

Rules of fiction? The work of creating digital games

Funded by the Swedish Research Council (2011-2013). Project coordinator: Assoc. Professor Jonas Linderöth.

Project summary

Fiction has for a long time figured in text-based media, such as literature, and screen-based media, such as film. Digital games provide another arena for consuming fiction. However, games are unique as they hold the additional dimension of interactivity. These rule-based systems call for a new understanding of the relationship between play, technology and fiction. The interactive rules of games add another layer to the production of fiction. This research project focuses on the creative work of producing fiction for digital games. In what ways are stories and aesthetics dependent on the interactive rule systems? Are some stories more suitable for games as a digital medium? Do games as a form of art, open up for new aesthetics? How does the relation between producers and consumers affect the production of fiction? The project studies the intersection between fiction and rules through exploring and describing game producers' practices for creating fiction. The study has a post-phenomenological approach using video recordings, augmented with fieldwork. In two case studies, one at a professional game developer company and one at an academic game design course, the project will investigate gameworkers practices when designing for culturally and technologically shaped play worlds, and sometimes also, historically established play practices. The project will have great significance for understanding the conditions for producing and using fiction in a maturing medium.