Lecture 11: Persuasive Games and Intro to IF

CM 148
Kathleen Tuite
ktuite@ucsc.edu
April 24, 2015
Persuasive Games, Ian Bogost

- **Rhetoric**: effective persuasive expression
- **Procedurality**: creating, explaining, or understanding processes
- **Procedural Rhetoric**: the practice of persuading through (computational) processes
- Book’s focus:
  - politics, advertising, education
Procedural Rhetoric

Film

McDonald’s Videogame
Editorial Cartools ➔ Easily Made Editorial Games

WISH FOR A CLIMATE POLICY.

U.S. WATER WELLS

THIS IS OUR CLIMATE POLICY.
**Kaboom!** is a Many-Splendored Thing: An interpretation and design methodology for message-driven games using graphical logics

Mike Treanor, Michael Mateas, and Noah Wardrip-Fruin
Expressive Intelligence Studio
University of California, Santa Cruz
Santa Cruz, CA, USA
{mtreanor, michaelm, nwf}@soe.ucsc.edu

**ABSTRACT**

This paper describes an explicit model for how to interpret and create simple 2D games that reasonably communicate messages through a game’s representational layer in a manner that is consistent with its processes.

A few prominent experimental games (e.g. Kabul Kaboom, Passage) have demonstrated that when the rhetorical implications of a game’s processes and its representational layer are in harmony, worthwhile and coherent messages can be communicated. This paper reports the findings of an extensive analysis of Activision’s Kaboom! (1981) [1] that explores its rhetorical design space in the service of developing a general method for the interpretation of simple message-driven games. The paper then shows how the application of this method to even a simple game like Kaboom! reveals an unexpected range of coherent potential messages. The paper concludes with a description of a design process and assistant tool that enables those who are not game designers, or even procedurally literate, to create simple games that present editorial and expressive statements. We see this project as a concrete step forward, both analytically and in enabling production, in the field of procedural rhetoric.

Figure 1 A screenshot from the Atari VCS version of Activition’s Kaboom! (1981)

Game mechanics and rules—in combination with a game’s representational layer—have the ability to communicate messages like other mediums of expression (e.g. films, novels, poems, etc.) [2, 7, 8]. However, these claims have yet to become widely accepted—perhaps because few games have successfully combined the representational and rule layers to achieve the expressive quality of message-driven works in other media.
Figure 7 Help after school programs *divert* kids from video games.

Figure 5 The rules and generalized entities of *Kaboom!*
- When C collides with B, the score is incremented
- A moves left and right
- B is controlled by the player
- B can move left and right

Figure 8 Jesus saves the people from sins with his sacrifice.

Figure 9 Help the Republicans *rescue* money from fiery destruction.
Mike Treanor, Bryan Blackford, Michael Mateas and Ian Bogost

Figure 1. Game-O-Matic’s concept map input (left) and a game that was generated to represent the ideas in the concept map.
MAKE A DIAGRAM FOR YOUR GAME

Ghosts

attacks

spawns

Obama

attacks

spawns

attacks

Ghosts

Dinosaur

flees

Ghosts

Dinosaur

flees

Palin

game-o-matic
Text Adventures and Interactive Fiction

First: a reading from Aaron Reed’s *Inform 7* book
Assignment #3

• Play three IF works:
  – Zork 1 (long game – play for ~2 hours)
    • https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ToEllOW2r1Y
  – Photoplia (play to end)
  – Galatea (play through multiple times)

• Due next Wednesday, April 29

• https://classes.soe.ucsc.edu/cmpm148/Spring15/assignment3.html