gameZ & ruleZ

Conference on game mechanics in design and culture.
http://www.gamezandrulez.ch
Zurich, Switzerland
October 2 - 3, 2015
Friday: 10.30 - 18.00 / Saturday: 9.30 - 15.30

Talks

Jesper Juul (Denmark)
The Art of Failure

We call video games „fun“. Yet players often look unhappy and even scream in frustration. I will talk about why we play video games though they make us unhappy, and I will play games with the audience.

Jesper Juul is an influential video game theorist at the Danish School of Design and CMS/W at MIT. He is author of the books Half-Real, A Casual Revolution and The art of Failure.

Staffan Björk (Sweden)
An overview of gameplay design patterns and their uses

To be able to understand and reflect on design one needs a suitable vocabulary. While practitioners have developed these over time for design fields that have existed for long period of times, those working with developing or studying game design do not have the advantage of having these. Design patterns, a concept originally developed for Architecture, offers one solution to this issue by letting re-useable game design concepts be described using a common template and linking concepts together through several types of relations. Staffan Björk has worked with gameplay design patterns for over ten years and will in this presentation give an overview of the current collection of over 500 patterns as well as looking at specific uses and methods for patterns.

Staffan Björk is a full professor at the department of Applied IT at Chalmers and Gothenburg University. He has a PhD in Informatics from Gothenburg University and conducts research within the areas of gameplay design, pervasive games, and interaction design. A common theme in his research is to develop a design language for gameplay design. A primary result of this work is the gameplay design patterns concept and the book “Patterns in Game Design” co-written with Jussi Holopainen and published by Charles River Media.

Wolfgang Walk (Germany)
From MDA to DDE - necessary enhancements on a comandable Design Framework

Wolfgang Walk is computer games consultant and contractor. He worked in the games industry for more than 20 years as a producer combined with a love for storytelling and an interest in all questions regarding this topic. He has a broad knowledge of the game development cycle. And at the same time he works on theories for ethics of gameplay and understanding game mechanics as systems.

He will introduce a new model that extends the MDA model of Le Blanc et al. The model that he likes to discuss is called DDE, Design/Dynamics/Experience. This model creates clearer categories for the first and the third step of the MDA frameworks – and attempts a renaming. It integrates and also defines the role of the designer in each category of design and tries to avoid misunderstandings that were possible with the MDA model.

Carlo Fabricattore (United Kingdom)
The heart of players' holistic engagement: gameplay activities, mechanics and context

Games can be regarded as systems in which players tackle challenges in order to fulfil overarching aims. When playing, players engage in activities interacting with each other and/or other gameplay tokens, such as objects and entities. Gameplay activities are organised processes of actions, regulated by mechanics, and framed by a game context. Game mechanics are functional details, systems of rules defining what can be done in the game, how and with what effects. The game context defines purpose and sense of gameplay dynamics through narrative and setting elements, thus framing the meaningfulness of the player experience. The definition and integration of game context and gameplay system (activities, actions, operations, involved tokens and underpinning mechanics) is key to trigger and sustain players' holistic engagement in the game, supporting the development of their mastery, sense of agency and motivation. Expanding on these ideas, a method will be presented to design/analyse games as contextualised activity systems, pivoting around the interplay of core gameplay activities, mechanics and game context, and their relevance to trigger and sustain players' holistic engagement. The method will also be discussed as a means to generate evolutionary game design innovation "learning from the past", through identifying and repurposing gameplay elements and design patterns proven successful in older products.

Carlo Fabricatore has a multi-disciplinary background integrating computer science, industrial engineering, game & interaction design, and learning sciences. He holds an Associate Professorship and leads the Pro-Social Immersive Technologies (PSiT) research incubator at the University of Huddersfield, where he conducts research on the impacts of play and games on learning and the development of social systems and enterprises. Carlo Fabricatore has a strong industrial track-record in the fields of ICT and Electronic Entertainment, and has collaborated with leading organisations including Nintendo, Atari, Accenture, Microsoft and the United Nations.

Anika Waern (Sweden)
Game Mechanics in Pervasive Games

Pervasive games are games we play out in the everyday world, and that are played as part of everyday life. In this presentation, I will look into the design of a host of pervasive games to tease out some of the most important decisions that designers make in creating pervasive games. I argue that for pervasive games, the design process is better structured around questions such as „what will players do“ and „how will the game appear to them“, than around concepts such as rules and goals.

Annika Waern is a ‘research by design’ academic with a background in computer science and Human-Computer Interaction. The latest ten years she has dedicated to understanding games, and pervasive games in particular. These games are played in the physical world, often with the aid of mobile and ubiquitous technology. Annika coordinated the EU Integrated Project on Pervasive games in 2004-2008, and has continued to research the subject by studying commercial productions as well as creating her own games.

Renzo Thönen (Switzerland)
Game Mechanics of the Farming Simulator

Renzo Thoenen is associate partner of Giants Software Inc. and developer of the Farming Simulator, one of the most successful games that publishes a new version every year, is published in more than 30 languages and covers most of the systems you can play games on. The 2013 version pf Farming Simulator sold over 2 million copies. Thoenen studied game design at the University of the Arts Zurich. He will talk about motivation techniques, game mechanics and retention mechanics for the Farming Simulator.

Mischa Geiser (Switzerland)
Guidance Systems for Journey of a Roach

Mischa Geiser is „project juggler and fun maker“ of a small Indie studio called Koboldgames. The studio published an exciting adventure game called „Journey of a Roach“ with publisher Daedalic. The adventure won several awards and found a small fan community. Geiser and all his co-workers studied game design at the University of the Arts Zurich. He will lead us through the guidance system that was developed for „Journey of a Roach“, show us why the game does not need any localization. Generally he will tell us more about the problems the developer team encountered while working on game mechanics and guidance systems for the adventure game.