

An Advergame Demo: “Patrulha SEPNA!”

Demo de um Jogo
Promocional: “Patrulha SEPNA!”

Luís Torráo

Nuno Rodrigues

Digital Games Research Center (DIGARC) – Instituto Politécnico do Cávado e do Ave (IPCA)

mail@luistorrao.com

nfr@ipca.pt

Abstract

“Patrulha SEPNA!” is an advergame created in collaboration between DIGARC and the Portuguese National Republican Guard. Meant for youngsters aged between 6 and 10, the game's specification was centered in the goal of transmitting an advertising and institutional message about SEPNA (Nature and Environment Protection Service). Its development looked forward to building an attractive playful tool with simple game logic.

Keywords: serious-game; advergame;

Resumo

“Patrulha SEPNA!” é um jogo promocional criado no âmbito de uma colaboração do DIGARC com a Guarda Nacional Republicana. Com um público alvo entre os 6 e os 10 anos de idade, a sua especificação centrou-se no objectivo da transmissão de uma mensagem de divulgação do SEPNA (Serviço de Protecção da Natureza e do Ambiente). O seu desenvolvimento procurou a construção de uma ferramenta lúdica atraente e com uma lógica de jogo simplificada.

Palavras-chave: serious-game; jogo promocional;

This paper presents and briefly explains the development process of the game “Patrulha SEPNA!”. The game has two versions, one made available to 4.000 young players in the “Barcelos Party 2010” event and the other meant to be published in the GNR’s website. The demo can be found in: <http://www.luistorrao.com/sepna.rar>

The development of “Patrulha SEPNA!” started with the Portuguese National Republican Guard¹ challenging the Digital Games Research Centre (DIGARC) to create games for their new website’s junior section. This triggered an investigation on what innovative game concepts could be introduced in game with such particular specifications. It was decided that the ideal game type to choose would be a serious/advergame [1], a game with promotional purposes that suited the opportunity to make young players get in touch with what GNR is while at the same time enjoying their gameplay. The game was developed

¹ A Portuguese Police Force (<http://www.gnr.pt>)

using XNA game development framework and later it was rebuilt to SilverLight [2] using the SilverSprite [3] framework.

GNR's SEPNA (Serviço de Protecção da Natureza) was chosen as the central theme of the game because this service mission targets relevant values, such as nature conservation and protection. An extensive analysis to SEPNA's activities led to the definition of what one would include in the game (animal protection, surveillance of forests, rivers and air, etc.) as well what would be the best game genre to choose. After such an analysis, one has chosen to implement a Simplified Role Playing Game/ Hidden Object Game, where the player impersonates a game character (a male or female lynx, SEPNA's mascot) that tries to accomplish SEPNA's missions on the field (solving small hidden object games), possibly joined in patrols with other players. One of the main innovative aspects of the game is to accomplish the promotion of a public institution by means of a serious/advergame, able to educate towards ecological awareness and present the player with this institution's mission and goals.

Another relevant innovation aspect is concerned with the player's achievements/apprenticeships, which are anonymously registered in the game's server, creating a database of results that can be interpreted in order to understand the game's promotional/educational effectiveness. This information can be used to improve the game and to study the advergame's type, characteristics and peculiarities.

In what respects to the gameplay experience, there are two other innovative points to emphasize. First, the randomly generated changing game map: when ending a mission and beginning a new one, the player will be presented with a map that has more places to play and these places will be put randomly in the game map until map completion, which determines the end of the game. The changing hidden object games are yet another innovation: the hidden object games may vary when activated by the player: hidden object, questionnaires or accessory distraction games may appear randomly.

References

- [1] Prensky, Marc (2004) Digital Game-Based Learning, McGraw-Hill
- [2] Microsoft Silverlight, July 2010, <http://www.silverlight.net/>
- [3] SilverSprite Project, July 2010, <http://silversprite.codeplex.com/>.