A new perspective for the games and entertainment community

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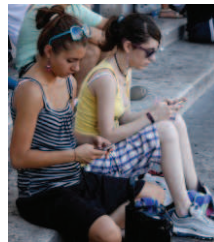
Abstract

Games and Entertainment has become an important area for researchers in Human-Computer Interaction. The community has grown dramatically in the past three years. During CHI 2012 a two-day workshop on Games User Research was held, and a growing number of game-oriented submissions shows the increasing importance of the field. In 2013 the successful Student Games Competition will continue and we plan to program engaging game experiences during CHI 2013. The games and entertainment community is the only community that got the agreement of the Conference Management Committee of SIGCHI to extend existence beyond the initial three years. The Games and Entertainment Community is thus extended for the years 2014 and following. It is of immense importance for the community to have the possibility to discuss new perspectives for the Games and Entertainment Community in a SIG.

Keywords

entertainment; games; future perspectives.

Introduction

Games and entertainment have been represented at CHI during the past 20 years in almost all venues including workshops, tutorials, papers, notes and demonstrations [1], [2]. In 2012 we juried a Student Game Competition, which is continued for CHI 2013 (http://chi2013.acm.org/authors/call-for-participation/student-competitions/student-game-competition/). Aiming for a number of high quality game submissions in all topics we are looking forward to continue the success of the games and entertainment community at CHI by identifying new ways, possibilities and strategies for the games and entertainment community for 2014 and beyond.

The community of games and entertainment includes researchers and practitioners focusing on player-centered development and evaluation of games and entertainment applications. Topics of interest include player-oriented games development including analysis, design, development, and evaluation of desktop games, mobile games, mixed reality games, table top games, serious and educational games, exertion games, affective games; avatars, non-player characters (NPCs) and embodied conversational agents (ECAs) for games and entertainment purposes; development of (interactive TV) formats, DVDs and related media; interactive applications for media consumption and usage on the web, in the car, and using mobile platforms; and other entertainment-focused applications.

Why is games and entertainment a special community? Interaction with entertainment-oriented software and applications is different from interaction with standard (productivity focused) information systems, in that players/users of these kinds of applications care most about the moment-to-moment experience, rather than task outcomes, and may be driven just as much by their emotions as by logic and reason. What is usable and satisfying may not always be the easiest or most straightforward interface.

There has been a steady stream of games and entertainment-related presentations in the various formats at CHI, over the last few years (see Figure 1).

Year	Full/Short Paper	WIP	Workshop (WS) /SIG	Other
2006	22	9	2 WS/ 2 SIG	6 ALT
2007	6	8	1 WS	
2008	5	6	3 WS	2 ALT, 4 INT 1 CS
2009	15	7	-	5 VS
2010	12	8	1 WS	1 ALT, 3 MS
2011	19 long 5 short	9	2 WS/ 3 SIG/ 2 PAN	7 ALT, 2 INT
2012	32 short & long	18	1 WS/2 SIG	40 + (all cat.) and SGC (6)

Figure 1: Contributions of the Games and Entertainment community from 2006 - 2011 (ALT=ALT CHI; INT=Interactivity, CS=Case Studies; VS=Video Showcase; MS=Media Showcase, PAN= Panel).

The games and entertainment community is of great current and potential value to CHI. It is a driver for new interaction techniques and standards, entertainment services are deployed on almost all platforms and services quickly adopt new forms of interaction technology. Beyond that games are becoming more and more important for HCI oriented purposes.

Regina Bernhaupt's main research focus is the development of methods that support design and development of entertainment applications. She published a book on user experience evaluation methods for games [1] and contributes to the broader field of entertainment, especially interactive TV and IPTV. She is currently invited professor at IRIT, Toulouse and director of user experience research of ruwido. She has been an active member of the CHI community in several roles and she is member of the SIGCHI Conference Management Committee (CMC).

Katherine Isbister's primary research focus is games-related HCI. She has authored one book and edited another on games design and evaluation [2]. She has presented several full papers at CHI and served as an AC and as a reviewer for many years. She is an Associate Editor of the *International Journal of Human Computer Studies*, and a Senior Member of the ACM. She is a frequent presenter at the game industry's primary design conference (GDC).

Students immediately understand the benefits of user/UX- centered design and development process when confronted with the application domain of games.

Issues to cover during the SIG

The aim of this SIG is to listen to members of this important sub-community of CHI, to plan ways to serve the community best at upcoming CHI conferences. The following issues have been identifies:

New perspectives for 2014 and onwards: Given that the Games and Entertainment Community is the first community that got the agreement to be continued beyond the initial three-year term, it is important to discuss how to change perspectives and enhance the possibilities of participation for CHI attendees interested in this area. Goal: identify new venues, formats, ways of participation.

Games not only as content but as experience for CHI attendees: Despite the steady trickle of papers and other content types (see Figure 1), some games and entertainment researchers complain that the games community still does not use the whole potential it has to be present at CHI. As suggested in the SIG in 2012, we plan for games that are an integral part of the conference. Goal: discuss the success of on-site games and finding volunteers to continue on-site games if appropriate.

Attracting young researchers to CHI: While games content as of today can be found in almost all categories, it is important now to keep this level of submissions - still aiming for a healthy growth of submissions related to entertainment and games. Goal: Continue the successful student game competition

(SGC) and identify possible additional submission topics for the SGC.

Ensuring high quality reviews: Goal for 2013 and beyond is to continue the successful steps to ensure that game related submissions do receive quality reviews and feedback in the various review processes. We think it is appropriate to discuss again at this year's meeting, in the context of whether efforts to raise review quality that have already been made, have succeeded or not.

Extending impact of games and entertainment related research: Many report a feeling that CHI is a good place for this community to converge, but is somehow not serving its needs coherently and well. A tremendous number of games and entertainment-related conferences have emerged in the last few years, as well as sub-communities in major ACM conferences (such as SIGGRAPH), but no venue has emerged that takes Human Computer Interaction and Games as its core concern. Goal of the SIG is thus to discuss a possible creation of a conference that is focusing on games within the context of HCI, or to establish a two-days event during CHI 2014 similar to efforts that have been made by the Health Community (WISH workshop [3]).

Overall, given that the special community persists for 2014 and beyond, we should critically revisit the success that has been achieved and how to best support the community in the long(er) term. We would like to hear from the interested community about how they want the community to continue and welcome volunteers to help continue to grow this initiative at CHI.

Intended Audience (and how to reach them)

One of the goals of this SIG is to identify and gather people interested in the field of games and entertainment including practitioners and researchers interested in supporting the entertainment and games community. At the 2012 SIG, attended by ~60 people, the main interest of the community were:

• To ensure that the feedback of the review process of game-oriented submissions is of high quality.
• To continue the Student Games Competition as a way to bring young students and researchers into the field.
• To make games and entertainment content even more prominent during the conference, including on-site games during the conference which are outside of the traditional submission categories
• To document the community efforts beyond the standard publications by extending existing work in the area of games user research (which was the outcome of the games user research workshop in 2012 [4]).

Overall the SIG is of interest to a broad range of regular CHI attendees. Using our involvement in industry and using the over 300 contacts (games community "members") we have been gathering during 2011 and 2012, we do want to increase the representation of commercial game practitioners at CHI.

Process/Schedule/Agenda

We will inform the games community members about the SIG and the goals beforehand enabling participation of the attendees in the organization of the SIG beforehand (e.g. by communicating beforehand topics to the organizers). As this SIG is central to the success of games and entertainment related activities in 2014 and beyond, the agenda is planned as follows:

10 mins: Intro and Recap of what was done this year in preparation for the Special Community, and how we interfaced with the main conference planning.

Gathering ideas and aspects on how to move forward with the community beyond 2013 (using whatever game-like support people feel comfortable with). The following topics will be discussed 15 min each:

(1) Identification of tasks/topics that the community should focus on in 2014; (2) Summary of pain points of the community (3) Identification of volunteers that are willing to serve the community in 2014 and beyond (4) Summary of action points for next year(s). (5) 10 mins: Wrap-up, Collate and write up results.

References

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