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CMC, spel och informellt lärande

KTH (NADA/Media Technology)
• Senior Lecturer (Lektor) 2002-
Department of Communication studies, Linköpings universitet
• Ph.D. thesis: "Code begets community: On social and technical aspects of managing a virtual community"
Computer and systems sciences, Uppsala universitet

CMC & CSCW * tid och plats

Tid
same (synkron) | olika (asynkron)
--- | ---

Plats
same | olika
--- | ---

CMC
VC
SvM
MMOG
TDZK
Exjobb

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Intro
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CMC & CSCW

CMC CSCW Communities
Technology
Society

Human-Computer Interaction
Design Systems development

Computer sciences
Social sciences

Sociology
Anthropology
Psychology

Group Decision Support System (GDSS)
Skiftarbete, kontorrum, flygledning, sambandscentral

Telekonferens, videokonferens, chat, Mud & MOO

E-post, distributionslister, konferenssystem, voice mail
Akronymerna

CMC - Computer Mediated Communication
Dator-medierad kommunikation
Dator-förmedlad kommunikation

CSCW - Computer-Supported Cooperative work
Datorstöd för samarbete

CMC och CSCW - samma sak?

Ett annat sätt att överblicka området:

Distributionslistor
Konferenssystem
BBS
Asynkrona system för att stödja delat arbete
(ex. skriva)

Chatt, IRC
Synkront stöd; F2F, audio, videokonferenser

CSCW i ett större perspektiv

The computer reaches out - the historical continuity of interface design (Grudin 1990)

50 60 70 80 90-tal

Effekter av CMC

Effekter kan delas in i två typer:

1:a ordningens effekter är de effektivitets och produktivitetsökningar som man förväntar sig av den nya teknologin (cost/benefit issues)

2:a ordningens effekter är de förändringar av sociala beteenden som uppstår genom användandet av den nya teknologin

Implicita antagande inom CMC-forskning

- Det självklara studieobjektet är instrumentell (arbetsrelaterad) användning.
- Kommunikation ansikte mot ansikte (F2F) utgör normen och är den ”bästa” kommunikationen.
- Resultat är generalisera benefica och gäller för all CMC.
- Experiment med ”zero-history groups” vs etnografiska studier.
Men tänk om sambandet är mer komplex?

The social-technical design cycle

Social practices — Artifacts

O’day et al. (1996)

Bilder

Size as a critical factor

- The larger less appropriate to call it a community
  - "The AOL community now includes tens of millions of people"" (Figallo)
  - "Large size has little meaning except as a threat to the individual’s feeling of significance" (Figallo)
- Growth as a move from village to city
  - "The small towns of the Internet [are] becoming urbanized" (Baym)
  - "The population had boomed, the texture of life had grown more "urbanized" - more cosmopolitan, more brutal, more anonymous" (Dibbell)
SvenskMud as a game

- Everything is in Swedish
- Takes place part in a Tolkien-inspired fantasy world and part in a Sweden of the 19th century
- Has a text-based interface
- Contains 6000 distinct spaces ("rooms") full of monsters, treasures etc.
- Has limited access to 100 simultaneous users at peak hours
  - "Neither young nor dead - sustainability of Internet communities"

Informal learning in SvenskMud

- Informal learning in computer games - leaning as a side effect of playing/participating
- Making a "career" in SvenskMud as a movement from periphery to core and from novice to expert in the activities that are relevant to the community.

Informal learning in SvenskMud II

- A movement from being a legitimate peripheral participant to becoming a full member of the community of practice.
- Career as a matter of learning how to act, reason, and think in the right way, learning how to handle common and unusual, simple and difficult situations.

Community of practice (apprenticeship)

Social theories of learning - points of departure

- Learning is social, learning is part of human nature, and, we are quite good at it.
- Learning is not confined to a certain place or situation and thus has no beginning or end.
- Learning instead happens best when it is a side product of, or part of other activities.
- Learning is not necessarily the effect of teaching. And when we are being taught, we learn many other things than the subject at hand.
Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOG)

- Persistent worlds
- Thousands of simultaneous players
  - Lineage 3,000,000 players in Asia (Korea, Taiwan)
  - Everquest 500,000 players in USA and Europe
- Complex social interaction/social phenomena
- Can be very captivating
- Subscription model (10-15$ / month for unlimited online access)

Star Wars Galaxies

- Released in the US in June 2003 and in Europe in November
- 125,000 subscribers the first week, 300,000 after the summer
- > 3,000,000 posted messages on the official discussion forum on the web (spring 2004)
- Costs 15$ / month
- Suffer from the same problems as other games (released too early = many bugs)

From MUDs to MMOG

- Graphical interface = more accessible
- Two magnitudes larger
- Commercial enterprises
- But, same social interaction and same social phenomena

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Learning in online games

- Informal learning in computer games - leaning as a side effect of playing/participating
- If online games are complex, informal learning becomes unreliable (uneven results)
- The answer is in-game academies (schools!)
- Grant application, "Formal and informal learning in and around computer games"

Dynamics and driving forces behind the formalization of learning

- How are in-game academies organized and how do they change over time?
- What does it mean when in-game academies appear and how is learning organized there?
  - What makes people "go to school" within a game?
  - Do you take a break after 45 minutes, do you "sit down" in a (virtual) classroom?
  - ...
  - Similarities and dissimilarities compared to traditional schools

TDZK

- Browser-based MMORPG
- Persistent online world
- 4000-5000 registered players
- Space adventure game
  - Gather resources, trading goods, upgrading your ship, fighting your enemies
- Semi-synchronous
- "Symbolic" interface
- Very complicated, knowledge intensive game
- Played in 4-month rounds
Generic division of labor in a fantasy OCG

- Melee, tanks - close combat
- Magicians, archers - range combat
- Healers, priests - heal the others
- Everyone has to know/be able to handle his character’s role (or conflicts might occur)
- But how to play a role can not be learned through reading manuals/documents

Division of labor in TDZK

Hunting team
- Team Leader
- Trigger
- Scanner
- Scout
- Liaison

Raiding team
- Team Leader
- Trigger
- Liaison
- Repairman
- Intelligence

Maintenance team
- Planet owner
- Trader
- Resources
- Planet restocker
- Planet repairman

TDZK “Training wings”

- Established players recruit unallied TDZK newcomers (who are often interviewed before being accepted)
- Phase 1: Game fundamental - basics of trading, navigation, how to find your way around, read maps etc.
- Phase 2: “Secondary socialization” - training into a specific role, career or position in the social order (e.g. battle exercise)
- Phase 3: Further specialization (e.g. advanced guerilla tactics)
- Final test to be passed before full membership in the alliance

Where the learning is

- Learning situations evolve in and are fully mediated by the game
- The subject of the education is the same phenomena in which the education is situated
- Bottom-up approach to constructing formal learning situations among players
- Design issues:
  - First order effects?
  - Second order effects?
  - Social-technical design cycle?
  - Open-ended online "laboratories"?

Structural factors behind formalization

- Very complicated, knowledge-intensive games
- Steep learning curve
- Increasing complexity of division of labor
- High incentives to cooperate in groups
- Same structural factors present in other recent and future online games
- There are reasons to believe that in-game schools will appear in other games

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Exjobb
Law and order in online games

- Seven Master’s students at KTH, Stockholm
  - All looking at “law and order in online games”
  - Each looking at a different online game
- 10-week long studies ≈ 400 hours of collecting empirical material
  - Participant observations (playing)
  - Online fora
  - Interviews
- Question: law and order in online games
  - Relationship between player - player
  - Relationship between player - service provider

Law and order in online games II

- What is forbidden in the game (according to the EULA)
- What do the players break against anyway?
- What is “forbidden” according to the players’ own rules/norms?
- Who commits virtual crimes?
- How is deviant behavior handled in the game?
  - Technically (through code)
  - Socially (through talk)?
  - Centralized (“from above”)?
  - Decentralized (“from below”)?
- Theses are published on the web

Money and economy in online games

- Ten Master’s students at KTH, Stockholm
- Money and economy in online games
  - The real-world/game industry economy
  - The in-game economy
  - The interface (ebay) between in-game and real-world economies
- Norrath is the 77th richest county in the world
  - GNP per capita = 2226 USD, hourly wage = 3,42 USD, currency exchange etc.
- When someone develops virtual resources (“works”?) within a game, who owns it?

Money and economy II

- Money and economy thesis proposal (exjobbsförslag) on the web:
  http://iplab.nada.kth.se/iplab/jml.cgi/exjobbView.jml?name=pargman
- Results will be published on the web in the spring

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