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WET WET WET FLUID: A COLLABORATIVE JOURNEY THROUGH ECOSYSTEMIC RIVER NARRATIVES.

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ABSTRACT | The Format X on “Wet Wet Wet Fluid” presents an interactive game aimed at exploring the dynamics of river ecosystems beyond the traditional human-centric narratives. The game’s objective is to foster ecological empathy and a deeper understanding of river ecosystems by engaging participants in creating and sharing video narratives from the perspectives of various ecosystem actants. By using video storytelling and integrating speculative design principles, the game encourages players to assume roles of diverse ecosystem actants, such as living entities, inanimate elements, and abstract concepts, promoting an understanding of each actant’s unique perspective and role. The gameplay involves continuous interaction and narrative building, where participants can add their stories to a collective narrative, reflecting the dynamic and interconnected nature of ecosystems. Initially launched in a group workshop format, it transitions into an ongoing installation open to all, encouraging contributions that respond to the current state of the river ecosystem. The game’s design, based on non-human perspectives and fiction storytelling, allows for the creation of a layered and interconnected series of stories. “Wet Wet Wet Fluid” culminates in a narrative mosaic, showcasing the diversity and interconnectedness of ecosystem members, and encouraging players to appreciate the complex web of relationships within more-than-human ecologies. The outcome is a collective awakening to the importance of inclusive and responsible environmental stewardship. Conclusively, the game offers a novel platform for engaging with ecological narratives, bridging the gap between human and non-human entities and promoting a more harmonious coexistence through ecological education and empathy.

1. Track

Posters, Slide Decks, Workshops, Format X – Taming Entropy: Systems Design for Climate and Change.

2. Objective

'Wet Wet Wet Fluid' is an innovative interactive game designed to explore the intricate dynamics of river ecosystems, moving beyond the conventional human-centered narrative. It aims to foster ecological empathy and deepen understanding by engaging a diverse range of participants in creating and sharing video narratives from the perspectives of various ecosystem actants, fostering ongoing participation and contribution.

3. Methodology

Employing video storytelling as its core mechanism, 'Wet Wet Wet' integrates speculative design principles to engage participants creatively and empathetically with ecological challenges. Participants, playing individually or in groups, are encouraged to assume roles representing diverse ecosystem actants, including living entities like water, fish, and plants, inanimate elements such as stones, and abstract concepts like pollution or conservation efforts. This approach allows participants to step into the 'shoes' of different elements within the ecosystem, promoting a deeper understanding of each actant's unique perspective and role. The use of event and action cards, depicting various ecological scenarios, guides the narrative development, allowing for the creation of videos that embody the actants' experiences and reactions in the ecosystem.

4. Gameplay

The game facilitates continuous interaction and narrative building, where participants can view existing video narratives and add their own stories, reacting to or expanding upon previous narratives. It begins with a short group workshop format, where initial rounds are carried out by a few small groups, each given 15 minutes for their recordings and responses in each round. After recording, these narratives are added to a looped stream, creating a collective circular statement. After this phase, the game transitions into an installation open for participation to all conference attendees, both on-site and online. In this ongoing format, each participant can contribute their part in response to the current state of the 'river' through their chosen actant and the specific challenge they face. Participants view the current state of the river and draw cards that include perspectives of the actant, archetype, action, and artefact, which they then use as the basis for their contribution to the story. The cards designed for the game are based on the author's research into non-human perspectives and fiction storytelling.

Every hour, a new state of the river is presented, and then, the selected submissions are integrated into the next round of the river's state. This creates a layered and interconnected series of stories, fostering a rich tapestry of ecological perspectives. The fluid format of the game, where new narratives can be added at any point, mirrors the dynamic and interconnected nature of ecosystems.

5. Outcome and Impact

'Wet Wet Wet Fluid' culminates in an intricate narrative mosaic that showcases the diversity and interconnectedness of ecosystem members. Players experience the river ecosystem through various non-human lenses, gaining a deeper appreciation for the complex web of relationships that define more-than-human ecologies. The game challenges participants to rethink their roles within these systems and fosters an understanding of the ecological implications of human activities. The outcome is a collective awakening to the need for more inclusive and responsible environmental stewardship.

6. Conclusion

'Wet Wet Wet Fluid' offers an innovative platform for engaging with ecological narratives in a collaborative and evolving manner. Utilizing video storytelling as a tool for ecological education and empathy, the game bridges the gap between human and non-human entities, paving the way for more harmonious coexistence. It represents a step towards a more inclusive, responsible, and ecologically conscious approach to living and design.

About the Author:

Katarzyna Anosowicz is a Service Designer, UX Researcher, and Innovation Strategist with a distinctive track record in developing the CX division at Player, a leading VOD platform by TVN Warner Bros Discovery. She established Player Labs and has successfully led over 100 projects that deepened immersive narrative experiences in streaming films and series. In her capacity at WBD in Poland, she conducts workshops aimed at redefining future media landscapes, prioritizing community engagement, and ecosystemic sensitivity. Educated with a Master's in Psychology and a postgraduate in Service Design from SWPS Warsaw, she is now completing a Master's in Theatre Studies at the Academy of Theatre in Warsaw, focusing on performative arts. Additionally, she is a recent graduate of Futures Studies & Strategic Foresight at the Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies and will soon be lecturing on Critical Futures, Speculative Design, and Design Fiction at SWPS University. Her work is dedicated to advancing social and gender justice through speculative design. She is constantly developing her methodology centered around feminist futures, performative presence, and speculative design, aimed at analyzing spatiotemporal ecologies and fostering social and environmental change. Her passion lies in existential, total, and post-feminist theatre. She resides and works in Berlin.

P / REFERENCES OF DESIGN

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Conference Website

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Speculative Perspectives
The Power of Immersion
The Future of Well-being
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