

Round 2/5: A video-based eLearning unit

This report (form) is a re-mix taken from <http://www.f4.htw-berlin.de/~weberwu/didaktics/Report-form.shtml> and the one from the Moodle forum.

At a glance

Round	2/5 - a video-based eLearning unit
Tester	Alexander Kluge
View Date	03.12.2011
Name of unit	Machinimas: Kreative Spiel-Filme
Who offers the unit?	eVideo 2.6 »Film/Video 2.0« - HTW eLearning project
Producer	Matthias Löwe (hosted by Anja C. Wagner and Fabian Topfstedt in the background)
URL	http://blip.tv/evideo/machinimas-kreative-spiel-filme-5721158
Stated learning goals	Understanding machinimas in general
Overall rating (1-10, 10 best)	8 - in comparison to 1st unit. 10 - without comparison.
Minutes needed	33 (+10min transcribing the video, +120min writing the report as a blog post and PDF)

Overall summary of the unit

The unit is a video-based eLearning unit about machinimas. Matthias cratches the history of machinimas while showing a lot of good examples. It gives you the impression that the idea of machinimas is not that new to you as non-gamer or casual gamer. After the unit you very much want to start creating those movies as it appears not so difficult to accomplish.

Detailed Experience

Did the given time suffice?

There was no time given for the unit. I'd see it more like an introduction to the subject itself. It's a starting point from where you can personally continue the journey - this is a typical approach of eVideo online sessions. The learner shall take its own steps while Anja C. Wagner (the host in the unit) and the expert (Matthias) provide good starting points and links.

Short synopsis of the unit

Machinimas are a combination and play on words comprising: Machine + Animation + Cinema. So what you basically want to achieve with those is creating movies using game graphics engines. It all started with Doom in 1993 where so-called speed runs were done, demonstrating how fast a player could run through a game's level while standing in competition with others.

Matthias goes into detail when he talking about in-game editors, story and video cutting while giving vivid examples, like Stunt Island (1992) in which you build your own routes or the 1k Project (2007) in which 1000 cars are film synchronously.

In the end he opens a discussion to join (speaking metaphorically). For him it's the constraints of the game and game engine which make machinimas interesting to work on. Therefore it's often a challenge against the game itself and its limitations.

One last very interesting part was the term »Creative Gaming« (2010) which is said to mean that a group of people act together on a machinimas - Matthias called it digital puppet theatre.

Reflection on your personal learning experience

I felt in warm and good hands being guided by Matthias. While he sometimes seemed a bit stiff - probably nervous - he did a good convincing job of telling me about machinimas. For me this is a reference I'd refer to anyone new to the topic and recommend every interested person.

No questions arose about things he mentioned. He spoke clear with a clear structure and order. As a visual person, I felt very much attracted by the visual hands-on way of giving me an understand of machinimas.

Though, I must admit it was - compared to my first text-based unit - less good with regard to the practical application. Without comparison to the first unit, it'd have been a 10 out of 10 as it serves "only" as introduction. The text-based unit I reviewed before did you hints, code, and a demo to work on by yourself.

Did you achieve the stated learning goals?

As I said for an introductory unit I'd say that I got an idea of machinimas and feel attracted by the topic as it gives you just another way of telling your stories in a transmedial way.

Comment on the design - what was good, what could be made better?

The unit was a vivid mixture of theory (background) hands-on examples. As an introduction into the topic it was (almost) perfect - I don't know how it could have been much better.

I found it good that he very much stood in the background moderating the slides, preventing to show off himself as the expert or something like that.

To sum it up, the unit was adequately and very good designed!

Conclusion / Positive and negative aspects of the unit

Pro: He uses a very good structure, is very little showing off, and doesn't do too much talking/moderation while putting the games into focus.

Contra: He's a little stiff, sometimes.

Indifferent: He's not a fascinating speaker like you know from TED talks. It could be seen as a contra but I think this is ok for the target group which are not or little experienced people with regard to machinimas.

Further reading

Matthias also delivered some really great links for further reading. These were:

Biggest Machinima portal – <http://www.machinima.com/>

Machinima film festivals and awards:

- <http://mmif.wordpress.com/>
- <http://www.bitfilm.de/festival/>
- <http://www.machinima-expo.com/>

Random artists:

- <http://litfusefilms.com/movies/> (Recht anspruchsvolle Kurzfilme)
- <http://zeitbrand.de/> (Friedrich Kirschner)
- <http://www.accursedfarms.com/movies/fm/> (Freeman's Mind)
- <http://www.pixeleyesproductions.com/> (Shelf Life)
- <http://www.rockstargames.com/videos/video/4861> (Red Dead Redemption with John Hillcoat, the Hollywood director of "The Road")

News:

- <http://goodnews.antville.org/>
- The channels of <http://machinima.com> an <http://kotaku.com>
- The news of the film makers themselves
- <http://creative-gaming.eu/>

Events:

- <http://play11.de/> – Festival für kreatives Spielen (3.-5.11., Bahnhofspassagen Potsdam, Ausstellung/Talks/Workshops)
- A MAZE - <http://amaze-festival.de/blog/night-machinima-iii-wtf-di-27september-2011>, Night of Machinima (every end of the month machinimas in the cinema, with workshop before!)

Transcript of the unit

1. Machinima

- Machinima = Machine + Animation + Cinema (1998, Hugh Hancock)
- Film aus Spielen machen schon früh, z.B.
 - Speedruns in Doom (1993),
 - Trickjumps in Quake III (1999),
 - Fragmovies in CounterStrike (2000), v.a. um mit Anderen zu teilen und zu zeigen, wie gut man spielen kann.

Editoren, Storys & Videoschnitt

- Stunt Island (1992)
 - Strecken zusammenbauen und mit Auto abfahren
- Uwe Girlich: LMPC (1996)
 - Editieren im Spiel selbst
 - mit Quake-Engine
- The Sims 2 (2004)
- 1k Project (2007)
 - 1000 Autos werden gleichzeitig gefilmt dargestellt
- Anna (2003)
 - Vogel wird zum Fokus im Film
- GTA IV (2008)

2. Demo

- Praktisches Beispiel: Garry's Mod (Aufnahme mit dem Tool FRAPS)

3. Spielraum

- Einschränkungen durch Spiel bzw. Spielelemente selbst
 - Wahl des Spiels zum Filmemachen nach seinem Interaktions-Spielraum
 - bietet Möglichkeiten zur kreativen Regiearbeit
 - Spannend: Kreativer Spielraum im Spiel vs. lineares Skript im Film
 - Spiel mit dem Spiel (selbst)
 - oft schwer zu kontrollieren

- Vision des Filmemachers vs. die Intention des Spiels
- Creative Gaming (2010)
 - mehrere Personen arbeiten synchronisiert zusammen
 - Digitales Puppentheater
- Beispiel: Freeman's Mind, 2007 (Half Life 1 gesprochen)
- Beispiel: Ill Clan (2003)