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)