CIT 112S – Game Development Essentials

Creating a Character Week

Last week we learned how storytelling devices could be used in games to enhance players' enjoyment and emotional involvement. What about the characters within the story? What sort of impact can game characters have on the player?

This week in class, we will be looking at what characteristics and qualities make good characters for your video games. We will expand on the ideas of theme, genre, and environment by looking at different character archetypes for use in your game.

Super Hero Brick

Character by L. Spivey, 11/17/2005.

In this unit we will explore all aspects of game character development – including how they look, act, move, feel and communicate.

The importance of characters in a game environment can add a personal dimension to a player's experience. Unlike characters in other entertainment media, game characters can interact directly with the player – who might also play a character role.

In this lesson, we will answer the following questions:

* How are game characters different from characters in other media?

* What are avatars and how do they relate to player identity?

* How does visual character development differ from other forms of character development in games?

* What are some character types and archetypes and how do they relate to story structure?

Assignment for Next Week:

If you were to create a customized character based on yourself, what would it be like?

Describe yourself in terms of a game character. What are your physical and personality characteristics, goals, strengths, and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, general mood?

Discuss other characters that might also appear in the game. (Note: These characters may not necessarily be helpful, but could represent obstacles that prevent you from reaching your goals.)

Create a name for this character. Tie the name into the character's physical and personality characteristics. How does the character name relate to the game's genre and style of play? How do the visual features of a game character reflect the character's personality?

Discuss how you would utilize profile, facial expressions, gestures, poses, costume, character movement, color scheme, and even associated objects to reflect the personality of one of the original characters you created.

The Ogre "Hermit"

Character by L. Spivey, 11/17/2005.