Taskforce Group Actieplan Ruimtevaart
"Mental Health and Entertainment"

Minutes of the meeting at TU/e on 5 September 2005, 14:00-17:00

Present: M. Rauterberg (chair), J van Loon, A Nijholt, J Goldstein, J Jansz, W IJsselsteijn, C Bartneck, M Ponsen (minutes taker), D van Mortel, P Wouters.

1)   Introduction Round:

Anton Nijholt (U. Twente): CS Human-Media Interaction, Many entertainment related activities, but not AI! Main project: real-time virtual meeting rooms (real-world movement is translated into VR). Entertainment conference: INTETAIN (November 2005)
Potential contribution:
- Interactive storytelling; - virtual and human participants; - Virtual social agents: emotions, humor, learning and conversational skills.

Christoph Bartneck (TU/e): Bring feedback hardware in gaming environments up-to-speed.
Potential contribution:
Not specified

Dirk van Mortel (JHV, Tilburg): game designer and has students working on research projects.
Potential Contribution:
Aid in game design, make their games available to other taskforce members (?)

Jack van Loon (VU): Cell biologist. Main interest (in respect to this taskforce) is in psychological needs of humans during ultra-long flights (human psyche crucial for success of missions).
Potential contribution:
Initial idea of taskforce was his (combining entertainment (i.e., games) and psychology).

Jeffrey Goldstein (Utrecht): Psychologist: wrote several books on psychological research. He also wrote a book on computer game studies: "handbook of computer games". Games can be used to measure, reinforce and teach social and psychical skills. One can choose entertainment for any psychological study. According to his research, entertainment can enhance "mental health" and productivity.
Potential contribution:
Find metrics for entertainment, a psychological approach

Jeroen Jansz (University of Amsterdam): Interested in the psychological process of attracting the attention of gamers and emotional involvement of gamers in games. His studies focus on users, not game content (therefore, again no AI). Their lab needs more gaming equipment.

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Potential contribution:
Development of measures for entertainment. Jansz also has contacts within PlayLogic (one of the larger game developers/publishers in the Netherlands) and it is proposed that he tries to include Playlogic in the taskforce (**ACTION**).

Marc Ponsen (U. Maastricht): Questions asked during my presentation: Q: Did you program these games or focus on AI solely? A: No, we used already existing games (e.g., Neverwinter Nights) and open-source games (e.g., Stratagus) Q: What are more advanced: military simulations or computer games? A: The military invested (invests?) a lot of money to create military simulators (e.g., work on computer generated forces), but now computer games are becoming more attractive. For one because the game industry makes a lot of money and this money is in part used to create better games (interesting article: Computer Games and the Military: two views). I also introduced TIELT: a tool to connect AI systems to computer games. I handed out two copies of Pieter Spronck's dissertation to Dirk van Mortel and Walters. Cristoph Bartneck also requested a copy.
Potential contribution:
Create smarter, more challenging, less repetitive, more enjoyable, more realistic games.

Matthias Rauterberg (TU/e): Entertainment Computing. TUE Industrial Design -> teaching domains 'Entertainment'
Potential contribution:
Organizer taskforce meeting, interested in Human-Machine Interaction, among others in respect to entertainment (with Computer Games as a very interesting form of entertainment)

Pum Wouters (Microsoft, NL): Also performed research related activities. Software engineer
Potential contribution:
At this point he is a passive observer and the contact person for academia.

Wijnand IJsselsteijn (TU/e): Research in human-machine interaction to enhance human wellbeing (Media-psychology). Working on commercial products (funded by Philips) and uses technology to enhance human wellbeing. Interesting projects/conferences: FUGA (fun of gaming): Psychological measurements of enjoyment. PERSUASIVE technologies: conference May 2006, technologies aimed to change/persuade human thinking (for wellbeing, not for commercial interests)
Potential contribution:
Not specified

2)   Infrastructure for TASKFORCE

* Task of Taskforce: there are no concrete ideas what the task will be. Roadmap is done and is currently under review. The primary intention is to setup a Dutch research community for entertainment computing.
* Sharing information via website (not public), and seminars (**ACTION**: M Rauterberg will setup a website for this taskforce group which will not –for the time being- be made

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public available; **ACTION**: all members are encouraged to provide Matthias with documents and links to be mounted on this site)
* Student projects (maybe Game AI class at U. Maastricht can play a role here) that fit this project. Any other related activity is welcome.

3)   Projects / Funding

* IOP (funding stream proposal) in entertainment: become an entertainment community (dedicated entertainment computing conference: ICEC). This option is preferred. Jaap van den Herik's input is requested. Also, people are encouraged to bring as many relevant contacts to the table as possible. (**ACTION**: M Rauterberg, A Nijholt and J van den Herik will investigate how to proceed to set up a national funding program in IOP).
* For an ESA-MAP program we need the interest of companies (that participate on their own costs : from my experience mostly in kind) and academia are financially supported. Also : ESA is more willing to work with international consortia but is not mandatory.
* SRON support only comes in after we would have put in a general science proposal to ESA and that this is selected by them. Only than we could ask for funding at SRON.
* NIVR generally only funds industrial entities and only when they are related to ESA programs via their PEP structure.
* Dutch or European initiative? Keep it broad? Space-research or more general (e.g., long travels in submarines)?

4)   Future Plans

It was consensus among all participants to continue in the setting up a Dutch community for entertainment computing. Several actions (see above) were agreed upon.

5)   List of Taskforce-Group Members:

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