Computer game mods, modders, modding, and the mod scene

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Abstract

Computer games have increasingly been the focus of user-led innovations in the form of game mods. This paper examines how different kinds of socio-technical affordances serve to organize the actions of the people who develop and share their game mods. The affordances examined include customization and tailoring mechanisms, software and content copyright licenses, game software infrastructure and development tools, career contingencies and organizational practices of mod teams, and social worlds intersecting the mod scene. Numerous examples will be used to ground this review and highlight how such affordances can organize, facilitate or constrain what can be done. Overall, this study helps to provide a deeper understanding of how a web of associated affordances collectively serve to govern what mods get made, how modding practices emerge and flourish, and how modders and the game industry serve each others' interests, though not always in equivocal terms.

Keywords

computer games, mods, modding, modders, mod scene

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