

COMPUTER GAMES – THEMES FOR CONSIDERATION

The following aspects should be considered when playing a game. These are a starting point – think about other themes

Personal experiences

For example: How did the game make you feel? Was it a positive experience? How did it relate to the rest of your life? How did your experience develop over time?

History

Where does the game come from? What other games (computer and traditional) does it relate to? What is the history of the developer?

Technology

What kind of technology does the game employ? In what way is it innovative? Anything special about the game engine (3d games)? Does it rely on any special hardware?

Aesthetics

How appealing is the visual imagery? How is this limited by the technology? How do the aesthetics enhance or degrade game play? How is abstraction employed?

Interface

Describe the interface. How easy was it to use? How could it be improved?

Psychology

What aspects of the game appeal to human psychology?

Cultural Relevance

To what extent does the game relate to events and issues of contemporary culture? Does it add any insights or does it simply mirror culture? How does it function politically? Does the game inspire the player to act in the “real world”.

Narrative Structure

What kind of narrative structure is employed in the game? eg linear, branching, open. Is this effective? How is the game structured? How does it differ from a book or a film? If a multiplayer game, how does this manifest itself? What is the difference between online encounters and “real” encounters?

Simulation

Does the game simulate “real life” in some way. What does playing the game teach you about how things work in the “real world”? Can this be more effective than traditional learning, .e.g. books

Social Relationships

To what extent does the game foster collaboration, or the reconfiguration of existing social relationships?

Gender and Race

How does the game reinforce or question traditional notions of gender or race? How is this manifested in the game?

Violence

How is violence used in the game? Is it a necessary part of the narrative? How did it make you feel? How is the game rated?

Military

What debt does the game owe to technology developed by the military. To what extent does it contribute to the militarization of civilian life?

Economics

How has the game sold? How have economic imperatives affected its structure and content? Where was it made? Was outsourcing used? Does the game contain any advertising?