GameFlow: A Model for Evaluating Player Enjoyment in Games(Week 5)

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GATE 508 – Game Metric

The aim of this paper is to specify the heuristics used in game design to merge them into one proposed evaluation(and design also) tool,called "GameFlow". Because there is a widely accepted model in the litrature named "Flow" to understand enjoyment and because it overlaps with the heuristics used in game design, the starting point for the authors was the content of this model. GameFlow, mainly consist of eight features and its sub criterias to provide enjoyment for games. According to the references in the paper(Federoff), in the current state of industry, the main focus for the designers is usability features(as interface, mechanics and gameplay) rather than enjoyment. However, the authors' aim is to combine these usability heuristics with enjoyment criterias to validate and serve a well-structered model for design and evaluate. When we look at the ejoyment models in media and games, there are disposition theory, attitude, transportation theory, cognition, parasocial interaction and flow. However, according to the author, these modals are narrow and specify enjoyment concept from one perspectives. To understand ennjoyment, there was a research conducted by Csikszentmihalyi which reveals that no matter what the genre, age or social class is, the human enjoy with some specific criterias(which consitute the Flow criterias). When the authors map these criterias into the GameFlow, **game(as task), concentration, challenge, player skills, control, clear goals, feedback, immersion and social interaction** are the elements of the model GameFlow for enjoyment. To identify the effectiveness and success of this model to specify the enjoyment in games, they conducted a research with two RTS game(successful and unsuccessful) Warcraft 3 and Lords of EverQuest and got expert reviews according to GameFlow Model. According to the result of the research, the reasons for unsuccess of Lords of EverQuest is linked up and correlated with the fails in providing the sub-criterias in the GameFlow model according to the review and rating results of the experts. Moreover, it was revealed that some criterias of the model are more suitable for specific genres. However, it is stated that, GameFlow model is needed to be strengthen by play-testing and observation elements to evaluate it from being a review and identification of issues tool to being a evaluation and design tool also.