Archiving Game Culture
… on the Messy Web

Henry Lowood
Stanford University Libraries

Society of California Archivists, 12 April 2013
Software Preservation and Game Studies @ Stanford

- Silicon Valley Archives
- Cabrinety Collection
- How They Got Game
- Research: Game Studies
- Exhibit Curation
- Machinima Archives
- Preserving Virtual Worlds
- - Archive-It
- Archiving Virtual Worlds
- IGDA Preservation SIG
Project Timeline

- Foundation
- The Cabrinety Collection
- Goals
- How They Got Game
- Research
- Preserving Virtual Worlds
- Implementation
- IA Collections, Archive-It …
Topics for today

- Goals, Tasks, Challenges
- Game performance archives and IA Moving Image Collections
- PVW and Archive-It
  - Example: The discovery problem
  - Example: Collecting decisions
  - Example: Web messiness and the limits of crawl
- Wrap-up, with a pitch for collaboration

Slide source: SodaHead, http://goo.gl/HYLT0
Game Art, Game History, Game Shows by HTGG
8 September, 2009 - 14:30 - Matteo Bittanti

What have we been working on in the past few weeks? Here's a brief update:
Harry Lowood: *The Complex History of Punch* (PDF), a chapter of a special issue of *IEEE Annals in the History of Computing* co-edited by Lowood.


Nicholas Winder: *All Your History Are Belong To Us*, a new game show that examines the history of specific game brands, in this case, no.

Stay tuned for more!

Matteo Bittanti's blog  add new comment


Salient tasks and challenges (c. 10 years ago)

1. Build emulation test-beds.
2. Build a game performance archive \(\bowtie\) IA Moving Image Collections
3. Build archives of design documents, source code, digital assets, and ancillary documentation of game development \(\bowtie\) Archive-It
4. Stabilize representative artifact collections in museums and archives.
5. Collaborate.

*Addendum:* Build Tools as Shared Resources
Build a Game Performance Archive
The Machinima Archive
Archiving Virtual Worlds

The Virtual Worlds video archive is dedicated to the academic investigation and historical preservation of documentation of virtual worlds.

This collection is a collaborative effort of the How They Got Game Project of the Stanford Humanities lab, as part of the Preserving Virtual Worlds project funded by the National Digital Information Infrastructure Preservation Program (NDIIPP) funded by the U.S. Library of Congress. Groups at the University of Illinois, University of Maryland, and Rochester Institute of Technology are also partners in this important project.

1. Online Traveler: AVATARA
   Documentary by 536 Productions - Donato Mancini, Jeremy Turner & Patrick "Flick" Harrison
   (2003)
   85 downloads

2. EA-Land: The Final Countdown
   44 downloads
PVW and Archive-It
The discovery problem

The unofficial DEM format description

Uwe Girlich, girlich@aix520.informatik.uni-leipzig.de

t0.2, 7/30/96

This document describes the DEM file format. This file format is the result of "recording" a game in Quake. This documentation covers the versions 0.91 through 1.01.

1. Introduction
   - 1.1 Recording and Playback
   - 1.2 Versions

2. Basics on the used client/server architecture

3. Some remarks on the used demo format
   - 3.1 Advertising
   - 3.2 Difference to DOOM
   - 3.3 Opportunities of the DEM format
   - 3.4 Problems of the DEM format

4. Some general remarks on the recording structure
   - 4.1 Entity
   - 4.2 Life-cycles

5. File structure
   - 5.1 Block of Messages
   - 5.2 Message
   - 5.3 Auxiliary routines

6. List of all message types
Search works (Bing or Google) but no context.
Google Groups offers context … if we know where to look
Now we know when and where it appeared, but will this be preserved?
This will take us to the document.

ANNOUNCEMENT: DEM file spec 0.0.1

1 post by 1 author

Uwe Girlich

Hello QUAKE players,

I just finished my DEM (recording) file spec. It is totally incomplete but better than nothing. It can be found at http://www.physik.uni-leipzig.de/~girlich/games/doc/dem.html

Text- and PostScript-versions are available as well.

DEM-0.0.1 is the

“Unofficial DEM format description” version 0.0.1

It covers all known aspects of DEM files for QUAKE (Shareware 0.91 and 0.92).

Uwe Girlich, 7/7/96
gir...@aix520.informatik.uni-leipzig.de
And here it is.
Archive-It search in Digital Games collection.
Let’s follow these results to documents from Gamers.org.
Different take on context – documentation of Girlich’s activity in group.
The unofficial DEM format description

Uwe Girlich, girlich@ai5z20.informatik.uni-leipzig.de

v1.0.2, 7/30/96

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Archive-It delivers the document.
Collecting decisions
Archiving Virtual Worlds

Welcome to Archiving Virtual Worlds

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Most Downloaded Items Last Week

2. EA-Land: The Final Countdown 44 downloads
The final moments of EA-Land.
Archiving Virtual Worlds, metadata editor

Field Name | Description | Value
---|---|---
identifier | The identifier of the movie | EALand_FinalCountdown

title | The title of the movie | EALand: The Final Countdown

creator | Producer | How They Got Game Project, Stanford University

mediatype | Indicates to the website that this item is a movie. | movies

collection | Indicates to the website what collection this item belongs to. Must be a valid identifier. | virtual_worlds

description | These are the last few minutes of EA-Land at the Sea You Soon Party in EA Town Hall, hosted by EA's Parian. Tears are shed, final goodbyes are made, and lasting memories are created before the plug is pulled and the world is brought to an end. The party was held in the Community Pub (Test Center 3) and EA Town Hall (EA-Land), beginning Thursday, July 8ist, 11 p.m and with a scheduled ending of 4 a.m PST. The game world was officially shut down as of 4:35am PST, August 1st, 2008. If you have a fast connection, I recommend downloading the high quality DivX version on the left.
The EA-Land Blog has been taken down, but more information about the event can | 2008

subject | Year of this movie (YYYY) | EA-Land: The Sims Online; Archiving Virtual Worlds

language | English

coverage | The extent or scope of the content of the resource (geographic place, temporal period, jurisdiction). For example, the place the work took place. | EA Town Hall, EA-Land
Archiving Virtual Worlds, “coverage” field in metadata
Documentation about a lost world in Virtual Worlds & MMOs.
EA-Land Blog

Allakhazam Contest
Posted in Fun by Partizad on the May 19th, 2008

Check out all the details on Allakhazam's EA-Land contest!

9 Comments

ATM Refunds
Posted in Simoleon, Real Life by Partizad on the May 19th, 2008

Happy Friday, everyone!

We are in the process of refunding simoleons bought through ATMs. If you have not received yours yet, you should receive it in the next few days.

14 Comments

Another Bug Fix!
Posted in Bugs by Partizad on the May 19th, 2008

We believe we’ve fixed the bug where some players could not go to certain houses.

Thanks again Randy! You rock. I’ll stop writing inappropriate stuff on your whiteboard, I guess.

18 Comments

Custom Content (Again!)
Posted in Bugs by Partizad on the May 19th, 2008

From your feedback, some people were able to retrieve their lost custom content, and some weren’t. That’s very peculiar to say the least. We have not seen any reports of custom content disappearing since yesterday’s update. Yay Randy! Thank you for fixing that for us.

So... Now, apparently, I’m having issues approving custom content for both servers. I’m crossing my fingers that we can fix it by this weekend.

6 Comments

Fixing Custom Content & Login Issues

The Search

The Pages
- About
- Alex
- Audrey
- Cinday
- Erst
- Greg
- Larry
- Laurent
- Lee
- Lusi
- Margaret
- Mark
- Michael
- Mork
- Partizad
- Paul
- Randy
- Sarah
- Sung
- Vidhbha

EA-Land Homepage
Download Game Installer
My EA Account

Recent Posts
- Allakhazam Contest
- ATM Refunds
- Another Bug Fix!
- Custom Content (Again!)
- Fixing Custom Content & Login Issues
- PayPal/Refund
EA-Land blog, April 2013, via Google search.
Documentation & the messy web
Amazon flash mob mauls Spore DRM
EA’s big title gets 1-star rating
By Austin Modine - Get more from this author
Posted in Applications, 10th September 2008 00:21 GMT
Free whitepaper - EMA advanced performance analytics report

For software that appeals to a wide audience like EA’s latest title, the average person gets a good taste of how digital

CONSUMER

Want Consumerist in your inbox? We will.

SPORE

Amazon Pulls Negative Reviews, Reinstates Them
By cowllers  September 12, 2008

Earlier today, about 2200 reviews of the game Spore disappeared from Amazon.com, almost all of them negative. Did Amazon censor or edit customer reviews based on their content? We'd only remove a review if it fell outside our guidelines. Spore's rating is back to a single star, and it's #5 on Amazon's video games chart.

"Amazon temporarily gags Spore critics, deletes and restores all customer reviews"
[ArsTechnica] (Thanks to Nathan!)
The documentation – Amazon.com reviews.

Most Helpful Customer Reviews

Most Recent Customer Reviews

3X points on airtime
2X points on purchases in select U.S. stores

32
Search for *Spore* in Digital Games collection.
These are documents that have been tagged.
Back to basic search
Archive-It delivers review page from 13 Sept. 2008 (was not captured by archive.org).
And here are the reviews from the anti-DRM campaign.
Key ingredient: Collaboration
Thank You!

- Henry Lowood
- Email: lowood@stanford.edu
- [http://howtheygotgame.stanford.edu](http://howtheygotgame.stanford.edu)
- @Liebenwalde on Twitter