Syphon Filter
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Mission Briefing

• First four games of the series dealt with the Syphon Filter Virus, biological and nuclear warfare, terrorism, and secret government agencies

• In Dark Mirror, the U.S. government orders Gabe Logan and the IPCA to stop a global terrorist organization called Red Section from synthesizing a new type of biological weapon of mass destruction

• Logan’s past comes back to haunt him
Agency Definitions

1) A unique sensation of cathartic immersion

2) The ability to interact with and influence a game environment when the game responds in a logical manner
Censored Elements in PS2 Dark Mirror

• People do not burst into flames or run around screaming when tased
• Language is milder but still strong
• Blood is gone
• Nudity is gone
• All online levels, weapons, and badges are gone
Censorship’s Influence on Agency

• Some areas make less sense without censored elements

• “They won’t miss what they don’t know was there”

• Lack of elements make the game less engaging and less enjoyable

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Less Sense Without Elements

• Logan: “I sure hope this dye washes out”
  • Censoring red blood also censors green die

• Female escort shivering and crying in the snow
  • She was just fine minutes ago, should she have less clothes now?
Less Sense Without Elements

• Immersion is compromised
  • Illogical event causes player to feel removed from the game

• Logical flow of events is disrupted
  • The player has lost the ability to influence outcome

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http://fp.scea.com/Content/games/SCUS-97362/packart/image_1.jpg

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“Don’t tase’ me bro’!”

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http://ps2media.ign.com/ps2/image/omegastrain_021104_001_640w.jpg

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Taser Agency

• The taser gives the player an immense sense of control

• The taser causes enemies to lose their control

• The game provides the player with freedom of employment
  • Anyone can be tasered

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Censored Taser Agency

• The taser is less powerful and the player is less powerful

• Enemies do not lose as much control as before

• Freedom to influence the environment is diminished
Historic Employment of the Taser

• At your side throughout the entire game

• Only available very late in the game

• Start game with short-range version, Player earns long-range version

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Constrained Taser Agency

• Powers are taken for granted if taser is always available

• Depravation causes frustration and risks player apathy
  • Late levels with the taser produce the most agency

• Incentive to earn taser motivates player and develops appreciation
Censorship’s Influence on Agency

- Some areas make less sense without censored elements

  “They won’t miss what they don’t know was there”

- Lack of elements make the game less engaging and less enjoyable
Enjoyable Elements

• Humor from disgraceful death and excessive violence

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Enjoyable Elements

• Disgraceful death
• Excessive violence
• Sexual references
• Whineing
• Foul language

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Censoring Enjoyable Elements

• Player’s freedoms are limited
  • The player loses the ability to cause actions

• Immersion is compromised
  • The player feels removed from the game

Nick Ristuccia - CMS.600

Cite as: Nick Ristuccia, course materials for CMS.600 / CMS.998 Videogame Theory and Analysis, Fall 2007. MIT OpenCourseWare (http://ocw.mit.edu/), Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Downloaded on [DD Month YYYY].
Other Enjoyable Elements

• Online play

• Target Lock

• Environment kills alter landscape


Nick Ristuccia - CMS.600
Other Enjoyable Elements

• Online play

• Target Lock

• Environment kills alter landscape

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Censoring Enjoyable Elements

• Embedded narrative is created by the player from environment kills
  • Leaves an imprint within the game of character action

• Restricting certain kinds of kills inhibits the player from embedding a narrative resulting from that kill
Uncensored Elements

• Enemies reaction to dead comrades
• Enemies tend to advance when you are inactive
• Missed shots alert and piss off enemies
• Shooting someone in the leg causes them to move slower
• A friendly will advance when you tell them to
• A friendly will offer advice, whine, or yell at you for making bad decisions
Uncensored Agency

• A player feels like he has the ability to influence the game

• A player can cause logical events to occur

• A decision will have a logical effect, good or bad

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Censorship in the Past

- Bomb in the U.S. Capitol → Secretary of State Assassinated via Gun

- Terrorism in Toronto → Terrorism in Carthage Michigan
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Why is PS2 Dark Mirror Censored?

• Attract a larger audience in the Syphon Filter series
• Interest a larger audience in the PSP
• Not put resources into setting up PS2 Dark Mirror servers
• Attention should be on the PSP and PS3, not the PS2
• Make up for low PSP and PS3 revenue
Advertisement for the Playstation 3 removed due to copyright restrictions.
Censorship’s Influence on Agency

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Replay Value and Censorship

• Less potential for agency in PS2 SFDM
• Agency may tend to decrease with play
• Desire to play the uncensored PSP version
• Sony accomplished its goal of attracting new players to the PSP?

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