

RADICAL GAME DESIGN

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the potential of video games as a medium for fostering critical thinking and discussion about social issues. The research starts with an overview of the game industry and its strategic role in the contemporary cultural industries. My critique of the mainstream industry is coupled with an analysis of the spaces of intervention for non-corporate producers such as artists, hackers, and activists. I propose the liaison between video games and the military-industrial-complex as a privileged point of view to understand the political implication of video games. Games and simulation are analyzed as representational forms, which unlike others such as narrative media as books or films, create models by means of a set of rules. I argue that these models and rules are not politically neutral as they reflect the creators' system of values, cultural contexts and ideologies. Every chapter revolves around a broad topic and is followed by a thematically related project that I developed in the past five years.

Author Keywords:

Video games, propaganda, ideology, politics, media-activism.