Theory
Mobile and Ubiquitous Games
ICS 163
Donald J. Patterson

Content adapted from:
Pervasive Games: Theory and Design
Experiences on the Boundary between Life and Play
Magic Circle as Contract

- The magic circle only holds if everyone agrees
  - implicit agreement

- Magic Circle is not impervious from the outside world
  - You can’t actually kill someone in a game and be ok
  - You can play a sport and be liable for external punishment

- Magic Circle membrane is broken by
  - Markets
  - Politics
  - Law

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic_Circle_(virtual_worlds)
Magic Circle as Contract

- The game Twister
- Watching TV while playing WOW
- hardcore gaming destroys the magic circle (Pargman/Jacobsson)
- games build communities that spill into the ordinary

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic_Circle_(virtual_worlds)
Game Frames (Fine and Goffman)

- Consider a role-playing game
- Primary framework
  - external matters from game (e.g., ordering pizza)
- Secondary framework
  - communication about the game (e.g., clarify a rule)
- Tertiary framework
  - diegetic communication (e.g., negotiating for a character)
- frameshifts aren’t explicit
  - gestures, speech, mannerisms index the metacommunication
Pervasive games break the magic circle

- “Killer” does not “proceed within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in orderly manner”

- It intentionally blurs

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic_Circle_(virtual_worlds)
A pervasive game is a game that has one or more salient features that expand the contractual magic circle of play spatially, temporarily, or socially.
Case Study: Cruel 2 B Kind

- Game designed by
  - Jane McGonigal
  - Ian Bogost
- Post 9/11 version of Killer
- Game Play
- Video Demo

http://www.cruelgame.com/
Genres of Pervasive Games

- Treasure Hunt
- Scavenger Hunt
- Assassination Games
- Pervasive LARPs
  - civil war
  - SCA
  - Ren-fairs
  - Furries?
- Alternate Reality Games

(more from wikipedia)
Emerging Genres

- Smart Street Sports

(more from pacmanhattan)
Emerging Genres

• Smart Street Sports
Emerging Genres

- Smart Street Sports
- Playful Public Performances
  - flashmobs
- Urban Adventure Games
Emerging Genres

- Smart Street Sports

- Playful Public Performances
  - flashmobs

- Urban Adventure Games

- Reality Games
  - aesthetic vandalism

- Knitta Please

(more from magda sayeg)