Systems of Love
Towards an Understanding of Designing for Romance

Jane Pinckard
Associate Director: Center for Games and Playable Media
Self-Intro
Self-Intro
The Game I Want to Make

Pride and Prejudice

A sophisticated comedy of manners and mores
An Intimate Multiplayer Online Game
Blue Ocean

BLUE OCEAN STRATEGY
How to Create Uncontested Market Space and Make the Competition Irrelevant

W. Chan Kim • Renée Mauborgne

HARVARD BUSINESS PRESS

OVER TWO MILLION COPIES SOLD

International Bestseller
WHO PLAYS COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES?

72%

of American households play computer or video games.

The average game player age is:

37

AGE of Game Players

18% under 10 years
53% 10-49 years
29% 50+ years
Pride and Prejudice

A sophisticated comedy of manners and mores
The Current State of Love (Single Player)
Love as a Plot Device
Love as a Spreadsheet

Plan the Coming Week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study the Arts</td>
<td>Study the Arts</td>
<td>Study the Arts</td>
<td>Study the Arts</td>
<td>Study the Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read a Book</td>
<td>Read a Book</td>
<td>Read a Book</td>
<td>Read a Book</td>
<td>Read a Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go Visiting</td>
<td>Go Visiting</td>
<td>Go Visiting</td>
<td>Go Visiting</td>
<td>Go Visiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go Outside</td>
<td>Go Outside</td>
<td>Go Outside</td>
<td>Go Outside</td>
<td>Go Outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do Needlework</td>
<td>Do Needlework</td>
<td>Do Needlework</td>
<td>Do Needlework</td>
<td>Do Needlework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>Rest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Begin the Week

Willpower | Wit | Talent | Kindness | Propriety | Sensibility | Energy
---|---|---|---|---|---|---

Love as Mouseclicks
Love as a Progression of Screenshots

Apologize for not having the answer
Ask why he doesn't just give it a shot

I guess there's only one thing I can do.
Love as Simulation
Love as Narrative
Love as Discovery
Love as Achievement

First Knight

10 points

Date: 6/11/2009
Status: Unlocked and uploaded

Description:
Experienced the thrill of romance with Alistair
EXPERIENCE =

USABILITY/ANALYTIC + DESIGN/CREATIVE

Left-Brain Functions
- Analytic thought
- Logic
- Language
- Science and math

Right-Brain Functions
- Holistic thought
- Intuition
- Creativity
- Art and music
Designing for Love
1. Make use of Adrenaline-filled Moments
2. Let the Player Express Herself
3. Allow for Vulnerability
4. The Object of my Affection is Unique
Designing for Love

- Hand-coded, hand-scripted games are resource-intensive and inefficient.
- Currently many modern games do not offer much room for self-expression.
- There is very little unpredictability in modern game systems.
- Customized experiences are difficult to achieve.
"I know you're not real, but somehow, I don't know, I love you."
Grail GM

- A dynamic quest generation system that responds to, and keeps track of, state changes in the world and in other characters.
- Individual lines of dialogue are still written out but they are freed from traditional dialogue trees and quest flagging systems.
The Future of Systems for Romance

“Social physics” game.
Heart of Shadows
Heart of Shadows

- Responsive: the player feels that characters (and the world) respond to her choices.
- The characters feel alive because they are aware of world state changes, and they are also aware of interaction between each other.
- The system allows emergent narrative blended with some scripted elements.
- Paving the way for natural language input.
Love is a Battlefield!

![Image of Mr. Darcy from Pride and Prejudice]
Thank you