

Jérôme DUPIRE

Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers
Paris, France

Anne-Mie Sponselee

Fontys Hogeschool Mens en Gezondheid
Eindhoven, The Netherlands

Context

Originally designed for entertainment purposes and dedicated to a young population of gamers, video games have grown up during the last decades.

As a consequence, *the variety of the population concerned with video games has changed* as well. Until now, the target group of elderly people had never been privileged by the industry, whereas the first generations related to the video game (currently between 40 and 50 y.o.) are growing older and will become the next challenge of the video game industry.



Current Situation

When talking about video games for the elderly, the current trend will quickly move towards games with simple gameplay and simple interactions.

The Wii has become the most popular platform in this context with its "party game" style and its simple controllers (especially the Wii mote), which allow gesture based interaction.

The offer available for older players is therefore far from complete. **Since the huge majority of mainstream video games offer very few accessibility options, older players are de facto excluded from most video game experiences.**



Esport

The esport scene is growing rapidly and the competitions involving aged players are rare but already exist and develop from year to year. This track is another opportunity to get developers to improve the accessibility of their video games and consider innovative game configurations (from an hardware, software or regulatory point of view).



Accessibility and Fun

How do we ensure that older gamers have or keep access to video games ?

Even though some researchers recently studied the relationship between video games and elderly people, it was (and still is) mostly in the context of serious or applied games ('games with a pur-pose'). Only a few of them have addressed the issues of fun and player engagement for older players.

However, both are needed to ensure a good user experience.

Inspiration

Research on game design for elderly people has to be emphasized (at least for an obvious demographic reason), especially in order to become a source of inspiration to design or identify best practices that could be generalized for the improvement of inclusion (meaning everybody, not only the inclusion of elderly people) in the mainstream video game production. Indeed, *if a game design fits for older gamers, it means that the content and gameplay is relevant, engaging, and/or fun for this population and is accessible to it* (from a cognitive, motor and/or sensory point of view). It might lead us to propose new directions to the existing game accessibility guidelines.

Mixing players with various capacities

The aim of our work is to prove that designing for and with elderly people is beneficial. Indeed, the game will have to be very adaptable, due to the huge variety of gamers abilities profiles. This will lead to create new design processes and to find new solutions. This game flexibility will serve all the players, allowing them to tune the game according to their skills/abilities.

Références

- [1] Astell A, Alm N, Dye R, Gowans G, Vaughan P, Ellis M. LNCS, Springer-Verlag 2014;8547(1);264-271 doi:10.1007/978-3-319-08596-8_42
- [2] Salmon JP, Dolan, SM, Drake RS, Wilson GC, Klein RM, Eskes GA. Entertain Comput 2017;21:45-64 ISSN 1875-9521 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.entcom.2017.04.006>.
- [3] De Schutter B, Nap H-H, Brown JA, Roberts AR. Gerontechnology 2014;13(2):277 doi:10.4017/gt.2014.13.02.131.00
- [4] <https://www.includification.com>
- [5] <http://gameaccessibilityguidelines.com>
- [6] Silver Geek Tournament 2018 Gamers Assembly, Poitiers, France

Contacts

jerome.dupire@cnam.fr
a.sponselee@fontys.nl