InGAME
INTERNATIONAL

Games in/between China and the West

April 12-13 2022

Conference Proceedings

Dr Hailey Austin, Charly Harbord, Dr Robin Sloan

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Introduction

The Chinese gaming market is known as a global powerhouse, generating billions of pounds of revenue and interacting with nearly 700 million gamers. The rapid growth of the Chinese gaming industry has drawn the attention of scholars and game producers alike, both eager to understand the political, social, and commercial side of the Chinese games market and gaming culture. Increasingly, UK games companies have been looking to 'break into' the Chinese market, but have been met with challenges including cultural differences, the language barrier, regulatory issues, and a lack of knowledge of the Chinese gaming culture.

This conference invited talks from researchers in China, the UK/Europe, and beyond, with a focus on cross-cultural (China-West) research in games. We aimed to bring together researchers from different regions to build a better understanding of the opportunities and barriers to academic and industry collaboration.

Conference Website

Video presentations of all papers can be accessed via the conference website.

About InGAME International

InGAME International is an international consortium of games industry stakeholders brought together from industry, agencies and universities to investigate the challenges to, and deliver solutions that support, international collaboration between the videogames sectors in the UK and China.

InGAME International will develop a transnational community of industrial and academic partners to provide a platform for UK-China partnership growth. We will foster this community through four interconnected mechanisms: Partnership Events - to stimulate new interactions between UK and China organisations; Partnership Support - to reduce barriers of regulatory, cultural and technical risk; Investor Forums - R&D led products and services can be showcased to potential investors in a supportive environment; and Development Activities - that will deepen links in the longer term by providing in-depth training to industry and academia in person and online.

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Conference Organisers

Dr Hailey Austin

Hailey Austin is a research and development fellow in transnational creative industries in the InGAME International team. Her current research focuses on identifying the challenges and opportunities for collaboration between the UK and Chinese games industries.

She also gives guest lectures for Abertay students on game studies, incorporating comics in game design, and caricatures and misrepresentations in games and comics.

She received her PhD in comics studies from the University of Dundee. Her personal research focuses on the intersection of games and comics, games as art, transmedia, female agency, and genre in comics and games. On top of academic publications, she is also an accomplished comics creator, having written Commando comics for DC Thomson and several public information comics that available for free online.

Charly Harbord

Charly is the InGAME International Project Coordinator in the division of Games and Arts. She is also the PI and Project lead on The Kilted Otter Initiative, a research-based extended game jam, and have received external funding totalling £52.5k from MG Alba, the Scottish Government, Bord na Gaidhlig, and Xpo North for the project. She holds the position of the Women in Games applied game designer in residence. She is a visiting lecturer at Norwich University of Arts and Ontario Tech University. She is also a course contributor and external examiner at Ontario Tech University.

Dr Robin Sloan

Robin Sloan is a Senior Lecturer in Computer Arts at Abertay University in Dundee, Scotland. He was previously a game development professional with experience in both Game Art and Post-Production, and has 11+ years postdoctoral experience as a games academic. As an educator he specialises in teaching visual design for games. This includes 3D modelling, 2D image creation, and development in game engines. At Abertay, his primary teaching role involves leading final year Game Design and Computer Arts projects.

As a researcher and practitioner his main areas of interest are gaming nostalgia, visual design for games, and character design and development. In addition to being the Principal Investigator of InGAME International, he is also a Co-I on the main InGAME Creative Industries Cluster and is currently undertaking research on three other funded projects.

List of Contributors

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Dr Gabriele Aroni is Assistant Professor at the School of Cultural Technology of Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University. He taught at universities in Canada and worked as a designer at the Studio Roosegaarde in the Netherlands, as well as in Canada, England, and Italy. His research is situated at the intersection of architecture, game studies, cultural heritage, and semiotics. He published articles in Well Played, the Journal of Media Research, Annali di Architettura, Southern Semiotics Review, a book on Renaissance architecture (Mimesis 2016), and has a forthcoming book The Semiotics of Architecture in Video Games by Bloomsbury (2022). He presented at conferences in China, Canada, Romania, Portugal, and Italy. Dr Aroni is also a researcher at the Global Academic Alliance on a Community with Shared Future (Communication University of China, Beijing), the Multilanguage Cultural Heritage Lexis (University of Florence, Italy), and the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Cultural Heritage Sites.

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Sam, Li Mengqi, is a PhD student at Birmingham City University. His research explores the representation of China in both Western and Chinese video games, drawing on theories of (sinological) orientalism, discourse and cultural appropriation. In addition, his ongoing side-project focuses on finding meaning in Tetris. Nick Webber is Associate Professor in Media at Birmingham City University. His research focuses on (video)games, cultural history and identity, and explores the historical practices of player communities, and the concept of national culture in video games and cultural policy.

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Dr Philip Newall is a gambling researcher who is currently working as a postdoctoral researcher at Central Queensland University's Experimental Gambling Research Laboratory. Previous to this, Philip completed a PhD in Economics at the University of Stirling in 2016, before going on to do postdoctoral research fellowships at Technical University Munich and the University of Warwick. In 2020 Philip was a special advisor to the House of Lords Select Committee Enquiry on the Social and Economic Impact of the Gambling Industry.

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Xiyuan joined Loughborough University School of Design and Creative Arts as a Lecturer in Graphic Design in September 2021. Originally from Wuhan, China, Xiyuan was awarded a BA in Artistic Designing at Wuhan University, then an MA in Creative Arts Practice at Newcastle University, before obtaining a PhD from Loughborough University. Xiyuan's research interests include illustration, drawing, character design, visual representation, and sequential narratives. Their practice-based PhD project looked into the representation of Chinese ethnic minority people from an underexplored perspective, and a comic book was submitted as part of the research outcome. Apart from academic activities, Xiyuan continues to work as a creative practitioner. Xiyuan is a long-term contract illustrator for Visual China

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Abstracts

The Aesthetics of Xuanhuan Games and Chinese Cultural Heritage Between East and West: A Study of GuJian 3 and Sword and Fairy 7 (Dr Gabriele Aroni)

Digital games history has been dominated by Japan, North America, and Europe, both as major producers and consumers of games, each with its own styles and peculiarities. However, China is now by far the largest digital games market on the planet, both in terms of player numbers and expenditure (Newzoo 2021). This exceptional growth is naturally reflected in the local production of games, which, despite their large numbers and player base, are only now having more resonance in the West. Most importantly, even the most successful Chinese mobile games often do not display visual Chinese characteristics, such as King of Avalon (FunPlus 2016), inspired by the Arthurian cycle as the name suggests, or Arena of Valor (TiMi Studio Group 2016) the version of 王者荣耀 [Honor of Kings] for the overseas markets, purged of its Chinese cultural elements in favour of Western folklore. This paper will analyse what role Chinese cultural heritage plays in the characterization of its games, as well as the similarities and differences with the Western and Japanese traditions of game development, both from a ludological and aesthetic point of view.

The focus will be on the under-researched area of AAA Chinese digital games which display evident Chinese cultural elements and have been officially released for the Western market with a translation in – at least – the English language. The case studies will be 古剑奇谭三 GuJian 3 (Aurogon Shanghai 2018) and 仙剑奇侠傳七 Sword and Fairy 7 (Softstar Technology Beijing 2021), as two of the major and recent Chinese 玄幻 [xuanhuan] action RPG games released in the West on the digital delivery platform Steam and translated into English. Xuanhuan is a genre that mixes the traditional Chinese elements of 仙侠 [xianxia], with aspects borrowed from Western folklore. This is particularly notable in digital games – especially in RPGs such as the two case studies – as while the visual aspect and the story are mostly based on Chinese elements, several gameplay elements are drawn from Western as well as Japanese conventions. Indeed, many of the most successful digital games are rich in the representation of cultural heritage (Copplestone 2017), offering digital games a unique venue for the combination of tangible and intangible cultural heritage (Chen 2014).

Gujian 3 and Sword and Fairy 7 are, together with Xuan-Yuan Sword VII (DOMO Studio 2020), the latest instalments of the Chinese Paladin series, that since 1995 represents a staple of Chinese RPGs and that through its development helps us understand the evolution of Chinese digital games, as well as their reception overseas. From the clear wuxia style of the first Chinese Paladin games, to the xuanhuan style of the latest entries, they reflect the evolution of taste within China (Kong 2021). Moreover, the influences both in terms of gameplay and aesthetics give us an interesting insight on the unique results that these games are: from JRPG-inspired turn-based combat and general aesthetics similar to Final Fantasy (Square, Square Enix 1987–2020), to real-time combat and open world approach resembling Western games, in particular The Witcher series (CD Projekt RED 2007–2015). The reference to The Witcher series is in fact not arbitrary, as it is an example of local folklore – Polish and Mittel European in this case (Aroni 2020) – applied to a relatively typical Western RPG gameplay framework, not unlike the two case studies, and an interesting example of how cultural heritage can be promoted through digital games and their aesthetics.

Video Games, Historical Representation and Soft Power (Dr Iain Donald; Dr Nick Webber; Dr Esther Wright)

This paper will explore how historical video games have become tools for both UK/Western and Chinese 'soft power' or 'public diplomacy' (Nye 2004; Schneider 2005) and the role of historical representation in portraying cultural identity in the global marketplace. We ask what effect state interventions have on historical representation in and around video games, and how this representation can be put to work in the service of soft power. In addition, we consider how the combination of ownership that crosses regulatory contexts with pressures to make games internationally consumable shapes historical discourse in these spaces.

Games are becoming the largest entertainment platform of the early 21st century (e.g. Richter 2019), and are culturally important to states and other actors in international politics. Gaming popularity has increasingly attracted state support to build regional hubs, to retain and attract technically skilled workforces, and to use video games to promote cultural heritage, even as older games become cultural heritage themselves (Eklund et al. 2019). This growth was well underway before the COVID-19 pandemic led to national lockdowns and curtailed other creative industries, but as live events and person-to-person contact were inevitably reduced, games accelerated as surrogate social and cultural hubs.

In the United Kingdom, the drive to promote games led to Video Game Tax Relief (VGTR) measures being introduced in 2014 and the sector being deemed as a key part of the UK Industrial Strategy in 2017. Today, developers can qualify for significant tax relief if their game passes a points-based cultural test, which includes the allocation of specific points for games which 'contribute to or reflect British cultural heritage' (BFI 2019). Although there is warranted cynicism about the extent to which such interventions are about anything more cultural than differentiation in the global marketplace (Kim 2003), there is an expectation that the games that qualify not only represent British culture, but by doing so conduct cultural diplomacy (a subcategory of public diplomacy). Notably, VGTR has flowed to a range of recognisably British historical game makers, such as Creative Assembly, as well as to non-UK companies involved in historical representation. Rockstar Games is internationally renowned for games with extensive historical content, both within the games themselves and in a range of paratextual or ancillary materials (Wright 2022). It is also one of the companies that has benefited most significantly from the relief; indeed, almost half of all the tax relief since the scheme launched has been claimed by Rockstar and other large multinational corporations (Sony, Sega, Warner Media). Here, then, explicit cultural policy in support of video games becomes implicit cultural policy shaping historical discourse, in an ideologically specific British, or more generally Western, mould.

In China, public diplomacy has also been at the heart of the national promotion strategy under Xi Jinping, summarised in the idea of 'telling China stories well' or 'telling a good story of China' (讲好中国故事) alongside the notion of the 'Chinese dream' (中国梦; see Liu 2018; Huang & Wang 2019). These initiatives build on China's previous adoption of established international models of development in the cultural sector, for example the introduction in the mid-2000s of the 'creative industries' approach (O'Connor & Gu 2014). The outcomes of these approaches are visible in the extensive presence of Chinese television on streaming platforms, and in hugely successful games companies such as Tencent and NetEase. With that said, there continues to be deep-seated wariness of the video game medium. In August 2021, an editorial in state media outlet Economic Information Daily branded online games 'spiritual opium' (Goh & Shen 2021). Since then, tighter restrictions on the amount of time children can spend playing games have been introduced along with measures to increase inspections of online gaming companies to ensure that the time limits are being enforced.

The stricter additional regulatory environment is bringing into sharp contrast games that are made that reflect upon China's history and cultural heritage (e.g. Liboriussen & Martin 2020).

There is, of course, substantial evidence that history can be a contentious issue in the space of national media regulation in any case, articulated not only by governments but also through local game communities. For example, Company of Heroes 2 (2013) was famously withdrawn from sale by its Russian distributor due to public controversy about its representation of the Red Army in World War 2. The Chinese regulator, the National Press and Publication Administration (NAPA), has clear rules against copyright infringement and output that might infringe upon state security, but other guidelines are less precise. Creative work and media that 'endanger social morality or national cultural traditions' or 'promote cults and feudal superstitions' can be banned (Holmes 2021). China has typically maintained a much stricter regulation and management of the gaming industry than Britain, where the PEGI system, administered by the VSC Ratings Board, has been the main articulation of games regulation since 2012. However, more recent British governmental interventions have taken a specifically nationalist approach to historical work, involving open denouncement of projects critical of the country's colonial past, and suggestions that such work may not be funded in future (Adams 2021).

What does this mean for the nature and status of historical representation in and around video games? While state interventions such as VGTR support and shape one set of historical perspectives, the extensive ownership of game makers by companies regulated in China applies distinct and opposing pressures on historical issues, particularly the history of the last three centuries. Do desires to be 'localisation ready' (Kerr 2017: 126), within an increasingly nationalistic regulatory environment, threaten the capacity of games to offer thoughtful and challenging engagements with the past? Or are historical arguments relocated into paratextual material - trailers, supporting websites, etc. - to avoid regulatory problems with major studio outputs? And overall, how effectively is historical representation mobilised to project soft power through video games?

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The Racialization of Creativity from Outsourced to Platformed Game Production in China (Dr Aleena Chia)

Two narratives dominate Western discussions of game production in the Chinese context. On the one hand, outsourcing vendors in China are portrayed by US-based AAA developers as technically skilled but unimaginative workers that can reliably scale up the production of art assets according to detailed specifications. For example, several talks at the Game Developers Conference (GDC) advise that external development teams in China are not being paid to be creative but to deliver precise 3D art assets. Relatedly, these outsourced workers are deemed as lacking cultural capital to grasp the affective qualities of gaming brands and must be provided detailed briefs without room for interpretation. The depiction of Asians as less creative and more robotic, rule-oriented producers more suited to industrial and mechanical functions pervades Western design cultures (Irani, 2018; Amrute. 2016). In fact, Western game developers often discuss outsourcing and procedural content generation interchangeably—as scalable art solutions made possible by modularizing the art pipeline to separate ideation from production (Chia, Forthcoming).

From the late 1990s to 2005, China's formative game industry developed games pegged as copies or imitations of those by American and Japanese studios (Nakamura and Wirman, 2020). The early 2000s also saw China develop as a hub for global game publishers and entertainment conglomerates to outsource graphic assets. In the Western tech imagination, China's labour force has long been associated with rote memorisation and authoritarian compliance rather than the creativity needed to lead in the knowledge economy (Neves, 2020). More recently, China has recuperated its copycat image—known as 'shanzhai'—from connotations of counterfeit goods to that of skilled reproduction, providing an 'an alternative to Western-centric notions of design and innovation' and its 'individualistic notions of authorship, ownership, and empowerment' (Lindtner, 2020: 79). For example, the Chinese videogame conglomerate Tencent's success in the past decade and a half did not bank on the creativity of developers or quality of products per se. Instead, Tencent's unrivalled commercial success has been attributed to the repetitive structures of its pay-to-win designs and platform strategies such as its pre-existing client base of instant messaging service QQ and social networking service WeChat that have a near monopoly over the Chinese market (Chew, 2019).

Divisions between what is celebrated as ideation and production, creative and derivative are informed by racial capitalism: how global capitalist expansion assigns differential value onto labour, resources, and markets across regions and populations according to colonial divisions (Lowe, 2015). The counter-narrative of the Chinese videogame conglomerate platform strategies (Coe and Yang, 2021; Zhao and Lin, 2020) complicates Western ideologies that have historically entwined capitalist growth with innovation and creativity. The case of the Chinese games industry provides a pivotal case to understand the geopolitics of creativity as it plays out against a moving stage of racial capitalism. Drawing from a literature review on creativity in the Chinese games industry contextualised by a textual analysis of Western games journalism and talks from the Game Developers Conference, this paper presents a preliminary argument about how platformization provides a counter-narrative to the racialization of creativity in the Chinese games industry.

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Realism or Myth? Translating Chinese Parents into Growing Up for the West (Luo Haoxi)

Affected by increasingly stringent domestic regulations, China's video game industry has dropped to 6.4% revenue growth in 2021 compared to 20.7% revenue growth in 2020 (Ye, 2021). At the same time, China's game companies have found that exporting their games overseas is a good way to reduce risk and make a profit. While most studies of overseas Chinese games have focused on online games by major companies and their contribution to China's soft power (He, 2021; Liu & Zhang, 2019), this article examines two indie games, Chinese Parents(2018), and its authorised "western" version Growing Up(2021).

With almost the same mechanics and different characters and narratives, they both express the same nostalgia of childhood and the 1990s by simulating the life from toddler to the end of high school. After three months of its release, Growing Up received a "Very Positive" score of the 1149 user reviews, which proved its quality as an indie game. But considering Chinese Parents' massive media exposure and socio-cultural influence, despite better graphics, music, and narrative, Growing Up does not replicate the success of its predecessor. I argue that the different social, economic, and political contexts of the developers and players suggest a different encoding and reading of these two games. In short, Growing Up failed to maintain the realism of Chinese Parents.

Realism in video games is not simply the realistic representation within the game but a result of cooperation, debate, and negotiation among the developers, players, and the theme in different contexts. Bogost's "simulation gap" (Bogost, 2006:131-133) and Galloway's "congruence requirement" (Galloway, 2006:76) show that when player's everyday experience and social context find connection with the game, the meaning of the game emerges from the process of playing. Realist games like realist novels relate to residual, dominant, and emerging social formations, and express people's feelings, affects, and thoughts of being in a world (Williams, 1978, Jameson, 2013).

Made by two Chinese developers, Chinese Parents captures the reality of an urban child in China and makes a strong statement on China's education. When players use the techang 特长 (Traits) as weapons in the mianzidazhan 面子大战 (Face Duels), they complete the complicity with "Chinese parents", which reaches the biopolitical of Chinese education. And when players start a new game plus after the end of one generation, they will gain an inheritable buff from the last generation's career. After many generations, the child is born to be a genius and go to a good university without learning anything. It's a critical parody of social class inequalities. It not only provides a realistic experience for Chinese players but also an exotic education experience for players around the world, considering the popularity of "tiger parenting" in the west.

Growing Up is a more complex case. Authorised by Chinese Parents, the Polish company, Vile Monarch, kept the mechanics of time management, mini-games, and the final college entrance exam but change the context to American. There are ludonarrative dissonances (Hocking, 2009) in this game. When the game tries to provide a universal simulation of growing up in the western world, it is weird to take SAT at the end of the game. Another dissonance is between the massive repetition of labour in the learning mini-games, which is valid in Chinese Parents, and the narrative of American life. Growing up deleted the Face Duel and the inheritable buff, which turn the realism to a myth of the freedom of education and social equality (Sandel, 2020). To create the myth of "your life is in your hands", they reduced the difficulty and made it easier for players to get the highest score in the SAT, which is not true. In short, Growing Up failed to translate the realistic experience that Chinese Parents provided to a west context (O'Hagan, 2007; Bernal-Merino, 2014).

By comparing the two games and interviewing players from different contexts, this article will provide a better understanding of game realism, localisation, and translation.

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More Than Just Kung Fu and Steamed Buns – Representing Contemporary Chinese Pop Culture through the Indie Video Game 'Chinese Parents' (Dr Xiyuan Tan)

The indie video game 'Chinese Parents', developed by a studio based in mainland China, has gained significant popularity among players owing to its unique narrative and representation of contemporary Chinese pop culture. The game has won several indie game awards, and from the large number of English game review articles as well as requests for an English language pack on Steam, it is obvious that the game managed to obtain audiences from the western world.

Many representations of Chinese culture have been shown in the game, such as the 'Tiger mum' parenting style, the pressure of Gaokao among teenagers, and the unique 'face culture'. This paper specifically looks at the representation of contemporary Chinese pop culture in this game from a graphic communication perspective, covering character design, background/scenery design, and supporting illustration design. Certain elements of culture were selected and analysed, followed by discussions on clever ways of incorporating contemporary Chinese culture in visual designs, and how these elements speak to different groups of audiences. Finally, the conclusion summarises the success of this game, and gives suggestions for future visual designers of games with similar theme and motive: demonstrating contemporary Chinese pop culture, and potentially to western audiences, too.

Introduction

Video game and representation is a topic often discussed by media researchers. Representations of race and ethnicity (Brock, 2011; Cicchirillo and Appiah, 2014; Sisler, 2016), sexuality and gender (Dillon, 2016; Mejia and LeSavoy, 2018), and cultures (Phi, 2009; Schules, 2015) are some of the common areas that researchers debate on. Simulation games, due to their simulation of reality, can be powerful tools for education (Squire, 2003). Life simulation games, such as The Sims and RealLives, could educate players on contemporary issues in our real lives, for example capitalism and global citizenship (Sicart, 2003; Bachen, Hernández-Ramos and Raphael, 2012). This research specifically looks at a Chinese life simulation game Chinese Parents. By focussing on the graphics and illustrations in the game, the paper inspects the game from a graphic communication perspective. It discusses the visual representations of contemporary Chinese pop culture in the game graphics, and how those visual details could provoke resonance among Chinese players, as well as introduce a different China to western players.

Visual analysis

Representation of contemporary Chinese pop culture is shown explicitly in the character designs, not only in the dress and appearance of the characters, but also in the anime-influenced art style. As for dress and appearance, many student characters, including the protagonist, were designed to wear the most representational Chinese school uniform, which is a tracksuit set usually in the colour combination of white and blue. Other details include the class committee badge that appears on the primary school version of the protagonist, the hair fringe sticker written with personality adjectives and the checked shirt worn by the grown-up version of the male protagonist. The way the characters' eyes and face were drawn indicate the adoption of anime art style. Making the game appealing to Chinese audiences is certainly one reason for this, but considering how it combines with other details of Japan-influenced Chinese pop culture elements (such as the hair fringe sticker), the anime style can also be seen as an implication and representation of how Japan has impacted contemporary Chinese pop culture (Wu, 2021).

The background scenes were well designed to represent contemporary China, too. For example, duvets were drawn as folded up on the bed in the illustration of the parents' bedroom. Folding up duvets is an iconic Chinese custom that is still practiced nowadays. In the classroom background illustration, a Chinese flag is shown stuck above of the blackboard, and a class schedule is shown written near the side of the blackboard. These are also common practices in contemporary Chinese schools.

Another unique feature of the supporting illustrations in the game is that they have incorporated 'biaoqingbao', a type of internet meme in Chinese pop culture that were often used to reflect social issues (Jiang and Vásquez, 2020). The illustrations involving biaoqingbao memes were deliberately rendered in a simplistic, low-quality art style to match the aesthetics of biaoqingbao, while connecting with the player emotionally by showing humorous, familiar imagery that evoke strong response.

Conclusion

The popularity of Chinese Parents in both China and the west indicates that not only Chinese players but also westerners could become interested in the representation of the more contemporary perspective of China, apart from the commonly seen traditional perspective. The game successfully attracted Chinese players with life-simulation and nostalgia. On the other hand, the game initially appealed to western players with stereotypical elements (e.g., 'Tiger mum'), but then gradually introduce them to other aspects of contemporary Chinese pop culture that the western world seldom talks about. This successful game could serve as a good example for developers who aim to exhibit contemporary values of a culture that has long been represented through traditional spectacles.

Video Games with National Characteristics: Understanding British and Chinese Video Games (Sam, Li Mengqi; Dr Nick Webber)

This paper explores the concept of the nationally-inflected video game, considering how so called 'British' and 'Chinese' games operate to represent - and arguably to constitute – the nation. It draws upon example games including The Hobbit (1982), Untitled Goose Game (2019), Chinese Parents/American Parents (2018) and Oriental Empires (2016) to ask what it means for a video game to be British or Chinese, and how this is made apparent, both within the game and without. Specifically, we seek to go beyond reductive constructions of 'British' or 'Chinese' video games as those made in the UK or China, to resituate these conceptions in a global context. Here, we are explicitly sensitive to Stephen Mandiberg's (2021: 177-98) reminder that 'video games have never been global', and that it is only through the work of localisation that they are made globally legible and the friction of the global and the national is rendered invisible. What do the processes of localisation and regulation do to video games' nationality? How are tensions between what Koichi Iwabuchi (2004) has called 'cultural odour' and 'cultural fragrance' managed? And can a Chinese or British game be made by someone who is neither of these things, and lives in neither of these places?

While the global, or at least transnational, nature of the contemporary video games industry is widely acknowledged, the local, in its various dimensions, remains centrally important to our consideration of games. Local contexts (the nation, region or city) shape the production and consumption of games, and recent years have seen a significant increase in the diversity of local perspectives in Game Studies, in part due to the emergent sub-fields of Local Game Studies/Local Game Histories (e.g. Swalwell 2021). Thus while it is necessary to 'overcome methodological and conceptual nationalism' (Kerr 2017: 194) in studying video games, we must take care not to 'under-estimate the persistence of the "national" in the face of globalisation and transnational flows' (Hill 2016: 706). Indeed, Benedict Anderson (2006) famously argued that media is a key constituent of the nation, bringing together a national community around shared consumption practices which engage with a common set ofvalues and ideas.

Elements of national culture are rendered specifically visible in the ways in which national cultural policies shape so-called national video games industries, creating subsidy regimes intended to attract game businesses. In Europe in particular, these are often excused as cultural rather than economic interventions, in order to comply with state aid laws. The result of these positions are arguments made through policy that 'British' or 'French' video games, for example, can and should be recognised through state-led processes - usually 'cultural tests' (see Webber 2020). These tests present frameworks which define national video games, such that a 'British' (or other national equivalent) video game must be made in 'British' (or equivalent) territory, and reflect 'British' (or equivalent) interests. Although China does not have cultural policies which adopt this model, the idea of 'Chinese characteristics' - 有中国特色的 - is well established as part of the discourse of the Chinese nation.

Furthermore, the Chinese government has been generally supportive of some of the largest operators in the video game space, such as Tencent, although this relationship has also evidenced tensions. Much like 'British' games, 'Chinese' games made in China for a Chinese audience can be understood to speak to a specific local context, and can be expected to include a range of local cultural references.

It is straightforward to see such video games as national(istic), given the constraints of audience and context, but how can we think about games which are situated outside this simple space? These games might have been rendered 'global' through heavy localisation, itself a very locally-specific and inconsistent process (Ren and Li 2020), or made outside the

national context by a range of creators and for a range of audiences. Specifically, here, we are thinking about video games which offer complex and nuanced cultural representation – of Chinese, or British, characteristics - but which would not pass a cultural test focused on the location of their production. Should we see such games as not British, not Chinese, at all? Or should we celebrate their hybridity, or think of them as 'British+', say, or 'Chinese-'?

In drawing conclusions about these liminal but relatively common forms, we question the descriptive value of the 'national' game label while recognising the importance and persistence of the representation of national values, humour and cultural discourses.

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Intellectual Property Protection for Video Games (Dr Jia Wang; Dr Robin Sloan)

The paper examines intellectual property (IP) protection for both UK and Chinese games companies with digital contents as their key intangible assets. The objective is to evaluate the efficacy of the IP system and advocate a legal reform for a more efficacious legal system. The research questions of the paper are (1) whether the current IP law has afforded adequate protection for games; (2) how the IP legal regime can be reformed to effectively protect the industry whilst maintaining a delicate balance between IP owners and other stakeholders, like the platform and the end user. The primary focus of the paper in on copyright, which has been involved in most disputes over the contents. Moreover, it undertakes a broader approach to examine how other IPs, including patent and design, have been utilized by games developers to protect both contents and physical operating systems.

The current research on the IP protection of video games is much confined to the law per se and therefore unable to address the challenges brought by technologies. The literature lacks the understanding of the technological, social, and cultural factors that influence the making and enforcement of the law. Without a thorough understanding of the dynamics between the industry and the market, it is impossible to seek an optimal model of IP protection for video games. The paper examines how businesses selectively employ different IP strategies to maximize their profit. Based on the observation, it analyzes the rationale of those choices. It discusses how the IP legal concepts of originality, idea/expression dichotomy, novelty and inventiveness that underpin the creation of copyright, patent, and design rights have affected the choice of the route for protection. Deriving from the current movement of theorizing IP as a complex adaptive system, we argue that the modular structure of IP, particularly copyright, is incapable of providing efficacious protection to games in a new virtual world with immersive technologies and a significantly higher degree of interaction. A more holistic approach needs to be adopted for games.

This paper is divided into five sections. The first section categorizes digital games based on the criteria typically applied within the games industry, including genre classification and the impacts of platform, technologies, and user generated content on original game design. The second section develops the theoretical approaches from game studies to conceptualise what is and is not expression. The third section examines the development perspectives on the individual code, image, and audio components of games. At the highest level, the core and shell model separate gameplay (the core) from the representation of ideas within the game (the shell). However, this level of abstraction does not necessarily map well to copyright protection, if the assumption is that the original expression within games is constrained to its representational and dramatic elements. The MDA framework stresses a distinction between mechanics (the game rules) and dynamics (the operation and behaviour of those mechanics at run-time). Lastly, at the most granular level of game categorisation we can consider all the individual text, code, graphic, and audio-based elements that are generated as part of the production cycle. The fourth section examines the scenarios where patent and design rights have been utilized to protect games by examining relevant UK and Chinese cases involving IP disputes. It analyzes the rationale of the alternative routes of protection and the resultant legal implications for games companies. The final section recommends an optimal model for IP protection for games and concludes that IP as a complex adaptive system can well apply to the protection of games.

What are the odds? Lower compliance with Western loot box probability disclosure industry self-regulation than Chinese legal regulation (Leon Y. Xiao, Laura L. Henderson and Philip W.S. Newall)

Paid loot boxes are video game monetisation methods that provide randomised rewards of varying value. Loot boxes are prevalent internationally: approximately 60% of the highest-grossing mobile games in 'Western' countries contain loot boxes. In contrast, approximately 90% do in Mainland China (PRC).

The loot box purchasing process randomises what rewards the player will receive. Therefore, loot boxes have been considered conceptually akin to gambling. Loot box expenditure has been found to be positively correlated with problem gambling. Loot boxes may present a gateway to gambling for vulnerable consumers, e.g., children.

Many countries across the world are considering whether to regulate loot boxes. Belgium and the Netherlands have proactively 'banned' the sale of certain implementations of loot boxes. Although such a restrictive approach provides immediate consumer protection, it also limits players' consumer freedom and harms companies' commercial interests, and therefore may not be the ideal regulatory solution for all jurisdictions.

A less restrictive approach that balances consumer freedom with consumer protection is requiring companies to disclose the probabilities of obtaining randomised rewards from loot boxes, which is easy to implement and therefore incurs minimal compliance costs. Such a measure seeks to provide consumers with information to help them make more informed purchasing decisions, but does not limit the consumers' ability to purchase loot boxes.

Presently, this measure has been adopted as law only in the PRC, where a 95.6% compliance rate was previously observed. In other countries, such as the UK, the industry has instead generally adopted this measure as self-regulation. However, it is not known whether self-regulation acting alone, which does not have the same enforcement powers as the law (e.g., being able to impose financial penalties and injunctions against non-compliant companies), would be as effective at ensuring a high compliance rate.

Method: The 100 highest-grossing iPhone games on the UK Apple App Store on 21 June 2021 were surveyed to determine whether each game contained loot boxes, and if so, whether they disclosed probabilities.

Results: Of the 100 highest-grossing UK iPhone games, 75.0% contained loot boxes implemented by the game developer. Of the 75 games containing loot boxes, 64.0% (48 games) disclosed probabilities as required by Apple's self-regulation, whilst 36.0% (27 games) did not. A preregistered binomial test revealed that the UK disclosure rate of 64.0% was significantly lower (p < .001) than the 95.6% PRC disclosure rate.

Discussion and Conclusion: A subsample of games that were available in both the PRC and the UK had a particularly high disclosure rate of 94.3%. This suggests that PRC law may have had a 'spillover' effect and has enhanced consumer protection in other countries beyond its formal jurisdiction because some companies intending to market games in both countries may have simply decide to produce and distribute one PRC-law compliant version of the game to reduce compliance costs.

The results of the present study are conclusive as to legal regulation being more effective than industry self-regulation. Companies were statistically significantly more likely to disclose probabilities in the PRC where legal requirements applied than they were to disclose in the UK where only advisory-level industry self-regulation applied. Indeed, 31.6% more highest-grossing games disclosed probabilities in the PRC than did in the UK. Therefore, policymakers and regulators in countries such as the UK, where practically voluntary and

non-enforced industry self-regulation similar to Apple's is already in force, should nonetheless consider imposing loot box probability disclosure requirements as law to increase the rate of compliance and better protect consumers from potential loot box harms, e.g., overspending.

Self/Censorship: Transmedial Regulations Across The East/West (Dr Hailey Austin)

Media and content, including comics, films, and videogames have been regularly regulated and censored around the world. As a result, some countries have established self-censorship codes and/or national age rating systems, while others still impose legal regulations on transmedial content. This paper examines the differences in Western self-censorship in comics and films with Chinese legal regulations (hard rules) and self-censorship (soft rules) in video games. The research questions of the paper are: (1) How does censorship and regulation impact media and culture, through a comparison of the US in the 1940s/1950s and present-day China; (2) In what spaces are these regulations ignored?; (3) How can games companies utilise transmedia to circumvent censorship/ go against self-censorship?

This paper posits that in China, there are both hard rules (written regulations) as well as soft rules (unwritten, self-regulation) in the videogame space. When it comes to hard rules, in China all games published in China must go through a licensing and approval process with the National Press and Publication Administration (NPPA) to obtain a Publishing License and ISBN (App in China 2020; BOP 2018). Non-Chinese companies are also required to have a Chinese partner (Pilarowski, Yue and Ziwei 2021). In other countries, age rating systems have been developed to inform users about the content of their chosen product. However, China has not implemented an age rating system, and thus all content, including films, comics and videogames, must be suitable for every age. This has led to the adoption of soft rules of self-regulation from videogame companies applying for ISBNs, including the avoidance of LGBTQIA+ content.

When looking at current Chinese regulations in videogames, they often hark back to similar arguments made in the UK and US about comic books and films in the 1950s, via the Hays Code or Motion Picture Production Code (1934-1968) and the Comics Code Authority (1954). Though they often claimed to have the viewers' interest at heart, these codes inevitably created a backlash and hunger for stronger, raunchier content that was often sold as illegal/black market goods, including, Tijuana Bibles, smut magazines, slasher/sexploitation films, etc. These codes also led to the creation of specific genres that pushed against regulatory codes, such as the film noir genre and the underground comix movement. Similarly, in China many users are using VPNs to access what has been termed the 'grey market' of videogames, allowing them access to games that are not approved by the NPPA and/or have been banned in China. These games tend to display content that is violent, sexual and political. As such, the censorship and self-censorship imposed in Chinese videogame regulations is contributing to the creation of another market or counterculture where players have access to otherwise restricted goods.

Transmedia plays an integral role in the generation of content that skirts around and/or goes against the hard and soft rules in China. Fans are able to generate content such as fan art that is not permissible within Chinese regulations, such as sexually explicit content and LGBTQIA+ content. Fan spaces, as well as some web comic hosting site likes U17.com, allow for the creation of content outwith censorship constraints, and allows fans to interact with the content individually (McCabe 2015). As such, this paper will include a case study of successful Chinese transmedia that operates alongside, but outwith games, and relies on user-generated content in a less-regulated space.

This paper is broken into 5 sections. The first is an introduction to the Hays Code, Comics Code and Chinese videogame restrictions. The second is an introduction to the countercultural spaces and genres that have been created as part of these restrictions, namely the film noir genre, underground comix movement and the grey market of Chinese

videogames. The third section is an analysis of the difference between self-censorship and legal regulation in China. The fourth is a case study of successful transmedia used in China that utilizes user-generated content outwith the regulated games space. Finally, a conclusion that suggests the conflicting relationship between restrictions and restricted content, as well as the ways in which fan-generated content and a transmedial approach to games is able to expand player interaction with brands.

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Video Game Streaming And Their Communities Of Play In UK And China (Dr Lynn Love; Xiaoxiong Xiong)

This paper will explore the culture of social video game consumption in the UK and China and the impact of commercial structures upon the social interaction between streamers and their audiences. Through a comparative analysis of literature reviewing video game streaming and viewing practices in each region and thematic analysis of streamer interviews and viewer surveys, we define the social and commercial conventions of Western and Chinese streaming platform approaches. Through the lenses of communities of play (Dekoven, 2002) and outsidership (Johanson and Vahlne, 2009) we seek to understand their differences, effect on socialisation and the potential implications for streamers, audiences and game developers seeking to engage with Chinese and Western streaming platforms.

Video game streaming is the act of live play of videogames for an audience. Video game streams are hosted by an individual or group who create content typically in the form of: a review of new video games; tips on how to play; a showcase their skills; or as entertainment driven play to build an audience. The global audience for video game streaming grew 10% between 2020 and 2021 to 728.8 million registered users where China represents the largest audience of 193 million (Newzoo 2021). Twitch.tv, Youtube and Facebook, the largest Western based streaming platforms, are established internationally with reach into US, UK, and Japanese markets. These platforms are not legally accessible in China (Brown, 2018), where live streaming in dominated by Douyu and Huya. Video Game Streaming platforms are complementary to the video games industry, enabling social interaction around and through video games whilst expanding the commercial opportunities afforded by video games for streamers, games developers and streaming platforms (Johnson and Woodcock, 2018).

In the UK and China, the streamer has proven to be central to the appeal of video game streams (Kowert and Emory 2021; Ding, 2016), rather than the specific game being streamed. This draws parallels to DeKoven's community of play, where playing together is more important than the game being played (DeKoven, 2002). In effect, the streamer and their community can be seen as a form of community of play but where the audience is not actively playing, but instead perform a form of active spectatorship through posting comments and virtual gift giving which is distinct to video game play and more akin to real world practices such as the video game arcade.

Game streams offer a new digital social space, a digital arcade, instantly accessible and where viewers can participate in the game community without game playing skills. This presents potential positive implications for accessibility, diversity, and social well-being. However, social interaction is mediated by the design of the streaming platform, in particular the tools, features, and commercial systems that the platform provides for its users. The design of these tools and the interactions they facilitate, particularly interactions which are mediated by monetisation strategies, alter the social dynamic within a streaming community: viewers can pay to have their comments on screen longer, can give digital gifts and be celebrated in leader boards for their financial contribution.

Monetisation of interaction can lead to hierarchies emerging within the community, where those who watch more often or financially invest have greater visibility, prestige, and influence. Such systems alter the potential for positive social relationships between members of the community (Zhang, Xiang and Hao, 2019) and between the community and the streamer, where the streamer's (and streaming platform's) financial success is a result of "audience work" (Carter & Egliston, 2021). The streamer becomes a celebrity, whose "play as work" ties the community together (Woodcock and Johnson, 2019). Despite the potential negative effects of monetisation of interaction, streamer communities develop their own

shared language and in-jokes based upon shared experiences, building rapport and self-identification for individuals with the community, (Ding, 2016; Lei, 2016,) as is typical in a community of play (Flanagan 2009).

A community of play can be difficult for new members to join, where shared experiences and in-jokes act as a barrier to entry and in online spaces, toxicity and negative behaviour (Ding, 2016) is an on-going issue. Participating in live streaming successfully, requires that the streamer, viewer, streaming platform as well as other stakeholders such as game developers and middleware developers maintain a network of relations where each party are inter-connected in a complex and intangible manner. To survive and stand out, insidership (Johanson and Vahlne, 2009) becomes vital. This, nonetheless, is not a privilege that can be easily accessible to people and/or organisations from foreign countries. Overseas streamers, viewers and streaming platform could be threatened by liability of outsidership (Johanson and Vahlne, 2009) because they have very limited extant connections abroad. Sadly, the social interaction between streamers and viewers plus audience interaction, which constitutes a significant appeal in game streams, could hardly be achieved without sufficient participants from other groups. Game streaming could deliver satisfactory experience to its users only when there is a critical mass of streamers, viewers and their interactions abound (Brouthers, et al., 2016).

Outsidership presents a boundary both within a community of play and across cultural boundaries for game developers and streamers alike. However, Chinese streaming platforms are recognised to provide more diverse content beyond video games than their western counterparts (Lin and Lu, 2017) and to offer greater commercial opportunities to their streamers through their monetisation strategies and active competition between leading streaming platforms to attract streamers with large audiences (Cunningham, Craig and Vi, 2019).

The growing audience in China for video game streaming, their diversity of content, along with novel forms of audience interaction (e.g. bullet comments) and stringent approach to toxicity position China as a market leader in the live streaming space. What can Western platforms learn from Chinese platforms? To what extent does outsidership influence interactions between streamers, the audience, and the streaming platform across and between these markets? Drawing from existing literature, streamer interviews and audience surveys this paper will assess these questions. As a result, we present implications for streamers, game developers, audiences, and streaming platforms in seeking to engage with audiences internationally.

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Regulatory Responses and Emerging Regulatory Debates of Digital Game Live-Streaming Influencers: A Comparative Analysis (Dr Yowei Kang; Dr Kenneth C.C. Yang)

Emerging communication technologies have enabled users to archive, share and exchange information frequently and unadulterated by established mainstream media (Bjerge et al., 2016). Among many of these new advancements, the growing popular live-streaming platforms have become a crucial communication and business tool (The Authors, 2021). Live-streaming platforms, also known as live video broadcasting (Yang, 2016) or social media streaming (Twitch, 2017), are characterized by their technical features that allow users to "broadcast videos to a remote audience in the instant that it is captured" (Juhlin et al., 2010, as cited in Rein & Venturini, 2018, p.3361). The platforms also enable "any audio or video content delivered over a network based on Internet protocols" (Kariyawasam & Tsai, 2017, p. 268). Live streamers can interact, in real-time, with their fans, followers, and other viewers through online chat or monetary donation (Yu et al., 2018; The Authors, 2022). Streaming contents can also be recorded, archived, and watched later on asynchronously (The Authors, 2021). In recent years, live-streaming platforms and influencers have become essential information sources and Internet usage behaviors among many young demographics worldwide. Popular digital game live streaming platforms (such as Twitch) are popular among many digital gamers. Live-streaming influencers, also known as Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) in China, also have significant commercial implications due to the rise of live-streaming/live commerce, advertising endorsements, and product promotions (Beck, 2021; Peng, 2021).

Compared with the Western countries, their Asian counterparts are more proactive to these problems. In May 2021, China has released stringent regulations of live streaming e-commerce activities that will now be under the oversight of its Commerce Ministry, Cyberspace Administration of China, and the Ministry of Public Security, in terms of its marketing practices, under-age consumers, and host identity. Additionally, viewers of live-streaming programs can easily interact with streamers in real-time through commenting and gift-giving (Yu, Jung, Kim, & Jung 2018; The Authors, 2021). The situation creates a chance to allow foreign governments to influence local political activities, particularly among political live-streaming influencers to set public agendas and frame recent news events. As a result, live streaming platforms can also lead to society's polarization, disrupting democracy (The Authors, 2022). Some examples of these emerging regulatory issues related to live-streaming influencers include conflict of interest, copyright (Kariyawasam& Tsai, 2017), fake news, freedom of speech, press freedom, (advertising) endorsement.

Considering the lack of programmatic research that intersects digital game and live streaming works of literature (except in a few studies by Cunningham & Craig 2019; Goanta & Ranchordà 2020), this computational text mining study examines and describes recurrent keywords, phrases, and topics about global government's regulatory discourses, responses, and debates about these crucial issues. This study first describes the role of digital game live-streaming platforms and influencers in China and other parts of the world. Second, our study also examines the current practices of the digital game live streamers in China and other parts of the world. Third, we provided empirical text mining data to examine the global government's regulatory debates, discourses, and responses about these crucial issues. Our study will answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What will be the keywords, phrases, and topics related to the regulatory responses and debates of digital game live streaming behaviors between China and other countries?

RQ2: How will China's socio-cultural-political factors help explain and understand these comparative findings?

The Graying of Digital Game Market: A Computational Framing Analysis of China-West Media Representations of Senior Gameplayers (Dr Kenneth C.C Yang; Dr Yowei Kang)

Introduction

According to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Population Division, United Nations (2017), 13% of the world population (7.6 billion) is above 60 years old. In Asia, life expectancy used to be 65.2 years old (1990-1995), but it is expected to reach 72.9 years old (2015-2020) and 77.5 years old (2045-2050) (DESA, 2017). Three hundred thirty million Chinese residents will be over 65 years old by 2050 (Campbell, 2019). The same ageing trend is also found in most Western countries. Therefore, it is expected that older adults/senior citizens will become a crucial digital game market in this region.

Because of this global ageing/graying trend, the digital game industry has increasingly paid attention to the older digital gamers (Brown & De Schutter, 2016; Hill, 2016; Knoop, 2017; Whitlock et al., 2011). The number of senior gamers (commonly defined as those above 50 years old) is rising across economically developed countries in this region. Digital game developers have increasingly targeted "royal and evergreen" (Woodside Capital Partners, 2015) gamers as a commercially profitable market segment.

Literature Review

Representing Senior Gamers in Mass Media

Digital game scholars have traditionally studied the representations of various digital game player groups. Most of these studies are a-theoretical and mainly focus on a detailed description of this emerging gamer segment. Loos et al. (2017) observed that older adults were often "under- and misrepresented" in the media by negatively portraying this market segment as "passive, alone, poor, in bad health" (p. 44). In general, older people are commonly described as "unskilled with new technologies" yet "eager to engage with modernity" (Caradec, 2001, cited in Lavenir & Bourgeois, 2017: 63). In the traditional mass media, Loos et al. (2017) note a widespread practice of underrepresenting or misrepresenting older people prejudicially in the media—a phenomenon later Loos and Ivans (2018) call "visual ageism." Playing digital games has been increasingly described in the media as a beneficial pastime for older adults to enhance their feelings in the ageing process (Lavenir & Bourgeois, 2017).

Ecological Factors Affecting Media Representations of Senior Gamers

Geert Hofstede's 5-D cultural dimension framework will interpret cross-cultural data collected from ESM. The national cultural characteristics in the current study have been chosen based on Hofstede's (2001) renowned model in international research that examined the relationship between cultural values and their behaviors in an organization. Hofstede (2001) developed his cultural value dimensions based on extensive cross-national data from IBM employees during the 1960s. Each dimension ranges from 0 to 100, except for the LTO index. Hofstede's cultural value system includes the following cultural dimensions: collectivism/individualism (COL/IDV), uncertainty avoidance (UAI), power distance (PDI), masculinity-femininity (MAS-FEM), and long term orientation (LTO) indices. Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimension framework has been widely applied in cross-cultural consumer research in international advertising and marketing areas (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2002; Overby, Gardial, & Woodruff, 2004; Taylor, 2005). Wang (2021) argues that respecting elders is a characteristic of the Chinese Power Distance (PDI) cultural dimension, while respect for elders is relatively rare in the West. We will use these cultural dimension indices to correlate with our findings from the text mining.

Based on the discussions of relevant literature above, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

Research Question 1: What are the recurrent keywords, key phrases, and topics to represent senior gamers in China and other Western countries?

Research Question 2: Will cultural dimensions explain variations of cross-country text mining findings?

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The Double Edge Sword: Digital Game Publication Policies' Effect on the Preference of Chinese Game Design and Market (Dr Yigang Liu)

Introduction

Despite the burgeoning digital game industry, there are numerous criticisms on the negative effects of digital games. Just on 3rd August 2021, Chinese media Economic Information Daily published an article accused the game industry "Spiritual Opium", which caused an enormous loss of the companies like Tencent on the stock market. Criticism and concern around digital games in China is a hot topic among the general public. Meanwhile, Chinese society puts a strong emphasis on education, creating tension between learning and gaming. Under these circumstances, the Chinese government has composed several regulations and policies on digital game publication, covering mobile games, online games, computer games and console games. Through government intervention, the game industry in China certainly feels the impact of the strict publication policies, resulting in positive and negative effects on game design and production, as well as the game market.

Methods

From a cultural standpoint, this section mainly focuses on the policies and regulations issued by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China (MCT), and the National Press and Publication Administration (NPPA). They are deemed to be directly in charge of the digital game industry. As a result, these policies have led to changes in the game market. We conclude by examining the games approved by the NPPA, while looking into the specific preferred genre and platform in the Chinese game market, from 2010-2020. This study selects the game publication statistics from 2010 to 2020, announced on the official website of the NPPA. It matches the time-line of policies issued by the MCT and NPPA, giving us unambiguous information to articulate the relationship between the policy and market.

Discussion: Fallouts of Pros and Cons

Chinese culture embraces the digital gaming scene ambivalently. As an extension of Chinese culture, policy and regulations affect the digital game industry, specifically, altering game design and progressively impacting the market. With respect to this, both pros and cons are observable; the risk of a market crash is lowered, while homogenization is limited. Finally, the lack of long-term vision is a clear negative effect.

Conclusion

This study explicitly shows that the game regulation and publication policy is not fixed, but gradually moves to accept the culture of digital games, albeit with conditions. It indicates that Chinese culture is cautiously open to this emergent cultural phenomenon. The dynamic interaction between the regulation policy and the digital game industry is evidence of Chinese game development. It shapes the characteristics of Chinese developed games, reflecting the reality that the Chinese game industry is more utilitarian and rooted in the Chinese culture. It is obvious that Chinese game design and development companies face a predicament. This phenomenon and paradox cannot be solved by publication policy alone; it needs an amalgamation of Chinese culture and the nature of man's desire for play, finding an appropriate method for both requisite needs, and reaching a balance between entertainment and self-discipline, rather than restriction through publication policy.

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