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Literature Review

February 4, 2020

**Question:**

How might we build community/relationship that engages multi-generational family members through gaming?

**Sources**

*Comunello, F., & Mulargia, S. (2017). My Grandpa and I “Gotta Catch ‘Em All.” A Research Design on Intergenerational Gaming Focusing on Pokémon Go. Human Aspects of IT for the Aged Population. Applications, Services and Contexts Lecture Notes in Computer Science, 228–241. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-58536-9\_19*

This paper looks into fostering relationships between younger and older players, a means of overcoming real or perceived differences between generations. As video games have steadily been on the rise, and on the radar of the younger generations, this paper looks into (re)negotiating norms and roles and questions the age-related stereotype in video gaming. It also dives deeper into the various interactive environments where collaboration and cooperation occur between generations. For example, a mix between traditional games and video games using AR, the physical and digital environment and an AR tabletop game. It takes a deeper look into what motivates the older generations into adopting digital media. It also elaborates and evaluates different research methods and tools to aid in further research steps regarding the topic of intergenerational gaming.

*Osmanovic, S., & Pecchioni, L. (2017). Pass the Control(ler): Shifting of Power in Families Through Intergenerational Gaming. Human Aspects of IT for the Aged Population. Applications, Services and Contexts Lecture Notes in Computer Science, 266–279. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-58536-9\_22*

Studies have shown that young adults have a rather negative view of older adults, holding up the stereotypes of old age – deterioration of physical and mental faculties – undervaluing their competence, their perceived intelligence or abilities. In this paper, it contends that idea with positive psychological outcomes for both the younger generation and the older generation. While tons of studies focus on the parent-child relationship, one of the influential family relationships is that between a grandparent and grandchild, despite the usually large generational gap. In this study, it examines the outcome of joint video gaming on intergenerational relationship development within families, seeking to find whether such shared activity provides a platform for building, maintaining, or balancing interpersonal power in relationships. This paper shows the social power of video games lies in the backstage, in all the ropes and pulleys that work together to create the experience that is on the surface entertaining, but also affects the heart, body and soul of those who take part in it.

*Zhang, F., Doroudian, A., Kaufman, D., Hausknecht, S., Jeremic, J., & Owens, H. (2017). Employing a User-Centered Design Process to Create a Multiplayer Online Escape Game for Older Adults. Human Aspects of IT for the Aged Population. Applications, Services and Contexts Lecture Notes in Computer Science, 296–307. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-58536-9\_24*

This study explores a user-centered design process to create a multiplayer online escape game with embedded learning content for older adults. The needs assessment was useful to understand older adults’ social interaction in real-life escape rooms, and to generate a list of design recommendations for the online escape game. It was found that older adults enjoyed playing in pairs because interaction with partners was easy. This means that older adults enjoy gaming experiences that involve partnership, or an experience that involves partnership or teamwork, an experience that is shared amongst more than just them. An online escape game for older adults requires an in-depth understanding of various aspects of the nature of older adults’ play, as well as game design principles, such as game thinking, game elements, curve of interest, motivation, aesthetes, and the needs and challenges older adults would face during the game. The results of this study also shows that maybe an online game might not be the best solution for the design challenge proposed.

*Chua, P.-H., Jung, Y., Lwin, M. O., & Theng, Y.-L. (2013). Let’s play together: Effects of video-game play on intergenerational perceptions among youth and elderly participants. Computers in Human Behavior, 29(6), 2303–2311. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2013.04.037*

This paper reports on a longitudinal study that investigates the effects of video-game play on intergenerational perceptions amongst youths and the elderly after participating in a program involving regular interaction sessions over two months. Results showed that participants in the video-game condition reported more positive changes in intergroup anxiety and attitudes, compared to participants in the non-video-game condition. In addition, the results showed that game enjoyment played an important role in developing positive intergenerational perceptions only for the elderly, but not for the youth participants in the video-game condition. This paper also supports the potential of video-game play in developing positive intergenerational perception as a means of shared leisure activities. The paper mentions that they took video-game play as a form of shared leisure activities in which individuals from different age groups can potentially engage in without much resistance. Meaning that a shared experience is the most important aspect of bridging the intergenerational gap between youths and the older generation.

*Costa, L., & Veloso, A. (2016). Being (Grand) Players: Review of Digital Games and their Potential to Enhance Intergenerational Interactions. Journal of Intergenerational Relationships, 14(1), 43–59. doi: 10.1080/15350770.2016.1138273*

The technological advancements of the past few decades have created a large gap among younger and older adults, alienating them from each other’s worlds, and video games are a significant part of that process. This paper reports on the current digital games and their utility in enhancing intergenerational interaction. Though, further studies and research is needed to compare different recommendations for designing intergenerational game-mediated interactions in both physical and digital spaces. It shows that games can foster intergenerational interactions by contributing to individual well-being, prosocial behaviors, and sharing of knowledge; by enhancing social interactions between different generations toward a communal activity; and by balancing both users’ skills and challenges.

*Wellman, B. (2001). Physical Place and Cyberplace: The Rise of Personalized Networking. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 25(2), 227–252. doi: 10.1111/1468-2427.00309*

A computer network is a social network. In networked societies, boundaries are permeable, interactions are with diverse others, connections switch between multiple networks, and hierarchies can be flatter and recursive. This paper shows that the household more important as a base from which to operate one’s computer-supported social network – leading to a rise in ‘neighboring’, as home-based people take more interest in their immediate surroundings and use the Internet to contact neighbors without physical intrusion and to arrange visits. Online relationships and online communities have developed their own strength and dynamics. The paper shows that often, the cyberspace-physical space comparison is a false dichotomy. Many ties operate in both spaces, using whatever means of communication is convenient and appropriate at the moment. This means that users are not opposed to the physical realms of video games, but instead are turning to spaces that they are familiar with and that is convenient to them.

*De Schutter, B. How games are changing the way we are. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZfU6DGfhWt8*

This TED talk by Bob De Schutter speaks on how games are changing the way we are now. A subgroup of older adults watch television to alleviate boredom, to find diversion, and for the parasocial interaction watching television offers. This means that older adults are seeking for social interaction that could help alleviate boredom and loneliness that they often experience. Brain training games that are currently developed are said to have lesser effect compared to regular entertainment. This is because brain training games have a sub-message that the brains of older adults are no longer useful. However, this is not true and regular entertainment and video games can help stimulate the brain. The current social construct holds older adults back from playing video games. People think it is unacceptable that an older adult is obsessed with video games while it is perfectly acceptable for them to be doing any other activity. There needs to be more opportunities for older adults in the realms of video games. Only 1% of game developers are over 50 years old. How are we able to design for intergenerational play when older generations are so underrepresented? De Schutter also mentions that games need to be genuinely fun to connect intergeneration players, and that there are many scientific researches that utilizes such concept, but none have translated into the realm of leisure play.

*Aarsand, P. A. (2007). Computer and Video Games in Family Life. Childhood, 14(2), 235–256. doi: 10.1177/0907568207078330*

In this study, the generation gap concerns knowledge asymmetries when it comes to handling digital technology. Studying the generation gap as a communicative phenomenon offers a more nuanced picture when it comes to how asymmetrical knowledge-relations are created and sustained, and it contributes to an understanding of some of the social mechanisms that create discourses of which digital divides are a part. The study supports the idea that children display a competence in play video games that parents do not display, and it could therefore be claimed that the traditional knowledge asymmetries between children and adults are bracketed. However, this is not a black and white matter where children just display superior knowledge in the field, while adults display a total lack of knowledge. Whether or not it is a matter of children as the most knowledgeable, or a question of “doing something together”, what has been called the digital divide is not a problem that can be merely related to a predefined generation. Rather, it seems to be a resource invoked for different purposes in social interaction, depending on time, place and activity.

*Beck, J. C., & Wade, M. (n.d.). Got Game. How the gamer generation is reshaping business forever.*

This study shows that the current generation is indeed very different from the boomers in ways that matter throughout business. They have systematically different ways of working. They choose systematically different skills to learn, and different ways to learn them and desire systematically different goals in life. Our current generation is a generation that grew up on games. Provocative new data show that video games have created a new generation of employees and executives – bigger than the baby boom – that will dramatically transform the workplace. Although many of these changes are positive – such as more open communication and creative problem solving – they have caused a generation gap that frustrates games and boomer who manage them. The study identifies the distinct values and traits that define the gamer generation – from an increased appetite for risk to unexpected leadership skills – and reveals management techniques today’s leaders can use to bridge the generation gap and unleash gamers’ hidden potentials.