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Game journalism as a new media communication format

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Abstract. *Game journalism, which combines the format of the media of local interests, at the present stage occupies a separate information area designed for a special audience. Nevertheless, the communication principles inherent in media information apply in the same way to any niche branches of the media market, as well as to the principles and functions of journalism in general.*

A computer game, having become a specific phenomenon of virtual culture, has made its own adjustments to the concepts of creativity and communicative relations with the audience. Since the game is based on an artistic image and a spatiotemporal organization, its aspects are similar in spirit to the communicative formats of the media. In addition, the main difference between a multiplayer game is considered to be an established virtual world, which develops even when the player is out of the game. And it also brings the functions of gamification closer to the functions of the media market, in the space of which the concept of gaming journalism is firmly established.

The article examines the features of the interaction of game journalism as a communicative process with the audience through the prism of its formation and the possibilities of further development and substantiates the need for scientific discourse on this topic.

Keywords: *video games, game journalism, gamification, information relations, communication process, media audience*

Introduction

Since the beginning of fundamental changes in the economy, politics and culture of a sovereign state in Kazakhstan, attempts have been repeatedly made to mechanically transfer and introduce certain social practices into the activities of various institutions of society. For any social institution to function normally, it itself needs a set of certain conditions that are formed under the influence of many factors and directly affect its development. Journalism as a social institution is also changing under the pressure of new technologies, social networks and new interests of the audience. In this regard, the importance of computer games is that it reflects the trends of modern communication trends. Artistically, creatively, game communication is reflected in the use of different points of view on the event, the inclusion of random current impressions of the public in the work, and an increase in viewer activity. A computer game opens up new forms of active and creative interaction between the viewer and the artistic environment, where interactivity has recently been used as an expressive means [1].

Formulation of the problem

Many pioneers in the field of video game journalism have freed themselves from their old editorial staffs and are creating their own independent magazines or media outlets nowadays. Having emerged from a locally niche structure, gaming journalism has firmly established itself in the media market. Currently, not only specialized video game publications cover the industry, but also such full-fledged media as The New York Times, Newsweek, The Daily Telegraph, The Mercury News, Los Angeles Times. In turn, online content has given magazine editors new advantages over traditional media, which were previously limited by long lead times. The new dynamics of the scope of video games require a quick and practical approach to this environment.

The transition to digital game journalism has not been smooth and still requires solving professional problems. Both journalists and their readers often openly criticized editors and entertainment sites for lack of quality and industry bias. This was due to the lack of journalistic training among new employees of online editorial boards. In addition, several major video game websites called for creating a more attractive media product for the video game audience and began recruiting independent blogs and websites to advocate for their brands. Gaming journalism began to be laudatory and bespoke. Young game journalists were talented, but the sudden appearance of amateur freelancers, who usually write based on interest and experience, made the industry unattractive professionally [2, p. 123].

The need for better control becomes especially obvious with the expansion of the field of media interests in this area, while video game journalism is still quite a controversial genre today in terms of professional forms and principles. Editorial content balances between pure consumer information and attempts at creative freedom. All this is controlled by publishers who act as investors, and thus modern game journalism can still have relationships with video game publishers that go beyond journalistic ethics and lack of journalistic training

for practitioners. Today, questions about the profession of a modern video game journalist often come down to two points of view. The first suggests that it is necessary to rethink the traditional understanding of journalism and expand it with the concept of video game journalism. They also consider video game journalism to be a dependent industry. The latter, on the contrary, are of the opinion that gaming journalism is legitimate [3].

Objectives of the article

The importance of computer games forces researchers of communication processes to look at them as an opportunity to transform the media field, since the information interest of their followers is growing and needs to systematize knowledge. The analysis of the role of game journalism in the context of its influence on the mechanisms of improving the global experience of implementing new communication practices is of research interest in the context of the functions and positions of professional journalism. It is necessary to consider how new formats affect the future of the modern media space. The number and importance of computer games today are so great that there is a need to structure this phenomenon not only as a form of virtual reality, but also as a principle of informational and communicative interaction and as a form of new media approaches in journalism.

History

The origin of modern gaming journalism has been traced by research experts since the early 1990s. The video game industry of this period was consumed by the introduction of Japanese game consoles. However, video game coverage actually began in the 1970s, and although the concept of video game journalism did not exist at that time, in fact, the foundations of game journalism began to be laid in the arcade trade magazines of the 1970s. The categories were grouped with other types of entertainment, such as pinball and slot machines. The success of the famous arcade games, Pac-man and Space Invaders, boosted the popularity of the first editions that popularized video games[4]. However, in 1983, there was a crisis in this industry due to the advent of Japanese consoles, when Japanese companies Nintendo and Sega successfully launched their consoles. New, cost-effective home computers from the Amiga and Commodore began to gain popularity, and only a few video game publications were released between 1988 and 1994. The leaders were GamePro, Game Informer, Electronic Gaming Monthly, Edge Magazine and Nintendo Power. Compared to earlier publications about video games, these publications exist and specialize in this topic to this day. Only Nintendo ceased to exist. It initially joined the structure of Future Media in 2007, and later closed due to declining popularity.

In the 1970s, all these publications were aimed at enthusiasts and consumers. There was an element of industry coverage, announcements were released, and reviews of recently released games became the most relevant for consumers. It was a period when journalism really began to play an important role in the local niche created by the new needs of the audience. As the video game industry continued to grow, their reach increased

exponentially. With the launch of set-top boxes, they gained even more mass appeal when multimedia machines appeared in the early years of the new millennium, which expanded functionality. It allowed us to go beyond the game, and then a new media demographic called on journalists to cover the video game environment in a broader context[5]. Time required the media to use more modern techniques, for example, to discuss games from the point of view of art and culture, and as video games became more complex, the media covered them using an understanding of other areas. Modern coverage of games already presupposes their overlap and multitasking: entertainment and leisure, economics and industry, discussion of technologies and equipment. Thus, this unique field requires that journalists understand all these areas and their interaction with each other.

Research materials and methods

In the process of digitalization of the information space, there were various, complex ways and levels of interaction between changes in the world and society; from the industrial era to the era of digitalization; and, accordingly, the ways of studying and adapting them varied.

The principles of cognition of social and empirical phenomena in the study of the topic of game journalism in the context of such a flexible phenomenon as the information environment have determined such methods of cognition as empirical and comparative analysis; the method of comparison; the historical method. These methods allowed us to explore the main trends in the formation and development of game journalism and the influence of new communication formats on the structure of the modern media market.

The variety of issues regarding the formation of the media field and the place of video information in it led to the choice of the method of abstraction as a theoretical level of knowledge. Moving away from non-essential connections and relationships that do not directly appeal to the research topic, the authors turned to fixing the most important elements in the creation and dissemination of information as an object of interest to the mass audience of the digital age. Studying the peculiarities of the influence of game forms and gamification on the media field, the authors drew parallels between the theoretical justification for the successful introduction of new formats of journalism interests and the direct development of game journalism, which is of interest to a growing audience.

Discussion

Computer games today are an expression of modern artistic trends and can influence the development of different points of view on an event, the creation of formations of public impressions, an increase in the activity of the viewer of an artistic work and, as a result, an increase in his emotional involvement. A computer game opens up new forms of interaction between the viewer and the information world, where interactivity has become an expressive means. The media market cannot fail to respond to these changing communication processes. The boom of modern video game coverage is considered to be the beginning of

the XXI century, when in 2007-2008 video game enthusiasts appeared, who began to explore new properties of social networks. The ease of using elements of online user tools such as uploading photos, editing videos and blogs, as well as creating more vibrant video game communities has allowed this area to develop at a rapid pace. Even though the gaming community and its audience have traditionally always been very active through discussion forums, the introduction of YouTube and WordPress has definitely helped enthusiasts to voice their ideas and their interests publicly.

There have been several pioneers in this form of entertainment. James Rolfe began posting humorous short episodes under his pseudonym "The Nintendo Nerd" on his website around 2005. Rolf as a character attracted universal attention and popularized the entire movement of video bloggers who ranted about video games in an "angry" manner.

Craig Skistimas and Thomas Hanley collaborated and began working together, uploading videos online to their ScrewAttack video game site. In 2006, they went on the air and their first episode of the show "Sidescrollers" was so well received that the multinational media networks Viacom later approached the founders with a request to acquire their intellectual property on the video game site Gametrailers. Later, Viacom acquired the rights to some of ScrewAttack's productions, and they became, in the opinion of the audience, a real masterpiece. This turned out to be one of the first options for successful cooperation in the field of video game broadcasting. Over the following years, reviews by bloggers such as Joe Vargas (Angry Joe Show 2014), Doug Walkers ("The Nostalgia Critic" 2014) and "Pat The NES punk" appeared Pat Contree.

However, the most important contribution of these niche enthusiasts was not their lighthearted comic view of video game coverage, but rather the adaptation of alternative media practices to the already established traditional editorial practice of video games[6]. In addition, it is of great importance that gaming journalists have started using the video blogging platform in more industry-critical areas. Former editor Jim Sterling of Destructoid launched his show "Jimquisition" in 2011, and it quickly began to attract attention from the video game community. He used the same video rant techniques to get constructive and industry critical opinions. Thus, the game was no longer just a product of entertainment, but became a means of conveying a critical message. And even if the traditional text blog about video games has been in relative decline lately, video rants and video products are still as relevant and popular as ever[7].

There is a special communication space in the game. Elements of a computer game are actually present in various genres of journalism, such as talk shows, television shows, and TV interviews. Complex special effects without the use of characters are inherent in the video installation. We usually see them before the news starts. The main function in this case is the separation of the presented content. Communication in the game is directly dependent on the random generation of locations, processes and characters, and the interaction of the audience with the game is influenced by skills and experience. Some of the most striking examples are puzzle games and word games. If in the first case semantic variation and the player's choice play a role, then the second generates the appearance of new meanings and their associative further reading, which occurs unconsciously. Game communication in the

second variant makes it possible not only to receive information, but also to create a new one. Therefore, we can say that through the game there is a creation of a special spontaneous creativity.

The specifics of the creative approach associated with gamification include the use of artificial intelligence in the media industry, namely the creation of gamified characters such as virtual announcers. The first robot announcer appeared in China, which transmitted daily news[8]. Then a second one was created. Representatives of the TV channels they work for kept full information about this technology in the strictest confidence. According to some sources in China, the appearance of the robot announcer was similar to the popular Chinese TV presenter Qiu Hao. The robot "Alex" was broadcast on the Russian TV channel "Russia 24". It was created with a portrait of the face of designer Alexei Yuyakov. In Kazakhstan, a robot announcer was created on the Atameken Business TV channel in the likeness of the face of the famous actor Sanjar Madi[9]. A hologram called "i-Sanj" conducts a daily block of economic news. The cyber journalist has brought some advantages to the TV channel from an economic point of view. For example, he does not need to make up before the broadcast, he does not need to pay a salary. It is known that the robot is able to do its job 24 hours continuously. It was possible to implement an ambitious project using a neural network by the efforts of domestic developers. This was preceded by a lot of preparatory work together with the media holding team. According to the development team that worked on the project, the unique content of the news should be presented by technological characters. This is the "highlight" of the project – combining intellectual content, new technologies and attracting the game audience to relevant economic, social and cultural information. In turn, a computer game can be called a genre of artistic creation, since it meets all the basic requirements of a work of art[10, p. 267]. As a genre of artistic creativity, it has such properties as: imagery, integrity, dialogicity, emotionality, expressiveness, symbolism, the presence of the image of the author. We can draw parallels to prove the proximity of gamification to mass media creativity. Game elements can be present in different genres of creative activity: shows, television shows, cinematography. They also include techniques involving graphic replacement of an actor, artificially constructed space, turns in the structure of text and TV shows, especially in talk shows.

The synthesis of modern technologies and creativity generates a new round in modern communications, language and special expressive means of television. This is reflected in the fact that a computer game is born during contact with the viewer. Gaming activity occurs only during this contact, and everything else is only the result of this contact. The manifestation of activity and the development of virtual reality contributed to the formation of subcultures within the game. Concepts such as active empathy for the joint actions of viewers and game characters have emerged, which is typical of modern television as a whole.

In addition, computer games can be attributed to the genres of technical art, using computer virtual reality as a technical basis. The field of functioning of these genres is limited to the sphere of electronic technical devices, and the method of artistic activity cannot be repeated by other means. Real culture in the media space uses the possibilities inherent in the properties of the material used in accordance with the communicative laws[11]. At the

same time, virtual culture brings a different meaning to reality. And it can also be compared with the communicative formats of modern media and social networks, which have the ability to change the picture of the world.

In the specifics of the interaction of video game content and game communication, it is worth mentioning the RPG genre, this is a computer role-playing game. It is a virtual reality that takes place online, where all the characters are live users of the world Wide web. The computer role-playing game is based on an ordinary role-playing game. In such a variety, everything depends not only on the dramatic moment, but also on the chosen roles of the players and their behavior within these roles. It is the nature of the role and the internal logic of the action environment that helps to see the order of events and the actions of the players. Each player models his own character based on the situation. This genre forms a kind of discussion around, since contradictions often unfold inside the game and different points of view are expressed. Similar to the RPG genre are virtual communication tools such as email, chat, forum, blog, messengers and SMS. They, in turn, form a prototype of communication in a virtual environment.

The concept of virtuality is based not only on the basis of space in terms of technology, but also as a kind of catalyst between the real and unreal world. It is a model of effective cooperation between two realities. This combination is particularly evident in the genre of computer simulations. They can be considered out of their context as high-class gaming products of modern culture, maximally imitating certain phenomena of reality with the possibility of immersion. From another point of view, a computer simulator opens up new horizons of the real world, promotes learning and understanding the details of everyday life.

Conclusion

In our opinion, game journalism, being a subject of information relations, helps to develop the multimedia media environment as the information potential of a digital society in which the entertainment industry has long and firmly occupied its own legitimate and very voluminous niche. If the needs of the mass audience are met through the information provided by the media, then it should be recognized that game journalism should be relevant to the principles and functions of journalism as such, including cognitive and integrative aspects, and, what is worth paying special attention to, the specifics of working with an audience that is changing under the influence of new technologies and presenting the world with a portrait of a new user.

Gamification, as a phenomenon of the 21st century, is a powerful tool for involving users in the communication process. This happens for several reasons. First, it is used to introduce fun, memorable elements into applications and systems. Otherwise, they might not have immediacy or relevance for users, but with the help of game approaches they are able to stimulate them to achieve their goals. Users like tasks, whether it's challenging themselves (for example, using step tracking devices) or trying to win rewards (for example, virtual "trophies" for completing job-based e-learning). Secondly, dynamics developers involved in successful gamification are in themselves an effective internal motivation. This means

that users interact with the system because they want to. For example, Foursquare/Swarm promotes users to the head of establishments after the required number of visits, allowing them to compete for the first place, enjoying food, shopping, movies, etc. Voluntary choice of interaction with the type of communication with the expectation of receiving a conditional reward, and in the case of journalism it can be the benefit of the consumed content, this is a very important aspect of the work with the audience [12].

The gaming phenomenon is an already formed product of human consciousness, a manifestation of human culture. However, the general meaning of the game is to reflect technical processes in the context of the mechanisms of the human psyche. Therefore, it can be said that game communication is based on a system of conditional existence.

This once again confirms the closeness of internal communication in the field of video games with general communicative principles and allows us to assert that game journalism is multifaceted and complex and needs scientific discourse.

Gratitude, conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest

The contribution of the authors.

S.V. Ashenova made a significant contribution to the concept of the work, the collection and analysis of information, and the writing of the text of the article.

Kaliazdarova S.I. made a significant contribution to the interpretation of the results of the work, collected information and critically reviewed its content;

Both authors are responsible for the final version of the article for publication and agree to be responsible for all aspects of the work, proper study and resolution of issues related to the reliability of data or the integrity of all parts of the article.

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Ойын журналистикасы БАҚ-тың жаңа коммуникациялық форматы ретінде

Аңдатпа. Жергілікті мүдделердің медиа форматын біріктіретін ойын журналистикасы бүгінде арнайы аудиторияға арналған жеке ақпараттық сала болып отыр. Дегенмен медиа ақпаратқа тән коммуникациялық принциптер жалпы журналистиканың принциптері мен функциялары сияқты медиа нарықтың кез келген тауашалық салаларына да қатысты.

Компьютерлік ойын виртуалды мәдениеттің ерекше құбылысына айнала отырып, шығармашылық және аудиториямен қарым-қатынас ұғымдарына түзетулер енгізді. Ойынның негізінде көркем образ және кеңістіктік-уақыттық ұйым болғандықтан, оның аспектілері бұқаралық ақпарат құралдарының коммуникативті форматтарына жақын. Сонымен қатар геймификация қызметтерін медиа нарықпен жақындастырып, ақпарат кеңістігінде ойын журналистикасы ұғымын берік орнықтырды.

Мақалада ойын журналистикасының аудиториямен қарым-қатынас процесі ретінде оның қалыптасуы мен одан әрі даму мүмкіндіктері арқылы өзара әрекеттесу ерекшеліктері қарастырылады және осы тақырып бойынша ғылыми дискурстың қажеттілігі негізделеді.

Түйін сөздер: бейнеойындар, ойын журналистикасы, геймификация, ақпараттық қатынастар, байланыс процесі, БАҚ аудиториясы

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Игровая журналистика как новый коммуникационный формат СМИ

Аннотация. Игровая журналистика, объединяющая формат СМИ локальных интересов, на современном этапе занимает отдельную информационную область, рассчитанную на специальную аудиторию. Тем не менее, коммуникационные принципы, свойственные медиаинформации, точно так же распространяются на любые нишевые отрасли медиарынка, как и в целом на принципы и функции журналистики.

Компьютерная игра, став специфическим явлением виртуальной культуры, внесла свои коррективы в понятия творчества и коммуникативных отношений с аудиторией. Так как в основе игры лежит художественный образ и пространственно-временная организация, то ее аспекты близки по духу коммуникативным форматам СМИ. Кроме того, основным отличием многопользовательской игры считается устоявшийся виртуальный мир, который развивается даже тогда, когда игрок находится вне игры. И это также сближает функции геймификации с функциями медиарынка, в пространстве которого прочно обосновалось понятие игровой журналистики.

В статье рассматриваются особенности взаимодействия игровой журналистики как коммуникативного процесса с аудиторией сквозь призму ее становления и возможностей дальнейшего развития и обосновывается необходимость научного дискурса на эту тему.

Ключевые слова: видеоигры, игровая журналистика, геймификация, информационные отношения, коммуникационный процесс, аудитория СМИ

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