gameZ&ruleZ 2017: Non-human Cultures of Play. Motivational Design for Animal and Robot Games/AI

Zurich, Walcheturm 10th - 12th November 2017

Abstracts

Hanna Wirman, PolyU, (Hong Kong). Non-human animal play: Games' potential for overcoming differences.

Dr. Hanna Wirman introduces how play is an activity shared by a multitude of species, while humans stand out because of our use of technologies in play. The talk addresses possibilities for learning from non-human animal play and for creating games to those truly 'Others'. Hanna draws from her experiences of designing digital games for orangutans in Indonesia since 2011.

Michelle Westerlaken, Malmö University (SWE). Imagining Non-Speciesism: On Playful Encounters with Cats, Dogs, Ants, and Penguins

Taking a critical approach to the treatment of animals in our society, Michelle Westerlaken, PhD candidate at Malmö University, will discuss how the design of playful artefacts for and with other species could transform our relationships with animals. By discussing recent examples and sharing some of her own projects, she exemplifies the notion of 'doing multispecies philosophy' with game design.

Gordan Savicic (CH). Animal upgrade – BioPong and other game experiments

From early maze solving machines to feral toy robots, artists and scientist extensively used animals and insects in communication experiments, networking simulations, new media artworks, games and speculative designs. In this talk, I highlight playful and sensorial interactions between human, non-human and insects through an overview of artworks and species.

Lukic Yanick (CH). Deep Learning as a Game Technology

Recent achievements of neural networks competing in complex games like Go or Dota 2 have started a big movement in this research area focusing on the training of networks to mimic human players for a variety of games. But there are many other areas in games where deep learning can be applied. In my still young research I am investigating where deep learning can be applied to help in the game design process and enable new possibilities of games.

Günter Hack (Österreich). NPC and Me. How to become a Non-Player Character.

You can learn absolutely nothing from this talk, because you are already in the know. One doesn't have to read William Gibson or Donna Haraway or watch Blade Runner 20-whatnot in order to be hep to the fact that we are already surrounded by myriads of softbots, hardbots, replicants, animal companions and cyborgs in our everyday life. So the question is not: „Am I a bot?“ but „How much of a bot am I?“ In this context, the notion of the Non-Player Character (NPC), a seemingly well-established concept from the games world might become fruitful and even bloom into a full-fledged Theory of the Non-Player.

Michael Cook (UK) "Are You Real?" - Lessons About Humanity From A Game-Designing AI

If we replaced every game designer with an AI, who would care? Would players? Would journalists? Would you? In this talk, Computational Creativity researcher Mike Cook talks about building an AI game designer: how it went from abstract shapes to games about environmentalism; how people fell in love (and hate) with it; and what all of this tells us about the future for developers, both human and AI.

Daniel Bisig (CH). Mating Dance of Robots

Theories of evolutionary aesthetics suggest that aesthetic preferences among animals and humans have emerged as adaptations that improve survival and reproductive success. The project "Courtship" serves as a semi-serious test-bed for these theories. It employs a small society of love-sick robots that engage in colourful display behaviour in order to impress their potential mates.

Sarah Celebioglu (D) & Livio Lunin (CH). "Tough Love. Building NPCs That Matter

How can a meaningful relationship between the user and a non player character be created in a small indie game? We show different approaches how an empathic bound can be build up through customized game mechanics, how they enhance the identification of the user with his avatar and the immersion into the whole game experience. Exploring different game milestones as Tamagotchi and Ico, as well as own experiments on the topic.