MMI508 HW1

Reflection paper on “measuring and defining the experience of immersion in games” Jennett et. al. (2008)

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I will start this reflection paper on my initial thoughts of immersion in games. Then I will talk about what my thoughts were while reading the paper and after reading the paper. Finally, I will talk about the questionnaires asked during the 3 experiments done in the paper.

So I though that immersion in games was a scale of how good the players did not get distracted from the main events in the game. These distractions I am talking about are both in game, like an out of place object, a bug etc.; and in real life, like someone calling you, loud noises, basically anything that makes you turn your attention away from the monitor. And as I read through the paper I understood I was both right and wrong, since according to paper immersion is (in a way) related with attention to the game, but there are cases where attention to the game does not correlate with having immersion.

In the first three minutes of reading the paper I realized the reason why I don’t like casual/hyper-casual or almost all of the mobile games: I couldn’t have an immersive gameplay with little stimuli from the game and high stimuli from outside world. For example; I am on an Archero level with my phone muted(no sound coming from the game) and as soon as I hear a sound coming from the environment I would lose all focus of the game even though I already had a low focus on the game.

Now let’s go back to what the paper talks about. In the paper immersion is separated from cognitive absorption and other “mumbo jumbo” of psychological terms. I believe they did this to individually test each of these aspects, but I am against this since I believe immersion is highly intermingled with things like cognitive absorption. Now don’t get me wrong the paper goes on to talk how each of these things affect each other but when the data is first separated then combined you probably will lose some perception in the results you will find. Not only the separation/combination of data is (in my opinion)wrong you can get different results using different statistical methods on the same datasets. So I believe that the data and statistical comparison of the data this paper uses could be a little bit faulty. Oh and let’s not forget the small test size on the first and second experiments.

After reading the paper I mostly had my own opinion on immersion in computer games. As I said in the beginning I do believe that immersion is unavoidably not losing focus during gameplay. Even though I disagree with the methodologies in the paper, most statistical analysts will find this paper very useful because it really did everything it could in measuring something that is not directly measurable. They even went the length of doing multiple experiments learning from their previous experiments(making questions simpler) and adding new technologies(eye tracking). But when it comes to game development I don't think this paper could be of much help since each game is unique and game testing will show the errors in immersion to the developers, however perhaps the developers could realize the effect of immersion before development and change the game's design depending on that.

As for the questionnaires, they are basically a personal survey of a past experience. The previous sentence really shows where I stand with these kinds of surveys because they depend too much on the person answering the questions even if you ask simple questions. I mean one day I could say oh yeah I felt 5/10 immersed and another day I could say 7/10. Unfortunately, there is no other way to statistically test immersion and the scientist(s) simplified the questions and made a test containing over 260 people so that will make the results more normalized, but you can never be 100% sure.