Interactive Quest Journals as Learning Journals in Digital Educational Games

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Outline

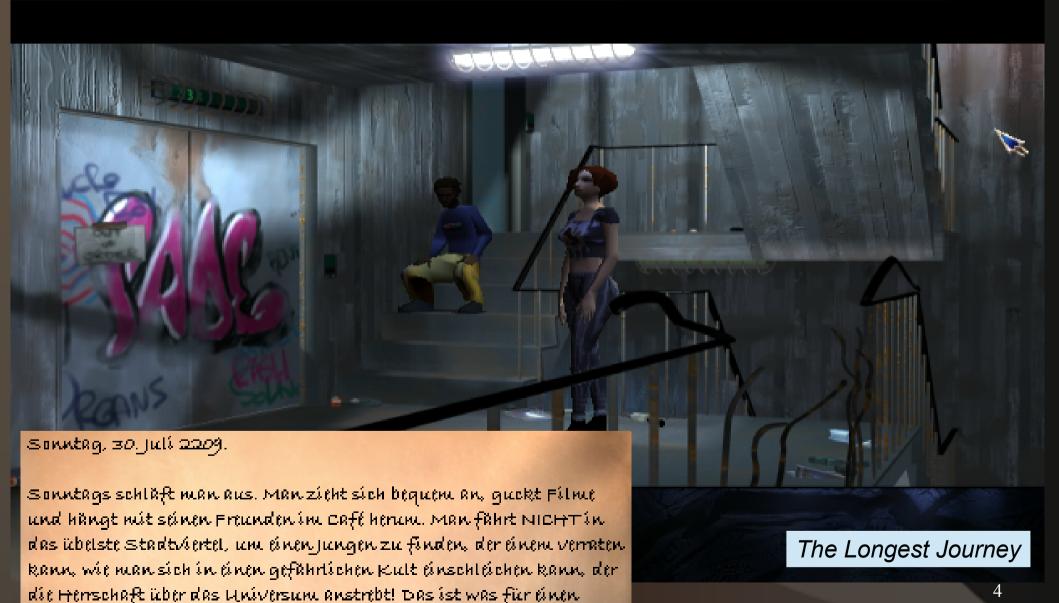
Quest journals in video games

• Learning journals in e-learning

→ Journals as reflection tools in educational games
 (3 studies)

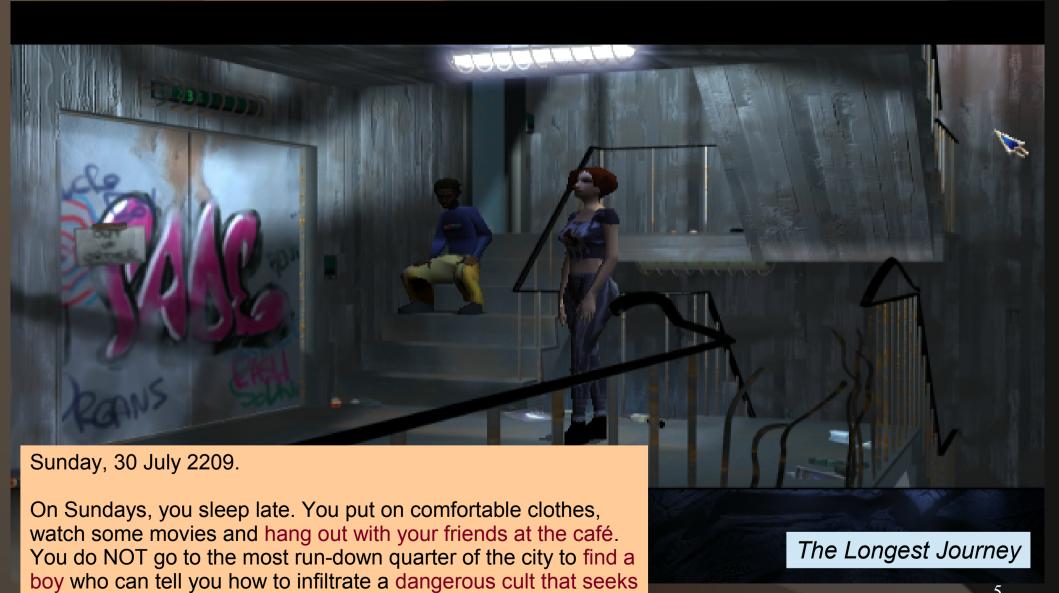
Introduction

April's Diary



Montag.

April's Diary



to control the universe. That's something for a Monday.

Evolution of the Quest Journal

Already in text adventure games

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what do I know?help
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- Gold Box RPGs (*Pool of Radiance* et al.): "journal entries" in paper manual as copy protection
- In-game journals, convention: J

Typical Language of Quest Journals

- Jeff Howard: Quests Design, Theory, and History in Games and Narratives, A K Peters, 2008, pp 110–111
 - "The actions that players perform in quests are constantly becoming narratives of past events that give rise to future actions, which in turn become narratives."
 - "Each quest consists of multiple entries [...] describing what has happened [...], then suggesting a next course of action. These entries need to take place in the first person past perfect and the imperative, [...] 'x has happened. I should or must go to y place and perform z action."
 - "This unusual combination of person, mood, and tense rarely appears in narrative except in the diaries of ambitious people focused on their short-term and long-term goals. Hence, [...] 7 the record of quests in many RPGs [...] is recorded in a journal."

A Definition

Quest journal

- Retrospective protocol of a player's progress through a nonlinear game story → reflection tool
- Prospective outline of possible future developments with regard to quest objectives / mission goals
- Written from the point of view of the player's avatar,
 as if s/he were writing a diary of his/her adventures
- Mapping:
 actions in a simulated microworld → literary text
 (by the author)

Quest Journals in Video Games

The Elder Scrolls Series

- Nonlinear sandboxes, open worlds, many sidequests
- Journal prevents / reduces cognitive overload
- Book metaphor → filing system on a computer



CSI: Dark Motives

- Detective genre → journal becomes case file (suspect ↔ victim ↔ crime scene)
- Not structuring a set of quests / cases (macro level)
- But the case itself (micro level)
- Narrative →
 schematic, mind map



CSI: Dark Motives [gamezone.com]

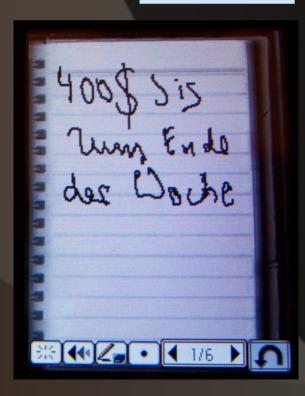
Last Window: The Secret of Cape West

- Visual novel, Nintendo DS, pretty linear
- Gameplay path \rightarrow individual novel
- + Notebook

Last Window







Neverwinter Nights 1

- Classical quest journal (incl. language) + Notebook
- Not associated with individual quests



Dragon Age: Origins

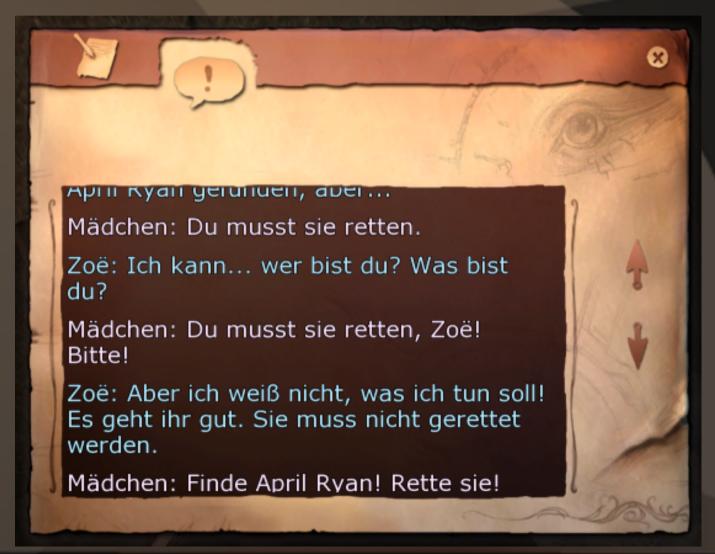
- Online journal
- Upload character
 & their story
 to social media site



Dragon Age

The Longest Journey Series

Journal + conversation log

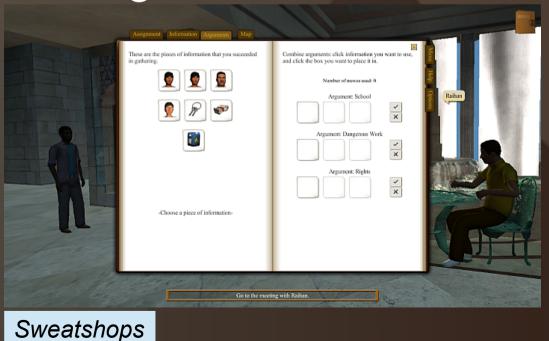


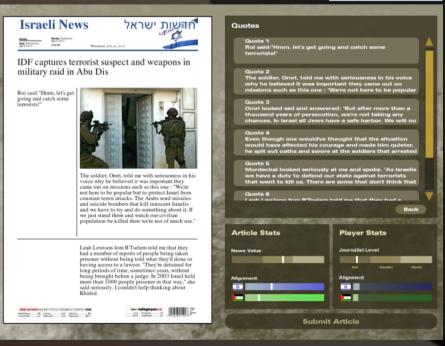
Dreamfall: TLJ

Global Conflicts Series

- Educational video games (Politics, e.g. child labour)
- Conversation log as gameplay mechanism
- Conversations: collect knowledge items
- Arguments in final confrontation or news bits

Palestine

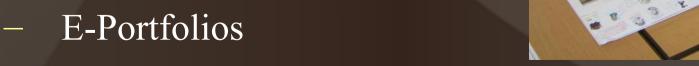




Interactive Learning Journals in E-Learning

Quest Journals \(\rightarrow Learning Journals \)

- Quest journals support reflection about play sessions
- Educational games use this for learning purposes
- Similar to learning journals in classroom settings
- Offline: www.learninglogs.co.uk
- E-Learning
 - Blogs
 - Wikis





Teaching Method

- Students write personal diary or create scrapbook
- Reflection phase after shorter learning unit
 - What have I learnt?
 - What questions remain?
- Like a workbook, but constructivist approach
- By creative work, student forms a reference object
- For oneself: tacit knowledge \rightarrow explicit knowledge
- For others: personal knowledge → public knowledge

Domain-Specific Learning Journals

- Engineering, e.g. construction manual
- Science, e.g. lab report
 - Setup
 - Hypothesis
 - Procedure
 - Observations
 - Hypothesis falsified / verified
 - Interpretation
- Social Sciences, e.g. interview transcript
- Humanities, e.g. interpretative writing task

Experimenting (Inquiry Learning)

Journals in Educational Games & Virtual Worlds

Research Objectives

- Instructional design of learning journals in digital educational games (like *Global Conflicts*)
- Integration into gameplay

 (motivating, meaningful, encourage experimentation)
- How to design journals for successful support of reflection?
- Design as quest journals (see before)
- But interactive:
 Students makes mental models explicit → feedback
- 3 studies to evaluate different approches

(1) Game Adaptation of Classical Theatre Play

"Kabale und Liebe" in NWN Toolset

- 3 students (aged 14–15, grade 9) as co-developers (one year)
- Evaluation of resulting product in the classroom (group of 21 players)



Ferdinand von Walter

Ich habe mich in Ihnen betrogen, Lady. Ich erwartete - ich wünschte, Sie meiner Verachtung würdig zu finden. Fest entschlossen, Sie zu beleidigen und Ihren Hass zu verdienen, empfing ich Sie - glücklich wir beide, wenn mein Vorsatz gelungen wäre! Ich liebe, Milady, liebe eine Bürgerliche - Luise Millerin, eines Musikus Tochter. Können Sie eine Hand ohne Herz erzwingen? Können Sie einem Mädchen den Mann entwenden?

- 1. Weil ich es muss. Meine Leidenschaft, Walter, weicht meiner Zärtlichkeit für Sie. Meine Ehre kann's nicht mehr. Unsre Verbindung ist das Gespräch des ganzen Landes. Alle Augen, alle Pfeile des Spotts, sind auf mich gespannt. Die Beschimpfung ist unauslöschlich, wenn ein Untertan des Fürsten mich ausschlägt. Wehren Sie sich, so gut Sie können. Ich lass alle Minen sprengen!
- 2. Walter, ich habe Kerker gesprengt habe Todesurteile zerrissen und manche entsetzliche Ewigkeit auf Galeeren verkürzt. Und jetzt kommt der Mann, der allein mir das alles belohnen sollte. Der Mann, den mein unerschöpftes Schicksal vielleicht zum Ersatz meiner vorigen Leiden schuf. Der Mann, den ich mit brennender Sehnsucht im Traum schon umfasste... und sagt Nein??
- 3. Höre, Walter. Wenn eine Unglückliche unwiderstehlich allmächtig an dich gezogen sich an dich presst mit einem Busen voll
 glühender unerschöpflicher Liebe, Walter, und
 du jetzt noch kalte Worte sprichst... Wenn
 diese Unglückliche niedergedrückt vom
 Gefühl ihrer Schande, des Lasters überdrüssig,
 heldenmäßig emporgehoben vom Rufe der
 Tugend, sich so in deine Arme wirft.....

Narrative Quest Journal: Prompts

- Script writers: plot + journal (POV Luise/Lady)
- · Classical, narrative quest journal
- 3 scripts: paper prototype of interactive quest journal
- 2 prompts(quest journal language)
- Used, but assistance requested: "All I need is the first sentence ..."
- ⇒ Requirement 'prompts on demand'



Narrative Quest Journal: Texts

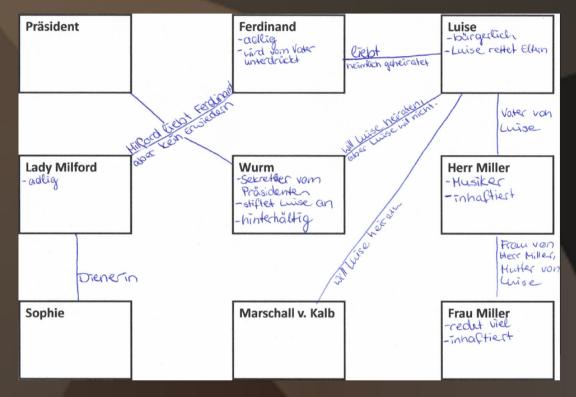
Ich habe Herrn Hofmarschall von Kalb getroffen und musste feststellen, dass er sehr eingebildet ist. Er hält sich für was besseres, nur weil er von einem höheren Stand ist. Allerdings schien er sehr an mir interessiert zu sein. Ich sollte ihm beweisen, dass ich eine gute Musikerin bin.

Dieser Major [richtig: Marschall] scheint sehr eingebildet zu sein. Ich habe mich erst mal ein bisschen bei ihm eingeschleimt. Vielleicht ist er ja doch ganz nett.

Was ein egoistischer, eingebildeter Affe. Als ob ich mit dem eine Beziehung eingehen könnte. Aber er sah schon fabulös in der Uniform aus *_* [Smiley: erstaunt, entzückt]

- Learning goals (motives & relationships) met
- Focus on personal feelings of characters (cf. *TLJ*)
- Individual writing styles (detailed vs. lively)
- Some mistakes & over-interpretation
- ⇒ Tool for interpretative writing (Produktives Schreiben)

Schematic Quest Journal: Mind Maps



- On average: 8 correct facts, 1 incorrect item
- Possibilities as facts, literal reception (not indicators)
- Learning goals met, little constructive interpretation
- ⇒ Good for quick overview, not for deep reflection?

(2) Programming virtual robots in Second Life

Intelligent Game Characters

- Pilot: 2 students (distance learning)
- 12 students (aged 17–18, grade 12), Computer Science class (2 weeks)
- Study in-world experimenting (inquiry learning)

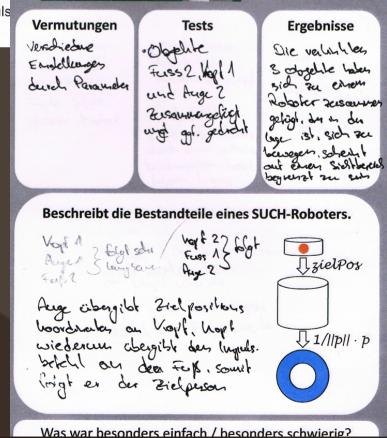


Narrative Quest Journals: Prompts

• Pilot: homework tasks, construction manuals (digital)

Die erste Folie beschreibt im Allgemeinen die verschiedenen Faktoren des Sichtfeldes, die im Skript "AugeIntelligent" enthalten sind. Hierbei werden die Variablen r (Radius des Gesichtsfeldes), α (Winkel des Gesichtsfeldes) und t, der Zeitabstand der zu sendenden Werte benötigt. Ausgegeben wird dann die Position des erwünschten Objektes, in diesem Fall der Avatar. Das Auge ist im Endeffekt ein bereits verlinktes Objekt, da sich das Skript nur in dem Linsenartigen Objekt enthalten ist. Die erfassten Werte werden anschließend an den "Kopf" des Roboters weitergegeben. Hier wird nun der Vektor p in Abhängigkeit des Ursprungpunktes <0,0,0> und der eigenen Position berechnet, der den benötigten Impuls beschreibt und in welche Richtung sich der Roboter bewegen muss. Der errechnete Impuls wird erneut weitergegeben. Der "Fuß" des Roboters ist nun für die eigentliche Bewegung verantwortlich. Als erstes findet die Normierung des Vektors statt, anschließend wird mit der vorgegebenen Geschwindigkeit multipliziert.

• Classroom study:
live, during sessions,
lab reports (paper):
hypotheses, validation tests,
observations, interpretation



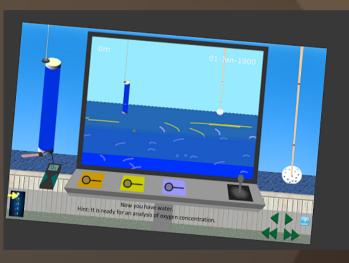
Narrative Quest Journals: Texts

- Pilot: Detailed texts (in retrospective), creative ideas
- Classroom study (in the moment of experimenting)
 - Narratives scarce, not precise, incorrect
 - Problems setting up experiments & documenting
 - Except when following own creative ideas
 (seek own avatar, improved arriving behaviour,
 rotation, gravity, comparison of code)
 - Tried ideas quicker than could think them through
 - Rather than reflecting ... they played!
- ⇒ Incorporate reflection phase in gameplay?

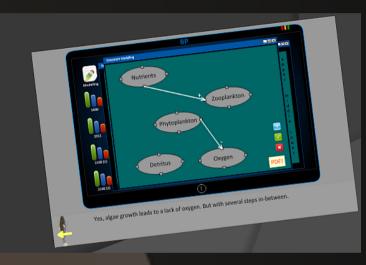
(3) Causes & effects in a virtual ecosystem

Simulation of Scientist Profession

Marine scientist investigating eutrophication



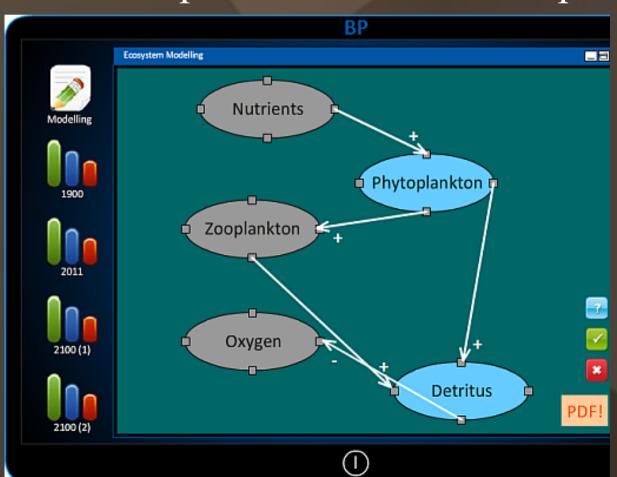




- E-Learning module in EU-funded project www.southbalticweblab.eu
- Teams of 2: grade 11 geography course (0 solutions), Deutsche SchülerAkademie (4), science camp (23) 33

Interactive, Schematic Journal

- Draw mental models of simulated world (online, live)
- 2 teams duplicated the exact sample solution:



Quantities of Drawn Causes & Effects

+->	Nutrients	Phytoplankton	Zooplankton	Detritus	Oxygen
Nutrients	-	24	2	2	0
Phytoplankton	0	-	15	15	6
Zooplankton	3	1	-	23	1
Detritus	6	0	1	-	0
Oxygen	3	2	5	2	_
$- \!$	Nutrients	Phytoplankton	Zooplankton	Detritus	Oxygen
-→ Nutrients	Nutrients -	Phytoplankton 0	Zooplankton 1	Detritus 0	Oxygen 5
	Nutrients - 2				
Nutrients	-		1		5
Nutrients Phytoplankton	-	0 -	1	0	5 2

- Correct > incorrect, many plausible interpretations
- ⇒ Use if rational topic, but alternative solutions allowed

Discussion

Summary

- In educational games, quest journals can act as learning journals
- But they must be interactive
- How to design journals for meaningful reflection?
- Narrative journals: deeper reflection, but need for prompts on demand and integration into gameplay
- Schematic journals: good for checking concrete learning goals, what sort of interpretation desirable?
- Review of games → design options (design space)