How People Game Disinformation

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Québec
Fonds de recherche – Nature et technologies
Fonds de recherche – Santé
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Who Am I?

- BA/B Ed, Primary Junior Education
- MA, Media Studies
- PhD Candidate, Communications
- Public Scholar, Media Literacy / Play
- Game Designer, Educational Games

Researcher at:

MACHINE AGENCIES

Technoculture, Art and Games Research Center

act
ageing • communication • technologies

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I study how digital issues become tangible

How games frame them, players play them, and users learn with them.

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What I am doing?

1. Examined existing media literacy Games
2. Designed systems game on digital conspiracy
3. Conducted a study on the relationship between disinformation and videogames.

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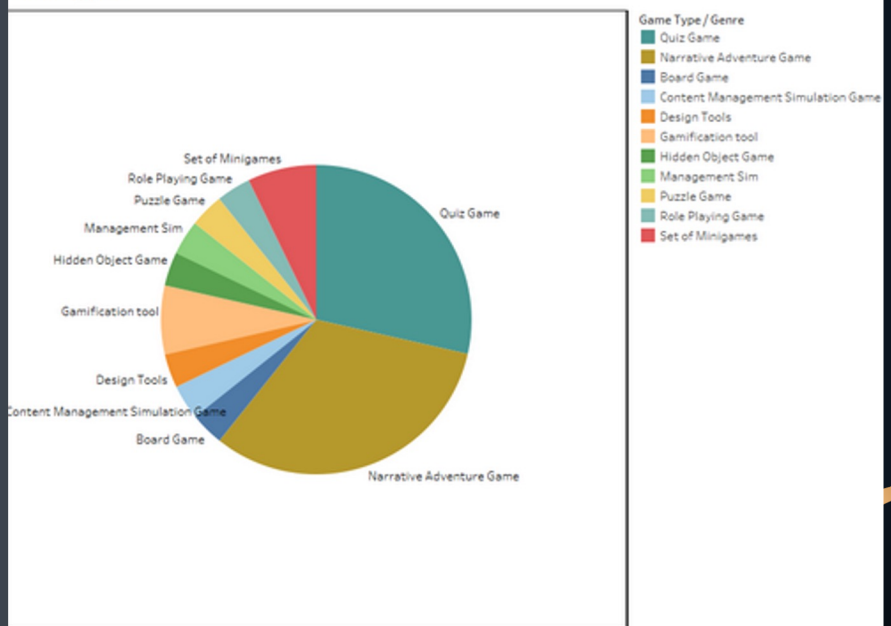
1. Existing Games

What I Did:

1. Played and Analyzed 52 Media Literacy Games
2. Media Literacy games were specifically chosen for dealing with themes tied to disinformation, fake news, misinformation, or mal-information.
3. I explored key themes, design mechanisms, and how the games framed disinformation

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What I found:

1. Educational formats relied on Quiz and Narrative formats.
2. Games offered limited player agency.
3. Disinformation was seen as something equally impacting an audience. Little discussion towards randomness, offline ideologies, and geopolitics of information.

Game Types

Game Type / Genre
- Quiz Game
- Narrative Adventure Game
- Board Game
- Content Management Simulation Game
- Design Tools
- Gamification tool
- Hidden Object Game
- Management Sim
- Puzzle Game
- Role Playing Game
- Set of Minigames

Set of Minigames
Role Playing Game
Puzzle Game
Management Sim
Hidden Object Game
Gamification tool
Design Tools
Content Management Simulation Game
Board Game
Quiz Game
Narrative Adventure Game

Game Type / Genre. Color shows details about Game Type / Genre. The marks are labeled by Game Type / Genre.

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What I Did:

1. Conceptualized the Disinformation war into a playable board game.
2. Explored how modelling analogies of disinformation systems offered understanding of information flows.
3. Used the game as a tool for talking and training various audiences about the minutia of disinformation.

2. Lizards and Lies

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What I found:

1. False content is part of a media ecology.
2. Systems games can help us understand the back and forth of communication, and translate them to our lives.
3. Single solutions or victories are ineffective learning markers. Players respond to dynamic means of achieving goals.

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Donald Trump

That's FAKE NEWS! Fox & Friends is the only network people can trust.

SHUT UP

- The "Better Socialism" (Left) and "No Woke Shit At My Factories" (Right) Mod Thumbnails

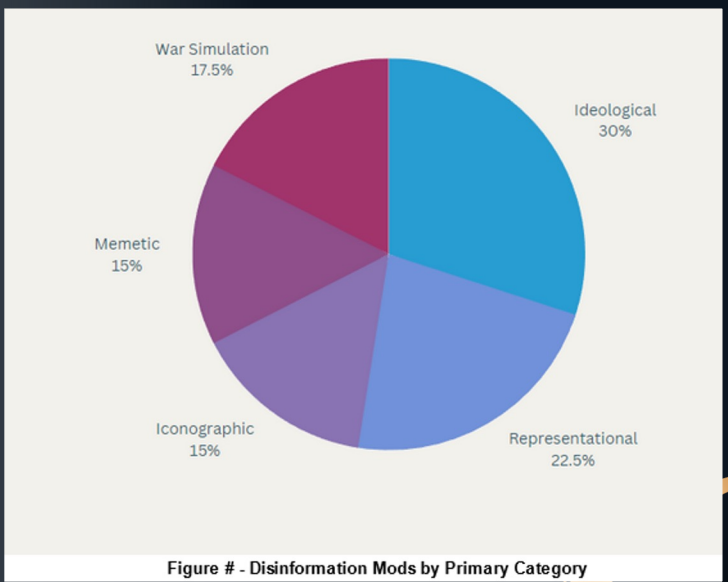### What I Did (alongside a team):

1. We explored videogame mods and how they can be used to signal or build disinfo communities.
2. Analyzed videogame communities for how memes and other content can be used to spread false and extremist ideas.
3. Studied various mini-games and game making tools for how ideology and information get bled into the design, making, and play process.

3. Disinfo in Games

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What we found:

1. Minigames and mods functioned as ways to signal and build community.
2. Games make lines between fact and fiction blurry. Thus making distinguishing truth challenging for researcher and player.
3. Play and humour simultaneously obfuscate larger ideologies and rhetoric that users can be potentially influenced by.

War Simulation 17.5%

Ideological 30%

Memetic 15%

Iconographic 15%

Representational 22.5%

Figure # - Disinformation Mods by Primary Category

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Point #1 - Rethink how we conceptualize disinfo.

Disinformation is not just a "smoking gun"

It is personal, felt, and experienced.
It is a system

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Second, **Move to Grey Ecosystems**

Media Assemblage

Actors and Environments are interconnected. Content is object and "glue".

Individual Goals

Actors, users, and stakeholders all have their own intentions.

Diverse Channels

Content does not follow "pipelines" all the time.

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Third, Re-consider non-traditional spaces

Play is a means to weaponize
and mobilize.
Recognizing and studying
that is a crucial next step.

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Thank you!

Do you have any questions?

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