

Daniel Shafer

Communication Studies

Psychological Dynamics of Mobile Game Play: Expanding the Video Game Enjoyment Model

Tablet computing is a worldwide phenomenon that is rapidly gaining in popularity. Competition in the field is growing as multiple developers have released their own tablet computers into the marketplace. One of the most touted functions of these hand-held tech powerhouses is their capacity for gaming. In fact, a recent Google survey reports that gaming is the number one use for tablet devices, coming in even ahead of email. Many games have simply been adapted from consoles (e.g., XBOX 360) to tablets. Still others are casual games played on handheld units (e.g., smartphones) that have been reformatted for tablets. This project proposes to investigate how these tablet games compare to their counterparts (played on larger and smaller screens; i.e., on consoles and phones) in terms of enjoyment.

This question opens an important line of inquiry that will give important insight into the implications of mobile gaming as a pastime. For instance, will the constant availability of portable games enhance or detract from the quality of our work, family, and social lives? Will increased exposure to certain (violent) genres of mobile games increase the likelihood of negative effects such as addiction? This project seeks to provide a starting point to discuss these implications by using the recently proposed Video Game Enjoyment Model (Shafer et al., in press). Originally developed here at Baylor University to investigate the determinants of enjoyment of motion-based video games, the model is highly adaptable to other new gaming formats; and considers the impact of realism, presence, and interactivity on enjoyment of playing games.

This project is needed now because, in the ever-growing field of the study of the psychological effects of playing video games, mobile devices have not yet been considered. I and my colleagues have already broken new ground in terms of the examination of new video game technology in a foundational piece that is set to appear in *Presence: Teleoperators and Virtual Environments* (Shafer, et al., in press).

Since the popularity of mobile devices is on the rise, new knowledge on the potential impact of this technology is vital to our understanding of how gaming is becoming more and more integrated into our lives. It is my desire that Baylor be the focal point of this research, and that I as a scholar and we in the department of Communication Studies be first to accomplish work in this area.