

SoAC_ProjectProposal_RyanWilliams(2005055)

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Submission date: 21-Oct-2022 10:44AM (UTC+0100)

Submission ID: 187183156

File name: 24871_Ryan_Williams_SoAC_ProjectProposal_RyanWilliams_2005055__443262_1238395080.docx (20.21K)

Word count: 756

Character count: 4686

Dissertation Proposal

What is Good LGBT Representation in Video Games?

Contents

- **Introduction**
An introduction to the proposal.
- **Background to the Proposed Research**
A statement of the proposed dissertation project.
- **Aims & Objectives**
The aims and objectives of the proposed project.
- **Project design**
An overview of the intended design of the project.

1. Introduction

This proposal will include different aspects of the proposed project, which are, a general overview of the topic being proposed, aims and objectives that I hope to complete during the process of this project, and an outline of what the planned process of the project is going to be, including an outline of the process, the methods planned to be used to acquire data for the project, and ways I plan to evaluate said data.

2. Background to the Proposed Research

This project will be about representation that LGBT+ people have in video games, and will cover what good representation means, how the LGBT+ community feels about certain representations, and how to make good representation. This will delve deep into topics of morality, and how societal views change over time.

This will include finding and comparing many different examples games that feature LGBT+ representation in order to find whether each example has good representation or not. I will also be getting first-hand accounts of what LGBT+ people consider to be good representation in order to ensure I have valid data, and I'll discuss the potential controversies of certain types of representation, such as LGBT+ villains, antiheroes, and stereotyped characters as well.

Another topic that will be talked about is examples of queer bait and the harm it can cause to LGBT+ people. As well as discussing exclusionary representation with the moral implications that brings, the straightwashing of existing LGBT+ characters with examples of how problematic that can be, the morality involved in LGBT+ representation, and how representation for the LGBT+ community in gaming has changed over time.

3. Aims & Objectives

- To find correlation between games considered good representation to the LGBT+ community.
- To find correlation between games considered bad representation to the LGBT+ community.
- To help people differentiate between examples of representation that are helpful, and examples of representations that are harmful.
- To explain the reasons that LGBT+ representation is such an important topic in society these days.
- To help break the stigma against calling out LGBT+ people on any problematic behaviours.
- To shine a light on potential struggles that LGBT+ people have to cope with, some of which may not be well known to the average person.
- To show people the lengths LGBT+ people must go through to find characters that they feel can represent themselves.
- To show the imbalance present in LGBT+ representation, and explain the problems inherent that imbalance.

4. Project Design

4.1 Outline of Project Process

The research will include looking into newer, more inclusive games of the modern era, like Sims, Mass Effect, and Undertale, as well as looking back at older games with LGBT+ representation, such as Le crime du parking, Moonmist, and Caper in the Castro. I will be doing this to determine the quality of representation provided, as well as comparing these games to see how representation in video games has evolved over time.

Some of these games are famous for their representation, such as The Sims which was a huge movement for representation [1], and Caper in the Castro being the first game with a gay protagonist [2].

It will also involve getting the opinions of people from the LGBT+ community in order to ensure that the statements given are actually representative of the LGBT+ community. For example, this would include referencing articles from LGBT+ authors, reviewing LGBT+ discussions on certain topics, and potentially surveying LGBT+ people for their opinions on related material.

4.2 Data Collection

Data will be collected by reading through game reviews, articles and game manuals of games related to the dissertation topic. As well as playing said games for a first-hand experience of how LGBT+ representation is handled. This will allow for the collection of both primary and secondary data.

4.3 Data Evaluation

This data will be evaluated by comparing different sources of information and finding an accurate middle ground between the two separate sources of information.

5. Reference List

- [1] S. Parkin, "The kiss that changed video games," *The New Yorker*, 18-Jun-2014. [Online]. Available: <https://www.newyorker.com/tech/annals-of-technology/the-kiss-that-changed-video-games>. [Accessed: 20-Oct-2022].
- [2] "Caper in the Castro," *LGBTQ Video Game Archive*, 22-Jan-2021. [Online]. Available: <https://lgbtggamearchive.com/2015/08/23/caper-in-the-castro/>. [Accessed: 20-Oct-2022].

6. Bibliography

<https://web.archive.org/web/20171026054220/http://www.gamingbus.com/2012/06/05/glb-t-history-video-games-1980s/>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20190404195845/http://www.gamingbus.com/2012/06/12/glb-t-history-video-games-1990s/>

<https://www.gamesradar.com/queer-representation-in-games-isnt-good-enough-but-it-is-getting-better/>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20131203015922/http://secretlaboratory.org/?p=5024>

<https://www.advocate.com/arts-entertainment/2018/2/02/25-lgbt-video-game-characters>

<https://kotaku.com/a-brief-history-of-gay-marriage-in-video-games-1714251913>

FINAL GRADE

57 / 100

GENERAL COMMENTS

Instructor

1. Engagement with Literature Skills (56%)

Research has been evidenced and references appear in text - this is a good start, but these are still very light. More diversity in sources should be investigated too, such as journals, magazines, books, etc. as this can strengthen your research and knowledge and allow more marks to be awarded.

2. Knowledge and Understanding Skills (58%)

A glossary of subject specific terms would be useful when using terms like 'queer bait' and 'straightwashing' - there is obviously an understanding of certain phenomena here, you just need to convey that knowledge to a reader through the text to demonstrate this knowledge.

3. Cognitive and Intellectual Skills (64%)

The proposal for looking at how societal views change over time is good as it will allow for a lot of research and analysis to be conducted - probably more than can be covered in 6000 words but this is a good thing as it will make it easier to find information to compare and analyse.

Similarly, portrayal of LGBTQ+ characters in popular media (games) should provide a lot of opportunity for analysis. It would be good to see a few examples mentioned in the proposal as this would indicate you've made a start of the research already.

Games have been suggested for a comparison - this is good as it shows you have considered the road

ahead, though it may be that we look at elements rather than whole games, or look at each game alongside cultural norms at their time of publication.

Interviews and data collection from LGBTQ+ individuals has also been suggested as a research source – this is good. Be wary of confirmation biases and making sure different viewpoints are fairly represented – you can also research how to conduct surveys and questionnaires too, as these could be helpful tools in your studies.

4. Practical Application Skills (48%)

The contents page doesn't really offer any purpose - it isn't really even a summary of the content. Contents pages should be linked to page numbers as a way to navigate a document. The introduction should still be contextually linked to your document, even if it is a light overview. Right now it offers no substantial information, and is of very little value.

The same goes for your introduction, which at present feels like word padding. We will work on techniques over the Dissertation supervision sessions to avoid this in future.

5. Transferrable Skills for Life and Professional Practice (50%)

The document is less than 800 words in total. This includes the contents and titles of sections. I feel you could have explored this idea to more depth, even at this stage – a little more information on how and what you intend to cover could help enhance the marks awarded here.

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