Design Research: Creating User Personas, Comparative Analysis
Assignment #4: CMS.301, Spring 2016

Summary: This is an exercise in user research: first defining potential users, and then investigating features common to games they use and play.

Learning Goals: Practice user research techniques. Define a potential user by constructing a user persona. Research games, using comparative analysis to determine features that appeal to your user.

Key Dates:
- Session 7: Research methods introduced and discussed in class; teams formed, potential 'user personas' chosen.
- Session 8: Presentation. Introduce and describe your user persona, explaining why they are a good representative use. Then, detail the features common to games your user plays, and explain why those features are important your user.

Description: Your team is researching 'free to play' digital games for a client. You need to research their target user, and the games they play. This group assignment (3 - 4 students) has three phases: the creation of a user persona, a comparative analysis of existing games, and an in-class report describing game features that appeal to your team's persona.

First, your team should choose a picture from this image set. Create a single user proto-persona, describing their characteristics and features. Work with your team to agree on your persona's qualities, but please take note: no college students! User personas help development teams understand people who are not represented in the team.

Key Facts:

- Name, Age, Occupation, Gender
- Gaming & computer experience
- 'About' Section - a brief description of who they are /what they do.
- Game playing patterns: when do they play games, how long, under what conditions?
- Goals: Why do they play games? What experience are they seeking? (Social, competitive, relaxation, time passing, etc.???)
- Actions: What do you imagine them doing as they play games.

Next, identify 3 - 4 games (digital, free to play) your persona is likely to play. Analyse the games, identifying each game's primary features, and which features the games have in common. For each game, what appeals to your persona? Which of the game's features are a negative or a turn-off to your persona? Why? Which features would be good candidates to include in a game that appeals to your user? Again, why?

As a group, write a maximum one page summary of the analysis, and upload that and your user persona to the course website by Session 9. You need only submit one copy for the group, but make sure each team member has their name on the paper.

Present your results during crit on Session 8. Introduce and describe your persona's key characteristics, and present the results from your comparative analysis, particularly which features are most important to your user and why. Presentations should be no longer than 10 minutes long. Expect to have a few minutes of group discussion and questions after your presentation.

CMS.301 Introduction to Game Design Methods
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