Tech and Play – COMM 408/840 Final Project Elements Menu

How to Choose
This list is not exhaustive; it is meant to give you ideas. Since every project will be different, some of these elements may not apply to you. Required elements are marked with the word [REQUIRED]. If an element is required, this means it is required for V. 2 of the Project. To receive credit, each element should be about the length of a blog post (at least 250 words).

How Many to Choose
For your **Proof-of-Concept Proposal (due about Week 14):** At least 4 elements from this menu.
One of these four must be the *summary* of your project. *Be sure to choose elements that make sense together.*
You can think of this like a **pitch**. This version will be read by our outside judges!

For your **Complete Proposal (due at Final Exam period):** At least 12 elements from this menu, including ALL [REQUIRED] elements.

Please note that this list may be revised as the course progresses to include new elements, depending on what we are able to cover in the remaining weeks!

I. BACKGROUND
☐ **Summary of Your Project** (**required**)
Introduce your inspirations and summarize your playful technology, highlighting your contribution.
☐ **Sources Cited** (**required**)
List the complete citation to every reading you cite elsewhere in the project.
☐ Detailed Critique of One Influence
With many specifics & examples, a game critique of an important influence, showing what you might do better.

II. FIELDWORK
(**required**: at least one from this list) All fieldwork must follow the *Fieldwork Guidelines* Handout and you must turn in permission letters for each participant. Write up must include your notes/other proof that you did the fieldwork. State how this fieldwork affected your design. Fieldwork methods may include: observation, interview, survey, photographs, audio recording, video, or other methods.

☐ **Audience Study**
Study the people who play one of your inspiration games/technologies or who are the intended audience for your playful technology to find out more about them. (same idea as fieldwork blog post)
☐ **Playtesting**
Make "Paper Screens" or Mock-Ups of *part* of your design and test them with a group of volunteers. You will need to document this fieldwork in the same manner as the fieldwork blog assignment.
☐ **Other Fieldwork**
Feel free to propose other kinds of fieldwork, but new fieldwork ideas must be approved by the instructor via email before you begin.

III. DESIGN OF YOUR NEW PLAYFUL TECH
☐ Storyboards (required) (as discussed in class.) A storyboard is a representation of part of actual game play. It may include: example screens, a game board, mock-up, maps, diagrams, video made with puppets / actors, etc.
☐ **Sample Avatars** / Character Design (and: relation to types of players, audience, character types)
☐ **Script Segment** (Dialogue/Action – also should include discussion of the role of narrative vs. action)
☐ **Plot/Narrative Summary** (also should include discussion of the role of narrative vs. action)
☐ **Photographs** of Users with Mock-Ups (relation to types of players, collaboration, or stages of play)
☐ **Flowcharts** (discussion of action vs. narrative, game mechanics, or other)
☐ **Controls/Menus** (discussion of learning / usability / gameplay design: How do people learn to play the game? How do you make the game more usable for different kinds of players? How is gameplay mapped to interface and why?)
☐ **Aesthetics/Style/"Look"** (examples of your style / aesthetic choices, description of your overall intent and discussion of how this affects the design/gameplay)

IV. ANALYSIS

(**required**: at least **two** from this list)

These can apply to your inspirational (old tech) *and/or* your new playful tech.

☐ **Gender Effects**

Analyze the gender implications of your design. (You could discuss masculine/feminine roles, stereotypes, sexism and games, etc.)

☐ **Governance**

Analyze the governance mechanisms required by your game. (You could discuss codes of conduct, enforcement, in-game democracy, racism / bullying / aggression / sexism / griefing / sociopaths)

☐ **Motivation**

Analyze the part of your design that causes players to want to play (rewards, achievements, etc.)

☐ **Simulation**

What is your game attempting to simulate and how does this simulation work?

☐ **Adaptive/Evolutionary Aspects of Play**

Analyze the relationship of your project to evolutionary ideas about play (e.g., progress theories in psychology)

☐ **Commercial/Economic/Industrial Elements**

(relation to the game industry or a relevant industry – probably requires outside research!)

☐ **Incorporation of the User into Ongoing Design Work**

(hacking, reverse engineering, mods, user-built components/scenarios/levels, fan fiction, etc.)

☐ **In-game Economy**

Management of total currency/points in your multiplayer game (inflation/deflation, motivation, economics)

☐ **Technology**

How have the available technological constraints affected your decisions (probably requires outside research!)

V. CONTEXT OF NEW PLAYFUL TECH

☐ **Proposed Audience** / Ideal Users (detailed description, comparisons to other playful techs / audiences)

☐ **Play Space** (where will the game be played [map, room, etc.] and what effect does this have on the game / design)

☐ **Social/Co-op Play** (detailed analysis of the *social* parts of the game, design features that support cooperation, etc.)

VI. LARGER QUESTIONS

(**required**: at least **one** from this list)

in the context of your project, discuss implications of

☐ **Power** and Your Playful Technology (conspicuous consumption, Hearn's critical theory of play)

☐ **Violence/Aggression** (what are the consequences of play violence? Requires outside research.)

☐ **Ownership of Content** (intellectual property consequences of characters, symbols, etc.)

☐ **Content Ratings** (effect of content ratings and rating systems and your design; possible alterations for different markets/content rating systems)

☐ **Gambling, Chance/Fate, Risk, Danger** (as relates to your game)

☐ **Gamification/Serious Games** (educational/work aspects and the larger implications of them as they relate to your game design; this includes "games for change" [G4C] and "serious games" elements)

☐ **Other Societal Question** (must be approved by the instructor)

VII. OTHER ELEMENTS

☐ **Other Elements of Your Choice** (must be approved by the instructor)