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Proposal for Children's Educational Video Game

Summary and Purpose of Proposal

Thousands of children of all ages play video games every day. With children often being left unattended for hours to play whatever video games they have on their gaming systems, it is important that these games not only entertain children, but educate them as well. A game that will make children use the skills they are perfecting in school will not only make them better learners, but will likely make them more critical thinkers over all.

My objective is to create an interactive video game for children that will force them to think critically and logically while still having fun. This game will force children to use logic, mathematics, critical thinking, spelling, etc., to solve a series of puzzles and images in order to complete each level within the video game.

Introduction

As society becomes more technologically advanced and connected, it is important to understand how much time children are spending in front of some sort of computer screen. Whether a cell phone, iPad, laptop, or TV, children of all ages have their faces stuffed into technology for hours and hours every day. Children go to school all day and when they come home, after doing homework, or often instead of, they begin with the texting, movies, video games, etc. These children are often playing mindless games that require little to no real-life skills and can cause them to become more stupid ("Current Research").

Parents are often at a loss of how to prevent children from being so dependent upon and engrossed in so many different types of technology for many hours of the day. It would make parents much happier if they knew that their children were playing video games that required them to use the logic, math, critical thinking, and spelling skills which they are being taught at school. A game that had these requirements of its players would create sharper minds, smarter children, and a better society as a whole ("Action videogames").

Proposed Program

I intend to create an interactive choose-your-own-adventure puzzle video game for children in an effort to make their brains work more – to make them smarter. This game will begin with an interesting story for the children to follow; a girl and her dog who get lost in the big city and have to find their way back to her uncle's condo. Each level will have options for the child to choose, ie, walk down this alleyway or ask that homeless man for directions, and, based off of the choice made, then there would be different puzzles to solve.

The first level will have easy puzzles such as spelling short common-place words, putting together a small jigsaw puzzle based off of a picture which they have seen previously, solving simple mathematical equations, searching through a room in a hidden object style, etc., all in order to progress through the level. Only after completing one of each type of puzzle, can the child (as the game character) continue on to the next level where the puzzles become slightly more difficult. As the child goes from level to level, the puzzles become progressively more and more difficult to complete, but are never impossible, thus preventing the child from thinking they cannot beat the game and causing them to give up.

Before gameplay actually begins, the child must input their age and answer a series of questions which will allow the game to be at a difficulty level specific for that child. Each individual child may not encounter the same puzzle or the same level of difficulty depending on the child's age and how they answer the questions at the beginning of the game. The same questions asked at the beginning will be asked again at the end of the game and the results of both sets of answers will be given, showing the child and their parents how much the child has learned – how much playing the game has improved the child's brain and thinking skills.

Once a child has played through the game, from beginning to end, they can play it again and will have a different story. They will be required to answer a different set of questions so that the game can set the difficulty level based on the new answers. Each time playing the game will be unique from the last, sometimes with the same scenes or characters to interact with, but with different options for the interaction; different choices to make at each given interaction. The game will record the answers given to puzzles and will analyze the results at the end to give the child (and parents) an indication of what they have learned and how much their brains have gotten smarter.

Qualifications

My qualifications include: Being a senior Creative Writing major with an interest in the education of the younger generations. I have over ten years of experience playing video games that include puzzle solving, critical thinking, etc. With many years of babysitting experience, I can vouch for the need of more educational video games for younger children. I have good time management skills and can complete this project efficiently and completely.

Timeline

Oct 10	Begin Design Process	Oct 17	Create Usable Version of Product
Oct 24	Low Fidelity Prototype Complete	Oct 31	Continue Working with Prototype

Nov 5	Progress Report	Nov 12	Find Subjects To Test Product Conduct Research on Testing
Nov 19	Usability Report	Nov 26	Work Out Bugs/Defects Add the Finishing Touches
Dec 3	Final Document		

Bibliography

"Current Research Topics in Cognitive Load Theory, Third International Cognitive Load Theory Conference." *Computers in Human Behavior* 27.1 (2011): 1-606. *ScienceDirect.com*. Web. 8 Oct. 2013.

This article has provided good information on how computers and video games can cause problems with social and academic skills.

University of Toronto. "Action videogames change brains, improve visual attention." *ScienceDaily*, 26 Apr. 2012. Web. 8 Oct. 2013.

This article explains how action games actually improve attention and brain function.