Serious games localisation. Playability and translation strategies

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Serious Game (SG)

“A mental contest, played with a computer in accordance with specific rules that uses entertainment to further government or corporate training, education, health, public policy, and strategic communication objectives. [4]

Serious Game Audience

The profile of the user of a serious game is much more defined than that of a video game user.

Checklist audience

✓ Nurse, anaesthetist or surgeon
✓ Does not play for fun, and if the game does not motivate, if it does not present challenges, he or she deems it a waste of time and rejects it.

GlucoZor audience

✓ Child, 8-12 years' old, ill with diabetes
✓ Plays for fun, and if the game is not entertaining, or if he or she does not identify with or understand it, the child will be bored and learning will not take place.

Serious Game (SG) Challenges

- Interactivity: menus, hyperlink
- Playability
- Culture, image, sound, text cohesion
- Technical terminology
- Written oral register

Serious Game (SG) Localisation Strategies

The aim of the serious game is not entertainment but, as with videogames, it has the capacity to lead users, in a way that is fast, concise, efficient and also fun, through a series of predefined actions towards the objective. This capacity to create a convincing personal recreational experience is the playability.

Playability

Playability is the properties and attributes, taken as a whole, that define the experience of the videogame player.

Culture and image

- Text cohesion
- Written oral register

SG Localisation Strategies

The immersion and motivation of the player through identification with what happens on screen is a decisive mechanism for the game experience to be satisfactory and effective. Therefore, playability becomes a crucial variable which will determine the choice of translation strategies. The translator of a serious game must understand and know the mechanics of the game and its tools in order to have the capacity to select the most appropriate strategies and, therefore, have video game localization skills.

Serious game localization is found in theoretical limbo. It is not specifically specialized translation nor is it purely localization of video games. Localization of serious games, which unites the challenges of video game translation and specialized translation, is a complex process with numerous variables which merit their own part in translation studies.

References


Contact

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Picture 1: SG localisation problem solving: decision making factors

Learning and Efficacy

Interactivity is key in a video game. The player must be able to interact almost intuitively after little training. All the elements of UI (menus, buttons, dialogue boxes), messages and instructions must be clear, concise and intelligible.

Motivation and immersion

In order for there to be motivation and immersion, the player must identify with what happens on screen, which is mostly achieved through graphic elements although textual or oral narrative elements also play a part.

Interactivity

Game texts

Efficacy

User interface

System messages

Readability

Verisimilitude

SG Translational Challenges

A proven motivational factor for graphic elements is realism as well as the photographs.