Practical Assignment 3: Analysis

Game Design course 2016-2017, Utrecht University. Version 1.0

Overview

In the third practical assignment you will analyze two different games. In this analysis you will explain how the concrete implementation of a game leads to an abstract experience. It is very useful to practice the ability to see how concrete implementation choices affect the generated experience. It allows you to better predict the outcomes of your design decisions, thus leading to better games.

In the first part of the assignment you will analyze one game. After receiving graded feedback on your analysis, you will analyze another game in the second part of the assignment. You can write the analyses in Dutch.

Individual
In contrast to assignment 1 and 2, this assignment is not done in a team. It must be done individually.

Deadlines
Keep track of these deadlines:

- Thursday March 16th before 23.59: Submit the first analysis (Subtask 1).
- Sunday April 9th before 23.59: Submit the second analysis (Subtask 2).

Selection of games

You are free to choose which games to analyze. It is recommended to analyze games you are familiar with, to avoid the need for replaying the entire game.

There are several requirements for the games you want to analyze:

- Both games should be very different. They should not be in the same genre.
- The games should have enough depth for analysis. Very small or simple games may not offer this. Large or original games are usually easier to analyze.
- The games must be well known, it is not allowed to analyze obscure untraceable games. The games must have received at least 2 reviews on real game websites (check metacritic.com) and the games must have at least 2 gameplay videos on YouTube.
- Games analyzed thoroughly in the lectures should not be chosen. All analytical statements which were also made during the lectures are ignored in the grading.

You are highly discouraged to choose the same games as your friends. Cooperation is not allowed and similarities between the analyses will be checked.

Contact one of the teaching assistants or the lecturer if you have doubts or questions about the requirements.

Analysis

You will create two analyses, one for subtask 1 and one for subtask 2. The assignment for both analyses is the same, except for the deadlines. This subdivision allows you to learn from the feedback you will get on the first analysis to make your second analysis better.

In each analysis your main task is to explain how the experience of the game is generated from the concrete implementation of the game. This can also include an explanation what parts of the concrete implementation actually counter the experience.

The experience

As you're going to explain *how* the game experience is created, it is necessary to first explain *what* experience your game actually generates. Write down the following to do this:

- Write a vision statement which captures the experience. (Note that there is not an objectively correct answer. The vision statement you choose will give the direction for the analysis.)
- Retrieve the 1 or 2 main aesthetics from the vision statement, including why this follows from the vision statement if it is not obvious.
- Add more detail to the aesthetics such as the type of aesthetics. You can also analyze the vision statement further if it is not fully described by the aesthetics. The goal is to make the experience clear.

Include a link to a YouTube video containing gameplay footage showing the experience. The rest of the document should not refer to this video, it is purely for the grader to understand the game if the grader hasn't played the game.

How is the experience created?

You should explain how concrete aspects of the game create (or inhibit) the experience from the vision statement. Focus on interesting analytical statements. An analytical statement is not interesting if it is very obvious or if it has a negligible impact on the generated experience.

You are free to choose your approach for explaining how the game's experience is created. If you have trouble finding out where to start, here are some approaches:

- You can apply the knowledge from the lectures. For example if the game is focused on challenge, you can analyze what type of uncertainty is created (and *how* it is created) to generate difficulty. There are many concepts from the lectures you can try to apply. Select the concepts which explain an effect on the experience, and focus on the most interesting analytical statements. (Note that this is less applicable for the first analysis as not all lectures have been given at this point.)
- You can find Mechanics and Dynamics which explain how the aesthetics of the experience are created. Focus on the most interesting mechanics and dynamics which explain the experience best.

General tips

- Focus exclusively on game design, not on art or technical aspects (unless essential for the design).
- Quality is preferred over quantity. To stimulate this, you can first create a lot of analytical

statements, select the most interesting ones and only then start writing the analysis.
- Use relevant terminology (e.g. which was introduced in the lectures) as much as possible. But also make sure to use the terms correctly.
- Define important terms if they are open to multiple interpretations.
- Consider highlighting the core of your analytical statements in the text to make them more visible to the grader.
- There is a template available for the analysis.

Requirements

- <u>Each</u> analysis must consist of a minimum of 1000 and a maximum of 2000 words (this is about 2 to 4 pages).
- Deliver a pdf document.
- Name the pdf "P3-studentnumber-lastname"
- The document should contain your name and the name of the game you analyzed.
- The analyzed games should meet the requirements from the section "selection of games".
- All parts described in this document should be present.

Grading

Criterion	Poor	Fair	Good
Experience analysis (important)	The vision statement describes what you do in the game, instead of the abstract experience. The choice of aesthetic is not explained, or some of the mentioned aesthetics are not very important in the game.	The abstract experience is partly captured in the vision statement, but it also contains some unnecessary concrete things about the game. The connection with the aesthetic is not very clear.	The core of the abstract experience is clearly captured in the vision statement. The connection with the relevant aesthetics is clear, it gives a good idea of the experience.
Analytical statements (very important)	Most statements are descriptive instead of analytical. The analytical statements are obvious or have a small impact on the experience.	There are a few interesting analytical statements, but also a lot of obvious statements. Some statements explain a significant impact on the experience.	The analysis contains several interesting analytical statements which are not easy to think of. Most analytical statements explain a significant impact on the experience
Terminology (less important)	Barely any terminology from the lectures is used, or it is used incorrectly sometimes.	Some terminology from the lectures is used but there are several missed opportunities where more terminology could be used. The terminology is used correctly.	The analysis uses terminology wherever this is applicable. It is clear that the writer understands the meaning of the terms.
Formatting (less important)	The document has a title and a few sections, but not much more formatting.	The document is divided in logical sections and paragraphs. The different design decisions are clearly separated.	In addition to "fair", the document is well polished and contains several images/diagrams to aid in the explanation.
Language (less important)	There are some weird sentences.	Most sentences are nice and clear.	It is very easy to read.

Subtask 1: first analysis

Your first analysis will count for 33% of your Assignment 3 grade.

Submit your first analysis by email to game.ontwerp.2017@gmail.com subject
[P3.1-studentnumber-lastname]

Deadline: Thursday March 16th before 23.59

Subtask 2: second analysis

Use the feedback from your first analysis to write a better second analysis. Note that the game for your second analysis should be in a different genre, as mentioned in the "selection of games" section.

Your second analysis will count for 67% of your Assignment 3 grade. Note that the second analysis is graded more toughly than the first analysis, so you will have to write a better analysis for the same grade.

Submit your second analysis by email to game.ontwerp.2017@gmail.com subject
[P3.2-studentnumber-lastname]

Deadline: Sunday April 9th before 23.59