

Users and Evaluation of Interactive Storytelling

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Abstract. The manuscript includes information about the objectives, methods, participation requirements and references for the Users and Evaluation of Interactive Storytelling at the 3rd International Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling – Edinburgh 2010.

Keywords: User engagement, Interactive Storytelling, Evaluation.

1 Introduction

Interactive Storytelling (IS) is a multi-disciplinary research domain, which has attracted a lot of interest amongst scholars in recent years. However, despite a very strong activity towards specific aspects of IS (e.g. development of tools, applications and systems); the field is still to publish seminal work on connecting the notions and concepts of IS to users' experiences. We are yet to investigate the cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects of IS and establish the relationship between users and interactive narratives, their constituent parts, and consumption. This knowledge gap is a sensitive issue and hinders the field's potential to move forward and produce further meaningful advances on interactive narratives' design. It is difficult to see how the IS medium can be popularized and spread across genres and media without a clear understanding and assessment of the way in which audiences react to it. The main purpose of this workshop is to bring the study of users' experiences of interactive stories to the forefront of the IS research agenda. Our approach is to investigate IS from a user's perspective and work towards the identification of the variables, dynamics and methods contributing to understand the user/medium relationships.

2 Objectives

The main purpose of the workshop is to advance in the definition of a useful model for measuring user's reaction to interactive narratives. In order to do so, a number of

significant variables need to be identified so as to quantify and explain the user experience in consuming IS productions. The workshop will investigate a wide range of discipline so as to identify specific and appropriate techniques, procedures and methods for properly measuring the experience and its effects on receivers. We outlined three factors towards a model of users' narrative: narrative (a), formal (b), and decisions (c). These aspects will form the basis for discussions at the workshop. Factor (a) (narrative) concerns the variables that reception studies have largely considered to be meaningful in describing the user experience's of audiovisual narratives: engagement [1], presence [2], perceived realism [3], and identification with characters [4]. Also, we take into account the contributions of narratology researchers, whom relate the structure of the stories with its perception [5, 6]. Factor (b) (formal) focuses on elements derived from the audiovisual and interactive representation of stories, like visual communication [7] and reception [8], audiovisual cues [9], formal structures [10], production pace [11] or physical interfaces [12]. Finally, factor (c) (decisions) is variables used in different domains (as psychology, sociology or artificial intelligence) to explain decision-making.

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