



Aalborg Universitet

AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

Interactive Narrator in Ludic Space

A Dynamic Story Plot underneath the Framework of MMORPGs Storytelling System

Nobaew, Banphot; Ryberg, Thomas

Published in:

Proceedings of the 6th European Conference on Games Based Learning ECGBL2012

Publication date:
2012

Document Version
Accepted author manuscript, peer reviewed version

[Link to publication from Aalborg University](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Nobaew, B., & Ryberg, T. (2012). Interactive Narrator in Ludic Space: A Dynamic Story Plot underneath the Framework of MMORPGs Storytelling System. In P. Felicia (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 6th European Conference on Games Based Learning ECGBL2012* (pp. 600-608). Academic Conferences and Publishing International. <http://academic-conferences.org/ecgb/ecgbl2013/ecgbl12-proceedings.htm>

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal -

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us at vbn@aub.aau.dk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Interactive Narrator in Ludic Space: A Dynamic Story Plot underneath the Framework of MMORPGs Storytelling System

Banphot Nobaew, Thomas Ryberg

Department of Communication, Aalborg University, Aalborg, Denmark

banphot@hum.aau.dk

ryberg@hum.aau.dk

Abstract: For decades, the development of digital interactive storytelling in games has been of interest to many researchers. Some scholars have studied the expert system which dynamically creates plots for players, while other scholars investigate the story structure. However, the latter mostly focuses on the micro story level of storytelling structure (Begin-Middle-End). This paper describes the framework for a games writer in MMORPGs as a non-linear narrative, in which a gameplayer takes the role of a digital story writer in a magic cycle. It proposes an extended storytelling framework to a games writer. The framework is developed based on 3 prior theoretical notions: the Story structure, Dramatic structure (Freytag's Pyramid), and Hero's Journey model (Campbell). The story structure is founded by Aristotle in his Poetics (c. 335 BC), but is now considered the basis of digital narrative. Hero's Journey model is the basic of three structure story proposed by Campbell. Developing the framework, the study investigated forty Quests (quest stories) from players during gameplay in World of Warcraft, and employed the plot analysis to deconstruct game storylines. This framework is deeply focusing on the plot point of game-story and develops further to the multi-plot point structure. To analyze the gameplay data in this study, the emotional experience and learning content are considered for the plot investigation. This study is sets out to examine the assumption that, when players play games in a semiotic domain of visual grammar, they simultaneously interpret meaning and produce the storyline per se. The result shows that (1) gameplayers create distinctive story plots which are shown by the story graphs in a freedom of Ludic space, (2) each quest has the different of story plot patterns; although, it has likewise a storyline pattern. To summarize, from the results, the paper proposes the multi-plot point framework which creates the concept of the game story movement for applying in game-story design for learning purposes.

Keywords: Interactive narrator, Storytelling system, MMORPGs, Dynamic story.

1. Introduction

Computer games persuade player to play with the aesthetic experience (Nardi, 2010) and also to learn from the problem solving approach through an interactive drama or an interactive storytelling (Champagnat, Delmas, & Augeraud, n.d.). In this interactive storytelling, most of gameplayers taking the role of an audience actively participate in the game by interaction within Non-player characters (NPCs) or other players. In the mean time gameplayers also act as narrators who (co)write game stories via a gamescape where they are presented with different choices to play and tell the stories in many ways (McDaniel, Fiore, & Nicholson, 2010). This phenomenon is against the traditional concept of storytelling which pushes an audience to be a passive role only. Georges (1969) who believes in this concept, proposed in his paper 'Towards and understanding storytelling events' where he has justifiably claimed that every storytelling events which participants operate in, are a specific set of status relationship. Thus, the computer games need a flexible particular story-structure which allows players to have a freedom of play - the interaction with game objects and a participation in gaming societies. The interactive drama, for that reason, is introduced to be an effective solution for this sort of problems, for instance, (Delmas, Champagnat, & Augeraud, 2007) employed the narrative structure of Campbell's Hero's Journey as fundamental principles to build the interactive storytelling template for video games. The interactive drama has a basic structure resemblance to the traditional cinema structure, but it gives a freedom to a player. It is including three structures as a basis; they are Departure, Initial, and The return. The interactive drama, however, goes further by adding the complexity of sub-story with the aim of giving player experiences. The main issue to apply the interactive drama in games which is raised by Weyhrauch and Bates, is the balancing of player freedom versus Dramatic destiny (story plot-driven) by game designer. This also can be applied as a fundamental framework to a game story in game based learning. The dramatic destiny can be classified in three parts: a beginning, middle, and an end. Nevertheless, both the dramatic destiny structure and the traditional cinema structure are derived from the basic storytelling principles from Aristotle in his writing, the Poetics, 'A whole is what has a beginning

and middle and end' (Aristotle, 1450b). Moreover, Freytag took this notion as a fundamental and developed his own story plot, a dramatic arc. It consists of five parts drama, there are introduction, rise, climax, return or fall and catastrophe (Freytag & MacEwan, n.d.), and it has become a fundamental of a drama story (Göbel, Becker, & Feix, 2005). However, the arc model and the cinema structure of Campbell are designed for a linear narrative and the sequence of action and events are fixed (Delmas et al, 2007). Therefore, the interactive drama seems to be a noble way to fit for driving the story in video games. However, the interactive drama has some initial limitations in relation to implementation, for instance, the problem of creating the games content into a large story space and the problem of managing a player experience which can keep the player in the boundary of an author story space. Thus, it needs to make a balancing between a freedom of player and the goal of author (Weyhrauch & Bates, 1997; Magerko, 2006). In addition, with the interactive drama concept, it provides the players role to be the active players which they interact directly with a fantasy world. When players immerse into the story space in the game world, the dramatic experience will be taken a role as a passive story experience by players (Crawford, 2004). The interactive drama should be enable players to create game stories and define their action in the game world, as Laurel (1986) noticed that in the interactive drama, user should be able participation in the plot development, and the plot should be allowed player to guide directly to the story progresses (acting plot) (Falstein, 2005).

To sum, within the development of interactive drama, many scholars and artists pay attention towards the participating player and progress plot; however, those investigations focus on the macro level of plot development and in the level of technological or the expert system. On the other hand, if we look carefully back and consider the basics of story structures since the first founder by Aristotle's Poetics, the main component which drives the story progression is the plot point. The dramatic experience, immersive, and engagement are led by the sub-story plot. The story plot analysis needs to be emphasized more in the plot point level. The main questions in working with the story plot level are: what the story plot points are in video games and how we can work with the story plot points. However, even at the level of the story plot study, there has been made only a few studies. For example, McDaniel and other (2010) investigated the combination of plot, character, and environment as the narrative concept to identify the narrative taxonomy in Fallout 3. They utilize a common quest plot as a high-level plot combined with other plot types as embodied by the lateral quests and events. (Landwehr, Diesner, & Carley, 2009) studied the quest in World of Warcraft (WoW) on the assumption that *'Quests - tasks given to players - provide a window into the traits of artificial cultures created for these environments, and researchers have used specific quests to advance arguments about game cultures'*. Furthermore, Ashmore and Nitsche (2007) studied the way to implement a basic quest generator in the Unreal Tournament game into a procedural game world.

In this paper, we will specifically focus on the story plot development which is a micro-level of the plots investigation. The finding knowledge benefits to adapt in developing a game story in a sub-plots level to encourage players more immersive and experienced from gameplay without boring, such as in a serious game. Developing a story structure in games is not enough to apply only in a whole story, but this applying is needed to emphasize in the structure of sub plots. This notion is concerned to the main question: how we can design a game story for both attraction (fun) and learning. The study draws from the previous fundamental storytelling - the story structure, the dramatic structure (Freytag's Pyramid), and Hero's Journey model. The data for analysis in this research are taken as a gaming video recorded from different gameplayers. The main analysis focuses on the gaming quests data from World of Warcraft - the popular online game for many years. These data had been collected during a gaming workshop for two weeks. Moreover, the quests data had been collected for two years. The game quests data were brought to analyze in deep to the story plot point. This paper, therefore, frames the concept of the multi-plot point of interactive storytelling in Multiplayer Online Role-playing Games (MMORPGs), WoW.

2. Analytical framework

This study takes departure from the investigation of the prior story-structure frameworks (from Aristotle to Campbell) which are emphasized only on the story structure and story plot level to develop the specific tool to analyze the quests of World of Warcraft (WoW). Then, the result of the initial investigation is employed to establish a new way of developing a story plot in games story. The storytelling in World of Warcraft borrows the story structure concepts from various myths and fictions. This game remediates the

preexisting mythological cosmologies and characterizes the genre of high fantasy into the online game context (Krzywinska, 2006). Game designers make use of to the knowledge of these myths when they design the game story concept, game themes, game quests, characters, props, sets, and game landscape (gamescape). Furthermore in WoW, game designers not only use the symbolism from an ancient mythological and fictional concept, but also employ contemporary fictions, for instance, a Panda theme -Pandarian. Pandarian is the last continent of WoW zone which borrows the story concept from an animation movie name Kung Fu Panda. This game landscape theme is designed by mixing a fantasy world and China's worldview to represent the complex ecosystem of the ancient realm of Pandarian which shows the indigenous races and exotic creatures of Chinese culture. According to Krzywinska it is noted that all game quests tie into mythic form through the rhetorical style in the game context, such as dialogue, written, game structure, and game content. As Greek myth lends the story concept to WoW; therefore, using a story structure framework from Aristotle's Poetics as a departure point is more reasonable for analyzing MMORPGs. In Poetics (Aristotle, n.d.), the Tragedy is the structure of story order; it is divided to Prologue, Episode, Exode, and Choric song. Tragedy consists of six components which are adapted into WoW game in this study.

- *Mythos or plot* concerns to the structure of game interaction. It has the main components that are Reversal of the Situation, Recognitions, and the Scene of Suffering or Resurrection in WoW. The plot is run by the cause and effect in game mechanics.
- *Ethos or character* concerns to characteristics of main character which can be a good, appropriate, consistent, and consistently inconsistent. It is brought to consider an avatar, NPCs, and other players.
- *Dianoia (thought or theme)* concerns to the reason of character-spoken which refers to character background. This component relates to avatars' race, and classes. The ways of avatar actions, abilities, and totems are referred to Dianoia of games.
- *Lexis (diction or speech)* concerns to the speech quality of character which reflects to moral qualities of character. Each race and class in WoW is unique, and they have their own language.
- *Melos or melody* in the plot refers to be a character in a part of a whole story. In games, there have themes songs for each avatar's race, and class included NPC; in addition, each game land (zone) also has different scores (music) and background sounds.
- *Opsis or spectacle* refers to the visual apparatus of play, such as props, sets and costume in a game story. The visual aesthetic of gamescape in WoW is the crucial factor which encourages player into the game. It is represented in the design in game objects and game atmosphere. The gamescape principles, one of visual grammar components, which composite all visual game objects and make these objects work together. These gamescape principles consist of the principle of visual elements and the visual principles (Nobaew & Ryberg, n.d.).

Tragedy's components are made use to determine and frame the story structure in WoW; however, it has limitations as it is a linear narrative structure. The Tragedy treats the audience as passive spectators and separates them from the story plot. The plots are static and fixed by the story structure per se, although WoW is a dynamic game in the three-dimension space which gives a freedom to the players. Therefore, because of a freedom of play, it makes an occurrence of the complex story-plot. The six elements of Tragedy, nevertheless, can be lent to classify the game characters and visual game objects, and also can be brought to count the sounds as one of game objects. Moreover, Mythos is also used to construct the game story-plot from a gameplay data recorded by cooperated with the game quests data.

Another framework which is developed from the analysis of Greek myth and Shakespearean drama is Dramatic Structure by Freytag (1900). This framework later, has been called 'Freytag's Pyramid'. He proposed the five points and three crises of the drama. The five points consist of introduction, rise, climax, return or fall, and catastrophe. The plot rises from the introduction by the exciting forces to the climax and fall to the catastrophe. Between the three points, plots are laid by the rise and fall. However, the five points must be connected by three crises. These crises are the exciting moment or force, the tragic moment, and the last suspense moment which bind between the introduction and the rise, the climax and the return, and the return and the catastrophe respectively. The dramatic structure of Freytag places more focus towards the plot than Tragedy, and it starts to investigate carefully the connection between plots; however, the five points are to fix, and the natural game plots are often conversed as the freedom of play. We can therefore, apply it for the initial steps of the sub-plot analysis.

As former mentioned, we need other story-frameworks to fulfill what the story structure and dramatic structure are missing. Hero's Journey of Campbell seems to mostly emphasize the plot and sequence of actions. In his work, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Campbell, 2008), Campbell divides into two parts. These parts are the Adventure of the Hero and the Cosmogonic Cycle. In the Adventure part, the hero ventures forth from the normal world to the unknown world. It consists of three sections, they are Separation (Departure), Initiation, and Return. These sections consist of seventeen stages; which can be linked to the game story structure.

Separation/departure

- The Call to Adventure, in games, it can be referred to an avatar selection, quest request, and quest information from non-player characters (NPCs).
- Refusal of the Call and Acceptance of the call, it refers to accept or reject the quest, join the guild and ask for the quest.
- Supernatural Aid refers to the help from NPCs, a magic power and a special weapon.
- The Crossing of the First Threshold, it refers to the entering to the game world, and change to a new game zone.
- The Belly of the Whale refers to enter to a dangerous game's territory.

Initiation

- The Road of Trials, in games, it refers to get the harder level or confront with the boss – a powerful monster.
- The Meeting with the Goddess refers to a help from NPCs.
- Woman as Temptress, the tempted in the game can come in many forms, such as, monster, quest and attractive events which take players far from the goal.
- Atonement with the Father, this stage refers to avatar's classes, and races in Horde or Alliance.
- Apotheosis refers to a gaining high level and new skill.
- The Ultimate Boon, it refers to the quest resolve.

Return

- Refusal of the return represents to when player still stay in the unknown area or return to the same quest.
- Magic Flight refers to a magic door, Hearthstone and Teleporters in WoW.
- Rescue from Without, it can be referred to a special magic way during quest.
- The Crossing of the Return Threshold refers to re-enter back to the same quest.
- Master of the Two Worlds, this stage in game is meant when player completes more quests or harder quest and gets a promotion from the game.
- Freedom to Live refers to when players complete all quests in that area and they have a freedom to go to other lands.

From the three story structure frameworks, these are employed to analyses the whole story structure of WoW game as the study case. After analyzed, it reveals that the game story of WoW can be classified to a certain story structure and be classified the elements inside the game story. Moreover, these three frameworks have been utilized together to analyses the sub plot structure which helps us to find the answer from the question that how the sub plots of game story are work. The finding from this study can be used edits the sub plot level in other MMORPGs for a specific purpose, such as education, or learning purpose. For instance, it can be applied to design the game quests as an easy task, and give players a reward for the initial quest. Another sample to apply the story structure in learning, Sharda (2007) introduced Movement Oriented Design as a micro story which includes Begin, Middle, and End to contextualize and develop the good storytelling in educational multimedia. However, the repetition tasks and difficult quests should be considered to be utilized in a game story.

3. Methodology

This study investigates the storytelling framework of MMORPGs which main focuses on World of Warcraft. The main reasons to choose this game for analysis are considered from many issues which are related with quality of game story, gameplay, and popularity among gameplayers. This game becomes a game model for other MMORPGs. Moreover, it more influences to other games after it has succeeded in the

game world market. The analytical result and knowledge are useful for game writer and story developer to open the new way of game story analysis. This study bases on the assumption that a gameplayer can create stories for the game as a role of co-creator. Games stories in which are created by player are the supplement (sub-plot points) of the main game story. Therefore, the site of gameplayers (game stories from player) is needed to be counted in the data analysis. Thus, to develop the story plot point analytical framework for MMORPGs, data are collected from the online-gameplay. In addition, more data are also recorded by video-recording software. Furthermore player interviews and questionnaires are applied to the investigation. This study considers both qualitative and quantitative data.

3.1 Game content classified

At the first analysis, the research data are analyzed by the content analysis to classify the types of quests. However, the multimodal discourse analysis is the main approach in this study. This approach considers all data which are related to the research objectives, for instance, game documents, conversation, images, interaction, interactivity and social semiotic. In the second analysis, the gameplay video, game-playing video, and interviews are transcribed and classified. The study selects the 40 quests of the initial gameplay for the analytical samples which are selected by a randomization. However, the result from this study cannot be claimed for all game genres, but it can be a guideline to open the new way for critical analysis in the game story at the micro level (sub-plot point analysis).

4. Plots analysis

To classify the game content, we need a framework of quest type to categorize it. These quest categories are necessary to frame a type of game stories from gameplayers, in which it can be broken down to the sub plot point for analysis. The study is analyzed as back and forth step, to construct the game stories from gameplay and deconstruct the stories for analysis the plot point.

4.1 Types of quest in World of Warcraft.

There are many quest types in WoW from simple tasks to complex tasks involved in game storyline. A game typically starts by giving a quest to a player; it shares resemblance to the Call to Adventure stage in Hero's Journey. There has some existing framework classified the quest types in WoW, such as, Blizzard Entertainment divided into 9 quest types. In this study, the analysis takes its departure from the investigation of 500 WoW quests from four limited game versions and employs the prior framework to classify it. However, the existing quest types are not correspondence with 500 quests in the quests data because there are some quests which cannot be classified to that framework due to, some new quests were created when the new game versions are introduced. Therefore, those quest types need to be re-classified before being used to analyze the story plot in WoW. From the gameplay data (video data from playing WoW) which has been recorded in the duration of a year, they can be classified into 13 quest types. The criteria are a characteristic of quest story, the task details, visual environment in the quest, quest rewards, amount of the task (sub-quest), NPCs or creatures' level, level of quest difficulty and amount of time playing. They can be classified to 13 quest types.

- Destroy Quests - give the player(s) tasks to destroy or kill creatures or NPCs. Players gain experience from a weapon usage, and also get credit for the kills. After kill, the game is required to bring items back for proof the kills. These types of quests allow players to form a group and loot the item off the corpse.
- Gather Quests – these quests require obtaining specific items from gamescape or NPCs. It allows taking quest as a group, but the items are not share for counting.
- Delivery Quests – call the players to deliver an item or to meet NPCs from place to other, but during the hostile territory players will face with risks. Players have to keep them alive and sent the quest items on time.
- Training Quest – give the task for the player for training new skills.
- Aid Quests – the tasks require player to bring items to heal NPCs or just go to protect the land from creatures.
- Escort Quests – the task is to take NPC to the designated place with safe under the limit time. Along the road of trial, player has to defeat creatures whose attempt to kill NPC.
- Faction Quests – lead the group of NPCs with the purpose of complete the task. The player has to stay with the faction during the quest.

- Class Quests – these are specific to the avatar classes. They aim to train new skills or abilities to the avatar when complete the quest.
- Quest Chains – these are complex quests which consist of many small quests. It starts from an easy one to more difficult with a boss creature. There are chains of storyline.
- Elite Quests – challenge player to face with the very high NPCs level which have a high skill, power and health. It takes more time to compete and needs a group of players to deal with.
- Dungeon Quests – are special quests which announce from the game. It will bring a player group to a Instance dungeon, special location in WoW (Blizzard Entertainment, 2007).
- Designate Quests – give player a task to do something in a particular purpose, such as explore the land, protect item in a period of time and other.
- Mix or Hybrids Quests – these are complex quests which have more than one task aim, for instance, obtaining quest items and also bring them to destroy creatures, and construction. These quests also to need collect items to create new weapons or magic powers.

The thirteen quest types are not only used significantly to classify the gameplay data in 40 quests from four players. But, they are metaphor and used to relate to the seventeen stages of Campbell. These quest types are also help us to evaluate the quest aim and the emotional experience which players perceive.

4.2 Building the game quest storylines (stories construction).

The game quest stories can be built on the quests data (task details) which players use as guidance (quests give details of what, where, and how to achieve the quest goal). While the players play the game, they also draw the storyline for themselves as co-creators. They choose to accept the quest as a call from NPCs or decide refusal the quest, but they will not gain the experience or game level. Gameplayers, mostly, take more than one quest when they are playing. Consequently, the game mechanic always puts the quest to player to let them continue play simultaneously. In this study, the gameplay data is collected from four players (they are male and female teenagers) as the video format by giving them a time to play in a half hour for each one. Then, the data are classified relative to the quest types by using the thirteen quest type classifications. Once analyzed, the result in figure 1 shows that the delivery quest types have the highest amount of percent (40%) compare to the other quest types, and the destroy quests are the second (31%). These results explain that WoW uses the delivery quests and destroy quests to persuade player to continue play game by giving them the tasks to explore the gamescape and get the pleasure from the visual aesthetics. Moreover, these quest types are easy tasks which player can achieve the goal easily and also get the new level or new skills in the short time of playing. Players can get the pleasure of play by slaying monsters and enjoy new skills or powerful magic in the Ludic space. This finding can be a contribution for a game designer when creating quest stories in games. However, the quest story design needs to cooperate with the visual aesthetic which it is worked by the visual grammar, this grammar composites all visual game elements as a whole.

In WoW, most of the beginner quests are easy to play, less time consuming and easily increase the player level or new skills, all which encourage players to enjoy the play. Moreover, the game always urges players to take a journey by giving more new quests during gameplay by inserting the quest, or after completing a quest. In the other hands, the process of continuing to add more quests as player tasks make a conscious effort to players to show a responsibility to complete it. This causes to a game addiction.

To investigate the story plot in the quest stories, this study employs the twelve stages from the total seventeen stages of Campbell's framework as a plot point analysis to analyze the quest stories from 4 players. The other plot points are not applied for this study. To apply this framework, it is necessary to assign the specific number (1-12) for each plot point to represent as the Three comprises of Campbell and Freytag's Pyramid in the linear narrative structure, but these numbers are not related to the frequency or density.

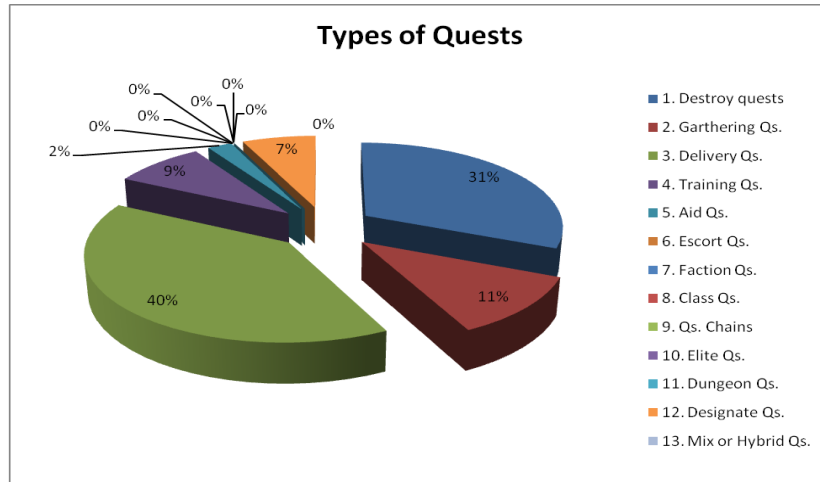


Figure 1: The Types of Quests in World of Warcraft.

For instance, the Q1 represents to the first quest which player gets from game (NPC), and the number in table row of this quest show the meaning that this plot point (plot type) is exist in the quest journey. The plot points are already defined from above (seventeen stages). Table 1 shows the ten quest data from the first player which he plays in a half hour.

Table 1: Plot point analysis in the story quest.

Plot Points	Assign number	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
Quest Call	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Accept the quest	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Crossing to the First Threshold	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Entering the Belly of the Whale	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Investigation	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
The Meet with the Goddness	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6
Woman as Temptress	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Antonement with the Father	8	8	0	8	0	0	0	0	8	0	0
The Ultimate Boon	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Refusal of the Return	11	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Resolution	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Return to report the completed quest	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9

Subsequently, when using the quest data in table 1 as input for a graphic visualization or story-plot graph (Figure 2). It shows that in the beginning play in WoW, the quests apply most plot point types in the quest stories (by game designer), whilst other plot points are not often used in the WoW story plots, such as The Meet with the Goddness, Woman as Temptress, Atonement with the Father and Refusal of the Return. The main reason is that these plot point types are usually applied when creating the difficult quests (higher quests) which require an experienced player to solve it. The higher quests are more difficult and players needs more time to solve the tasks. The higher quest seems to be the Mix or Hybrid Quests rather than other single quests. This result is resemblance with the study of Delmas and other which applies Hero's Journey framework to investigate in the serious game. They found that games should be permissive to failure if players get worse results by giving a hero to support in the game story such as Supernatural Aid and the Rescue from Without (Delmas et al, 2007).

Therefore, many high level quests call for multi-players to form a guild (group player) in order to solve the task, they want a high player level and skillful included powerful weapon or magic. However, the quests for beginner players need to be easy in order to motivate continued play. New players need a simple quest and training quest for practicing, but these quests are not boring. That is why the simple kill, obtain and delivery quest are the most popular usage; moreover, players can enjoy the visual aesthetic of

gamescape. The delivery and obtain quests are good choices to explore game environments for players, as Crawford (2005) noted that the quests in interactive storytelling should envision a dramatic storyworld.

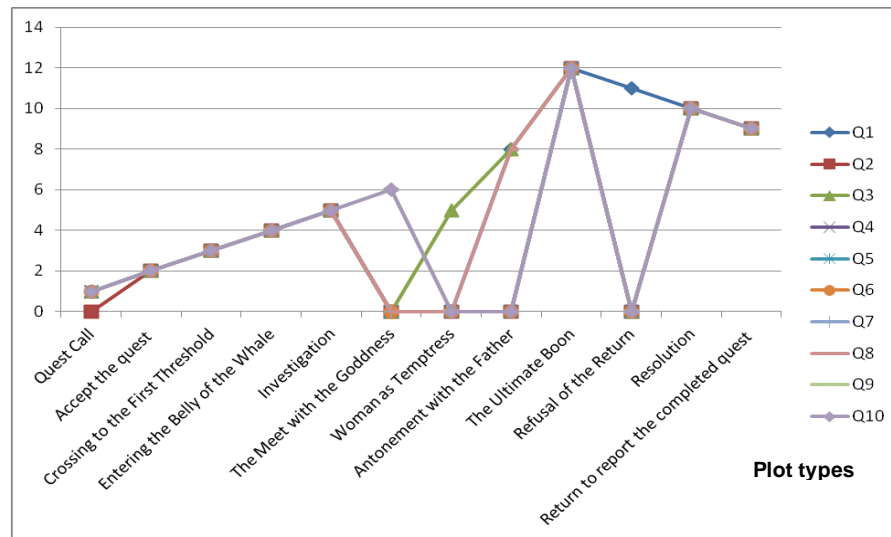


Figure 2: The story (plot) graph of the quest from player.

To sum, the story structure in World of Warcraft works as the progression cycles (Fig. 3) in which each big cycle represents to territories (game landscape). The territory which is designed as an unique theme has various quests inside, represented by small cycles. The quests in territory vary to the player level, skill and also game environment (visual design theme). The progression of story plot directly relates to learning experience and the quest types.

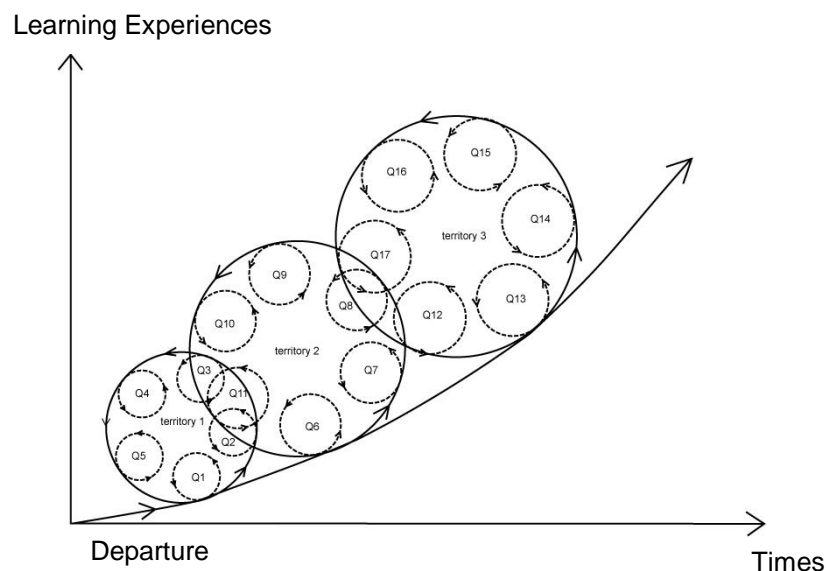


Figure 3: The Story Sub-plots of Quests in World of Warcraft

In the higher level, the story plots are more complex and dynamic. The amount of the plot is also dramatically increased and it is difficult to resolve. The game calls for players to play more quests through NPCs or poster announcements in a specific area. Players need to spend more time playing to gain a new level and skill. However, the quests are similar and repeat the pattern. Players can get bored from the non-progressiveness of the quest qualities. It is always found in the higher level quests.

5. Conclusion

Gameplayers play the role of co-creator(s) in WoW and writing storylines via quests accomplishment. This paper takes the quest storyline as the Hero's Journey cycle; therefore, the quest itself consists of a range of story plot points. The Hero's journey with seventeen components or the (multi)plots point is valuable when investigating the gameplay story plot (quest story) in MMORPGs which player takes a journey by a quest. This analysis framework examines and shapes the story graph from gameplay data. It contributes to the quests quality. This knowledge contributes to an appropriate quest-designing to player as a situated learning in a freedom of game space, for instance, considering to the difficulty of quests level and quests feeding time. Moreover, this analysis also opens the new way of methodology for storyteller scholar and game writers to look critically in the level of plot point analysis of game stories for the game story design in specific purposes such as for education or training. Some important factors are needed to consider for designing game stories such as a freedom or choices of play, rewards, playing skills, avatar skills and role playing. They are the key factors in WoW which reveal from the quests analysis that encourages player to continue playing. However, the quest study in WoW game needs to investigate more in the higher quest levels which are complex and energetic. Moreover, the elements of visual design need to consider in the investigation framework for analysis the emotion and experience of gameplay.

References

- Aristotle, P. (n.d.). The Internet Classics Archive, 350 BCE Translation by SH Butcher available at <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/poetics.html>. Last referenced, 1(10), 08.
- Ashmore, C., & Nitsche, M. (2007). The quest in a generated world. *Proc. 2007 Digital Games Research Assoc.(DiGRA) Conference: Situated Play* (pp. 503–509).
- Campbell, J. (2008). *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Bollingen Foundation, 1949. Princeton University Press. 3rd edition, New World Library.
- Champagnat, R., Delmas, G., & Augeraud, M. (n.d.). A storytelling model for educational games: Hero's interactive journey. *International Journal of Technology Enhanced Learning*, 2(1), 4–20.
- Crawford, C. (2004). *Chris Crawford on Interactive Storytelling (New Riders Games)*. New Riders Games.
- Delmas, G., Champagnat, R., & Augeraud, M. (2007). Bringing Interactivity into Campbell's Hero's Journey. *Virtual Storytelling. Using Virtual Reality Technologies for Storytelling*, 187–195.
- Falstein, N. (2005). Understanding Fun—The Theory of Natural Funativity. *Introduction to game development*, 71–98.
- Freytag, G., & MacEwan, E. J. (n.d.). *Freytag's technique of the drama: an exposition of dramatic composition and art*. Scott, Foresman.
- Georges, R. A. (1969). Toward an understanding of storytelling events. *The Journal of American Folklore*, 82(326), 313–328.
- Göbel, S., Becker, F., & Feix, A. (2005). Inscape: Storymodels for interactive storytelling and edutainment applications. *Virtual Storytelling. Using Virtual Reality Technologies for Storytelling*, 168–171.
- Krzywinska, T. (2006). Blood Scythes, Festivals, Quests, and Backstories World Creation and Rhetorics of Myth in World of Warcraft. *Games and Culture*, 1(4), 383–396.
- Landwehr, P., Diesner, J., & Carley, K. M. (2009). The Words of Warcraft: relational text analysis of quests in an MMORPG. *Proc. Digital Games Research Association Conference (DiGRA)*.
- Laurel, B. K. (1986). Toward the design of a computer-based interactive fantasy system.
- Magerko, B. S. (2006). *Player modeling in the interactive drama architecture*. University of Michigan.
- McDaniel, R., Fiore, S. M., & Nicholson, D. (2010). Serious storytelling: Narrative considerations for serious games researchers and developers. *Serious Game Design and Development: Technologies for Training and Learning*, 13–30.
- Nardi, B. A. (2010). *My life as a night elf priest: An anthropological account of World of Warcraft*. Univ of Michigan Pr.
- Nobaew, B., & Ryberg, T. (n.d.). Gamescape Principles: Basic Approaches for Studying Visual Grammar and Game Literacy.
- Sharda, N. K. (2007). Authoring educational multimedia content using learning styles and storytelling principles. *Proceedings of the international workshop on Educational multimedia and multimedia education* (pp. 93–102). ACM.
- Weyhrauch, P., & Bates, J. (1997). *Guiding interactive drama*. Carnegie Mellon University.