

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer Key: Ludology and Socio-Technical Systems for College

Examine the intersection of procedural rhetoric, algorithmic bias, and the semiotics of virtual economies within modern interactive media frameworks.

1. Which theoretical framework, popularized by Ian Bogost, proposes that video games make arguments not through words or images, but through the execution of rules and processes?

Answer: B) Procedural Rhetoric

Procedural rhetoric is the art of persuasion through rule-based representations and interactions rather than spoken word or static images.

2. In the context of virtual economies, the concept of _____ labor refers to the blurred line between productive work and leisure, often seen in 'gold farming' or skin trading.

Answer: C) Playbor

'Playbor' (play/labor) describes how user activity in digital environments creates value for developers and third-party markets under the guise of entertainment.

3. True or False: The 'Magic Circle' theory, originated by Johan Huizinga, argues that the space of play is entirely porous and cannot be distinguished from ordinary life's moral or social constraints.

Answer: B) False

The Magic Circle actually suggests that play occurs within a temporary, bounded space with its own internal rules, separate from the 'real world'.

4. Critically analyze the 1982 game 'Custer's Revenge.' Which socio-political failure does it most prominently represent in early gaming history?

Answer: B) The commodification of sexual violence and colonial trauma

The game is a primary case study in ludology regarding unethical content, specifically how early software mirrored systemic racism and misogyny.

5. The term _____ refers to the conflict between a video game's narrative themes and its mechanical requirements, such as a pacifist character being forced to engage in mass combat.

Answer: A) Ludonarrative dissonance

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Ludonarrative dissonance occurs when the story told through cutscenes or dialogue contradicts the gameplay actions performed by the player.

6. In 2005, the 'Corrupted Blood' incident in a major MMO became a significant case study for which field of scientific research?

Answer: B) Epidemiology and public health

The unintended spread of a virtual plague in World of Warcraft allowed researchers to model human behavior and panic responses during real-world pandemics.

7. True or False: According to Espen Aarseth's theory of Ergodic Literature, a game requires non-trivial effort to traverse the text, which distinguishes it from linear media like film.

Answer: A) True

Aarseth's 'ergodic' concept posits that the user must engage in active physical or mental labor to produce a sequence of signs, unlike passive consumption.

8. How did the 'Gamergate' controversy of 2014 affect the sociological landscape of the gaming community at a systemic level?

Answer: C) It exposed a deep-seated culture war regarding identity politics and gender representation

The event highlighted systemic issues of harassment, misogyny, and the resistance to diversifying the gaming audience and industry.

9. The _____ principle in game design suggests that players will often 'optimize the fun out of a game' by finding the most efficient, albeit boring, path to victory.

Answer: A) Soren Johnson

Game designer Soren Johnson noted that given the opportunity, players will use metrics and efficiency to bypass intended creative experiences, posing a challenge for designers.

10. True or False: 'Paratextuality' in gaming refers exclusively to the code written in the C++ language that allows the game engine to render assets.

Answer: B) False

Paratextuality refers to the materials surrounding the game, such as manuals, fan wikis, trailers, and mods, which shape the player's interpretation of the game.