“It’s a penguin world!”: what can we learn from children’s game play?

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Introduction

• Working with Disney for the past 3 years on curriculum and game design
• Current work is in Club Penguin (Jelly Bean Game for example)
• CP is currently in 5 languages – English, Spanish, Portuguese, German and French
• Localization means translate (Dumb?)
Jelly Beans
Research purpose

• This study examined children’s experience in playing online games within a popular game environment.
Research Questions

• What kind of experiences do children have playing online games?
  – What are the motivational aspects of playing online games?
  – What are children learning from these experiences?
Research Context

- A four-hour long game camp.
- Seven children (from 4 to 10 years old). There were three boys and four girls in the camp.
- Interactions and activities of participants in playing online games were videorecorded and observed.
Data collected

• Five videorecordings of children playing online games:
• Field notes from researchers
Data sample
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Dialog</th>
<th>Actions/Reactions</th>
<th>What is accomplished</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:25p</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>Child clicks on a revers [online spaces] in the game environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:34p</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Game: a new screen loads up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:37p</td>
<td></td>
<td>Heydo - hopper</td>
<td>Child moves his mouse over a speed boat image on the screen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:39p</td>
<td></td>
<td>I love Heydo - hopper</td>
<td>Child gazes at the child on his left. He clicks on the speed boat icon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:40p</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Game: a message pops up asking whether he wants to play the game.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:41p</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Child clicks on yes button</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:43p</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Game: a new screen with the title of the game loads up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:44p</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Child clicks on the play button</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:46p</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Game: a new screen with instructions loads up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:47p</td>
<td></td>
<td>I love this game!</td>
<td>Child clicks on the ready button</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preliminary findings

• Playing together
• Getting Bored
• Connecting with the game world
• Reading symbols/texts within games
• Teaching others how to play
Future research

- Cross-cultural comparison (US vs Brazil)
- Think-aloud protocols