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Game Engines - GDC Video 2

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In the second GDC video UX expert Celia Hodent analyzes what scientific research says about potential problems that video games can create. Specifically, she goes on to talk about how addiction, dark patterns, loot boxes and gambling, and violence are potential problems that video games create. She analyzes these topics with discussing public concern, how science perceives the problem, and what we can do in response. Celia treats the discussion as an invitation to reflect on ethical concerns.

In Celia’s discussion about gaming addiction she states that the “Internet gaming disorder” was added in 2013 in DSM-5 recommending further research, and “Gaming disorder” as a new entry in the ICD, announced by the WHO in late 2017. These “disorders” are debunked with her research; there is no consensus and a lack of rigorous research to back it up. There are over 2 billion gamers out there and if there is not rigorous research done it stigmatizes people. She goes on to say that “Problematic gaming is best viewed as coping mechanism associated with underlying problems such as anxiety or depression.” I agree with this statement, I don’t believe gaming is a disorder itself, but peoples underlying problems can drive them to dive into a game to escape. I’ve done this myself, come home upset about the day and just want to forget about it so I start playing Xbox to distract myself. Gaming is a way to escape reality and give gamers a new identity. If someone is addicted to gaming its most likely another underlying issue that drives them to become addicted to gaming or escaping reality.

Celia also points out that classifying gaming as an addiction stigmatizes the use and meaning of the word addiction. It downplays other real addictions. Celia also shows us that children and teenagers have low self-control. I remember when I was a kid and I could not wait to get home to log onto Xbox with all my friends and launch the new Call of Duty. I would play for hours on end with them, my mother would scream at me to get off and say I was addicted to that thing; referring to my Xbox. But I was a kid and that was a part of my social life, that’s how my friends could hang out and play games together.

Celia goes on to discuss loot boxes and gambling, dark patterns, and violence. How gaming has problems that lead to these topics. I found the rest of her discussion insightful and interesting and worth discussing but this paper would end up being over 10 pages. But, she made some very insightful comments and ways we can improve on these issues. She offers solutions to the issues she raises and they’re viable, the gaming industry should take action to prevent these issues from developing further.

One last point, I recently purchased and returned Tom Clancy’s Ghost Recon Breakpoint. I was looking forward to this game for so long and anticipated a game that was advertised to be something that it was not. The development of the game was no where close to what they advertised. Game mechanics were all off, I could kill enemies ten levels higher than me! Not only that but the monetization of the game is ridiculous. It’s a “pay to win” kind of game that when you buy armor and weapon upgrades it doesn’t even matter because the game mechanics are so screwed up. I have an issue with the whole marketplace and buying things to put you further in the game. It was a total let down. They had the basis of a game that could have been game of the year and one of the best developed in a long time. But they focused on the money. Ok I am done ranting.