Session 13 – FICTIONAL WORLDS

Readings

Klastrup, A poetics of Fictional Worlds
Juul, Half-Real Ch. 4 (Fiction)

Concepts/Keywords

- Fictional worlds (fiction virtual worlds)
- “worldness”
- Incoherent worlds
- Persistent representation

Goals

Clarify issues of Fictional World vs. narrative
Prepare for discussion of simulation

FICTIONAL WORLDS

- While Narrative was a controversial issue, Fictional Worlds are a more or less agreed part of games → Fiction vs. Fictional World
- Not all games have Fictional Worlds, although they may evoke worlds
  - Bejeweled
  - Tetris
  - Checkers
  - (playing) Card games

Q: Examples of games without worlds or with weak worlds

- Worlds are a device for transmedia storytelling – same world can be incarnated in different media
  - A world can harbour different narratives
  - At times narrative is weak (Star Wars Racer)

Fictional World isn’t a story, but the setting of a story (remember Chatman's story tree)

“Worldness” can be a way to determine the degree a game constructs a fictional world (prototype theory)
CMS.300 – Intro to Video Game Theory

Virtual Worlds (social space) are **online** fictional worlds

2 levels of worldness
- Spatial Properties
- Abstract (what's common to all Virtual Worlds)
- Navigable and Habitable (social)
- Persistent
- Virtual Worlds
- Online (social)
- Allows synchronous interactions
  - between users (PvP)
  - between user and world (PvE)

Why is persistency important?
- Leaving a trace → storytelling
- Feeling the world being “lived in”
- Some offline games can have persistency in a playthrough
- Some online worlds can have different instances of the world depending on their level (even in the same server)

Specific – what sets apart that world from others

Juul – Ways of creating worlds
- Graphics
- Sound
- Text (description)
- Cutscene (dialogue)
- Title, box, manual (jargon)
- Haptics – controllers – rumble (guitars, microphones, STEEL BATALLION)
- Rules
- Player actions and time
- Rumors (urban legends, Battlezone)

Inconsistent worlds → rules & fiction clash

What makes something inconsistent? Is it realism? (3 lives in Mario?)

Planescape makes it part of the game

Save potions in ICO