Aman Patel

September 6, 2018

INFO-I 101

Onesti/Paul

Envisioning Technology: Video Games

**Part 1: My Interests**

Throughout my life, I’ve gained a lot of interests including playing tennis, doing puzzles, watching TV, sleeping, and more. However, there is one interest that trumps the rest: playing video games. I’ve always enjoyed playing video games because they are so diverse in content and can be replayed as many times as I’d like, which essentially provides an unending source of entertainment. My passion for video games sparked at six years old when I got a Nintendo DS Lite for my birthday. Having two screens on a handheld device was unheard of at the time, making it exponentially cooler to have my own. I particularly liked this device because it had a slot for Game Boy Advance games, meaning I could continue playing my old GBA games on my new system.

After that, game systems became more and more innovative, and upgrading with the times was the only way I could continue playing games from my favorite franchises, including Mario, Pokémon, and Kirby. Later that year came the Wii, then the 3DS, then the Wii U, and most recently, the Switch. Each of these had attributes that made them stand out. For example, the Wii had motion controllers, the 3DS had 3D capabilities, and the Wii U had a gamepad with a screen that could be used without a monitor. However, the Switch truly changed the world of gaming, as it was the first two-in-one gaming console ever produced (MediaWhale). This means the console can be used in both handheld mode and docked mode, allowing the system to be used on its own or with a TV. Nintendo attempted this same concept earlier with the Wii U gamepad, but it never truly worked as a standalone system as it always had to stay within a certain range of the console. The Switch has opened the gates to a more portable gaming experience, and it has also opened the gates to better power consumption by consoles in the future. While the Switch is not nearly as powerful as some of its competitors, including the PlayStation 4 and Xbox One, it consumes power far more efficiently. The PS4 and Xbox One consume approximately 140W and 125W, respectively (Passingham). On the other hand, the Switch consumes at most 17.7W (Smith). I believe the Switch has set the precedent for two-in-one gaming systems and competing companies are going to follow in Nintendo’s footsteps. Eventually, gaming will become a more portable experience, giving players more freedom to play whenever and wherever they want.

Video games have always been intriguing to me because they are always improving, and they provide a seemingly infinite source of entertainment. I started with a Nintendo DS Lite, and gradually improved systems until I recently purchased the Nintendo Switch. The Switch revolutionized the gaming industry because it was the first game console that could function as both a handheld device and a dedicated console. This solved two major issues with current gaming consoles: portability and energy inefficiency. Most current game systems are tethered to a TV, forcing players to be in that location if they wanted to play. Also, the Switch has been shown to consume nearly 10 times less energy than its stationary competitors. If Nintendo can continue to reinvent gaming like they did with the Switch, playing video games will be one of my primary interests for the rest of my life.

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**Part 2: In the Media**

Drake & Josh: Season 2, Episode 1: “The Bet”

Drake & Josh is about the journey of two competitive stepbrothers, Drake and Josh, through high school and home life. Drake’s mother is married to Josh’s father, and Drake’s sister Megan is a main character as well. “The Bet” begins with Drake and Josh talking about bets they’ve made in the past. After the theme song, the scene portrays Drake and Josh eating junk food and playing video games, respectively. Drake’s mother tells the stepbrothers to take an umbrella and walk Megan home from a friend’s house. Neither listen to her request, and both are subsequently grounded for the night. Once they reach their room, they start arguing and making fun of each other’s addiction. They then make a bet to see who can last the longest without their addiction. Megan drafts a contract that says whoever loses shall dye their hair pink. Later, Drake gets a severe rash on his face due to sugar withdrawal. Meanwhile, Josh is also struggling holding up his end of the bargain after his grandmother sends him a brand new, state-of-the-art GameSphere. Megan convinces the stepbrothers to sabotage each other, causing them to both lose. In the end, Drake and Josh both dye their hair pink, per the contract.

The GameSphere is a gaming console that is a parody of the Nintendo GameCube. Josh received the GameSphere in a package sent by his grandmother during his bet with Drake. It was a very exclusive product, as Drake mentioned that it wasn’t supposed to be released until 3 months after Josh received it. In real life, the Nintendo GameCube was released in North America in November of 2001, 3 years prior to the airing of the episode (Lupton). In the show, the GameSphere was new and state-of-the-art, creating a new problem for Josh. If the GameSphere wasn’t sent to Josh, his focus could be diverted from video games, giving him a higher chance of winning the bet. It can and will solve Josh’s problem of boredom once the bet is complete, but for the time being the technology only creates problems for those involved. At the time, the technology is making Josh’s life a lot harder and Drake’s life a lot easier. Josh is having a harder time with the bet because of it and Drake doesn’t need to try as hard to sabotage with Josh’s attention already on the GameSphere. In real life, the GameSphere would provide people with entertainment, making their lives more enjoyable. I would consider the technology ethical, but it does create an unfair advantage towards Drake in the bet, as he repeatedly plays video games in front of Josh to taunt and tempt him. On the other hand, Josh transforms Drake’s room into a sugar wonderland to produce the same effect, so the advantage gained by Drake from the Gamesphere is essentially matched. Five years after the GameCube came out, the Wii was released. The Wii controllers were a massive change from the common controllers that had been used since the first video game systems. Six years after the Wii was released, the Wii U was released. I believe the GameSphere would follow a similar evolution line, with a major upgrade five years after the initial launch, and a moderate upgrade ten years after the initial launch.

“The Bet” is an episode of Drake & Josh where two stepbrothers bet on who could last the longest without their respective addictions. Drake is forbidden from eating junk food while Josh is forbidden from playing video games. Both experience major hurdles during the bet, including Josh’s new GameSphere from his grandmother and Drake’s sugar-themed bedroom. Most viewers of this episode picked up on one thing in particular: the similarity between the GameSphere from the show and the Nintendo GameCube. Their names had an obvious connection and both used Nintendo controllers. Despite the similarities, the GameSphere is a fictional piece of technology from an episode of Drake & Josh, and the episode and the technology within will never fail to make me laugh.

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