[title] (votes and suggestions please?)

I Think Therefore I Am
I Sim Therefore I Am
I Think Therefore I Sim
I Freak Therefore I Sim
I Geek Therefore I Sim
I Seek Therefore I Sim
I'm Queer Therefore I Sim
From Ben Shneiderman:
How game designers can foster an inclusive, accepting, and tolerant world
Enlightening minds through game design: Lessons from The Sims
Game design for open minds: Lessons from The Sims
Mister Rogers meets The Sims: Design principles for teaching tolerance
Simclusivity
Inclusivity in The Sims
Inclusive Simulation Games
The Sims Path to Inclusivity
How Inclusivity Benefited The Sims
How Inclusivity Saved The Sims

[subtitle]

The evolution of The Sims same sex relationships, marriage, sexual preference, and gender expression.
[Is there a single "inclusive" term for all these related topics? How about "inclusive".]
How The Sims became more inclusive over time.
The history of inclusivity in The Sims.

[abstract: 350 words]

[main idea]

[bla bla bla]

How Inclusivity Saved The Sims
By Don Hopkins, Ground Up Software.

The Sims has evolved with society over two decades towards a more inclusive, tolerant world celebrating diversity and creativity. Its procedural rhetoric promotes inclusivity, diversity, personalization, and tolerance, and supports self-expression, creativity, storytelling, and sharing. Players imprint their own identities, families, homes, communities, and stories into the game, and share their own personal emergent narratives using online community tools like The Sims Family Album and The Sims Exchange.

The Sims presumes to model human minds and relationships, but necessarily makes brazen simplifications due to technological constraints. It optimizes for playability instead of realism, while making concessions to marketability, corporate interests, societal norms, and taboos. But somehow it works, and this paper attempts to explain some of the magic.

Will Wright defined the “Simulator Effect” as how players imagine the simulation is vastly more detailed, deep, rich, and complex than it actually is: a magical misunderstanding that you shouldn’t talk them out of. He designs games to run on two computers at once: the electronic one on the player’s desk, running his shallow tame simulation, and the biological one in the player’s head, running their deep wild imagination.

The “AI” of The Sims is scripted in a noodly visual programming language called “SimAntics”, and is distributed throughout the objects and characters of the Sims microworld. But it magically offloads most of the heavy lifting into the player’s own imagination, incorporating and enriching their intertwingled tapestry of common-sense knowledge and stories about people, families, and communities.

The graphical design of The Sims was inspired by Scott McCloud’s “Understanding Comics”, in which he illustrated how the “Masking” visual style draws abstract characters against realistic backgrounds, which increases empathy and projective identification, empowers emotional connections, and permits players to easily and deeply identify with characters.

The educational philosophy of The Sims and SimCity was inspired by Seymour Papert’s “Constructionism” learning theory, with which learners construct mental models to understand the real world by building tangible personally meaningful shareable microworlds, and learn by discovery and exploration, by leveraging information they already know to learn more, and architecting their own educations.

This paper reviews the history of inclusivity in The Sims franchise over two decades, and explains some techniques for imagination, persuasion, identification, empathy, storytelling, and education, which can also make other games more inclusive, expressive, and enlightening.

QGCon Interview Points

1. The Sims applied Scott McCloud’s ideas about “masking” to make abstract characters in a realistic environment that players can emotionally identify with.

2. "The Sims Family Album” tool built into the game and "The Sims Exchange” online community enabled storytelling, and sharing those stories and save files online.

3. Tools like “Create a Sim”, “SimShow”, “FaceLift" and “Transmogrifier” enabled players to model themselves and their families and homes, and create their own personal content, to use in the game and their stories.

4. Discuss how The Sims has evolved over 20 years since its first release.

5. Will Wright gave me some useful advice, which I’ll try to paraphrase: Your personality, skills, technology, society, market, and politics change over time. So hang on to your dreams and never give them up, and every few years, take them out and re-examine them, because someday you might be surprised that your wildest dreams have finally become possible.

For better or worse, games can deliver pre-programmed propaganda and procedural rhetoric for advancing ideologies and changing minds. Some designers push clichéd narratives, stereotypical characters, and institutionalized prejudices that normalize and encourage homophobia, sexism, racism, bigotry, and violence.

Procedural Rhetoric

Ian Bogost defined the “Procedural Rhetoric” game design philosophy as an unholy blend of Will Wright and Aristotle, that explains how people learn through rules and processes, analyzes the art of persuasion, and focuses on conveying ideology by crafting laws and rules within games.

Constructionist Education.
Jean Piaget. Seymour Papert. Alan Kay. Maria Montessori.

social interaction
building environments, creating characters, telling stories

Situated learning theory. Learning by doing. Lev Semenovich Vygotsky. John Dewey.

Design Based Learning.

Doreen Nelson. SimCity.

Sims players can learn about who they are, and about other people and their stories.

Multidisciplinary.

Simulator effect: players imagine your world, your simulation, is more detailed, more rich, more complicated than it actually is, don't talk them out of it. Part of exploring a world is uncovering these loops of complexity and covert rules. Part of learning the rules of the game are actually embedded in the game.

Overall structure:

Introduction and summary of overall themes.
Discuss the timeline in chronological order.
Discussion of overall themes.

[conclusion]

Give the talk a meaning.
Motivate the audience to go out there and change the world.
Callbacks to previously made points.
Kindness. Empathy. Enlightenment. Inspiration.

[bio: 100 words]

Don Hopkins is a user interface flower child and software developer who developed pie menus, and applied them to games like SimCity and The Sims. He ported SimCity to Unix, created a cooperative networked multi player version of SimCity for X11/TCL/Tk, and talked EA into open sourcing the original SimCity source code, then adapted it for educational use on the OLPC XO-1 Children's Computer. At Maxis and EA, he worked with Will Wright on The Sims core team, developed the character animation system, user interface, pie menus, architectural editing tools, visual AI programming tools, and internal and user content creation tools, and insisted The Sims allow same sex relationships.

TIMELINE

1984-01-24	Macintosh Released.
1985	MacroMedia VideoWorks (later known as Director) Released.
1986	MacPlaymate Released.

1987	HyperCard Released.
1987	HyperCard Smut Stack Released.
1988	HyperCard Smut Stack II Released.
1989-02-02	SimCity Released.
1989-12	Don Hopkins saw SimCity for the first time and played it over Christmas break.
1989-12-26	Don Hopkins reviewed SimCity on comp.theory.cell-automata.
1990-04	Virtual Valerie Released.
1991-07-24	Carol Adams posts to a Sun internal mailing list about porting SimCity to Unix.
1991-07-25	Don Hopkins and Josh Siegel offer to port SimCity to NeWS. (one day later)
1992-07-26	SimCity for HyperLook / NeWS / Unix / Sun Released. (one year + one day later)
1993	Will Wright starts development on his weird dollhouse project.
1993-04	SimCity for TCL/Tk / X11 / Unix / Sun / SGI Released.
1993-05-05	Supreme Court of Hawaii ruled in Baehr v. Lewin that it was unconstitutional under the state constitution for the state to abridge marriage on the basis of sex.
1993-09-19	Multi Player SimCityNet for TCL/Tk / X11 / Unix / Sun / SGI / NCD Released.
1994-01	SimCity 2000 released.
1994-02-28	Don’t Ask Don’t Tell Instituted by Clinton.
1994-08	Jamie Doornbos Joins Maxis. Lead programmer.
	Jacques Servin Joins Maxis. SimCopter programmer, Himbo Easter Egg layer.
1994	Will Wright shows a demo of Dollhouse to Don Hopkins at Kaleida.
1995-06-01	Eric Bowman Joins Maxis. Graphics programmer.
1995-06	Maxis Goes Public.

1995-10 Eric Bowman and Jim Mackraz meet Don Hopkins at Kaleida.

1996-01 Don Hopkins joins Interval Research Corporation.

1996-03-30 Don Hopkins hung out with Jim Mackraz, Jamie Doornbos, Eric Bowman and Will Wright at the Computer Game Developers Conference.

1996-04-26 Will Wright's talk to Terry Winnograd's User Interface source about Designing User Interfaces to Simulation Games.

1996-09-21 Defense of Marriage Act Signed by Bill Clinton.

1996-10-01 SimCopter Released. Himbo Easter Egg.

1996-10-02 WW, JDM, JD Wrote X: Initial Proposal / Happy-Friends-Home / Revision 3.

1996-11 Purple Moon founded by Brenda Laurel.

1996-12 Maxis Hits Deadline for Releasing Four Games by End Of Year: SimTunes, SimCopter, SimPark, and Full Tilt Pinball.

1997-01 Don Hopkins Joins Maxis. Character animation and UI programmer.

1996-01-20 DH Reviewed X: Initial Proposal / Happy-Friends-Home / Revision 3.

1997-03 Maxis reports loss of $2 million.

1997-07-28 EA Acquires Maxis for $124 million in stock.

1998-01-17 Clinton / Lewinsky Scandal Breaks on Drudge Report.

1998-06-04 The Sims Steering Committee Demo.

1998-08-07 The Sims Design Document Draft 3.

1998-08-31 The Sims Design Document Draft 5.

1998-10-02 The Sims Design Document Draft 7.

1998-10-08 House of Representatives Launched Impeachment of Bill Clinton.

1998-10-22 Patrick J Barrett III Joins Maxis. AI programmer.

1998-11-03	Hawaii voters approved an amendment to the state constitution that allowed the state "to reserve marriage to opposite-sex couples."
1998-12-19	Bill Clinton Impeached by the House of Representatives.
1999-01-31	SimCity 3000 Released.
1999-02-12	Bill Clinton Acquitted on Both Counts by the Senate.
1999-04-11	The Sims Shown at E3.
1999-04-20	Columbine Shooting.
1999-05	SimShow Released. The Sims HomeCrafter. Facelift. Weekly webcam events.
2000-01-31	The Sims Released.
2000-03-07	California voters approved Proposition 22, adding the statement "Only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California" to the state's statutes.
2000-07	The Sims Transmogrifier Released.
2000-08-31	The Sims: Livin' Large Released.
2000-11-07	2000 United States Presidential Election, Closest Election in US History.
2000-12-12	Bush v. Gore Decision: Supreme Court Fixes Election for George W Bush.
2001-01	The Sims Becomes Best Selling Computer Game of 2000. The Sims Sells 1.77 Million Copies in US during 2000, for $72.9 Million Revenue.
2001-01-26	The Sims Awarded IGN Best Simulation of 2000, Editors' Choice Award, Readers' Choice Award.
2001-03-24	The Sims Awarded Game Developers Choice Game of the Year Award 2000. The Sims Programming Team Awarded Game Developers Choice Excellence in Programming Award 2000. Will Wright Awarded Game Developers Choice Lifetime Achievement

Award 2000.

2001-04-02 The Sims: House Party Released.

2001-06-07 The Sims Awarded GameSpot Game of the Year 2000.

2001-08 Game Informer's Top 100 Games of All Time.
SimCity: #31, The Sims: #80.

2001-09-11 September 11 Attacks.

2001-11-12 The Sims: Hot Date Released.

2002-01 The Sims Sells 6.3 Million Copies in 2002.
The Sims Overtakes Myst as Best-Selling PC Game of All Time.

2002-03-28 The Sims: Vacation Released.

2002-11-07 The Sims: Unleashed Released.

2002-12-17 The Sims Online Released.

2003-01-14 SimCity 4 Released.

2003-05-13 The Sims: Superstar Released.

2003-09-22 SimCity 4 Rush Hour Released.

2003-10-29 The Sims: Makin' Magic Released.

2003-11-18 The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court issues a decision in Goodridge v. Department of Public Health that gives same-sex couples the right to marry, with licenses to be issued beginning May 17, 2004.

2004-02-04 The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, responding to a query from the state Senate, issues an opinion that same-sex couples must be allowed to marry and that a designation like civil union constitutes discrimination.

2004-02-11 San Francisco 2004 Same Sex Weddings Begins.

2004-03-01 Transmogrifier 2.0 and Rug-O-Matic Released.

2004-03-11 San Francisco 2004 Same Sex Weddings Ends, 4000 Couples Married.

2004-05-17 Same-sex marriage starts in Massachusetts.

2004-06-10 Same sex marriage question removed from The Sims 2 FAQ.

2004-08-12 California Supreme Court Voids Same Sex Marriages.

2004-09-14 The Sims 2 Released.
The Sims 2 FAQ removed.

2005-02-07 The Sims Sells 16 Million Copies.
The Sims franchise has shipped over 52 million units worldwide, including more than 16 million units of the original product, The Sims. Since the launch in 2000, The Sims franchise shipped 7 expansion packs and a deluxe, console, and online version. The Sims has been translated into more than 17 languages and is sold worldwide.
The Sims 2 has sold 4.5 million units worldwide.

2005-09-29 California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoes legislation establishing same-sex marriage.

2006-10-25 The New Jersey Supreme Court holds unanimously in Lewis v. Harris that excluding same-sex couples from marriage violates the state constitution's guarantee of equal protection. A majority of four justices gives the state legislature six months to amend the state's marriage laws or create civil unions.

2007-10-12 California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoes same-sex marriage legislation for the second time.

2007-11-07 EA releases free open source GPLv3 SimCity source code for the OLPC.

2007-11-13 SimCity Societies Released.

2008-06-17 In California, county clerks begin issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

2008-08-25 The Democratic National Convention adopts a platform that "oppose[s] the Defense of Marriage Act and all attempts to use this issue to divide us" and suggests support for same-sex marriage.

2008-09-01 The Republican National Convention adopts a platform that "laments that judges are ... undermining traditional marriage laws", endorses the Federal Marriage Amendment and state initiatives that support "traditional marriage", and references "the right of states not to recognize same-sex 'marriages'".

2008-09-07 Spore Released.

2008-11-04 Proposition 8 Passed in California, outlawing gay marriage, and preventing the issuance of same-sex marriage licenses.

2008-11-12 Same-sex marriage starts in Connecticut.

2009-03 The Sims Franchise Sold More Than 100 Million Copies.
Over 60% of The Sims Players Are Female.

2009-04-03 The Iowa Supreme Court, ruling in Varnum v. Brien, holds that the state's restriction of marriage to different-sex couples violates the equal protection clause of the Iowa Constitution.

2009-04-07 The Vermont General Assembly overrides the governor's April 6 veto of same-sex marriage legislation, making it the first state to institute same-sex marriage by statute.

2009-04-23 Connecticut Governor Jodi Rell signs legislation converting existing civil unions into marriages effective October 1, 2010.

2009-04-27 Same-sex marriage starts in Iowa.

2009-05-06 Maine Governor John Baldacci signs the marriage equality law, the first governor in the U.S. to sign such legislation.

2009-05-26 The California Supreme Court, ruling in Strauss v. Horton, upholds Proposition 8's ban on same-sex marriage and holds that same-sex marriages performed before its passage remain valid.

2009-06-03 New Hampshire Gov. John Lynch signs legislation legalizing same-sex marriage.

2009-06-02 The Sims 3 Released.
EA has sold 1.4 million copies of The Sims 3 for PC and Mac in the title’s first week on shelves, making it the bestselling PC launch in the company’s history.

2009-09-01 Vermont's statute authorizing same-sex marriages takes effect.

2009-10-02 A Texas judge rules the state's same-sex marriage ban unconstitutional while presiding over the divorce proceedings for two gay Texans married in Massachusetts.

2009-10-11 California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signs legislation establishing the recognition of same-sex marriages performed elsewhere.

2009-12-18 District of Columbia Mayor Adrian Fenty signs same-sex marriage legislation.

2010-01-01 In California, all out-of-state same-sex marriages are given the benefits of marriage, although only those performed before November 5, 2008, are granted the designation "marriage".
New Hampshire's statute authorizing same-sex marriages takes effect.

2010-02-24 Maryland Attorney General Doug Gansler issues a legal opinion stating that state agencies could begin to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states, under the principle of comity.

2010-03-03 Washington, D.C.'s statute authorizing same-sex marriages takes effect.

2010-08-04 U.S. District Judge Vaughn R. Walker rules in Perry v. Schwarzenegger that California's Proposition 8 is an unconstitutional violation of the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process and Equal Protection clauses.

2011-06-24 New York Governor Andrew Cuomo signs the state's Marriage Equality Act into law.

2011-05 National public support for same-sex marriage rose above 50% for the first time.

2011-07-24 New York's statute authorizing same-sex marriages takes effect.

2011-09-20 Don’t Ask Don’t Tell Repealed by Obama.

2012-02-07 The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals affirms district court Judge Vaughn Walker's decision in Perry that overturned California Proposition 8.

2012-02-13 Washington Governor Christine Gregoire signs same-sex marriage legislation into law.

2012-02-22 Judge Jeffrey White rules section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act unconstitutional in Golinski v. Office of Personnel Management.

2012-03-01 Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley signs a bill legalizing same-sex marriage.

2012-05-09 President Barack Obama becomes the first sitting U.S. president to declare his support for legalizing same-sex marriage.

2012-05-31 A unanimous three-judge panel of the First Circuit Court of Appeals upholds the decisions in Gill and Massachusetts that found section 3 of DOMA unconstitutional.

2012-06-06 Judge Barbara Jones of the District Court for the Southern District of New York finds section 3 of DOMA unconstitutional in Windsor v. United States.

2012-06-25 SimCity Social Released.

2012-07-31 Judge Vanessa L. Bryant of the U.S. District Court in Connecticut holds in Pedersen v. Office of Personnel Management that section 3 of DOMA is unconstitutional.

2012-08-28 The Republican National Convention approves a platform that asserts right of the federal government and each state to deny legal recognition to same-sex marriages and endorses a constitutional amendment defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

2012-09-05 The Democratic National Convention adopts a political platform that supports marriage equality for the first time in its history and opposes all constitutional amendments that would exclude same-sex couples from marriage.

2012-10-18 In Windsor v. United States, the Second Circuit Court of Appeals rules Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) as unconstitutional, holding sexual orientation to be a quasi-suspect classification, and determining that laws that classify people on such basis should be subject to intermediate scrutiny.

2012-11-06 Voters in Maine, Maryland, and Washington become the first in history to approve legislation establishing same-sex marriage.

2012-11-29 Museum of Modern Art selected The Sims for their collection of 14 video games.

2012-12-06 The state of Washington's statute authorizing same-sex marriage takes effect.

2012-12-07 The Supreme Court grants review of United States v. Windsor, formerly Windsor v. United States, and Hollingsworth v. Perry, formerly Perry v. Brown.

2012-12-29 Maine's statute authorizing same-sex marriages takes effect.

2013-01-01 Maryland's statute authorizing same-sex marriages takes effect.

2013-03-06 SimCity (Reboot) Released.

2013-05-02 Rhode Island Governor Lincoln Chafee signs same-sex marriage legislation into law, effective August 1.

2013-05-07 Delaware Governor Jack Markell signs same-sex marriage legislation into law, effective July 1.

2013-05-14 Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton signs same-sex marriage legislation into law, effective August 1.

2013-06-26 The Supreme Court of the United States struck down DOMA for violating the Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution in the landmark civil rights case of United States v. Windsor, leading to federal recognition of same-sex marriage.

2013-08-31 Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg becomes the first member of that court to officiate at the marriage ceremony of a same-sex couple.

2014-03-05 An ABC News/Washington Post poll finds 59% of Americans support same-sex marriage, a record high.

2014-08 Gamergate Begins.

2014-09-02 The Sims 4 Released.

2015-03 The Sims for PC Sold 11.24 Million Copies.

2015-03-04 EA shuts down Maxis Emeryville.

2016-06-02 The Sims 4 Patch 34: The Sims adds cross-dressing as ‘male and female’ limits are scrapped.

2019-06 The Sims 4 Pride Month Update Released.

2019-07 The Sims 4 will have a lesbian couple on the game’s cover.

TIPS

https://qgcon.com/tips-for-a-successful-abstract/

[State the main idea right up front, clearly and directly.]

[What will I talk about, and why is it important? What key points and new perspectives should people with different backgrounds take away?]

[What makes me the best person to speak on this issue? What concrete relevant experience?]

[Who am I in dialog with? What's going on around me and how am I engaging with it? Background research. Props to others doing related work.]

[Interactive element?]

[Post mortem, my own creative experiences, what didn't work as well as what did. Not an advertisement, but reflection on what went wrong and right, and what I learned along the way.]

NOTES

Avery Alder and micha cárdenas are giving the keynote address.

> https://qgcon.com/qgcon-2020-keynotes/
>
> micha cárdenas, PhD, is Assistant Professor of Art & Design: Games + Playable Media at the University of California, Santa Cruz. cárdenas is writing a new algorithm for gender, race and technology. Her book in progress, Poetic Operations, proposes algorithmic analysis as a method for developing a trans of color poetics. cárdenas's co-authored books The Transreal: Political Aesthetics of Crossing Realities(2012) and Trans Desire / Affective Cyborgs (2010) were published by Atropos Press. Her artwork has been described as "a seminal milestone for artistic engagement in VR" by the Spike art journal in Berlin. She is a first generation Colombian American.
>
> Avery Alder is a queer designer hailing from Sinixt territory, nestled amidst the Selkirk Mountains. Her work over the past thirteen years has been in tabletop roleplaying games, and her portfolio includes Dream Askew, Monsterhearts, The Quiet Year, Ribbon Drive, and a host of smaller, scrappier projects. She works to create games that can **help people tell the stories that need to be told**, games about **the bodies we inhabit and the world we share**. In her design and play, she gravitates toward the moody, the personal, and the transformative. Having presented at Queerness & Games Con in 2013, giving a talk on queer game mechanics with Joli St Patrick, she is honoured to return again as a keynote speaker.
>
> https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgamedesigner/18557/avery-alder

I believe a few things pretty seriously:
We are strongly moved by and informed by stories.
Stories unify communities.
Stories reveal who we are.

The Sims is a game about acting out and telling stories that need to be told, and crossing boundaries between minds, bodies, and realities.

Family Albums. Storytelling. Writing graphic novels. Blogging.

Enables you to easily create and share graphical illustrations and textual descriptions of your imagination.

The Sims Exchange.

Generates, uploads and shares web pages about your house, family, and photo album, along with your game save file.

Procedural rhetoric. (Ian Bogost, Janet Murray)

“I developed my own design philosophy that I called procedural rhetoric, an unholy blend of Will Wright and Aristotle.” -Ian Bogost, Video Games Are Better Without Characters

Simulation versus Representation.

Ludology. (Gonzalo Frasca)

The Sims: Grandmothers are cooler than trolls

http://www.gamestudies.org/0101/frasca/

https://mediasubjectivity.wordpress.com/2011/11/26/simulation-versus-narrative-introduction-to-ludology-gonzalo-frasca/
https://nmrs13.wordpress.com/2013/04/07/simulation-versus-narrative-introduction-to-ludology-•-traditional/

Paidia refers to “play”: (i.e. make-believe games, construction kits) has no winner/loser. Examples: SimCity, The Sims.

Ludos refers to “game”: (i.e.soccer, poker, chess) has winner/loser and social rules.

Examples: Super Mario, Zelda.

Ideological Levels in Simulation

First Level: Deals with representations and events. Includes the characteristics of objects and characters, backgrounds, settings and cut-scenes.

Here the rules of the games remain unchanged: only characters and settings can be modified.

Second Level: Manipulation rules: What the player is able to do within the model.

In some cases certain manipulation rules state a possibility.

In others, they are necessary to attain a level three goal.

Most paidia games work within this level.

Third Level: Level of goal roles: What the player must do in order to win.

Deals with what the author states as mandatory within the simulation.

On this level simauthors funnel through all the available actions and encourage some that will lead to the winning scenario.

Fourth Level: Level that deals with meta-rules.

States how rules can be changed.

Games include editors that allow players to build modified versions of the original game.

Meta-rules are there because authors wanted them to be there.

It is the author’s decision to make source codes or editing tools available to players.

SimShow, Transmogrifier

User Created Content.

The Simprov Wedding Playset

> Gay Marriage. Speed Dating. Cupid. Crowd Sitter. Buddha.
>
> Improvisational, storytelling style of gameplay.

Dumbold Voting Machine

> Interactive digital educational political agitprop.

Ian Bogost, Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames.

> Procedural rhetoric.
>
> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Procedural_rhetoric
>
> Procedural rhetoric or simulation rhetoric[1] is a rhetorical concept that explains how people learn through the authorship of rules and processes. The theory argues that games can make strong claims about how the world works—not simply through words or visuals but through the processes they embody and models they construct. The term was first coined by Ian Bogost in his 2007 book Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames.[2]
>
> Procedural rhetoric analyzes the art of persuasion by rule based representations and interactions rather than spoken or written word. Procedural rhetoric focuses on how game makers craft laws and rules within a game to convey a particular ideology.
>
> [1] Frasca, Gonzalo (2003). “Simulation versus Narrative: Introduction to Ludology.” In The Video Game Theory Reader. Ed. by Mark J. P. Wolf and Bernard Perron. New York: Routledge. 221–37 ISBN 9780415965798
>
> [2] Bogost, Ian (2008). "The Rhetoric of Video Games." The Ecology of Games: Connecting Youth, Games, and Learning. Ed. by Katie Salen. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. 117–40. ISBN 9780262693646

Hamlet on the Holodeck. Janet Murray.

https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/hamlet-holodeck-updated-edition

https://www.newyorker.com/books/second-read/hamlet-on-the-holodeck-twenty-years-later

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Constructionist Education

Seymour Papert. Alan Kay. Doreen Nelson. OLPC. SimCity. Micropolis.

The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch, by Philip K Dick

Perky Pat Layouts. Can-D. Chew-Z. Virtual Reality. Shared Hallucinations. Stigmata. Transubstantiation.

http://mxmossman.blogspot.com/2013/01/the-three-stigmata-of-palmer-eldritch.html

Meanwhile the famous entrepreneur Palmer Eldritch returns from his ten year trip to the Proxima system bringing with him a new drug called Chew-Z. Quite a bit of the book is spent exploring the possible effects of Can-D and Chew-Z, and the religious implications. Dick compares them to the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. Leo Bulero, CEO of Perky Pat Layouts, and his Pre-fash buyer Barney Mayerson attempt to stop Eldritch, working on various plans to kill him, or prevent the distribution of Chew-Z, but they fail. It turns out that Chew-Z may alter reality, as well as casting the user into hallucinatory states that are so realistic as to be indistinguishable from reality.

The Perky Pat Layouts itself is an interesting concept. Here's Dick, in the early 60's, coming up with the idea for virtual worlds. I mean, Second Life and other virtual worlds are just a mapping of the Perky Pat Layouts onto cyberspace. Today Facebook acts like the PP Layouts, taking people's minds off toil and work and letting them engage others in a shared virtual hallucination --you're not actually physically with your friends, and they might not even be your friends.

Dick’s description of the Can-D experience is essentially a description of virtual sex:

“Her husband -- or his wife or both of them or everyone in the entire hovel -- could show up while he and Fran were in the state of translation. And their two bodies would be seated at proper distance one from the other; no wrong-doing could be observed,

> however prurient the observers were. Legally this had been ruled on: no co-habitation could be proved, and legal experts among the ruling UN authorities on Mars and the other colonies had tried -- and failed. While translated one could commit incest, murder, anything, and it remained from a juridicial standpoint a mere fantasy, an impotent wish only."
>
> Another character says "when we chew Can-D and leave our bodies we die. And by dying we lose the weight of -- ... Sin."
>
> https://books.google.nl/books?id=S0pxC7PEXFkC&pg=PA41&lpg=PA41&dq=%22when+we+chew+Can-D+and+leave+our+bodies+we+die.%22&source=bl&ots=mcQ7P5_J-e&sig=ACfU3U0kBYgtDQ4Y08b36cPlSEZBvPzMfg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwik4OSNzOnlAhXOZVAKHdEyCloQ6AEwAHoECAgQAQ#v=onepage&q=%22when%20we%20chew%20Can-D%20and%20leave%20our%20bodies%20we%20die.%22&f=false

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Implementing Behavioral Simulations with SimAntics Source Code

> Some notes on programming objects in The Sims
> http://www.qrg.northwestern.edu/papers/Files/Programming_Objects_in_The_Sims.pdf

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SimCopter Himbo Easter Egg was a SimAntics Programming Bug

https://web.archive.org/web/19991109030656/http://www.gamespot.com/features/maxis/page6.html

> Indeed, SimCopter was shipped too soon, and as a result, it launched with one of the most controversial bugs in gaming history. A homosexual programmer at Maxis objected to the use of female characters as objects of affection in SimCopter. So, he decided to protest by putting what he termed "muscle boys in swim trunks" into the game. During the game, these characters would mysteriously appear and kiss each other, but only on very rare occasions. At least, that was the idea. Unfortunately, as the programmer told Wired magazine in 1996, **"My random-number generator didn't work as I'd planned,"** and the characters appeared with startling regularity. Upon discovery of the errant code, the programmer was immediately fired, but the transgression spoke volumes about the frenetic and fragmented state of affairs at Maxis.

The Sims Steering Committee Heterosexist SimAntics Source Code

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Patrick's Gay Friendly SimAntics Source Code

How Later Versions of The Sims Changed and Improved

SimSlice: SimCity in The Sims

Scott McCloud

> Reinventing Comics:
>
> https://www.nextchapterbooksellers.com/book/9780060953508
>
> "Anyone involved in interactive entertainment (games, web, etc.) should read this book. Scott McCloud has once again transcended the world of comics and tapped into much deeper issues of creativity entertainment and economics. This time he's looking into the future rather than the past."
> — Will Wright
>
> Understanding Comics
>
> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Understanding_Comics
>
> Masking, abstraction, concrete background, abstract ground, projecting the reader or player into the scene.
>
> Show vs. Tell
> Transition and Gutters
> Abstract vs. Realistic
>
> https://understandingcomics177.wordpress.com/
>
> https://understandingcomics177.wordpress.com/understanding-scott-mccloud/
>
> Reinventing Comics

McCloud discusses the changing economics of comic publishing with the advent of independent publishers and the Internet as well as topics like diversity in both genre and characters when it comes to comics.

Conclusion

Scott McCloud's work all share a theme. They all look to take the best elements that can be found across the wide medium of comics, and use elements from each possible and available source to better his or anyone's work. He looks to help make comics a more widely accepted cultural and artistic medium, without sacrificing what they are, by looking at what they can be and what they are, without condemning any specific idea or use in the medium. From looking to the influences of others for his own work, to looking at how to read the medium, in its past, present, and future, McCloud looks to give to comics as they have given to him.

Masking.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masking_(illustration)

The masking effect or masking is a visual style, dramatic convention, and literary technique described by cartoonist Scott McCloud in his book Understanding Comics in the chapter on realism. It is the use of simplistic, archetypal, narrative characters, even if juxtaposed with detailed, photographic, verisimilar, spectacular backgrounds. This may function, McCloud infers, as a mask, a form of projective identification. His explanation is that a familiar and minimally detailed character allows for a stronger emotional connection and for viewers to identify more easily.

It is used in animation, comics, illustration, video games (especially visual novels) and other media. It is common in Western graphic novels and Japanese comics and animation. The psychology behind the masking effect has been extended to rendering antagonists in a realistic manner in order to show their otherness from the reader.

…

One of the book's key concepts is that of "masking," a visual style, dramatic convention, and literary technique described in the chapter on realism. It is the use of simplistic, archetypal, narrative characters, even if juxtaposed with detailed, photographic, verisimilar, spectacular backgrounds. This may function, McCloud infers, as a mask, a form of projective identification. **His explanation is that a familiar and minimally detailed character allows for a stronger emotional connection and for viewers to identify more easily.**

…

https://remnantsofwit.wordpress.com/2017/07/06/the-masking-effect-what-a-boring-main-character-can-do-for-a-story/

http://www.comicscube.com/2011/06/comic-book-glossary-masking-effect.html

Transitions and gutters.

The Sims encourages players to get their mind into the gutter.

https://understandingcomics177.wordpress.com/about/1-2/2-2/

Gutters: The Invisible Messenger

If one were to look at a comic they would see empty space between the panels that contain the illustrations and dialogue of the text. This is an obvious observation that has not so obvious implications. In the comic world this space is known as the gutter. The gutter is essential for comics to be successful because it allows for closure to happen. Scott McCloud describes closure as, “Observing the parts, but perceiving the whole.” This is important within comics because they are a medium that do not allow for actions to take place in real time. The author can only draw a static picture so how are they supposed to convey the passage of time and movement? This is where the reader and gutters come in to play.

Here we see an example used by Scott McCloud that shows how the gutter stimulates time and motion when the reader uses closure.

In the first panel there is a man about to be attacked by another with an axe. In the next panel we simply see a deathly scream rising from a cityscape. It is left up to us to decide what exactly happened between these two scenes. How did the man die? Where did the axe fall? Could the man have been saved and the scream was coming from the axe bearer? This is left for you to decide.

Gutters act as an invisible messenger within comics in that they pass information but are simply an empty space. Comic artists need gutters as well as the reader’s participation in drawing conclusions from them in order for time and motion to take place. Even though the reader draws his or her own conclusions, the author can greatly influence which conclusions are draw. Authors do this by using different types of panel-to-panel transitions within the gutter.

https://understandingcomics177.wordpress.com/about/1-2/2-2/3-2/

Realistic Vs. Abstract Art

The Sims Design Document Review

Tension Between Realistic Models and Fun Game Play

> https://medium.com/@donhopkins/designing-user-interfaces-to-simulation-games-bd7a9d81e62d
>
> Some muckety-muck architecture magazine was interviewing Will Wright about SimCity, and they asked him a question something like “which ontological urban paradigm most influenced your design of the simulator, the Exo-Hamiltonian Pattern Language Movement, or the Intra-Urban Deconstructionist Sub-Culture Hypothesis?” He replied, “I just kind of optimized for game play.”
>
> Discussion of all the third parties who wanted a version of SimCity that ham-fistedly taught whatever they had on their agenda. Misunderstanding the potentials of Constructionist Education. Ham-fisted attempts at patronizingly didactic pedagogy.

Nurture -vs- Nature Debate

> Can you decide to change your sexual preference? Should you be able to? What makes a game more fun? Does a game need to be realistic? What are the technological limits of the model (complexity, privacy, AI, machine learning)? Do we even know what the correct model is?

Flying Under the Radar

> Censorship. ESRB. Jack Thompson. Hostile parents. The Sim banned in Russia. “We’re just like you” rhetoric. Assimilation.

Russia Bans Children From 'The Sims 4' Because Gay Relationships Are 'Damaging To Youth'

The Sims getting banned in Russia for that reason is a badge of honor. It’s funny how The Sims “flew under the radar” for so long that it took Russia’s Memetic Defense League 14 years until The Sims 4 to notice that The Sims was ‘Damaging To Youth’, since The Sims has always supported gay relationships from the start.

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/05/12/the-sims-russia-gay-ban_n_5309847.html

Russia Bans Children From 'The Sims 4' Because Gay Relationships Are 'Damaging To Youth'

Russia has effectively banned children from playing The Sims 4 because it includes the ability to form gay relationships.

The upcoming game has received a "mature" rating in the country, meaning that only people over the age of 18 can buy it.

That's despite the fact the game is widely acknowledged to be a relatively light and harmless life simulator, with a focus on buying objects, making friends and designing your Sims' homes. The Sims is rated T for Teen (13+) in the US, and PEGI 12 in Europe.

The decision, according to EA, was made based on a recent Russian content rating law (436-FZ), which states homosexual relationships are "harmful" to children. The 2012 law has proven to be extremely controversial, and was the cause of several high-profile protests during the Sochi Winter Olympics earlier this year.

EA told Polygon that it will not change the game, despite the potential impact on sales.

"We have no plans to alter The Sims 4," Deborah Coster, a spokesperson for The Sims, told the website.

"One of the key tenets of The Sims is that it is up to the player to decide how to play the game. We provide the simulation sandbox and player choice and creativity does the rest."

The situation is almost the exact opposite of that which befell Nintendo last week, in which it was criticised for not including same-sex marriage in its own life simulator. While it apologized, Nintendo also said it would not alter the game before release.

Same-sex relationships have been possible in The Sims since the release of the first game in 2000. Gay marriages have been possible since The Sims 3.

Dimensions of Evolution around Gender Boundaries

- Binary / Fluid Gender
- Love
- Woo Hoo
- Marriage
- Reproduction
- Sexual Preference
- Sexual Expression
- Clothing
- Facial Hair
- Makeup
- Body Types
    - Sims 1, 2: fat, fit, skinny, custom
    - Sims 3: fitness and fatness are scales, Late Night also has muscle definition and breast size scales.
    - Sims 4: modifiable body shape
- Physique
- Toilet Behavior
- Impregnability
- Voice
- Clothing Filters
- Life Stages
- Top Surgery Scars

The Sims 4 Patch 34

https://sims.fandom.com/wiki/The_Sims_4/Patch_34

The 34th patch for The Sims 4 was released on June 2, 2016. It updated the game to version 1.19.28.1010 for PC and 1.19.28.1210 for Mac. The patch allows players to customize a Sim's gender in greater depth and allows previously gender-specific assets to be used by any Sims regardless of gender.

Zodiac Sign

Tell the story about Will insisted on using standard Zodiac signs instead of making up fictional SimSigns, because he WANTED to have all the emotional baggage and

preconceptions they entailed. Then how after the zodiac user interface was implemented but not yet hooked up to any behavior code, the testers complained that their zodiac sign had TOO MUCH effect on their behavior, even though it had none. Confirmation bias.

The trick of optimizing games is to off-load as much as the simulation from the computer into the user's brain, which is MUCH more powerful and creative. Implication is more efficient (and richer) than simulation.

During development, when we first added Astrological signs to the characters, there was a discussion about whether we should invent our own original "Sim Zodiac" signs, or use the traditional ones, which have a lot of baggage and history (which some of the designers thought might be a problem).

Will Wright argued that we actually wanted to leverage the baggage and history of the traditional Astrological signs of the Zodiac, so we should just use those and not invent our own.

The way it works is that Will came up with twelve archetypal vectors of personality traits corresponding to each of the twelve Astrological signs, so when you set their personality traits, it looks up the sign with the nearest euclidian distance to the character's personality, and displays that as their sign. But there was absolutely no actual effect on their behavior.

That decision paid off almost instantly and measurably in testing, after we implemented the user interface for showing the Astrological sign in the character creation screen, without writing any code to make their sign affect their behavior: The testers immediately started reporting bugs that their character's sign had too much of an effect on their personality, and claimed that the non-existent effect of astrological signs on behavior needed to be tuned down. But that effect was totally coming from their imagination!

They should call them Astrillogical Signs!

The create-a-sim user interface hid the corresponding astrological sign for the initial all-zero personality you first see before you've spent any points, because that would be insulting to 1/12th of the players (implying [your sign] has zero personality)!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffzt12tEGpY

Columbine

The Sims made its debut days before the shooting at Columbine, which triggered a moral panic over video games.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbine_High_School_massacre#Video_games

How did the Columbine shooting and subsequent backlash against violent video games affect the coverage and popularity of The Sims, as a counterpoint to Doom-type games?

Is The Sims a video violent game? There are numerous cruel and sadistic ways to painfully and violently kill people. Does that mean that The Sims is a violent video game?

The Kiss that Changed Video Games

https://www.newyorker.com/tech/annals-of-technology/the-kiss-that-changed-video-games

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The Unexpected Lesbian Kiss that Titillated the Press

Is it OK to make a game that panders to some heterosexual men's paternalistic desires to own, surveil, and control entire households of lesbians? Or some heterosexual women's sadistic desires to perform elaborate twisted experiments on their boyfriends?

Would the accidental kiss have gone over so well with the hetero-male-dominated press, were it two men kissing?

The Sleaze Factor

The de-evolution from "point-and-click" to "pointing-dick" interfaces.

Appealing to tired tropes and puerile desires can still bootstrap interest in a technology.

HyperCard Smut Stack.
https://hc.quibble.com/thread/8908

MacPlaymate (VideoWorks / Director).
https://www.macintoshrepository.org/5652-macplaymate
https://melmagazine.com/en-us/story/long-before-internet-porn-there-was-macplaymate

Mike Saenz. (MacPlaymate, Shatter, ComicWorks)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mike_Saenz

Chuck Farnham. (Smut Stack, Smut Stack II, MacPlaymate)

Museum of Modern Art Video Game Collection

https://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2012/11/29/video-games-14-in-the-collection-for-starters/

https://www.moma.org/collection/works/162461

Danielle Bunten Berry

The Sims was dedicated to Dani Berry.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Danielle_Bunten_Berry

Player Created Content

How to make the leap from smut to art, while continuing to support smut in a plausibly deniable way that you can sell through WalMart? Don't do smut explicitly, but put the tools to create their own "artistic" content into the hands of the users.

"Time to Penis" -A phenomenon that online game developers had been aware of for years, which didn't have a name until someone came up with TTP. It's traditionally measured in nanoseconds.

Spore Penis Monsters.

Players Unleashed!: Modding the Sims and the Culture of Gaming. Tanja Sihvonen.

http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.921.4343&rep=rep1&type=pdf

In fact, it may be that the vision described by Wright is the only sustainable way to address the problematics of the developer-player relations and the touchy subject of politically incorrect modding. The public image of games like The Sims may well be smooth and brazened out by the industry spokespeople, but the details of participatory design, or the first and second stages of game development, are telling in terms of the offstage power struggles and the game culture realities which the industry has to deal with. Wright's new game, Spore, has sparked considerable media attention and even "anti-Spore" movements, *374 as the game and its editor have quickly been adopted for the purposes of creating "indecent", for instance, genital-shaped, virtual life forms by its players. The fact that these creations are designed to be effortlessly shared online has, once again, been politically condemned – although a more game-culture oriented way of interpreting them might be regarding them as yet another indication of what Richard Bartle has half-seriously termed "time to dick". *375 It is noteworthy that modding remains outside of the scope of the developers' purposes and intentions in the sense that they have only limited means of monitoring what is going on in the field of modding, and even less power over what kinds of mods are being created and distributed – yet, modding is an issue they absolutely cannot ignore.

*374 See "Anti Spore", which seems to be targeted against two issues, in particular: interpreting the game as a line-up alongside the theory of evolution, and condemning the "indecent" user-created content its players share online.

*375 In the context of muds, 'time to dick' refers to the period of time that elapses before the players' start creating and distributing obscenities such as penis pictures.

The dynamics of custom content creation and game modding have in this section been addressed in the context of the identity political and economic struggles that take place, so to say, on the wrestling ground consisting of game code – the particularities of which I will be touching upon in the next main chapters. My take on these struggles has been based on the notion that the issue of modding considers first of all what game allows its players to do (or achieve, through utilising all kinds of available means), as was illustrated in the GTA:SA case. My second point is that despite these constraints, the game industry fervently aims at keeping in control as its business model depends on player participation and participatory design – at the same time, it has to keep modders on a leash to avoid political turmoil and economic loss.

Maxis and EA have solved this dilemma in relation to The Sims in such a way that they aim at creating as much high-quality extra content as they can, feeding it to the player communities in the form of 'official' downloads and stuff packs. The practice that Maxis adopted, already from the start, was to provide players with new stuff, household items and skins, on their official Sims website every Thursday (which they called The SimDay). *376 This practice is still carried out in attempt to not only satisfy the ever-increasing demands of the player-modders, but also, undoubtedly, to escort them towards the kinds

of activities that are the most beneficial from the point of view of the game developer company and its future market plans. In a way, EA is competing with the international crowd of thousands, even tens of thousands of modders. The Sims thereby remains the most expanded and stuff pack-fortified game so far, and the playground which both the official developers and game modders engage in seems to be a rather highly contested terrain.

*376 Simpson 2003.

Modding scenes. Introduction to user-created content in computer gaming. Tero Laukkanen.

https://trepo.tuni.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/65431/951-44-6448-6.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

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X: Initial Proposal / Happy-Friends-Home / Revision 3 (1996-10-02)

https://donhopkins.com/home/TheSims/HappyFriendsHome-1996-10-02.pdf

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The Sims Design Document Draft 3 (1998-08-07)

https://donhopkins.com/home/TheSims/TheSimsDesignDocumentDraft3-1998-08-07-DonsReview.pdf

On page 5, Don Hopkins wrote the following comments about same sex relationships in the game:

The whole relationship design and implementation (I've looked at the tree code) is Heterosexist and Monosexist. We are going to be expected to do better than that after the SimCopter fiasco and the lip service that Maxis publically gave in response about not being anti-gay. The code tests to see if the sex of the people trying to romantically interact is the same, and if so, the result is a somewhat violent negative interaction, clearly homophobic. We are definitely going to get flack for that. It would be much more realistic to model it by two numbers from 0 to 100 for each person, which was the likelyhood of that person being interested in a romantic interaction with each sex. So you can simply model monosexual heterosexual (which is all we have now), monosexual homosexual (like the guys in SimCopter), bisexual, nonsexual (mother theresa, presumably), and all shades in between (most of the rest of the world's population). It would make for a much more interesting and realistic game, partially influenced by

random factors, and anyone offended by that needs to grow up and get a life, and hopefully our game will help them in that quest. Anyone who is afraid that it might offend the sensibilities of other people (but of course not themselves) is clearly homophobic by proxy but doesn't realize it since they're projecting their homophobia onto other people.

The Sims Design Document Draft 5 (1998-08-31)

https://donhopkins.com/home/TheSims/TheSimsDesignDocumentDraft5-1998-08-31-DonsReview-Handwritten.pdf
https://donhopkins.com/home/TheSims/TheSimsDesignDocumentDraft5-1998-08-31-DonsReview.pdf

On page 4, there is a section about Same Sex and Opposite Sex relationships, which reflects Don Hopkins' suggestion to change the design to support same sex relationships.

Same Sex and Opposite Sex relationships
To be outlined in 9/30 Live Mode deliverable.
Currently the game only allows heterosexual romance. This will not be the only type available – it just reflects the early stages of implementation. Will is reviewing the code and will make recommendations for how to implement homosexual romance as well.

The Sims Design Document Draft 7 (1998-10-02)

https://donhopkins.com/home/TheSims/TheSimsDesignDocumentDraft7-1998-10-02-DonsReview.pdf

On page 21, there is a section (same as above) about Same Sex and Opposite Sex relationships, which reflects Don Hopkins' suggestion to change the design to support same sex relationships.

Patrick J Barrett III

https://donhopkins.com/home/TheSims/

After discussing it with Patrick J. Barrett III, we've determined that the sequence of events that led to The Sims having same sex relationships:

The initial prototype implementation did not support same sex relationships, and Don Hopkins noticed that, when he tried to have two women kiss, the would-be-kissee slapped the kisser. So he wrote up his opinion that it should support same sex relationships, instead of resulting in homophobic violence, and proposed a straw man 2-dimensional way of modeling it.

Subsequent design documents said heterosexual romance would not be the only kind available, and that Will Wright was reviewing the code and would make recommendations on how to implement it.

Patrick was hired soon after that, and was set to task implementing some social interactions. But Will didn't get back to Patrick and the production database didn't reflect his opinion by the time Patrick started working on it.

But Patrick implemented support for same sex relationships anyway, but not by explicitly modeling sexual preference as property of The Sims personality -- just as a behavior that was possible at any time for any character.

Sex in Videogames, Part 1: Seduction

https://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/131540/sex_in_videogames_part_1_.php

Sex in Videogames, Part 2: Explicit Sex

http://www.designersnotebook.com/Columns/034_Sex_Part_2/body_034_sex_part_2.htm

Sex in Videogames, Part 3: Dramatic Significance

https://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/131528/sex_in_videogames_part_3_.php

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Will Wright on Designing User Interfaces to Simulation Games (1996)

https://medium.com/@donhopkins/designing-user-interfaces-to-simulation-games-bd7a9d81e62d

Interfacing to Microworlds

https://hci.stanford.edu/courses/cs547/abstracts/95-96/960426-wright.html

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The Soul of The Sims

https://medium.com/@donhopkins/the-soul-of-the-sims-by-will-wright-8afdc225c936?source=search_post---------0

https://www.rockpapershotgun.com/2008/02/20/the-soul-of-the-sims/

Same-Sex Relationships in The Sims

https://sims.fandom.com/wiki/Same-sex_relationship

Suicide Prevention

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Same-sex_marriage_in_the_United_States

A study of nationwide data from January 1999 to December 2015 revealed that the establishment of same-sex marriage is associated with a significant reduction in the rate of attempted suicide among children, with the effect being concentrated among children of a minority sexual orientation, resulting in approximately 134,000 fewer children attempting suicide each year in the United States. The United States is the most populous country in the world to have established same-sex marriage nationwide.

https://www.bitchmedia.org/article/lgbtq-people-exploration-the-sims

The Sims Offers a Safe, Digital Space for Queer People
20 Years of Queer Exploration
How “The Sims” Helped 13 LGBTQ People Find Realization

The Sims Overtakes Myst as Best-Selling PC Game of All Time

https://www.gamespot.com/articles/the-sims-overtakes-myst/1100-2857556/

The Sims Overtakes Myst

Electronic Arts has announced that The Sims, the virtual-life game created by Will Wright and Maxis, has sold more than 6.3 million copies worldwide to become the best-selling PC game of all time. The previous record was held by Myst, the graphical adventure game released by Broderbund in 1993.

https://money.cnn.com/2002/03/27/commentary/game_over/column_gaming/

Goodbye Myst. Hello Sims.
'The Sims' reaches a milestone and bean counters smile.
March 28, 2002

NEW YORK (CNN/Money) - There's been a coup in the PC gaming world. After nine years as the best-selling computer game of all time, "Myst" has dropped to number two. In its place now stands "The Sims," the quirky and utterly addictive title that lets you control the lives of simulated people.

Electronic Arts has shipped more than 6.3 million copies of the game worldwide since February 2000. Don't expect things to slow down anytime soon, either. "The Sims" continues to rank among the industry's top-five selling games each week. And with a massively multiplayer Sims game (as well as a stand-alone sequel) on the horizon, Sims-mania might just be getting started.

…

The brainchild of developer Will Wright -- previously best known for his mega-selling "SimCity" games -- "The Sims" gave birth to a new segment of the gaming community. Players write stories about their Sims, create new skins for them, build new items for their virtual homes - and make all of this available to other players via the Internet. While this sort of fanaticism isn't uncommon among hardcore gamers, "The Sims" is a game that's typically played by casual gaming audiences.

"I feel like we built a good game and that brought it to the first million [sales]," Wright said. "But it's the fans that took it beyond that. ... We owe that level of achievement to the players."

1st Annual Game Developers Choice Awards

http://www.gamechoiceawards.com/archive/gdca_1st.html

EA supports gay youth, haters pile on hate

> https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/ea-supports-gay-youth-haters-pile-hate-flna125950
>
> Electronic Arts, one of the biggest video game companies in the world, has joined a campaign to end bullying and harassment of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered teens and to offer these kids support and hope.
>
> EA is the first gaming company to join the It Gets Better Project, which was started by columnist Dan Savage in September after several young gay people committed suicide after being bullied.

The Sims Partners With the “It Gets Better” Project

> https://simsvip.com/2019/06/08/the-sims-partners-with-the-it-gets-better-project/
>
> During today’s Sims 4 Announcement Stream, SimGurus announced a new partnership with the It Gets Better Project, a non-profit organization that provides encouragement to LGBTQ youth. On June 18th, 2019, the next Sims 4 game patch will include new pride items, one of which will be a gender neutral bathroom door.
>
> The Sims is proud to celebrate the LGBTQ+ community with a new partnership with the It Gets Better Project, a non-profit organization and global movement to provide hope and encouragement to LGBTQ+ youth. Beginning on June 18th, players will be able to access exclusive It Gets Better and pride in-game clothing in The Sims 4 on PC, The Sims FreePlay and The Sims Mobile, as well as a variety of pride items, including a gender-neutral bathroom door in The Sims 4. Look for this content to come to The Sims 4 on consoles in July.

'The Sims 4' Gets Pride Month Update & Island Living Expansion Pack

> https://hypebeast.com/2019/6/the-sims-4-pride-month-lgbtq-game-update-gender-neutral

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‘The Sims 4’ will have a lesbian couple on the game’s cover

https://www.lgbtqnation.com/2019/07/sims-4-will-lesbian-couple-games-cover/

The Sims It Gets Better Project

https://www.ea.com/games/the-sims/the-sims-4/news/it-gets-better-2019

The Sims Tombstone Generator

RugOMatic

Simplifier (originally a maze solver bot for The Sims Online)

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http://mentalfloss.com/article/28177/7-video-game-controversies-not-involving-grand-theft-auto-or-mortal-kombat

> 7 Video Game Controversies Not Involving Grand Theft Auto or Mortal Kombat
>
> 5. The Sims Online
> In the virtual world of massive multiplayer role-playing games, there are few rules by which a person must abide. This became clear to Peter Ludlow, a philosophy professor from the University of Michigan, when, in 2003, he found that players were involved in a virtual sex trade on The Sims Online.
>
> If a player needed Simoleans, the in-game currency used to buy clothes, houses, and other goods, they would sometimes agree to cybersex sessions in exchange for digital cash. Of course the problem is, according to the game's terms of service, Sims' players can be as young as 13, meaning there's a good chance underage kids were participating in these sexual chats with adults.
>
> When Ludlow brought this illicit trade to the attention of Sims' creator Maxis, he claims the company did nothing to curb the practice. However, they did shut down his account

> because he had links to his commercial blog in his Sims character profile, which apparently was prohibited in the otherwise anarchic online world.

Is The Sims parody / satire / critique / social commentary of American consumerism, or not?

Yes, it's satire of consumerism and American life. Read the product names and descriptions, many of them written by Sean Baitey.

Same sex interactions, sexual equality, and racial equality in The Sims 1 was an idealized model of how society could be, not how it actually was.

The sexual preference model was designed for playability and shippability, not realism.

Lucy Bradshaw in "How entertainment and 'life' give life to The Sims", 2014-09-19

> https://venturebeat.com/2014/09/19/how-entertainment-and-life-gives-life-to-the-sims/
>
> "We want players to imbue a sense of importance. Create-a-Sim in Sims 4 just became all the more important. …" Bradshaw said. "You can choose traits that reflect real stories, like coming out of the closet or the death of a family member."

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https://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=3676313

> SimHacker on Mar 7, 2012 | parent | favorite | on: Electronic Arts bringing back 'SimCity' franchise ...
>
> Well, SimCity "classic" was 2D top-down square tiles with flat terrain. SimCity 2000 was orthographic with terrain elevation but essentially 2D sprite graphics.
> Maxis announced that SimCity 3000 was going to be full 3D, and in fact demonstrated early versions of it to the press, but the project was too ambitious, took far too long, and the technology was not quite there yet. Maxis almost ran out of money before they could ship it.
>
> At that point EA bought Maxis, fired all the people who had been fucking around for years trying to implement the full "VR Cyberspace" experience instead of just the next version of SimCity, reverted to the original design of a sprite based version of SimCity instead of full 3D, invited the reporters who they'd shown the 3D SimCity and explained

that now it was going to be 2D like SimCity 2000 but with higher quality graphics, and they finally delivered SimCity 3000.

Going 3D at that time in history meant that the quality of the graphic would take a huge hit, as well as the rendering speed, and fewer people would be able to run it because it would require a high end computer, so it was just not worth it.

Using 2D pre-rendered sprites means that the artists can use as many polygons, rich textures and lighting techniques as they want in 3D Studio Max, and tweak them until the sprites look perfect, and that's exactly what the user sees. You just could not approach anywhere near that quality with 3D graphics at the time. Of course things are a lot different now!

That was during the time that The Sims was also in development. One reason The Sims was successful is that it did not try to be full 3D, and ran well on low-end computers (the old computer that little sister inherits from big brother when he upgrades to a gaming machine). It used a hybrid 2D/3D system of z-buffered sprites, with an orthographic projection constrained to four rotations, three zooms, and only the characters were rendered with polygons into the pre-rendered z-buffered scene, using DirectX's software renderer.

I developed the character animation system and content creation tools for The Sims, and when the EA executives were reviewing the technology to decide if they should buy Maxis, to justify our approach I bought them a copy of Scott McCloud's book Understanding Comics, which explained a concept called "masking" -- http://www.themedianinja.com/glenn/legacy/default_links/anime_links/mccloud.html ...

Hergé's Tintin comics are a great example of how that works: The idea is that by making the background environment very realistic (i.e. rich pre-rendered sprites from high poly models), and the characters themselves more abstract (i.e. efficient real time 3d texture mapped low poly models), the readers (players) can more easily project themselves into the scene and identify with the characters. Much in the same way an abstract happy face can represent everyone, while a photograph of a person's face only represents that person.

The other fortunate consequence was that it was easy for players to create their own characters and objects by editing the textures and sprites with 2D tools like Photoshop, without requiring difficult 3D modeling tools like 3D Studio Max, so that enabled a lot of user created content by kids instead of professional artists, which was essential to the success of the game.

After looking at the "SimCity Announce Trailer Insider's Look" -- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T70evBJE93s -- I have high hopes for the new version

of SimCity, and I think it could be better than even the original ambitions of SimCity 3000. The best indication that it will be great is that Ocean Quigley is still the creative director, who's the original art director from Maxis, and he's also the one who came up with the hybrid "holodeck" idea that The Sims used.

He's giving a talk about it at GDC called "Inside the Glass Box": http://schedule.gdconf.com/session/13473480/Inside_the_GlassBox_%28Presented_by_EA%29

The Sims Evolution – The Sims 1 - 4 Graphics Comparison

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZyiFepFPNas

Sims 1 - Sims 2 - Sims 3 - Sims 4 : CAS - Evolution

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_b0Mj3B9JBU

Sims 1 - Sims 2 - Sims 3 - Sims 4 : Baby Evolution

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SlQZq1FjeL8

Sims 2 vs Sims 3 vs Sims 4: Kisses & Interactions

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfI9GrYJEQc

Sims 2 vs Sims 3 vs Sims 4: Aliens

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lhzY-P2OVR4

Lampshade Hanging (or a better term)

Guard rails?

The Sims 1, Hot Date
- Object interaction.
- Play in love bed.
  - Asks if you want to have a baby AFTERWARDS, which is bizarre.
- Play in hot tub.

The Sims 2
- Romantic interaction.

WooHoo
- Public WooHoo inside dressing rooms on community lots.

The Sims 3
- Romantic interaction.
- Shower WooHoo
- Public WooHoo Backstage at theater, military base, laboratory, etc.

The Sims 4
- Romantic or object interaction.
- Public WooHoo in the observatory, rocket ship (50-mile-high club), etc.
- Teens can “Mess Around” (woohooing with clothes on).
- Elders can risk their lives by woohooing, and drop dead from too much sex.
- Customize your gender to “become pregnant” or “get others pregnant”.
- (Also “use toilet standing”.)
- Enables same sex “try for baby”.
- So men may get pregnant.
- Aliens can also make men pregnant.

https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/LampshadeHanging

https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/LampshadeHanging/VideoGames

WooHoo under the covers.
Having a baby.
Infant neglect.
Social services take away neglected babies. Baby just whisked away in Sims 4.
Military school takes neglected children.
Censorship effect.
Hammer space: grabbing gifts, spatulas, plungers, etc, out of your ass.
Blue puddles when peeing your pants.
Traveling in vehicles and transporters.
Player controlled same sex interactions.
Death, tombstones, and urns.
Aging and life stages.

Microworlds

> Papert coined the term “Microworld” when he was describing the world of geometry explored when children used Logo (Papert 1980). He defined a microworld as a “subset of reality or a constructed reality whose structure matches that of a given cognitive mechanism so as to provide an environment where the latter can operate effectively. The concept leads to the project of inventing microworlds so structured as to allow a human learner to exercise particular powerful ideas or intellectual skills.” (Papert 1980)
>
> A microworld is based to a large degree on the way in which an individual is able to use a technological tool for the kinds of thinking and cognitive exploration that would not be possible without the technology (http://edutechwiki.unige.ch/en/Microworld). But not just any technology.
>
> “The use of the microworld provides a model of a learning theory in which active learning consists of exploration by the learner of a microworld sufficiently bounded and transparent for constructive exploration and yet sufficiently rich for significant discovery.“ (Papert 1980)
>
> Papert, S. (1980). Computer based microworlds as incubators for powerful ideas. In R. Taylor (Ed.), The computer in the school: Tutor, tool, tutee (pp. 203–210). New York: Teacher’s College Press.

The Sims Online

> Christ Trottier’s most awkward moment:
>
> Flirting w/ Mother Theresa, rushing into a shotgun wedding, and then finding out it was Will. Wrong on so many levels.

The Sims 4 Pride Pack

> New lot trait: clothing optional.

Will Wright - Master Class - Game Design and Theory

“As a designer, you are actually dealing with two computers: First the electronic one sitting on the table in front of you. But more importantly, the player’s imagination, the player’s brain. And that one is far more complex, and we have barely scratched the surface of it.” -Will Wright

Fundamental concepts of game design. Player psychology. Mental model. How to use game mechanics. Develop a tool set as a designer. Structure of what is going on beneath the hood. Emergence. Surprise. Detailed worlds. Motivate. Pull in. Get them emotionally involved. Build communities.

Real world simulations. Encourage creativity. Storytelling.

Games are a subset of a larger space called Play.

Play is exploring. Experimenting. Trying different things. Symbolic representation. Some little toy of the real world. Very low cost for failure.

Games misaligned, associated with violence. True of any new media. Breaking boundaries.

Games borrow from many other design fields.

Multidisciplinary approach.

Embrace constraint. Charles Eames. Design is constraint. Without constraint, there is no design.

Zero sum games -vs- beyond zero sum games with no specific win state. Open ended toy. Leave it to the player to define the goal state. Player is the one building the rule set and scoring the game. Different play styles and win states. Creative storytelling. Social currency.

Players smoothly shift from “he” to “I” when describing what is happening in games.

Microworlds let you externalize what is in your imagination and share with other people. Doesn’t require an advanced skill set. Tools give average casual game players the creative leverage to externalize, create things out of the imaginations, share it with other players, and have shared imaginary worlds.

The design of your creature or character really influences how you play it in the world. Part of the player’s identity.

Spore creature editor. Got a million creatures in the first week. Passed 5 or 6 million in the first month, more than the number of species on Earth.

Computers give creative leverage. Creative amplifier.

Trust your instincts. Will thought SimCity would be fun, but didn't realize what a wide range of people it would appeal to. He trusts his instincts, designs for himself, trusts that he can find a way to bring other people to enjoy it. Designs for himself, figures out why he enjoys it and what motivates him, and what about other people's thought process will let them see this and enjoy it and experience it the same way he does.

Build tangible models.

Built a neighborhood model for The Sims. Built a giant ant for SimAnt.

Find the fun. Spore editor is consistent across five different sub-games.

Relationship between story and games.

Coolest stories are always coming from the players. Cool to have a backstory. But every player can create their own story by what they do in the game.

Play and Story are both educational technologies, which help us build more elaborate, more detailed world models, with a limited experience space.

Story and Play are two sides of the same coin.

Games generate stories as the players play. Good play can generate stories. Good stories can generate play. Self supporting, but very different.

Empathy -vs- agenda.

Emotional palettes. Films make you empathize with the emotions of the characters. **Games have an emotional palette that is based upon agency.** I did it. I am responsible. The kind of emotions we can get out of games is very different. Guilt, pride, accomplishment, teamwork, directly felt (about me) in games but not linear media. Black and White.

Before releasing The Sims we had people play the game and while they played tell the stories of what they were doing. People would build a story around the gameplay. At the last minute we added the family album feature. Capture and write a story. Upload with one click. Website with player stories. Started seeing heartfelt, deep, real stories. A woman who got out of an abusive relationship, told

to inspire other women. One about a guy who had a horrible senior year in high school. Rants about Starbucks in New York City where homeless people would go in and drink the cream. People had stories they wanted to express. People would post stories, and other people would comment on them. People told stories they otherwise would have never told. Feedback, positive reinforcement, recognition from their readers inspired them to go back and write much more elaborate stories. Machinima.

Player psychology.

Maslow's Pyramid. Sims Motives.

Connect base motives to larger aspirations, having a job, performing well, making more money and advancement. Balance freedoms, motivations, goal states. Give motivation. Make them want to do some things and avoid other things. Environment where players feel strong motivations for their actions.

You can't overestimate the player's narcissism. The more it is about the player, the more the player is celebrated, the center of the universe, the more they like it.

Build a mental model in the player's head. An art form learned from magic. Get people to craft the wrong mental model so you can trick them. When you do the reveal, you see that your mental model was wrong. Game designers build a world in the player's head. Game designer is a much more elaborate magician.

Model building. Iterative scientific process.

Data => Patterns => Schema => Models => Behavior.

Schema: Classification, Causality, Empathy, Agency.

Game are the opposite of science: games expand a small rule set into rich world, science reduces the rich world into a small rule set.

Allow your model to diverge from reality.

What is correct is an open question. Training simulator -vs- entertainment. Take liberties.

Enable player communities.

The Sims community. Ecology Pyramid.

2,000	**Webmasters**
8,000	**Content Creators**
20,000	**Storytellers**
50,000	**Collectors**
500,000	**Browsers**
20,000,000	**Casual Players**

Collectors. Specialized collections.
Webmasters. User contributions. Subscription.
Creators. Tool builders.
The narrow tip of the pyramid is supported by the much wider lower layers in the very wide base of casual players.
Upward flow of recognition, fueling the people building these things.
Has given rise to very large communities. Recognition. Reputation. Hook into different types of social networks. Professional. Games became doorway into communities that become an integral part of their identity.

Fundamental issue in education is not how to teach, but how to motivate. Kids will follow their own interests and learn at their own pace if motivated.

Develop a Game Language

The Sims used to be called Dollhouse.

SimCity was essentially a digital train set. The feel of crafting this little world that came to life, a little automata, that you designed. The train set metaphor was the guiding principle of SimCity.

Game Mechanics

Create both overt and covert rules.

You're very clear to the player about overt rules.

Part of the early game play is the tutorial. Encounter objects as part of directed game player early on, teaching you how to use a sword, cast a spell, etc.

Other rules are overt, hidden from the player, under the hood, mysterious, black box game world. Get to emergence. People imagine SimCity has complex calculation. But it's much more sparse, emergent. If players saw under the hood it would destroy the illusion of complexity. Why The Sims did not speak in a known language. When you can't quite understand them you start to read in a lot more. Simulator effect. People would describe stuff that happened in the game. Describe causal linkages that did not exist in

the game, but came from the player's head. Nothing about the game dissuaded them from believing that. They build up their own elaborate interesting models of how the game worked, that you want to keep ad black boxes, so the player can imagine their own much more elaborate simulation in their own minds, far more interesting than yours, as long as you present them with enough scaffolding to build that in their imagination.

Simulator effect: players imagine your world, your simulation, is more detailed, more rich, more complicated than it actually is, don't talk them out of it. Part of exploring a world is uncovering these loops of complexity and covert rules. Part of learning the rules of the game are actually embedded in the game.

Use chance in place of calculus. Monte Carlo Method. Rely on probabilities. How emergence works.

Ensure player agency determines fate.

Playtesting.

SimEarth. Planetary model. Like being in a 747 cockpit headed in a nosedive towards the earth.

The Sims. Fixated on the architecture. Put it in front of people, who were fascinated with messing with the people. Revisited assumptions based on how people interpreted it.

Demographic. Wide range. Where does it hit the mark? What kind of people do you want to bring in more of? Achievers. Creators. Storytelling. Social advancement. Showing off. Focus on some people, or keep it broad? Demographics are frequently misleading.

The Sims was initially sold to gamers, who were teenage boys, who liked to try out weird new things, and played it for a few weeks. Their sisters were watching them play, and wanted to try it, then ran it on their hand-me-down computer. It was a big hit with 12-year-old girls, who don't go into computer stores and buy computer games, and were not the target demographic, but just happened to see it on their brother's computer.

Playtesting -vs- Focus Group Testing

Focus group testing has been pretty close to useless. Described four game ideas to players. They liked them all but The Sims. Expecting players to be designers. No easy way to communicate the design.

Designing sound aesthetics. Fall back on humor.

When you hit an intractable design problem, you can fall back on humor. The Sims had to pull things out of their butt. The way they talk.

Sound Design in The Sims

Using real language would break the illusion. Tone of voice. Sounds real but is not understandable. Initially tried unfamiliar languages. Estonian. Navaho. Improv comedians. Started speaking in gibberish to each other. Clair Curtain gave them some direction. They developed their own language, to the point that they were both speaking the same language. Through their talent, we zeroed in on Simlish. Discovery and exploration on the sound stage.

Leadership and collaboration.
Look for outspoken collaborators.
Ocean Quigley was the meeting canary. When he asked to leave, the meeting had reached the point of diminishing returns.

The Future of Game Design.

Stay open minded. Commit yourself to lifelong learning. Rapidly advancing. Wide palette of things you can do. Don't get dogmatic about platform, approach, philosophy. Be adaptable, open minded, look ahead, assume you're on shaky ground.

Final thoughts.

Reverse over-engineering: a dynamic of the "simulator effect".
"Reverse Over-Engineering" is a desirable outcome of the Simulator Effect: what game players (and game developers trying to clone the game) do when they use their imagination to extrapolate how a game works, and totally overestimate how much work and modeling the simulator is actually doing, because they filled in the gaps with their imagination and preconceptions and assumptions, instead of realizing how many simplifications and shortcuts and illusions it actually used.
