinary area and with expert researchers in very diverse fields of study, it has tried to define a coherent framework to study games where designers, developers and academics describe their experiences, methodologies, predictions, and analysis, among other things; and give visibility and importance to the communities that arise around the games.

In recent years, some attempts have been made to measure the scope of research topics in this field. For example, bibliometric analyzes have been carried out with the intention of establishing data and detecting which are the most researched topics or the communities that are observed around them (Melcer et al., 2015), in addition to classifying the games and their derived genres (Coavoux et al., 2017). Although these voices have grown to include the investigation of various games (not only digital) and all those adjacent phenomena, it is evident that we still have limited research in the study of games. There is a lack of research with an emphasis on cognitive studies, artificial intelligence, informal learning (Scolari and Contreras-Espinosa, 2019) or in other more technical areas.

Deterding (2017) highlights that game studies were initially formed to be an "umbrella" discipline, but it has become a sub-community within game research. In addition, he points out that the exodus of academics from the areas of communication and psychology to this area has served to broaden the study of games. With this, new research, approaches, and points of view have been generated. Basically, game studies today have scholars from areas like humanities, social sciences, communication, user-centered design, etc., and a large group of followers of its study as a cultural phenomenon. Deterding further suggests that something similar to what happened with cinema has happened in this field, by predominantly addressing the social and cultural aspects, and then moving to much more technical issues.

But we must consider that it is also necessary to review the panorama of current games, as well as the variety of phenomena that are now included in the concept of "game". Not only video games, board games or interactive stories could be included in the definition. It is missing to incorporate eSports and many other activities that are not easily classified as games but that currently share some aspects or digital infrastructure. The concepts and classifications created years ago around the game may be limiting or not very broad for the currently established dynamics and for the game practices

that players use now. In addition, it is necessary to delve into the situation of women in games, in other groups (Fron et al., 2007), in races (Gray, 2012) and in the employment situations as industry workers (Hammar et al. 2020). It is necessary to move away from binary classifications and visualize a path towards fluid and inclusive classifications.

It is even necessary to investigate new methodologies, both in the sense of approaches on how to analyze games, or how we should select games that we want to analyze. Coavoux et al. (2017) indicate that in any field of research, especially in culture or arts, the personal tastes of the researchers are very important in the choice of research objects. Therefore, when delving into the methodologies currently used in research related to games, we would be taking into account that route those researchers follow. I believe that we must open ourselves to new concepts, accept new choices from researchers, but also include new methodologies to conceive new studies. According to Pettman (2019), we should adopt a new approach to examine the processes and conditions that allow us to study games in another way. We could see the other side of the coin integrating new directions of studies, in the same way that has been done with other areas with more tradition. This would even help reduce the perceived barrier for newcomers to these studies, as it would open the field to new ideas and people.

The articles contained in this monograph represent a testimony of the need to continue researching the area of games. That is why we took on the task of making a hole in the area of game studies and new faces in the Obra Digital magazine. The reader will find a wide variety of articles that study the video game from the point of view of education, an analysis of the stereotyping of bisexuality, the management of a political community, or the importance of the recreational medium to favor ideologies. Also included in the monograph is a study on the empowerment of women by analyzing the work of *The Last of US part II* and reflecting on how narratives promote critical thinking. Finally, the importance of *Flash* in the configuration of various artistic movements linked to the virtual environment is highlighted.

This is a very special issue for us, not only because of the articles gathered in the monograph, but also because from this issue the magazine Obra digital will change its team and activity. In the same way that the game studios faced changes, this must define a new framework of work. Changes are inevitable but necessary to make sense of our goals. I only have to say: thank you very much to all the readers and authors who have accompanied us in all these years. I do not want to close without publicly thanking Dr. Cecilia Ugalde Sánchez, my friend and colleague. Thank you for all your work and constant involvement throughout this stage. I hope you enjoy this issue dedicated to video games as much as we have enjoyed editing it.

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