McAllister and Brown (Week 1)

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In their book, Brown's aim is to examine about the concept of "fun" and focus on the user experience evaluation tools and methods that make the games more funny and so more playable. Because of the fact that, according to references, the concept of "usability" evolved from functionality and efficiency to pleasure and aesthetic, this aim is the baseline for Brown's research. To reach this aim, the author starts with explaining the elements and processes in game development to enlighten us with the background information. The author summarizes these elements and processes in two parts as "the industry and the people" and "development". The industry consists of platforms, genres and delivery and the people includes producers, directors, programmers, artists and most importantly designers. According to the author, all these elements and their interaction with each other have different roles and different level of impacts on the user expectations and experiences. The development part divided into three(four): concept, pre-production, production(and launch). At the concept stage, the key point is to find a new idea for game mechanics to propose a different experience to users. Current technology, current time and current state of industry should be taken into consideration. To predict and shape the intended experience "paper prototyping" and "tech demo" methods are used. At the pre-production state informal "heuristics"(informal because the rules are proposed according to the previous personal experiences of the designer) and first reaction of "personas" are important to improve the design. Designers observe the interaction between the player and game mechanics and try to understand the enjoyment limitations. At the production state "user testing" is much more important to be sure for the usability of the product. Proposed automated data collection tools are used to scale and rank the experiences of the users. And finally at the post launch state the "reviews" and "online forums" come into prominence as they establish bridges directly between the developers/designers and end user(player) to fix unnoticed bugs and propose new patches or updates. The changes at this stage is crucial as directly influencing the game which is already being played. According to the author, the main drawbacks at the current state are ignoring the volunteered information by the large-users and reaching the anticipated feedbacks more often which does not clearly help to improve the redesigned process and does cause unneccessary cost. In addition, the deficiencies are more detailed observations on the user as physiological measures, formal heuristics, ethnographic methods and patterns. Because, eventually the target is human, I believe the developers/designers should figure out the tendency of human to feeling of pleasure for games with the currently unconsidered methods as the author proposed. Moreover, because games varies in different scales, some common and formal evaluation criterias and heuristics should be applied.