E.U. GAME LAB, UCY

E.U. 05/06

Hyper Walker Game

Project Team
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Volunteers: students from the Department of Architecture, University of Cyprus

E.U. Games: Encouraging Urbanity Game Series: Designed by students in an elective course at the Department of Architecture, University of Cyprus, aiming to increase public engagement in the urban environment.

E.U. 05/06 Game: It is a joint outcome of the 5th and 6th generation of Game Series. The E.U. 06 operates as a plug-in to the main organizational structure of E.U. 05 Game (2011), adapting it to the “U-A-W?” terms of reference.

“Hyperwalker”: It is the E.U. 06 version of the game. It is about walking the city in distance. “Hyperwalkers”, like hypertext, are that kind of “walkers” with “extensions” into another environment. In this case, the “walkers” (the generals), operate on a floor-board environment and their “extensions”, in other words their “avatars” operate in physical space, rather than in digital one. There is a twist here, since they are the “avatars” that are more connected to reality rather than the actual players, (the “generals”).

Aim
To get the students acquainted with the relationships between the physical urban space with its nuisances and its representation on a map. Criticize creatively the dominance of parked cars in areas where usually are designated for pedestrians.

To mingle the students from two schools located in a 15’ walking distance, coming from different social background.
At Ayios Antonios (Elementary School 2), there are mostly kids from immigrant working class people whose employment is close by the school. At Lykavitos school (Elementary School 1) the students come mostly from higher middle class. The students from the former school have the habit to walk around the city which is not the case for the latter whose means of transportation, to any destination out of the school premises, is a private bus. It is a safety caution indeed, which seems to be strongly endorsed by the parents. Persuading both teachers and parents to allow to a few students to walk around the city was not an easy task. The rest of the students had stayed in the multipurpose room where the “game operation” took place.

Kit-of-parts
For the game operation room in Elementary School 1
- A game floorboard depicting an aerial view of the urban area around Elementary School 2 (Ayios Antonios, Nicosia).
- The streets on the game floorboard are divided into compartments with numbers, corresponding to the plot sizes. Short cuts and fall backs are designated with reference to the “ladders and snakes” table game. Plus, checkpoints are inserted to orientate the game course.
- The students that will stay in the operation room will be the “generals” and will lead the game through the floorboard’s game pieces.
- Three cardboard game pieces, 15cm tall of three colors: red, green and blue.
- Three dice with numbers on each side up to No 3. Dimensions: 30 X 30 X 30cm
- Round shaped stickers of red, green and blue colors to be placed on the
students’ white T-shirts.
-A set of A5 size cards in the three different colors. The cards depict the diverse conditions between cars and pedestrians along the roads’ thresholds with private properties. Such conditions correspond to the urban environment in which the game takes place.
-Direction cards of black background dictating the players’ directions during the game.
-One set of hollowed circles made of black color cardboard, of 30cm diameter.
-Three laptop computers with internet connection and communication software.

For the “hyper game” environment (physical space around Elementary School 2)
-Three groups of minimum six volunteers each, will be the “avatars” of the “generals”. The volunteers and students of each group will wear a white T-shirt with the appropriate color sign of EU 05/06 (green, red and blue).
-An A3 size map of the game environment which is the reduction of the floorboard map.
-Three “I-pads” with wireless internet connection to the “Game Operation Room” lap-top computers.
- A navigating tool made of six wooden sticks connected with red/yellow plastic ribbon. The ribbon’s length is the perimeter length of a typical car.
-Reversing Roles Dice: two large cardboard dice with the signs of + (plus) and – (minus) of all three colors, marked on the six sides. With these dice the avatars take control of the game over the “generals”.
- One set of hollowed circles made of black color cardboard, of 30cm diameter. They are placed in empty lots along the game path.
-Yellow cardboard A4 size boxes. They are placed at each checkpoint of the map together with cardboard signs with numbers, showing the floor board compartments’ number in the physical space.

Players
11 and 12 year old kids of Elementary Schools 1 & 2, preferably of adjacent neighborhoods.

Number of players
30 kids
There will be 10 kids for each team. Five of them will stay in the “Game Operation Room” and become the “generals” where the other five will become the “avatars” together with volunteers from the Department of Architecture, University of Cyprus.

Prepare the Game Environment
-Locate the 3 UAW tricycles with the 3D banners in the multipurpose room of Elementary School 1 (Lycavitos, Nicosia), defining a central space which will act as the “Game Operation Room”, where the “generals” will be located.
-Place three tables with chairs around the floor board and put three laptop computers on the tables. Make sure they are connected through internet to the 3 “I-pads” held by the teams’ “avatars”.
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Modus operandi
Starting: The game begins by throwing the dice by the “generals”. Each game piece has its own dice in order to proceed independently from the other two teams.
The “avatars” as the extension of the “generals”: The “avatars” have to follow orders from the “generals”, adopting “hyper-moves”, in the logic of “hyper-text”, meaning applying in their game environment the reciprocal moves taking place on the game floorboard by the “generals”. For each number on the dice they need to move forward reciprocal compartments in physical space.

Detecting threshold conditions (public/private, parked cars/pedestrians): In order to move through the next compartment the “avatars” need to detect the threshold conditions and inform back the “generals”. They will then, read the card and give them directions how to use their navigating tool (wooden sticks and ribbon). The volunteers from the avatar team would then create alternative navigating paths for the 5 students-avatars in order to bypass parked cars, or to enter into private niches along the threshold between road and buildings.

Short cuts and fall backs: If the dice leads the game piece into a short cut or fall back the “avatars” have to follow.

Reversing Roles: If the dice leads the game piece into two special compartments on the map, then a reversing of roles takes place momentarily. Meaning, the “avatars” become the “generals” and by throwing the “Reversing Roles Dice” could force any of the three game pieces on the game floorboard in the “Game Operation Room” to move forward or backward.

Changing “avatars”: The “generals” could get a direction card that connects them with an “avatar” of a different color. This could last for the rest of the game, or for the next move, depending on the card.

End of the game: when all teams arrive to the finishing point.

Winner: the first “avatar team” arrives to the finishing point in physical space and the “generals” team guiding it through. They could be of the same color or not, depending on the direction cards they were receiving through the game.

(Text by S. Stratis)

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