

WHAT MAKES A SERIOUS GAME GOOD?


The IDEC PBL project partners played and tested 25 serious games to be able to define what makes a good serious game. Then, they analyzed

- the content
- the type of technology used
- the best and bad practices
- Ranking of several items: content and design, interaction, immersion, imagination, emotions, real-life application and transformative power

This document summarizes the key points of this analysis.

ANALYSIS OF THE BEST PRACTICES

ABOUT THE TOPIC AND OBJECTIVES OF THE GAME:

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- Game based on concrete subjects
 - Easy to understand
 - Relevance and interest of the topic
 - Promote empathy
 - Encourage critical thinking
 - Not too long
 - Give some basic information on the subject before starting the game
 - Make it fun and authentic : but not just fun make it informative
 - Educational value and good learning process
 - Raise awareness on a subject with an accurate representation
 - Take ethical dimension into consideration
 - Detailed tutorial

ABOUT THE DESIGN AND THE CONSTRUCTION

- Nice and original design: appeal to imagination, immersive
- User-friendly graphics
- Use of different multimedia when playing; videos, interactive maps, interviews,...

- Complex in game technology/ subtle dynamics
- Connecting with real life actions
- Single and multiplayer mode
- Possibility to customize contents
- Mobile friendly
- Availabilities in several languages

ABOUT THE COURSE OF THE GAME

- Have a good storytelling
- Have some guidance along the way & give positive feedback for a smart move
- Indicators throughout the game to indicate to players how they are doing
- Trial and error approach: players can try different approaches until they find the one that works best
- Allow collaboration and interactions:
- Have a chat box interaction constantly available

ANALYSIS OF THE BAD PRACTICES



- Instructions are not clear or not enough time is allowed to read them
- Too much training or prerequisites required to play the game
- Too expensive games
- Too many players and dialogues
- No interaction
- Have only one place to explore
- Too difficult to play
- Too many challenges appear within the game
- Focusing too much on the fun game side and not on the actual content
- Having to start all over again one making one bad move
- Very basic design of the game
- Limited options for players
- Too much guidance, not many choices for the players
- Very basic content: no real takeaways for players
- Repetitive tasks

- Lack of sensitivity
- Not engaging stakeholders
- No explanation provided when you fail
- No feedback on the decisions players make
- No real objective
- Focusing too much on a western perspective
- Oversimplifying a complex issues or using stereotypes