Video games have evolved so much in the past thirty years. The graphic of video games changed from scratchy polygons into nowadays photographic look. More and more games focused on telling a complex and touchy story which was unimaginable in the past. Gameplay wise, modern games focused on multiplayer factors like coop and players versus players. Not only the video game itself evolved, the way how people play games also have changed. Play video games is not only simple entertainment, it become a social activity these days. Although many of us don’t use the term “gamer” to identify who we are or what we do, more people play games, on phones, on tablets, on PCs and Macs, around the world, than ever before (Consalvo, 84). In Mia Consalvo’s article, Player one, playing with others virtually: what’s next in game and player studies, she describe current research in player studies, focusing on how play is a social activity (Consalvo, 84). In her article, she discussed how people’s way to play games evolved due to tandem play, and how platform like twitch changed tandem play and people’s way to play games. In my opinion, although using Tandem play and twitch as example strongly reinforced that single player gameplay can also become social activity, focus on game failure may not be a good option. And beside scholars, there still lots of people can benefit from this article, especially game designers. As this article shows the possible future for video games and how people play video games.

Summary

In this article, Consalvo used tandem play and websites like twitch to show us that even single-player game can be a social activity. In order to prove her research she focused on twitch streamers’ game failures, and how streamers react on those failures. First of all, she introduce the term “tandem play”, which means two or more players engage with a single player games together. The history of the term “tandem play” existed as long as the existence of single player games. Back in the 90s, people started to sit on the couch and play a console game together in the same room. Each players will take turns to have hands on the controller. “Tandem play” provides the players an environment where they can share their thoughts and commentary with other players more directly. The players can also share memorable movement through Tandem play. Overall, players are able to enjoy more fun when they play single player games through tandem play. Tandem play turned play video game into a social activity. Although tandem play can greatly improve players’ experience when they are playing single player games, the fact which the players have to meet in a physical location limits the extensity of tandem play. The limitation of tandem play limited the size of tandem play community, which only friends or family can perform tandem play. However, the introduction of live streaming sites like Twitch.tv changed this situation. Although most of viewers and streamers engaged in competitive multiplayer games, a significant amount streamers who focused on single player games still exist on Twitch. In order to prove that twitch affect our way to play games, Consalvo researched on twitch streamers’ game failures, and how streamers react to those failures. For some streamers, failure is simply part of the process of playing a game, and those streamers can positively accept their failure (Consalvo, 86). For others, they might choose to ignore their failures, or joke about their failures in self-deprecating ways. However, none streamers expressed real anger when they facing failures. And the viewers don’t harass or abuse the streamers because of the failure. Which is very different from the competitive communities in twitch. Overall, platform like Twitch gives the streamers an opportunity to perform tandem play with people all around the global. As viewers are able to exchange their thoughts and feeling with streamers positively through Twitch without latency.

Strengths and limitations

Consalvo used tandem play and twitch as an example to show us a vivid picture that even single player games can be a social activity. Tandem play did actually bring the players together to form a community. From my personal experience, I used to have tandem play when I was young, and I can still remember the good moment we had at that time. When we were performing tandem play, we were able to share our thoughts and feeling while play the game together. The good moment we share when we play games became the bond of our friend ship. Thus, play games tandemly reinforced my friendship with my friends. And we created a small community around the tandem play. At that movement, playing video game not only is a group entertainment, but also a social activity for us. However, as I grow up and move away from my friends, our community was disbanded. Yet, platform like twitch, and steam broadcast give me the opportunity to enjoy tandem play once again. And at this time, the community we form became even larger as I can tandemly play a game with anyone on the internet. It is true, that tandem play and live broadcast platform give the player a chance to turn a single player game in to a social activity.

However, in my opinion, use game failures to show us how viewers and streamers positively communicate with each other may not be a good option. In this article Consalvo researched how in game failures affect streamers and viewer, and how streamers react to their failures. Although not every streamers can accept their failure when they play games, most of the viewers will still support the streamers. When streamers facing failures, instead of harass and abuse the streamers, the viewers will often provide suggestion and encouragement. This created a friendly bond between the viewer and streamers in the single player gameplay broadcasts. Which increase the popularity of online tandem play, and turned single player gameplay into a social activity. For the streamers, the way they react to their failure became their brand, if they can react to their success smartly, they would be more likely to become a more successful streamer. In my opinion, although using game failure as a method of research showed the bond between viewers and streamers. It gives me a feeling that the author run off the topic. In common sense, people should not harass or abuse others when they failed on something, and providing support and encouragement when others facing failure surly can strengthen relationship. However, I don’t see any point in how people react to failure connect with how twitch changed our way to play video games. Also, if people can react to their failure in a smart way, they will not only become successful in streaming but also in other careers. And I still cannot see the connection between game failures and play single player game as a social activity. Therefore, in my opinion, using streamers game failure as a method of research is the limitation of this article.

Proposal

Besides scholarly audience, there also other audience can benefit from this article, especially the game developers. Nowadays, it seems multiplayer gameplay become a must have for the video games. There are a huge amount brought Battlefield and Call of Duty franchise exclusive for their multiplayer gameplay. In order to please their customers, more and more game developers publish multiplayer games such as Rainbow Six Siege and PUBG. Traditional MMORPG (massively multiplayer online role-playing game) such as World of Warcraft still operate healthfully on the market. Nowadays, it seems the single player games became obsolete as there are very few major developer still focus on single player games. This article showed us that there still are lots of players who enjoy single player games. Gameplay method like tandem play and platform like twitch give players a chance to make single player gameplay become a social activity. In fact there are some developers already notice tandem play in modern game culture. For example, EA’s A Way Out which exclusive focused on tandem play, and I believe it is good attempt for the new generation. In this past ten years, gaming company always afraid that their game is too hard for general gamers. Thus single player games become easier and easier, and it dead out as the player find out it was too easy for them. In this article, as Consalvo mentioned how streamers react to failure, it seems in fact failure will not stop people continue to play the game. Therefore, game developer can try not to make their game too easy for the players, as challenge also come with accomplishment. Fortunately, it seems more and more game developer realized that make a hard game may not be a bad thing. In the last two years, the success of PUBG and Rainbow Six Siege proved this point. Therefore, I think the game developers can benefit from this article as they might learn that single player game still have market in modern gaming culture. And gamers have the courage to face failure in a video game.

Conclusion

Mia Consalvo’s article showed us that play a single player game can also be a social activity. She made connection between tandem play and platform like twitch. She used twitch streamers as examples to show us how viewers and streamers share thoughts and feeling with each other, and how they form a strong community. The only drawback of this article, is she using game failure as her research materials, which I found somehow confusing. In my opinion, I think lots of people beside scholars can benefit from this article; in fact I’d recommend everyone to read this article, as I find it’s pretty interesting. And most importantly, it’s short.

Citation:

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