Game Analysis – Stacking

Video game is important medium in and combination of culture and interactivity in contemporary world. The video game that I am going to talking about is *Stacking*. This game not only has humor story, but also implements unique interaction in the entire game play. It reflected “Narrative and Ludology Theory” in the class. *Stacking* has established a particular game world and system with concept of Matryoshka doll. In the game system, the developer delivers a story by utilizing player’s curiousness and exploration.

Play and game has long history in human culture. People use play or game to competition, gambling, simulation and so on. Most of traditional game are board game, card game and board wargame. For example, Go, Poker, Chess. The development of video game cannot separated from the advances of computer technology. The earliest video games were developed in the computer lab of tech institute, like *Spacewar!* in MIT. These games set rules and environment for people to interact with computer or other player rather than narrate a story. Before 1970s, people had no consciousness for the connection between a video game and a story. But until 1975, the release of *Colossal Cave* changed the entire world of video game with interactive text and stared a new genre – Adventure People called this game Interactive Fiction (IF). Colossal Cave broken through the gap between video game and storytelling. By the graphic advancement to computer, storytelling not only belong to text, but narrative with vivid graphics and virtual world. Player would easily attract by the game world and the story comes with more dramatic. Virtual Reality (VR) has started a new era for video games and pushed story narrative to a higher level with immersing experience. Based on my experience for video game, most of contemporary video games has implemented story narrative to support their theme and pointed the direction for player to explore. Interactivity makes the game story attractive and brought free-explore to the player in the game system. Some of current video games have non-linear plots in storytelling. The end or result of the story is based on player’s choice and decision. Video game is similar to TV, broadcasts, and paper. They are mediums for storytelling. But video game is not as same as traditional mediums conduct linear story, it immerses player with interactivity and non-linear story.

*Stacking* is a puzzle adventure game. The game uses Matryoshka doll as characters and narrates stories with puzzle solving, NPCs’ conversations, open world exploring and silent film style scene cuts. The game story is talking about Charlie Blackmore who rescues his siblings from the antagonist, Baron. In the game, player acts as Charlie that is the smallest doll. Charlie has abilities to jump in and out a bigger doll to acquire its abilities for puzzle solving or interacting with other dolls. The game is full of puzzles and challenges. One puzzle may has more than one solutions or embedded with other relative puzzles. Player can choose either following the main story or having freedom to explore the entire game world, engage challenges, collect objects and evolve abilities.