

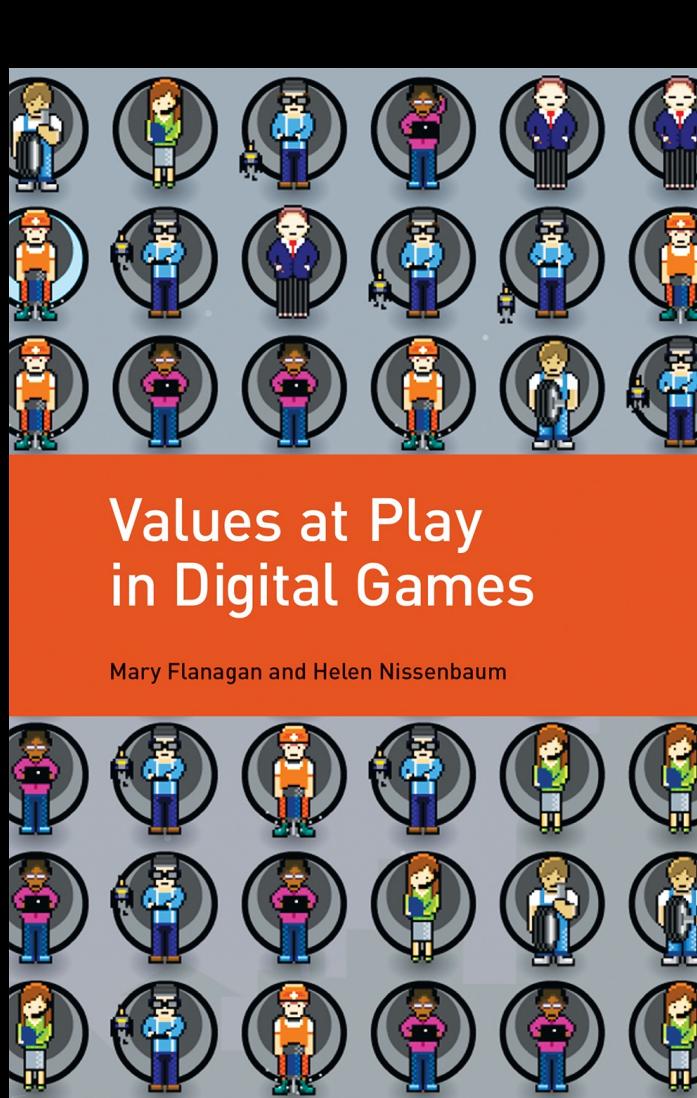
Flanagan and Nissenbaum

Values at Play in Digital Games



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- Director, Tilt Factor Lab



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- Professor, Cornell Tech
- Director, Digital Life Institute

Why study values in games?

“First, the study of games enriches our understanding of how deepseated sociocultural patterns are reflected in norms of participation, play, and communication.

Second, the growth in digital media and expanding cultural significance of games constitutes both an opportunity and responsibility for the design community to reflect on the values that are expressed in games.

Third, games have emerged as the media paradigm of the twenty-first century, surpassing film and television in popularity; they have the power to shape work, learning, health care, and more.” (3)

What are values?

“Simply put, values are properties of things and states of affairs that we care about and strive to attain.”(5)

“Values may be specific to individuals or shared by groups, and they may bind communities, cultures, religions, or nations. We acknowledge these differences by speaking of personal values, cultural values, religious values, human values, and so forth. We may further differentiate among types of values by talking of ethical, political, and aesthetic values and more. Finally, values are often ideals: we promote them even as we accept that we may never achieve them. World peace, tolerance, kindness, and justice are instances of such ideals.” (5)



List of **VALUES**

Accountability	Ethics	Kindness	Self-respect
Achievement	Excellence	Knowledge	Serenity
Adaptability	Fairness	Leadership	Service
Adventure	Faith	Learning	Simplicity
Altruism	Family	Legacy	Spirituality
Ambition	Financial stability	Leisure	Sportsmanship
Authenticity	Forgiveness	Love	Stewardship
Balance	Freedom	Loyalty	Success
Beauty	Friendship	Making a difference	Teamwork
Being the best	Fun	Nature	Thrift
Belonging	Future generations	Openness	Time
Career	Generosity	Optimism	Tradition
Caring	Giving back	Order	Travel
Collaboration	Grace	Parenting	Trust
Commitment	Gratitude	Patience	Truth
Community	Growth	Patriotism	Understanding
Compassion	Harmony	Peace	Uniqueness
Competence	Health	Perseverance	Usefulness
Confidence	Home	Personal fulfillment	Vision
Connection	Honesty	Power	Vulnerability
Contentment	Hope	Pride	Wealth
Contribution	Humility	Recognition	Well-being
Cooperation	Humor	Reliability	Wholeheartedness
Courage	Inclusion	Resourcefulness	Wisdom
Creativity	Independence	Respect	
Curiosity	Initiative	Responsibility	
Dignity	Integrity	Risk-taking	
Diversity	Intuition	Safety	
Environment	Job security	Security	
Efficiency	Joy	Self-discipline	
Equality	Justice	Self-expression	

Write your own:

Be bold

Building great things means taking risks. We have a saying: "The riskiest thing is to take no risks." In a world that's changing so quickly, you're guaranteed to fail if you don't take any risks. We encourage everyone to make bold decisions, even if that means being wrong some of the time.

Focus on impact

To have the biggest impact, we need to focus on solving the most important problems. It sounds simple, but most companies do this poorly and waste a lot of time. We expect everyone at Facebook to be good at finding the biggest problems to work on.

Move fast

Moving fast enables us to build more things and learn faster. We're less afraid of making mistakes than we are of losing opportunities by moving too slowly. We are a culture of builders, the power is in your hands.

Be open

We believe that a more open world is a better world. The same goes for our company. Informed people make better decisions and have a greater impact, which is why we work hard to make sure everyone at Facebook has access to as much information

Build social value

Facebook was created to make the world more open and connected, not just to build a company. We expect everyone at Facebook to focus every day on how to build real value for the world in everything they do.

Ethical and Political Values

“Typical examples of ethical values include kindness, honesty, generosity, fidelity, integrity, respect, safety, autonomy, creativity, peace, pleasure, well-being, friendship, collaboration, health, responsibility, happiness, and contentment. All of these contribute to the moral dimension of our lives—how we treat others and how they treat us.”

“Political values include those that define relationships within and between societies, such as justice, equality, security, stability, cooperation, tolerance, privacy, accountability, democracy, voice, property, liberty, liberation, autonomy, equal opportunity, and government transparency.”(6)

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**THIS IS WHAT WE ARE
LOOKING FOR IN A
CRITICAL GAME DESIGN**

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Conscientious Design

“The notion that values are embedded in technology motivates a practical turn in the work on values in design System design is typically guided by goals such as reliability, performance, safety, and cost. We suggest adding items like fairness, equality, and sustainability to the list.” (9)

Conscientious Design



TECH FOR GOOD

A Declaration by the Canadian
Tech Community

POWERED BY



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Foundation

COMMUNITECH

BUILD TRUST AND RESPECT YOUR DATA.
BE TRANSPARENT AND GIVE CHOICE.
RESKILL THE FUTURE OF WORK.
LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND.
THINK INCLUSIVELY AT EVERY STAGE.
ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN COLLABORATIVE
GOVERNANCE.

RESPONSIBLE INNOVATION IN CANADA AND BEYOND

Understanding and Improving
the Social Impacts of Technology

ANTICIPATION proactively mitigating adverse effects;

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY at all stages of a technology's lifecycle;

JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS understanding and reversing disproportionate impacts, power imbalances, and systemic effects;

INTERDISCIPLINARITY AND COLLABORATION across many domains;

SELF-AWARENESS OR REFLEXIVITY of one's own position and perspective;

AGENCY AND CHOICE for those using or impacted by a technology.

<https://www.ictc-ctic.ca/>

Conscientious Design

“These are our core premises:

- (1)there are common (not necessarily universal) values;
 - (2)artifacts may embody ethical and political values;
 - (3)steps taken in design and development have the power to affect the nature of these values.”
- (9)

“Questioning one’s own worldview is a good start.” (9)

Gender Classifier	Darker Male	Darker Female	Lighter Male	Lighter Female	Largest Gap
 Microsoft	94.0%	79.2%	100%	98.3%	20.8%
 FACE++	99.3%	65.5%	99.2%	94.0%	33.8%
IBM	88.0%	65.3%	99.7%	92.9%	34.4%



Designer vs Player



Designer vs Player

“A good way to shed light on these issues is to take an already existing game, add or subtract a mechanic or key game feature, and investigate how such modifications change the range of plausible interpretations.” (16)



Games with Explicit Values



“In this game, the values of balance, sustainability, cooperation, and influence are infused into gameplay.” (22)

Games with Explicit Values



“Values that might be expressed by the game in its current state are interspecies differences, action, vengeance, destruction, humor, and violence.” (22)

Games with Explicit Values



“The natural aspects of the game ultimately function as a mere skin, a geographical metaphor on a social network.” (22)

Values at Play Heuristic

1. Discovery

2. Implementation

3. Verification

An iterative design process.

Where are the values?

1. *Key actors*: The people involved in creating the game.
2. *Functional description*: The explicit statement describing the game.
3. *Societal input*: Cultural contexts, standards, and other external factors bearing upon the game.
4. *Technical constraints*: The software, hardware, and other game elements that together constitute the game. (80)

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2. *Functional description*: The explicit statement describing the game.

HINT: USE THIS

TO WRITE YOUR FIRST ASSIGNMENT

3. *Social input*: Cultural contexts, standards and other external factors bearing upon the game.

4. *Technical constraints*: The software, hardware, and other game elements that together constitute the game. (80)

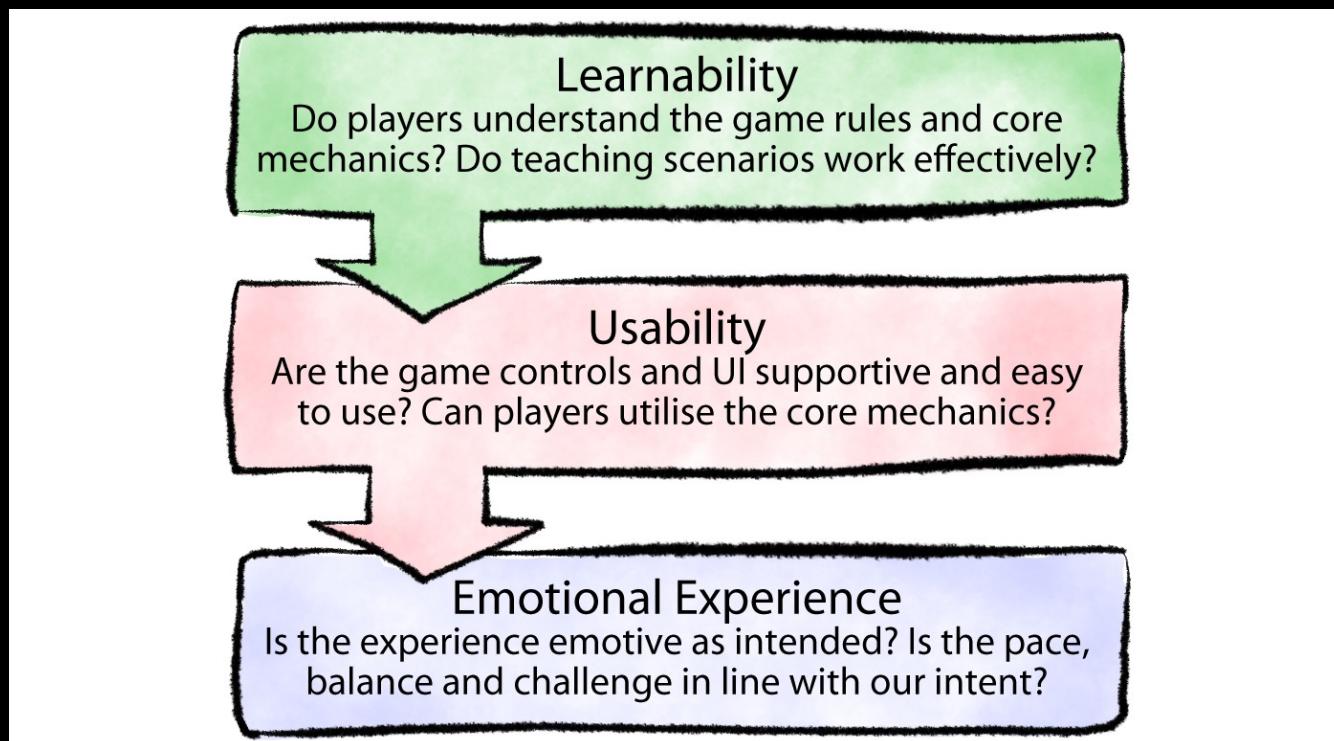
Discovery: Locate Values

1. *Key actors:* The people involved in creating the game.

“The designers’ ethnic origins, cultural groups, socioeconomic and political backgrounds, gender identities, education, and disciplinary training shape their perspectives and preferences.” (81)

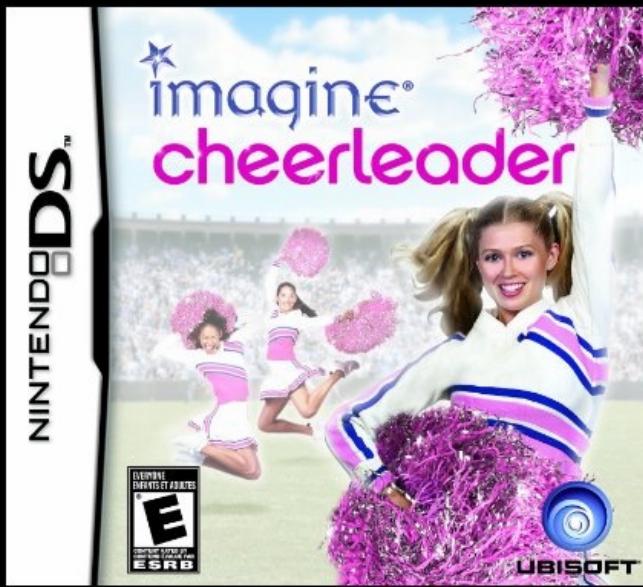
Discovery: Locate Values

“With the rise of the iterative design process and participatory approaches, designers and developers seek to incorporate feedback from users early in the design and development process.” (82)



Discovery: Locate Values

“Should designers’ inclinations win out over the audience in this tug of war with values? Is giving players exactly what they expect or want a good idea? Should it matter that player desires are shaped by marketing materials, prior games, and the dominant culture? Should the designer’s values trump the values of the marketplace, or vice versa?” (85)



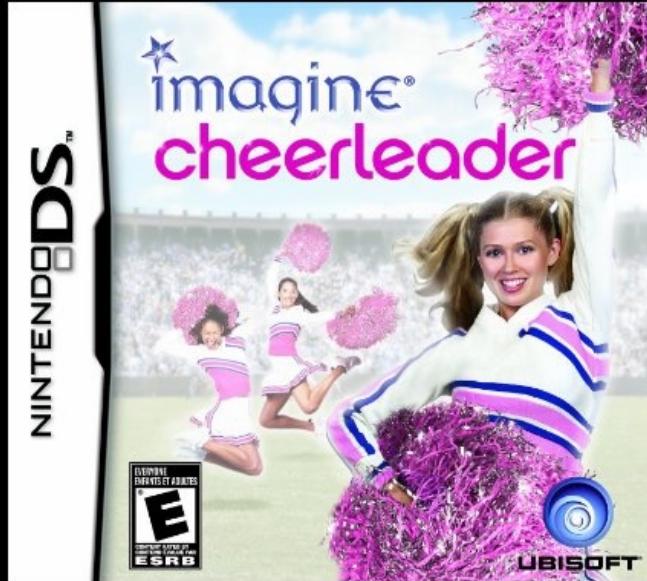
Discovery: Locate Values

2. *Functional description:* The explicit statement describing the game.

“Typically written at the start of a game development project, the functional description may or may not refer to values. When it does, it offers a top-level guide to values that the game developers intend to express.” (86)

Discovery: Locate Values

2. *Functional description:* The explicit statement describing the game.



Make a difference for your school and friends by leading the team to victory! Use the stylus to perform different cheers, kicks, lifts, and a variety of routines that will get the crowds pumping and inspire your team! Shop for uniforms, accessories and more using credits earned during play then test your cheering skills against other squads!

(<http://www.nintendo.com/games/detail/4sM6wkIswumr6GtdCIhGTs4j917V-C9v>)

Discovery: Locate Values

2. *Functional description:* The explicit statement describing the game.



In Power Planets you control the fate of your own miniature planet. Construct buildings to make your inhabitants happy and earn money and points. But buildings require energy to operate, so you must construct power sources to keep your civilization running.
(<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.449848721487.239719.173287921487&type=3>)

Discovery: Locate Values

3. *Societal input:* Cultural contexts, standards, and other external factors bearing upon the game.

“Even a simple kitchen appliance that toasts bread must meet societal standards.”(88)



Discovery: Locate Values

4. *Technical constraints:* The software, hardware, and other game elements that together constitute the game.

COLLATERAL VALUES:

“sometimes values appear in games not intentionally but as a result of other design decisions. In designing a game’s storyline, resolution, and arc – as well as game goals, scoring and available actions – a designer may contribute to a player’s experience of embodied values.”

HARDWARE AS CONSTRAINT AND AFFORDANCE



[giantjoystick], Mary Flanagan, 2006

Implementation: Design It

“Values for a given project must be translated into specifications for graphics, scripts, and lines of code. This process is what we call *implementation* – the transformation of a creative vision, ideas, aspirations, and fundamental requirements into a playable artifact.” (100)

Implementation: Design It

1. *Pay systematic attention to a game's elements.*"

- narrative
- character representation
- game actions
- game engine and hardware

2. *Consider what you are trying to achieve and how your game conveys values to players (and potentially others).*

- change a behaviour
- enable a valued performance
- induce a desired experience
- induce feelings
- raise issues and call to action

(101)

IMPLEMENTATION HEURISTICS

1. Pay systematic attention to a game's elements."

- narrative
- character representation
- game actions
- game engine and hardware

2. Consider what you are trying to achieve and how your game conveys values to players (and potentially others).

**HINT: USE THIS
FOR YOUR FINAL ASSIGNMENT**

- change a behaviour
- enable a valued performance
- induce a desired experience
- induce feelings
- raise issues and call to action

(101)

Verification: Test It

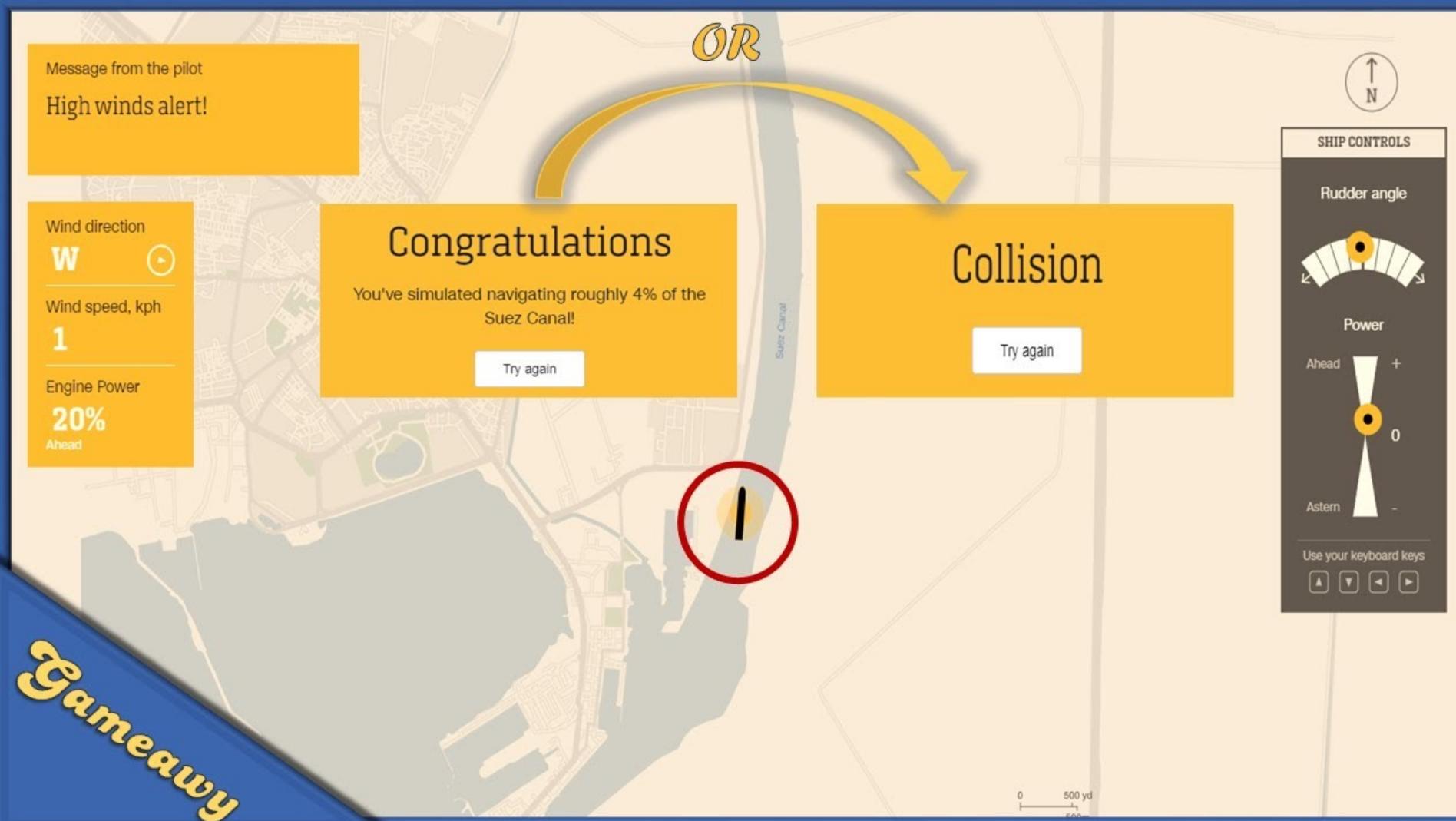
Verification remains more elusive and challenging than the other two core components of the Values at Play heuristic—discovery and implementation. Nevertheless, we have seen success when verification is structured around three questions: “Is the game eliciting the right sorts of feelings?,” “What attitude or behavior has changed among players, and do these changes match the game’s values?,” and “Is the game making players more creative, collaborative, and autonomous?” (137)

Serious Game



Pipe Troublē, Pop Sandbox, 2012.

Newsgame



Steer through the Suez Canal, CNN, 2021

Social Impact Game



Phonestory, Molleindustria, 2011

Social Impact Game

phonestory.org



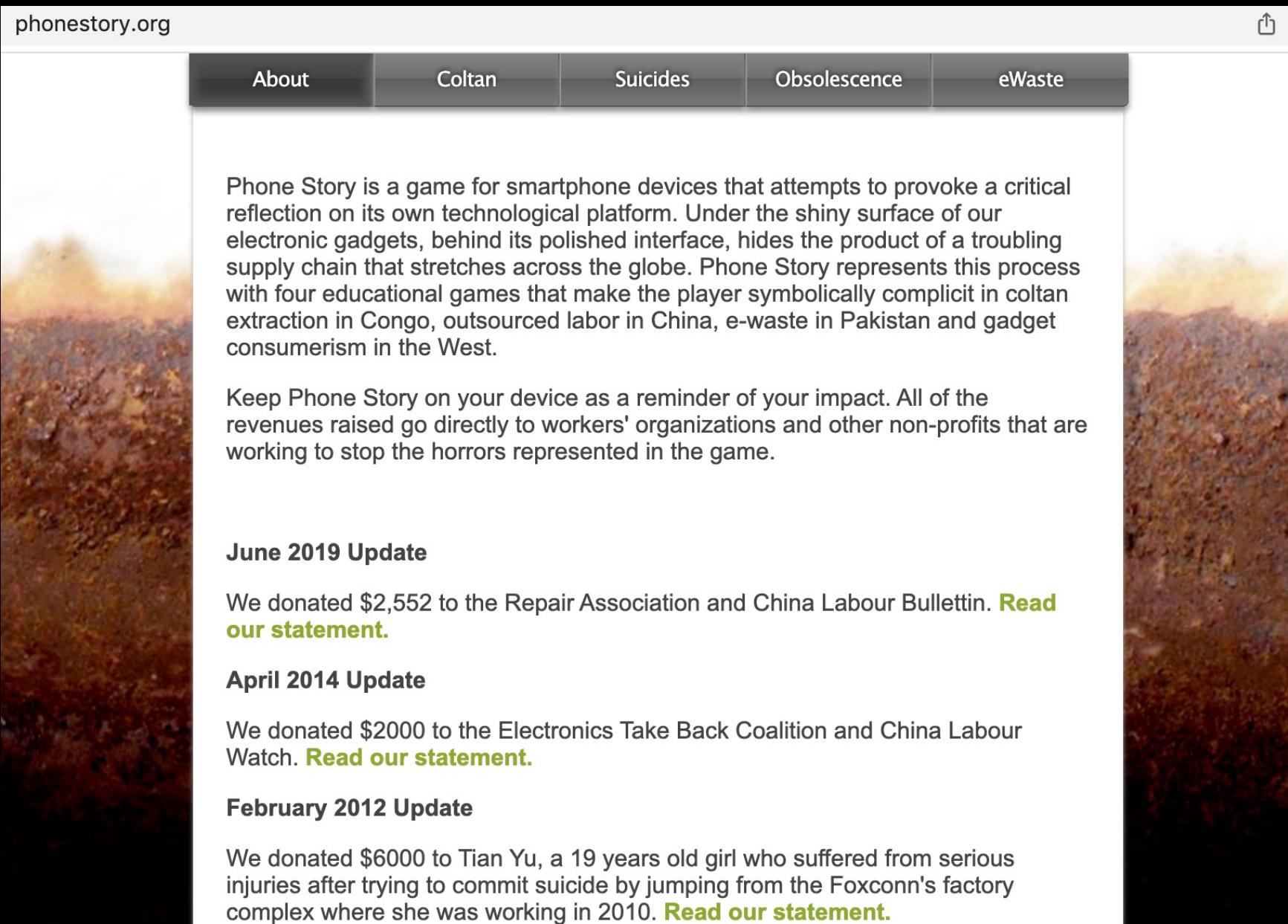
About

Coltan

Suicides

Obsolescence

eWaste



Phone Story is a game for smartphone devices that attempts to provoke a critical reflection on its own technological platform. Under the shiny surface of our electronic gadgets, behind its polished interface, hides the product of a troubling supply chain that stretches across the globe. Phone Story represents this process with four educational games that make the player symbolically complicit in coltan extraction in Congo, outsourced labor in China, e-waste in Pakistan and gadget consumerism in the West.

Keep Phone Story on your device as a reminder of your impact. All of the revenues raised go directly to workers' organizations and other non-profits that are working to stop the horrors represented in the game.

June 2019 Update

We donated \$2,552 to the Repair Association and China Labour Bulletin. [Read our statement.](#)

April 2014 Update

We donated \$2000 to the Electronics Take Back Coalition and China Labour Watch. [Read our statement.](#)

February 2012 Update

We donated \$6000 to Tian Yu, a 19 years old girl who suffered from serious injuries after trying to commit suicide by jumping from the Foxconn's factory complex where she was working in 2010. [Read our statement.](#)