HATE SPEECH IN VIDEO GAMES AND IN ONLINE GAMING COMMUNITIES – A STATE OF ART

Discurso de ódio nos videojogos e nas comunidades de jogos online – Estado da arte

Autores/as

Susana Costa[1]
University of Algarve / Research Centre for Arts and Communication
srsilva@ualg.pt

Mirian Tavares[2]
University of Algarve / Research Centre for Arts and Communication
mtavares@ualg.pt

Bruno Mendes da Silva[3]
University of Algarve / Research Centre for Arts and Communication
bsilva@ualg.pt

Beatriz Isca[4]
University of Algarve / Research Centre for Arts and Communication
bbisca@ualg.pt

Filipa Cerol[5]
University of Algarve / Research Centre for Arts and Communication
fcerolm@ualg.pt

Abstract This article framed within the European project *Play your Role – Gamification Against Hate Speech*, proposes the study and analysis of the state of the art in video game panorama, focusing the tendency to the use of hate speech by young players. The immersion of the player in the symbolic arena of the game, where everything becomes possible, raises moral questions about the relationship between video games, in the virtual world and the player's behavior in the physical world. It is shown that the use of anonymity and the creation of communities and game groups can lead to exclusion and attacks to minorities;

[1] Universidade do Algarve/Universidade Aberta, Centro de Investigação em Artes e Comunicação, Portugal.
ORCID ID - https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6117-5988
[2] Universidade do Algarve, Faculdade de Ciências Humanas e Sociais,
Centro de Investigação em Artes e Comunicação, Portugal.
ORCID ID - https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9622-6527
[3] Universidade do Algarve, Escola Superior de Comunicação e Educação, Centro de Investigação em Artes e Comunicação, Portugal.
ORCID ID - https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3207-5667
[4] Universidade do Algarve, Centro de Investigação em Artes e Comunicação, Portugal.
ORCID ID - https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8436-0585
[5] Universidade do Algarve, Escola Superior de Comunicação e Educação, Centro de Investigação em Artes e Comunicação, Portugal.
ORCID ID - https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9732-5797

RevCom

Hate speech in video games and in online gaming communities - A state of art
Susana Costa, Mirian Tavares, Bruno Mendes da Silva, Beatriz Isca e Filipa Cerol

chat communications can facilitate the sharing of interests and game techniques as well as insults in times of tension between players, what justifies the reflection on the role of gaming platform in the control of the shared content. Considering the possibilities of video games, this article also reflects about game literacy and how games can become powerful learning tools.

Keywords   Video games; game literacy; hate speech; teenagers

Resumo   Este artigo, enquadrado no projeto Europeu *Play your Role – Gamification Against Hate Speech*, propõe o estudo e a análise do estado da arte no panorama dos videojogos, focando a tendência para o recurso ao discurso de ódio pelos jovens. A imersão do jogador na arena simbólica do jogo, onde tudo pode ser possível, levanta questões morais e éticas às quais os jovens não estão muitas vezes preparados para responder. O recurso ao anonimato e a criação de comunidades e grupos de jogo pode gerar exclusão e ataque a minorias. Além disso, a comunicação por chat facilita não só a partilha de interesses e táticas de jogo, como também de insultos em momentos de tensão entre jogadores, o que justifica a reflexão acerca do papel das plataformas no controlo dos conteúdos partilhados. Tendo em conta as inúmeras possibilidades oferecidas pelos videojogos, este artigo reflete ainda acerca da literacia dos jogos e de como estes se podem tornar poderosas ferramentas de aprendizagem.

Palavras-chave   Videojogos; literacia dos jogos; discurso de ódio; jovens

1. Introduction

The online expression of hatred has been one of the European Union's political concerns due to its unbridled expansion on the web. Hate speech is defined by European law "as the public incitement to violence or hatred directed to groups or individuals on the basis of certain characteristics, including race, color, religion, descent and national or ethnic origin"[6]). The study of the state of the art we present here was developed within the scope of the project *Play Your Role - Gamification against hate speech*, whose main goal is to understand and point out effective approaches to prevent hate speech in video games.

Online video games are known as one of the favorite leisure activities among young people. In 1999, Tapscott already emphasized the behavior of the generation that he called the net generation: well versed in media and requiring high level of interactivity and collaboration. Nowadays, playing an online game or interact in a game community is part of everyday life of most teenagers. According to a recent study, in European key markets, 84%

---

[6] Retrieved from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM:l33178

of teenagers between 11- and 14-years old play video games.[7]

Malik (2008) states that in addition to providing entertainment and technological skills, video games give practice in problem solving, verbal cognitive performance and social interaction to solve conflicts. Granic, Lobel, and Engels (2014) summarize on the benefits of playing video games, focusing on four main domains: cognitive (e.g., attention), motivational (e.g., resilience in the face of failure), emotional (e.g., mood management), and social (e.g., prosocial behavior) benefits. Prensky (2006) and Tapscott (1999) showed that exposure to video games with open-ended problems has influenced the conflict management skills and the problem-solving capacity of this millennial generation.

The project *Play Your Role - Gamification against hate speech*, funded by the European Union, results of the collaboration of seven institutions working together under the program Rights, Equality and Citizenship. The project aims to understand the expression of hate speech in online video games, on the ground, among young people, to counteract and explore the literacy of games and serious games as significant learning tools to reinforce positive and empathic behaviors.

This research is the first of four interrelated activities to implement a counteraction to online hate speech. The research on video games communities aims to identify the challenges and potential solutions; the creation of new pedagogical itineraries for teachers which will contain resources to promote gaming as a powerful ludic tool and change the perception of video games in educational context; the organization of a European-level hackathon, where game designers and educators will work together in short video games; and the implementation of an online platform to provide new tools and organize dissemination events on this subject.

2. Online Video Games

Video games enable the discovery of knowledge through a simulated reality that allows the player to fail without physical consequences (Silva, 2010). Via image production and immersion techniques, games invade everyday life with "a system that engages players in an artificial conflict" (Salen & Zimmerman, 2004, p. 80), where, stimulated by curiosity, gamers look for answers and rewards. Video games can also provide the ability to learn new concepts, with constant feedback on player's progress; autonomy, freedom to build their own game and

---

[7] Retrieved from https://www.isfe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/ISFE-Key-Facts-Brochure-FINAL.pdf

RevCom

Hate speech in video games and in online gaming communities - A state of art
Susana Costa, Mirian Tavares, Bruno Mendes da Silva, Beatriz Isca e Filipa Cerol

relatedness, interaction with others, and the ability to play cooperatively and competitively (Nass, Taubert, & Zolotykh, 2014).

Nowadays video games represent one of the most influential media in popular culture. The size of the European industry is projected to reach 22 billion euros by 2020[8].

Since the arrival of accessible high-speed connections in the late 1990s, online games became very popular with servers and entire communities on the network dedicated just for gaming (Crawford, Gosling, & Light, 2011) with the affirmation of online games, a new form of gaming was installed. The consoles themselves started to bring features that allowed online access and multiplayer games. The 2000s were then marked by the rise of the multiplayer massive online games (MMOG) and the construction of online communities and sub-communities where gamers communicate and share game's strategies.

3. Hate Speech and Violence

The manifestation of opinion that incites hatred towards individuals or groups, giving words the power to hurt physically, characterizes hate speech. Online hate speech has been addressed in Europe for some time now, in the public discussion as well as at political and institutional level. With the implementation of the Code of Conduct, since May 2016, many important platforms have committed themselves to fight the spread of such content in Europe. The evaluation of the Code of Conduct on countering illegal online hate speech carried out by NGOs and public bodies[9] shows a fourfold increase in the reports of hate speech online being the main reason for reporting xenophobia (17.8%), which includes anti-migrant hatred. Xenophobia, together with anti-Muslim hatred (17.7%), as the most recurrent ground of hate speech, followed by ethnic origin (15.8%). Hate speech in video games can be mainly found in three different circumstances:

1. Offline gameplay;
2. Online gameplay;
3. Online community.

The first aspect - the offline gameplay - concerns the contents and the overall player experience. In this regard, some video games can contain material related to hate speech or can encourage its development in the form of very cruel and violent language and situations.

---

[8] Retrieved from https://www.isfe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/ISFE-Key-Facts-Brochure-FINAL.pdf
[9] Retrieved from http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-261_en.htm

This issue is well exemplified by the identification of PEGI (Pan European Game Information is a European video game content rating system) content descriptors such as discrimination and hate speech used in famous video games such as "Grand Theft Auto" – a video game series created by David Jones and Mike Daily and developed by Rockstar North, published in 1997 by Rockstar Games. This game is censored or banned in countries like Brazil, China, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, United Arab Emirates.

The online gameplay relates to the dynamics of interaction with other players during online multiplayer gaming sessions. Often unmoderated, activities such as the building of teams or clans, the sharing of strategies and the voice chat, can result in conflicts or be a vehicle of hate speech. Real time actions that cannot be regarded only as virtual, as they implicit the gamer as a real person and can have implications and influences outside the game, as leading to conflicts among friends. As an example, PewDiePie – YouTube celebrity related to the "let's play" genre – has suffered fines and has seen its sponsors withdrawing contracts for having made anti-Semitic insults on his YouTube channel[10].

The third aspect regards the online communities, formed around specific video games (for example "PUBG", "Fortnite", "League of Legends" and "Overwatch") on social media and video game platforms (such as Twitch, Steam and Reddit), where it's easy to find comments full of verbal violence, intolerance, or even "virtual stones" to those who express conflicting opinions.

These attitudes are widespread, and it has become more and more common to witness harassment campaigns against women within the video game industry, hate groups or white supremacist servers. In some serious episodes there has been a shift from the digital world to the real one, putting at risk the privacy of prominent personalities within these communities and even their own safety.

Since the beginning of the millennium, hate speech has become more frequent. Non-governmental organizations and public agencies shows a considerable increase in online hate speech notifications, the main reasons for denouncing xenophobia (17.8%), which includes hatred against migrants, together with anti-Muslim hatred (17.7%), one of the most fertile areas of hate speech, followed by ethnic origin (15.8%)[11].

Hate speech is often tolerated as a normal reaction in moments of anger or frustration

---

[10] Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/sep/12/youtube-pewdiepie-donation-anti-defamation-league
[11] Retrieved from http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-261_en.htm

RevCom

Hate speech in video games and in online gaming communities - A state of art
Susana Costa, Mirian Tavares, Bruno Mendes da Silva, Beatriz Isca e Filipa Cerol

aroused by the competitiveness inherent in video games. While playing, the interaction by chat is common and comments can range from performance compliments to ironic criticism, personal or ethnic insults, discrimination against sexual orientation, harassment or minority attack. Using anonymity in front of a supportive public and the absence of consequences might endorse the use of hate speech as a demonstration of power or frustration relief. This kind of behavior is detrimental to the physical condition and self-esteem of both the aggressors and the victims (Breuer, 2017).

According to Consalvo, Ivory, Martins, and Williams (2009), women and minorities are the most affected by hate speech, as there is a tendency for over-representation of males, white people and adults, and an under-representation of females, Hispanics, Native Americans, children, and elderly people. Not unlike television, games can impact the cognitive modeling of social identity, influencing players' impressions of social groups.

A study showed that there are no female characters in 40% of the games and that when they do exist, they mostly have secondary roles. Over two-thirds are Caucasian characters (68%), followed by Latinos (15%) and African American (8%), often associated with gangsters in games like GTA. By mirroring social inequalities of the physical world, this unbalance in games can boost the creation of stereotypes (Consalvo et al., 2009). More recent studies about gender in video games shows that an increasing number of female protagonists are headlining games, but they are still largely limited and defined by male figures (Perreault, Perreault, Jenkins & Morrison, 2018). Analyzing the video games media characters, Adrienne Shaw (2010) concluded that most of the time representation may be available, but only to those who seek it out.

Consequently, an environment where a group is highly represented will catch the attention of players with the same characteristics, creating virtual communities, which appeal to certain majorities (Consalvo et al., 2009). According to Breuer (2017), the fact that minorities are under-represented leads to few minority players who are consequently more exposed to exclusion and hate speech. Despite the need to defend minorities against hate crimes, control is often used as a tool to spread intolerance (Bernardes, Fernandes, Bonaldi & Nesteriuk, 2016). Many authors and scientific researchers have found a relation between violent depiction and aggressive behavior in children. According to Packard (2013), violent video games like "GTA" or "Fortnite" may promote unhealthy relationships between boys and girls, as it encourages sexual harassment and dehumanization. On the other hand, there are many recent studies that have underlined the positive role of video games, focusing the

potential in providing for safe zones of behavior and confrontation, reinforcing, and rewarding positive behavior, the ludic approach to serious topics and debates with a language that speaks directly to youngsters, without necessarily leading players to hideous and socially unacceptable behaviors and attitudes (Alves, 2005).

4. Video Games Platforms and Creators

The fact that players systematically choose a certain type of socially identifiable game will economically encourage the video game industry to match that preference; creating something with ethical and moral value is not reachable for industries designed to make money (Zagalo, 2019). Their goal is to satisfy this audience rather than expand it by making games for other audiences. MMORPG games, Massive Multiplayer Online - an online role-playing video game in which a very large number of people compete and interact simultaneously, are increasingly popular, giving players multiple options to create more distinct identities, by enabling them to choose gender, race or age (Consalvo et al., 2009). There are several gaming genres currently on the market with MMORPGs being one of the most popular. Blizzard's World of Warcraft, one of the most, if not the most, well known MMORPGs, last reported an active subscription base of 5.5 million players in September of 2015 (Manocha, 2017).

When combating hate speech, creators have the most important and immediate role, giving the change to block content, or diversifying the available characters. This way, they will increase the number of players from the minorities (Breuer, 2017). It's certainly almost impossible for game creators to predict the player's behavior during their interaction with the virtual environment, the control must be done by small A.I. programs that act as virtual police, are capable of rectifying mistakes (Machado, 2007).

In the Sing shut down Siri of this, big companies like Ubisoft, a French video game company with several development studios across the world, producing popular games such as Assassin's Creed, Just Dance, Prince of Persia, Rayman, have implemented a Code of Conduct on their community systems and in-game chats, banning players who use racist or homophobic insults. Players banning depends on how extreme the offense is, and it might take two, seven or fifteen days or even permanent ban (e.g., Tom Clancy's Rainbow Siege). Harder to track is everything that happens in chats and discussions.

A bigger concern and vigilance are a higher control and censorship. The EU Code of

conduct on countering illegal hate speech online[12] must serve as a model for platforms. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) also promotes media role to counter hate and extremism. The publication "Countering Online Hate Speech"[13] gives an overview of hate speech and some measures to counteract and mitigate it, showing good practices that have emerged at local and global levels (Grizzle & Tornero, 2016).

Game platforms and communities usually serve as a means for the propagation of this kind of speech. Discord, an application with voice and text chat designed for players which allows the creation of chats and groups to unite players, already imposed its position against hate speech by banning several users linked to neo-Nazi or white supremacy ideologies and forbidding harassment or threatening messages. On the other hand, Steam, the gaming community, and store, refused to block games or content in defense of the right of decision, reaffirming itself as a game market closed to cultural disputes. Twitch (streaming site focused on streaming video games) and YouTube (video sharing platform) are other platforms allowing to watch live streams (live transmission of an event over the Internet) of almost everything, including games. The content goes live without filters, so it is impossible to predict any inappropriate actions. Live streamers can become stars, like PewDiePie, influencing players to act according to certain attitudes. Banning or censoring video games can be considered a way to oppose free speech; and it is important to protect freedom of speech because it promotes self-fulfillment, autonomy, democracy, and truth (Greenawalt, 2005). Can censorship be justified? If the exposure to a type of content can lead to imitation, limiting the access to it can increase the ability to make freer decisions. The power of words is revealed in the influence of the content in opinions and actions, showing that violent speech can generate inconsistent answers (Hurley, 2004). On the other hand, banning certain video games may not be the correct approach, because it could be understood as turning violent video games into a "forbidden fruit". Maybe literacy and game design could be the answer, encouraging discussion about the messages and contents and stimulating young people's moral reasoning (Lourenço, 1998). On the other hand, the features of the game could be improved, assigning different missions so that the player would be encouraged to do less violent acts which could reduce potential harm.

---

[12] Retrieved from https://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-18-262_en.htm
[13] Retrieved from https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000233231

RevCom

Hate speech in video games and in online gaming communities - A state of art
Susana Costa, Mirian Tavares, Bruno Mendes da Silva, Beatriz Isca e Filipa Cerol

5. Video Games Literacy

Video games create challenging situations while they liberate, normalize, organize, and integrate, leading to the recognition of its educational potential (Moita, 2007). In a context where video games serve as a pedagogical resource, educators are given a strategic role to promote video games as a learning tool among the younger generations, scouting for resources that engage students. Using intellectual techniques such as reading, adding, memorizing or identifying, video games can offer an implicit awareness-raising approach on social issues including violence and amoral behavior, whose effectiveness would significantly outperform all attempts to impose any restrictive or prohibitive measure to disengage gamers. Instead, it is necessary to problematize games, urging creators and game developers to open ground for ethical behaviors in the virtual world and emphasizing the difference between the physical and the virtual, while reinforcing games as a space for learning, fiction and fantasy (Moita, 2007; Ramos, 2008).

How can young people learn from video games? How to promote video game literacy among educators, children, and teens? According to Espinosa and Scolari, "Video game literacy can be described as: having the ability to play games, having the ability to understand meanings with respect to games, and having the ability to make games" (Espinosa 2019, p. 48-49). Informal learning should be viewed as a set of skills that are rarely worked at schools and requires critical thinking, collaboration, and participation, showing the importance of the balance between the two education forms. This way of learning is very relevant for the modern man, by solving problems, simulating, evaluating, and imitating, players can learn from the virtual world. Imitation is the most important ILS (informal learning strategy), while observing their favorite players on platforms like YouTube, young people can complete tasks and solve problems in video games (Espinosa & Scolari, 2009).

Which factors can encourage learning through video games? Designing games with a set of key elements that enable gamers to create an experience user-friendly and educational experiences is of the utmost importance. Players could choose a new identity and discover an interactive world that allows them not only to take risks without real consequences but also to improve their gaming skills. However, there are some barriers to this educational method, such as affordability, the time that it takes to learn, the difficult access to gaming devices, and, above all, the preference some students nurture for the traditional methods (Nass et al., 2014).

RevCom

Hate speech in video games and in online gaming communities - A state of art
Susana Costa, Mirian Tavares, Bruno Mendes da Silva, Beatriz Isca e Filipa Cerol

Besides understanding the rules, objectives and game's interface, the user has the opportunity to communicate with others resorting to a specific language, while developing social skills. Unlike traditional education, often characterized by the individualization of work and conditioned by the classroom space, in video games, players learn with the actual interaction with software and other players. By being in control of the activity that challenges them to achieve a certain goal, students are offered an active role in constructing their knowledge (Delwiche, 2006).

According to Zagal (2008), "Gamer literacy", a result from an avid interest and years of gaming experience, should not be equated with "games literacy" or the ability to understand games. To understand games is also necessary to perceive their role in culture because language, music or other elements are often valued by a specific culture or subculture. The cultural context is often important to understand games and vice versa.

Understanding games implies the ability to explain, discuss, situate, interpret and position games in the human cultural context (artifacts), other players context and platforms context. In his research, Zagal (2008), looking for a framework for games literacy, pointed out two educational lenses that contextualize the meaning of understanding games and supporting the students: the "communities of practice", where the user is part of a community, sharing beliefs and goals, and the "knowledge building" where ideas valid to the community are encouraged and improved.

According to Grizzle and Tornero (2016), there is no clear consensus about how to counteract the negative impacts of online hate speech, but education and awareness are key elements to combat hate speech online, thus playing a crucial role in promoting media and information literacy. Recent UNESCO initiatives include the launch of a Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism through education. The organization notes that "It is not enough to counter violent extremism – we need to prevent it, and this calls for forms of 'soft power', to prevent a threat driven by distorted interpretations of culture, hatred, and ignorance"[14]. This media and information literacy must be applied to both formal and informal education and such an intervention should target especially youth, given their rich insight on their own knowledge, attitude, and practices when they encounter hate and extremist content online.

Media, such as video games and game-related practices, are complex and intertwined worlds that play an important role in the everyday life of youngsters and adult citizens and

---

[14] Retrieved from https://en.unesco.org/preventing-violent-extremism

have therefore a significant influence when it comes to building concepts of the other, behavior patterns and conflict management. The attention to this influence has been addressed mostly through its negative connection with violent behavior, violent radicalization, or the students' less worrying yet worrisome leisure activities. The positive potential of video games in providing safe zones of behavior and confrontation has been progressively exploited, reinforcing, and rewarding positive behavior, the playful approach to serious topics and debates with a language that speaks directly to young people. Researchers like Bogost (2011); Frasca (2001); Gee (2003); Jenkins (2009); McGonigal (2011); and Prensky (2006), among many others, have been highlighting the needs of a new generation of young people, generally called digital natives, whose distinctive characteristics must be recognized to guarantee successful learning, motivation and participation results, such as games, simulations, appropriation, multitasking environments, collective intelligence, work networks and negotiation skills (Felicia, 2009; Jenkins, 2009; Prensky, 2006).

Media Literacy plays here a crucial role in providing tools for critical thinking, but also in reinforcing more sensitive approaches around creativity. According to the European Council conclusions on developing media literacy and critical thinking through education and training, Media literacy is,

> all the technical, cognitive, social, civic and creative capacities that allow us to access and have a critical understanding of and interact with both traditional and new forms of media (…). It is closely related to active engagement in democratic life, to citizenship and the ability to exercise judgment critically and independently as well as to reflect on one's own actions, and can thereby enhance young people's resilience in the face of extremist messages and disinformation.[15]

To perceive the role of video games as artefacts and experience transmitters it is important to place them in the context of human culture. Video games can be excellent educational tools, capable of focusing and motivating young people to learn certain skills based on the development of their critical thinking, cooperation, and interaction.

---

[15] Retrieved from http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9641-2016-INIT/en/pdf

6. Serious Games

The serious games allow the player to learn certain educational material while playing, where gameplay and learning can't be separated. With an unappealing appearance, they rarely make a first good impression, i.e. they aren't received with the same enthusiasm as other games. In most cases, they are associated with a single skill, which, once learned, leads to discarding the game. Another discouraging aspect is the need to read the instructions before the game begins. Naturally, the player must be able to play fully aware of the rules to move ahead in the game; however, going through the instructions thoroughly might easily become too time-consuming, thus making such games even more unappealing: Game play as a lesson. The difficult access and unavailability in all platforms are other factors that compromise their success (Nass et al., 2014).

Several authors and studies have been researching the importance of serious games in education and behavior. The International Journal of Videogames or The International Journal of Game-Based Learning have devoted a decade of periodical publications to bridging the need for scientific and engineering methods for building games as effective learning tools, promoting regular meetings and job calls in this field. We also highlight the work of James Paul Gee, who has dedicated his scientific career to studying the relationship between games, learning and society. This author (Gee, 2006) gathered some principles that are good practices in creating serious games, guiding success as learning motors while being motivating and challenging. Also, the American Mark Prensky has been a reference for his research studies in Digital Game-Based Learning, basing his assumptions in the notion of digital natives and the need of taking the game into the classroom, while an innovative model that promotes student learning using technology (Prensky, 2006).

Some non-governmental organizations have implemented the use of video games while working closely with several communities, looking for behavior changes, as well as educational and cultural development[16]. Immersing a student in a virtual environment with physical world characteristics that allow him to test possibilities is one of the most effective ways of learning (Giasolli, Giasolli, Giasolli, & Giasolli, 2006). In many ways, video games can encourage learning, either through historical games or by depicting a historical character who teaches about the period in which he lived. As an example, let us consider "My Child Lebensborn", a nurture, survival game, based on true events, developed by Sarepta Studio AS, where, driven

---

[16] Retrieved from http://www.gamesforchange.org

RevCom

Hate speech in video games and in online gaming communities - A state of art
Susana Costa, Mirian Tavares, Bruno Mendes da Silva, Beatriz Isca e Filipa Cerol

by his own emotional drawing, the player takes care of a child from a Nazi program in the Norwegian society after the war; or "Florence", an interactive story video game developed and published by Mountains Studio, which allows the player to formulate questions about the society through a simple interactive story (Zagalo, 2018).

The success of these games depends on the player's emotional response while interacting, the aesthetic and the design. The most important factors seem to be: awareness, the player must be sensitized by a narrative that encourages him to achieve a goal; immersion, the game must be able to shut down the player from the real world, and make him focus on the game (Schell,, 2013); the feeling of progress that encourages the performance (Werbach & Hunter, 2012); the feeling of danger, when simulated with caution, can help the player focus (Chou, 2015); and, finally, the feeling of conquest, able to motivate the player to continue (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011).

The perspective of game-based learning seems to be an important path for teaching and modeling behaviors in the era of the digital natives. Taking this into account, we can understand serious games as a tool to sensitize the player through emotional drawing, which motivates natural and fluid learning, while cumulatively avoiding boredom.

7. Conclusion

The different paths gamers can experiment with while playing video games have given rise to many debates and reflections. Digital games have long been associated with negative effects on the players' physical and mental health. Currently, there seems to be a virtual space where hate speech manifestations are growing without mediation. However, recent studies show that, although digital games could, for various reasons (hate speech, addiction, violence, isolation), affect human health negatively, especially when talking about children, if there are good playing habits (such as limited time, appropriate environment, game literacy, moderation of games), they can be safe and have a positive impact on both behavior and learning (Felicia, 2009). The emergence of the notion of Serious Games, i.e. using new gaming technologies for educational purposes, has reinforced the positive impact that video games might have. According to a study published in 2009, written in the framework of European Schoolnet's Games in Schools project, this movement emerged "to meet the needs of a new generation of learners, often referred to as the digital natives, whose distinctive characteristics should be acknowledged in order to ensure successful learning outcomes and motivation on their part"

(Felicia, 2009), being a possible way to combat violence and hate speech in certain gaming communities.

In the revision of the studies that have been developed in this field, we gathered some authors, such as Breuer (2017), Bernardes et al. (2016), Packard (2013) and Ferreira (2003), who have carried out a concrete analysis of the violent and aggressive behaviors triggered by video games. There are also numerous articles posted on blogs or websites (Kotaku or Vice, just to name two) that warn of the controversial content that might be potentially found on online gaming platforms and communities. Analyzing the sources, it is notable an increasing discussion on the subject over the years, without reaching a consensus, mostly because there are those who argue that games do not influence violent behavior (Ulanoff, 2019), and see them to achieve behavioral, cultural, and social change. As Zagalo (2014) points out, what is discussed is the production of culture because, however violent the game might be, it forces the player to be aware of himself and of the environment he is immersed in. Each video game is thus a human expression of an idea, and those who play may or may not agree with it.

It is notable the constant evolution of the video game universe, new games are constantly being launched, with new themes and perspectives that will be received by the audience in many ways. According to Machado (2007), game creators are not fully capable of predicting the consequences that each game might have. Actually, it can be argued that games can be less violent, and individuals may still express themselves freely and violently in them. Finally, it is essential to mention the importance of dividing games in categories, using, for example, PEGI labels, and insisting on a game literacy perspective among educators.

The contribution of this project and the innovative aspect is in enhancing gamification in the role of creating safe zones for dialogue, debate and awareness of hate speech online starting from one of the most loved everyday life practices of the youngsters and to foster its pedagogical potential through the creation of new educational materials that teachers and youth workers can use in their daily work. The project proposes to learn how to fight hate speech online by starting exploiting video games in favor of the cause, by transforming a group of strangers into a community: discovering the other, activating empathy, trusting to be able to connect with others, having a common interest and the means to interact, by creating something. For this reason, the project proposes "creatively tinkering with technology" involving young game designers, promoting the dissemination of European content produced by the most innovative video game industry (often startups), laying the foundations for a greater involvement of the videogame industry in contrast to the phenomenon. The ludic

RevCom

Hate speech in video games and in online gaming communities - A state of art
Susana Costa, Mirian Tavares, Bruno Mendes da Silva, Beatriz Isca e Filipa Cerol

approach of the project itself, for example in the form of the urban games is also a powerful and innovative tool for creating awareness raising strategies in the dissemination of the project results, which include citizenship as a whole.

References

Alves, L. (2005). *Game Over - Jogos Eletrónicos e Violência*. São Paulo: Ed. Futura.

Bernardes, D.; Fernandes, H.; Bonaldi, V.; Nesteriuk, S. (2016). *Jogo sujo: Violência verbal e liberdade de expressão nos games.* University Anhembi Morumbi. Retrieved from http://www.sbgames.org/sbgames2016/downloads/anais/156127.pdf

Bogost, I. (2011). *How to Do Things with Videogames*. University of Minnesota Press.

Breuer, J. (2017). Hate speech in online games. In *Online Hate Speech, Perspektiven auf eine neue Form des Hasses, Kopaed.* Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316741298_Hate_Speech_in_Online_Games

Chou, Y. –K. (2015). *Actionable Gamification: Beyond Points, Badges and Leaderboards*. Createspace Independent Publishing Platform.

Consalvo, M.; Ivory, J.; Martins, N.; Williams, D. (2009). The virtual census: representation of gender, race and age in video games. *New Media Society, 11*(5), 815-834. https://doi.org/11. 815-834. 10.1177/1461444809105354

Contreras-Espinosa, R. S.; Scolari, C. A. (2019). How do teens learn to play video games? *Journal of Information Literacy*, *13*(1), 45. Retrieved from https://ojs.lboro.ac.uk/JIL/article/view/PRA-V13-I1-3

Crawford, G.; Gosling, V. K.; Light, B. (2011). The social and cultural significance of online gaming. In G. Crawford, V. K. Gosling & B. Light (Eds.), *Online Gaming in Context: The Social and Cultural Significance of Online Games* (pp. 3-22). New York: Routledge.

Delwiche, A. (2006). Massively multiplayer online games (MMOs) in the new media classroom. *Educational Technology & Society, 9,* 160-172. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/220374439_Massively_Multiplayer_Online_Games_MMOs_in_the_New_Media_Classroom

Felicia, P. (2009). *Digital Games in Schools – A Handbook for Teachers*, Belgium: Hofi Studio. Retrieved from http://games.eun.org/upload/GIS_HANDBOOK_EN.PDF

Ferreira, P. (2003). *Violência nos videojogos e a agressividade – Estudo exploratório da associação entre jogar videojogos violentos e a agressividade em adolescentes*. Dissertação de Mestrado. Instituto Superior de Psicologia Aplicada, Lisboa, Portugal. Retrieved from https://repositorio.ispa.pt/handle/10400.12/520

Gee, J. P. (2006). Semiotic Domains: Is Playing Video Games a "Waste of time?". *The Game Design*

RevCom

Hate speech in video games and in online gaming communities - A state of art
Susana Costa, Mirian Tavares, Bruno Mendes da Silva, Beatriz Isca e Filipa Cerol

Readed – A Rule of Play Anthology. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Giasolli, V.; Giasolli, M.; Giasolli, R.; Giasolli, A. (2006). Serious Gaming: Teaching Science Using Games. *Microscopy and Microanalysis, 12*(S02), 1698-1699. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1431927606061149

Granic, I.; Lobel, A.; Engels, R. C. M. E. (2014). The benefits of playing video games. *American Psychologist, 69*(1), 66-78. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0034857

Greenawalt, K. (2005). Rationales for Freedom of Speech. In A. D. Moore. *Information Ethics: Privacy, Property, and Power*. Washington: Washington University Press.

Grizzle, A.; Tornero, J. (2016). Media and information literacy against online hate, radical and extremist content, some preliminary research findings in relation to youth and a research design. *Media and information literacy: Reinforcing human rights, countering radicalization and extremism.* Retrieved from https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000246371

Hurley, S. (2004). Imitation, media violence, and freedom of speech! P*hilosophical Studies* 117(1-2), 165-218. https://doi.org/10.1023/B:PHIL.0000014533.94297.6b

Jenkins, H. (2009). *Cultura da Convergência*. Aleph.

Lourenço, O. M. (1998). *Psicologia de desenvolvimento moral: teorias, dados e implicações*. Coimbra: Livraria Almedina.

Machado, A. (2007). *O sujeito na tela: modos de enunciação no cinema e no ciberespaço*. São Paulo: Paulus.

Malik, K. (2008). Impact of Computer and Video Games on the Development of Children. In *Risk Assessment and Management in Pervasive Computing* (pp. 343-351). Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-60566-220-6.ch019

Manocha, U. (2017). *MMORPGs and Their Effect on Players*. http://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/art108

McGonigal, J. (2011). *Reality Is Broken: Why Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World*. Jonathan Cape London.

Moita, F. (2007). *Game on: jogos eletrônicos na escola e na vida da geração @*. São Paulo: Editora Alínea.

Nass, M.; Taubert, A.; Zolotykh, S. (2014). *Serious games in information literacy: The creation and analysis of games to teach information literacy*. Report submitted to Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Retrieved from https://web.wpi.edu/Pubs/E-project/Available/E-project-031214-143058/unrestricted/IQP.pdf

Packard, A. (2013). *Digital Media Law*. West Sussex: Wiley.

Perreault, M. F.; Perreault, G. P.; Jenkins, J.; Morrison, A. (2018). Depictions of Female Protagonists in Digital Games: A Narrative Analysis of 2013 DICE Award-Winning Digital Games. *Games and Culture, 13*(8), 843–860. https://doi.org/10.1177/1555412016679584

RevCom

Hate speech in video games and in online gaming communities - A state of art
Susana Costa, Mirian Tavares, Bruno Mendes da Silva, Beatriz Isca e Filipa Cerol

Prensky, M. (2006). Listen to the Natives. *Educational leadership: journal of the Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development, N.E.A, 63*(4). Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279868129_Listen_to_the_Natives

Ramos, D. (2008). A escola frente ao fenômeno dos jogos eletrônicos: Aspetos morais e éticos. *Revista Renote: Novas Tecnologias na Educação, 6(*2). https://doi.org/6. 10.22456/1679-1916.14512

Salen, K.; Zimmerman, E. (2004). *Rules of play. Game Design Fundamentals.* Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Schell, J. (2013). *The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses*. Massachusetts: Morgan Kaufmann Publishers.

Schell, J. (2013). *The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses*. Morgan Kaufmann Publishers.

Shaw, A. (2010). *Identity, Identification, and Media Representation in Video Game Play: An audience reception study*. Retrieved from http://repository.upenn.edu/edissertationshttp://repository.upenn.edu/edissertations/286

Silva, B. M. (2010). Arenas Simbólicas Virtuais. *Actas I Congreso Internacional de Videojuegos.* Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10400.1/2869

Tapscott, D. (1999). *Geração Digital - A crescente e irreversível ascensão da Geração Net.* São Paulo: Makron Books of Brazil.

Ulanoff, L. (2019). *Video games and social media are not the problem*. Life Wire. Retrieved from https://www.lifewire.com/video-games-social-media-not-the-problem-you-are-4766862

Werbach, K.; Hunter, D. (2012). *For the Win: How Game Thinking can Revolutionize your Business*. Pennsylvania: Wharton Digital Press.

Zagal, J. (2008). *A framework for games literacy and understanding games*. 33-40. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/221643982_A_framework_for_games_literacy_and_understanding_games

Zagalo, N. (2013). A singularidade da linguagem do videojogo. *Portal de la Comunicación InCom.* Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/20259446/A_singularidade_da_linguagem_dos_videojogos

Zagalo, N. (2014). Videojogos contribuem para a diminuição da violência. *IGN Portugal, 1*(1). Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/1822/33185

Zagalo, N. (2015). Como o videojogo se afastou do jogo, através da narrativa e criatividade. In R. S. C. Espinosa (2015), *Repensemos el juego.* Bellaterra: Institut de la Comunicación, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Retrieved from http://repositorium.sdum.uminho.pt/handle/1822/40746

Zagalo, N. (2018). Metanarrativas de uma nova sociedade, num videojogo. *Virtual Illusion* [Post on blog]. Retrieved from https://virtual-illusion.blogspot.com/2018/12/metanarrativas-de-uma-nova-sociedade.html

Zagalo, N. (2019). Das lamentações criativas. *Virtual Illusion* [Post on blog]. Retrieved from https://virtual-illusion.blogspot.com/2019/07/das-lamentacoes-criativas.html

Zichermann, G.; Cunningham, C. (2011). *Gamification By Design*. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Susana Costa
Susana Costa is a Ph.D. student in Media-digital Art (University Aberta / University of Algarve). She is studying hate speech in online videogames. She also collaborates with medium and high schools, where she teaches. Her research interests are education, arts and technology.
University of Algarve, Research Centre for Arts and Communication

Mirian Tavares
Mirian Tavares is an Associate Professor at the University of Algarve. With an academic background in Communication Sciences, Semiotics and Cultural Studies, she has developed her research and theoretical work in the fields of Cinema, Literature, and other Arts.
University of Algarve / Research Centre for Arts and Communication

Bruno Mendes da Silva
Bruno Mendes da Silva currently studies the hypotheses of Interactivity for the Cinema of the Future. He is coordinator of the Communication Sciences Department at the School of Education and Communication (ESEC) at the University of Algarve. He is Vice-coordinator of the Research Centre for Arts and Communication (CIAC) and a Guest Professor at Saint Joseph University of Macau.
University of Algarve / Research Centre for Arts and Communication

Beatriz Isca
Beatriz Isca has a degree in Product Design from University of Fine Arts of Lisbon and is currently a research fellow at Arts and Communication Research Centre (CIAC), in the project Play your role. Her research interests are design, arts, and technology.
University of Algarve / Research Centre for Arts and Communication

Filipa Cerol
Filipa Cerol has a Ph.D. in Communication (joint program of the public universities of Seville, Cadiz, Huelva and Malaga, Spain). She is Lecturer in Communication Sciences at the University of Algarve and a researcher at the Research Centre for Arts and Communication (CIAC).
University of Algarve / Research Centre for Arts and Communication