Design:
Designing for Social Expansion
Mobile and Ubiquitous Games
ICS 163
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Content adapted from:
Pervasive Games: Theory and Design
Experiences on the Boundary between Life and Play
Designing for Social Expansion

• Social Expansion
  • Can be intentional or derived

• “How is my game going to affect outsiders?”

• “How are outsiders going to affect my game?”
Designing for Social Expansion

• Temporal Expansion
  • Blurs the line between playing and not playing

• Spatial Expansion
  • Blurs the line between inbounds and out of bounds

• Social Expansion
  • Blurs the line between player and non-player
  • Introduces the idea of a participant
Designing for Social Expansion

- Social Expansion
  - Requires temporal and spatial expansion
- Non-players can be
  - obstacles
  - witnesses
  - an audience
  - tokens (to be collected)
  - converted to players
Designing for Social Expansion: Game Awareness

- Being **aware** of the game changes the participant’s response
- Participants can be
  - unaware
  - ambiguous
  - aware
- This can shift and is seen in flash mobs
Designing for Social Expansion: Game Awareness

- Unaware
  - Everything is ordinary and real
  - Game experiences can be scary
  - No protection from knowledge of game
  - Don’t know the full range of options
  - Still participants
Ambiguous

- Recognize something is out of the ordinary
- Watching details
- Searching for explanations
- Can treat the event as a performance or art or vandalism
- May confront the players
- May call the police if things remain unexplained
- Behavior is difficult to predict
- Designing for this kind of experience is ethically dangerous
Designing for Social Expansion: Game Awareness

- Aware participants
  - Know the game is going on
  - Understand the special social rules
  - Can bring unaware participants into the game
  - May still not have a holistic view of the game
  - Explain strange events against knowledge of game
Designing for Social Expansion: Game Awareness
Changes in awareness occur through **invitations**

Invitations can be

- **explicit**
  - conversation with a player
  - rabbit hole

- **implicit**
  - intervening in a public portion of the game
Invitations should be refusable

- Trivial for aware participants
  - Refusing to participate with someone dressed up like a zombie
- Difficult for unaware participants
  - e.g., if a game involves an elevator breakdown and a bystander is in the elevator, then...
• Playing with unaware participants can be fun for aware players

• Especially if the players are not known

• Actions must be simultaneously appropriate in both the game world and the real world
What do you think are the ethical boundaries around creating fun experiences for unaware participants?
NOT OKAY

- FAKE PARANORMAL
- FORCED PARTICIPATION
- DISRUPTION TO ROUTINE
- DOING FOR SHOCK VALUE
- NO TOUCHING

OKAY

- IMPROV DANCE
- WITNESS OR WALK AWAY
- WORST POSSIBLE REACTION IS INDIFFERENCE
- DOESN'T EXPOSE PRIVATE INTO
- DOESN'T FORCE PARTICIPATION
- DOESN'T LOOK DANGEROUS TO UNAWARE PEOPLE

CULTURAL NORMS
Some games support multiple modes of participation

- watching a recap/documentary of the game
- watching the game live or in person
- playing sub-games, possibly technologically mediated
- playing regional sub-games
- commentary in forums
An onion or ring model

- Invitations bring you into more participation
- Each level should be refusuable
- Moving into more participation could be part of the game itself
Designing for Social Expansion: Game Awareness: Modes

- An onion or ring model
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You earn reputation when people vote on your posts

Your reputation score goes up when others vote up your questions, answers and edits.

As you earn reputation, you'll unlock new privileges like the ability to vote, comment, and even edit other people's posts.

At the highest levels, you'll have access to special moderation tools. You'll be able to work alongside our community moderators to keep the site focused and helpful.
For social expansion

- players need to gain benefit from interacting with others
- missions can require interaction
  - photographs
  - inducing behavior
  - gaining knowledge
  - collectable tokens
  - e.g., Cruel 2 B Kind
- informed outsiders or outer ring players
Designing for Social Expansion: Playing with Outsiders: Pronoia

- Positive Paranoia -> “Pronoia”
  - The idea that people are conspiring to help you
    - game organizers
    - outer ring participants
    - informed outsiders
- Read the case study excerpt
• Positive Paranoia -> “Pronoia”
  • The idea that people are conspiring to help you
    • game organizers
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• Read the case study excerpt (p 122)
Designing for Social Expansion: Playing with Outsiders: Emergent Interaction

- Positive Paranoia -> “Pronoia”
- Creates Emergent Interaction
- “When players are provided with specific instructions that require them to take an adventurous attitude toward public places, this allows them to surprise themselves with their own daring and ingenuity.” McGonigal
- Apophenia: the belief that unrelated elements in a game are related
- It’s nearly impossible to design these are requirements
Designing for Social Expansion: Playing with Outsiders

- “Brink games”
  - games that empower players to break social conventions
    - e.g., Twister
  - allow actions that wouldn’t be okay outside of a game context

- “Secret Lives”
  - Works well in pervasive games
  - creates togetherness and privilege in being part of a secret
• Pervasive games don’t have to be mysterious
• Outsiders can know it’s a game right away
  • and be invited to join in
• Performative play
  • For the benefit of the non-players
    • e.g., flash mobs can be this
  • “performing” can be easier than “doing”
  • visible indicators can alleviate embarrassment
“Collective Play”

- Many people must act together to accomplish a goal