

THE MEANING OF GRAPHIC SYMBOLS IN TEXT-BASED COMPUTER GAMES

Oleksandra KOLISNYK¹,
Maria TOLPIK^{1*}

¹Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design, Department of Design, BDr 3-17, Kyiv, Ukraine,

* Corresponding author: Tolpik Maria, dgl1tolpikm@ukr.net

Abstract. *An urgent problem is the definition of artistic means for the formation of ideological and cultural integrity of a text-based computer game. The use of digital images within the text-based genre promotes the interest of users, provides a more accurate perception of the content of the work and the goals of the author. It is considered how visual stylistic means focus on the characteristic features of the text work.*

Keywords: *Visualization, visual communication, symbols, graphics*

Introduction

Computer games require conceptually different approaches in creating artistic support for individual genres and themes. The purpose of the computer games is to give the user the opportunity to create their own interactive experience. Modern computer games based on reading text are becoming visible due to the graphic design. With the help of graphics, such games are able to demonstrate thematic and cultural orientation, to address users in the language of visual symbols.

Setting the task

The internal needs of the subject come into contact with the set of components that make up the alternative reality of a computer game. Given the variety of game genres and technological advances, it is more difficult for the user to perceive the text-based game genre as something spectacular. An urgent problem is to consider the meaning of visual symbols and the subordination of their role in text games. It is necessary to establish how graphics can enrich the user experience, expand the idea of symbols.

Results of the research

In a literary work, the event is represented by a story, in the game - by a story that can be supplemented by elements of game mechanics and by representing the action itself and the protagonists. As in the literature, in computer text-based games, the setting of an action can be entirely narrative, or metaphorical, symbolic.

Visualization of text can act as a factor in facilitating or expanding the perception of content, creating connections of visual communication. Visualization of characters and the environment is created on the basis of graphic design elements: lines that make up the visualization of the shape through type, thickness, orientation and position to represent a certain image. Texture and color play an important role in the visual character. For example, colors often perform a connotative function, because color is able to build the perception of players according to sensory and psychological values. Perception of visual experience in the form of fine arts, media, virtual reality or computer games is a list of examples of stimuli that affect visual sensations [1].

Robin Sloan, a professor at the University of Abertae in Dundee, in his book *Virtual Character Design for Games and Interactive Media*, explored the ability of a visual character to

influence the imagination and use of users' minds and emotions. Graphic symbols are added as factors of visual identity through illustrative styles represented by external, postural, and auxiliary visual symbols. Imagination can be awakened through perception based on selectivity, internal factors of psychological needs of players [2].

There are many examples of computer games, the visual communication of which is based on the use of symbols, metaphors, folk motifs. Where *The Water Tastes Like Wine* - a game in which illustrative material forms the pace of a metaphorical story, based on folk tales from around America. 2D illustrations become an integral part of the story, allowing the text to be more concise and enigmatic. Visual elements tell about heroes thanks to associative visual symbols. For example, an illustration of a priest struggling with shaky faith in himself. The symbol is the image of a man in a trap placed over the silhouette of an angel's head. An African-American pulman loader facing an identity crisis is portrayed as a chimera hiding between branches holding white masks.

Literary works are created mostly about people (or anthropomorphic heroes) with whom the reader identifies himself cognitively [3]. In text-based games there is a tendency to rely on the actant, an active participant in the events, thanks to which the stimulus, role and influence on the described situation is prescribed. Thanks to the interpretive space, graphic symbols form a system of interconnected processes in the imagination and thinking of players. The visual characteristics of an object contain properties for observation: each line, shape, value, color is associated with other visible elements. Creating a meaningful connection between the visible form and the semantic message - the means of influencing the game on a potential player. Aesthetic visual communication never guarantees a single and literal interpretation, because the viewer's consciousness automatically establishes multiple connections through reconstruction. The study of certain cultural symbols contributes to the generalization of social meanings in the perception and imagination of the subject. Attempt to attach a single meaning to the image (using logical arguments and discursive statements) does not exclude the flexibility of thinking.

Graphics in games are able to rely on cultural symbols, demonstrating ways of expression that reveal meaning through interactivity and contemplation. It is necessary to combine the properties of graphic symbols with thematic content to create a coherent work. In the process of developing graphics for a text-based game it is necessary to determine the target audience, purpose, methods of transmitting information to potential users [4]. Tom Lipschultz, who works as a localization specialist for XSEED Games, focuses primarily on the mentality that is the mainstay of storytelling. The expert believes that pictorial and descriptive means should speak more in symbols, rather than reveal the topic through only one kind of perception. Through the selected symbols it is possible to achieve the effect of intuitive description of things [5].

According to various sources, games are not included in the genres of art, but exploring the needs of subjects in emotional stimuli and alternative cognitions, it is worth considering games as an opportunity to combine different elements of art in one area. This approach extends the authors' ability to inform, educate, and promote the emotional development of users by combining textual and visual symbols. The approach to text games as a kind of art genre creates the potential for expanding cultural knowledge by the user, giving the information source the possibility of interactive interaction.

Conclusions

The study provided an opportunity to analyze the possibilities of using graphics in text games. When processing a visual message, designers and artists leave an encoded structural message on the images, which creates a reaction in the mind of the viewer. In the future, it is necessary to conduct research on how the combination of visualization with a text basis changes

the impression of users. Formal, stereotypical and repetitive messages are unlikely to attract or support attention. The associative flexibility of the message is crucial for the disclosure and transmission of the meaning laid down by the author. The nature of visual methods can potentially be a symbolic work that carries a cultural message. These characteristics indicate the potential of games to perform the functions of art, revealing social and cultural significance through a combination of gaming experience and individual research.

Reference:

1. Gretchen Barbatsis, Keith Kenney, Sandra Moriarty, Ken Smith Handbook of visual communication theory, methods, and media. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2005. 47 c.
2. Dendi Pratama, Winny Gunarti Widya Wardani, Taufiq Akbar Designing visual character of Raden Wijaya as historical figure in visual novel. International journal of scientific & technology research. Nov. 2017. – vol. 6.
3. Games Telling stories? A brief note on games and narratives [online]. 2001. [access 20.02.21].– Retrieved from: <http://www.gamestudies.org/0101/juul-gts/>
4. Level 6: Games and Art [online]. 2009. [access 20.02.21] Retrieved from: <https://gamedesignconcepts.wordpress.com/2009/07/16/level-6-games-and-art/>
5. Text Adventures: The Story of Visual Novels in America [online]. 2014. [access 21.02.21] Retrieved from: <https://www.usgamer.net/articles/visual-novels-in-america>