Chapter LXI
Gaming Ethics, Rules, Etiquette, and Learning

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explains the significance of informal and unwritten rules in order to show the connections among formal rules of play, formalized learning, informal and unwritten rules, and collateral learning. It argues that computer gaming's rules of play include the formal rules by which games are played and the informal and unwritten rules within the magic circle of play where the games are played. Too often games are reduced to their formal rules of play and the collateral learning fostered by the realm of play is neglected. By examining unwritten rules, this chapter also connects to and informs other areas that rely primarily on formal rules, including educational gaming.

INTRODUCTION

Electronic gaming literacies are always multiple, involving literacy of game content, game play, and the rules of play themselves. Computer gaming's rules of play include the formal rules by which games are played and the informal and unwritten rules within what J. Huizinga (1950) termed the "magic circle" of play where the games are played. The magic circle of play isolates play or the game from everyday life by formalizing the play space and applying the rules. This play space includes formal rules as well as informal and unwritten rules. Like play itself, games are played within a play space. Too often games are reduced to their formal rules of play and the collateral learning fostered by the realm of game play is neglected. This chapter shows that the informal and unwritten rules are pivotal to game play, and shows the connections among formal rules of play, formalized learning, informal and unwritten rules, and collateral learning. In explaining the operations of informal and unwritten rules for play, the chapter also covers gaming etiquette in relation to the creation and changes of laws regulating game play.

Currently, many studies have been completed and others are underway that address law in relation to games as online game environments continue to see millions of players daily (Balkin & Noveck, 2006). Because digital objects in these game worlds can be exchanged for real-world currency (Castronova, 2003; Dibbell, 2006), and because of the massive international systems through which these games are played, studies on games and law are necessary because games can impact real-world law. In addition to legal concerns, however, computer games are also changing the space of play in terms of unwritten and informal rules. These changes have been less studied and are important to study because of the manner in which games are used for education and because of the manner in which games educate collaterally even when played purely for entertainment.

Games are often used in educational settings to teach specific information. Such games are often referred to as "edugames" or more generally under the category of "edutainment." Other games for education are referred to under the emerging classification of "serious games" which is meant to contain games used for serious purposes like education, business, and simulation modeling among other areas (Zyda, 2005). Serious games are classified by their express intent, yet many other games also serve the same serious purposes without being specifically designed to do so. Unwritten and informal rules help illuminate how games designed and played for entertainment purposes can also educate and argue through the space of play. Unwritten and informal rules also show how games excel at modeling complex scenarios. A critical gaming literacy, one that covers different types of games and different aspects of games as well as their uses, can be developed more easily with an awareness of the complexities of game operations and the situations of game play. Educators and game designers need this critical gaming literacy in order to best develop and use games for education. Unwritten

and informal rules inform a critical gaming literacy in relation to the space and culture of play. Additionally, unwritten and informal rules also illuminate other areas for possible development more generally, like gaming's ability to support collateral learning while teaching a particular topic or subject.

Building from the formal studies related to laws for games and rules of play, this study covers unwritten and informal rules for games to show how games offer unexpected collateral learning opportunities, like opportunities to learn proper behavior, social norms, information, and methods of investigation for learning. In studying non-explicit rules for games, this study contributes to a further understanding of how games are played within the space of play and thus provides information on how games can be used to teach.

BACKGROUND

Play and simulation for use in learning and education predate video games, with video games simply a newer entry into this area. Video games for education began as extensions from earlier work on games and simulations for learning, focusing on games to teach particular skills, information, and critical thinking about complex topics, as with K. Squire's research (2002) using the strategy game *Civilization* to teach history as a process and J. P. Gee's research on games and learning more generally (2003).

In all uses of games for learning, games also provide collateral learning. Collateral learning refers to the non-explicit material taught within the context of learning (Dewey, 1963). While all games provide a context for collateral learning, unwritten and informal rules of game play expand this context. Studies of games (Hughes, 2006; Sniderman, 2006; Taylor, 2006) show that the explicit game rules differ from those reported and employed by players. Like unwritten and informal rules, which add an additional dimension to a par-

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