Researching Virtual Worlds

Methodologies for Studying Emergent Practices

Edited by Ursula Plesner and Louise Phillips



Contents

.

| | List of Figures and Tables | vii |
|---|--|-----|
| | Acknowledgments | ix |
| 1 | Introduction: Approaching the Study of Virtual Worlds URSULA PLESNER AND LOUISE PHILLIPS | 1 |
| 2 | Virtual Worlds as Emerging Cyber-Hybrids: Accounting for the Travel between Research Sites with Actor-Network-Theory URSULA PLESNER | 16 |
| 3 | Presence in Virtual Worlds: Mediating a Distributed, Assembled and Emergent Object of Study DIXI LOUISE STRAND | 34 |
| 4 | Understanding Cyborgism: Using Photo-Diary Interviews to Study Performative Identity in Second Life ULRIKE SCHULTZE | 53 |
| 5 | Designing Childhoods: Ethnographic Engagements in and around Virtual Worlds MINNA RUCKENSTEIN | 76 |
| 6 | A Situated Video Interview Method: Understanding the Interplay between Human Engagement and the Power of Scripted Animations of a Virtual World SISSE SIGGAARD JENSEN | 95 |
| 7 | Comparing Novice Users' Sense-Making Processes in Virtual Worlds: An Application of Dervin's Sense-Making Methodology CARRIELYNN D. REINHARD AND BRENDA DERVIN | 121 |

vi Contents

| 8 | Exploring Stakeholders of Open-Source Virtual Worlds | |
|---|--|-----|
| | through a Multimethod Approach | 145 |
| | ZEYNEP YETIS, ROBIN TEIGLAND AND PAUL M. DI GANGI | |

| Notes | 175 |
|--------------|-----|
| Contributors | 177 |
| Index | 181 |

Figures and Tables

| 3.1 | The following table summarizes the three approaches | |
|-----|--|-----|
| | to presence in the research literature | 37 |
| 4.1 | Identity performance in virtual worlds | 58 |
| 4.2 | Photo-diary entry—Angela getting a foot massage | 65 |
| 4.3 | Excerpt from photo-diary interview | 67 |
| 6.1 | Video interview foci and questions to consider | 101 |
| 6.2 | Different views in the video interview, 1 | 107 |
| 6.3 | Different views in the video interview, 2 | 108 |
| 6.4 | Snapshot 1 from situated video interview | 110 |
| 6.5 | Snapshot 2 from situated video interview | 111 |
| 6.6 | Snapshot 3 from situated video interview | 112 |
| 6.7 | Snapshot 4 from situated video interview | 113 |
| 6.8 | Snapshot 5 from situated video interview | 114 |
| 6.9 | Snapshot 6 from situated video interview | 115 |
| 7.1 | Dervin's Sense-Making Methodology Triangle Metaphor | 126 |
| 7.2 | Core set of SMM interviewing queries | 127 |
| 7.3 | Interview excerpt | 130 |
| 7.4 | Jakob's City of Heroes interview, mapped to | |
| | SMM Triangle map | 131 |
| 7.5 | Comparing Jakob's and Sofie's sense-makings in | |
| | City of Heroes | 136 |
| 7.6 | Comparing Jakob's and Sofie's sense-makings in Second Life | 137 |
| 8.1 | OpenSimulator Core Developer meeting | 147 |
| 8.2 | Conducting an interview with a member of the OpenSimulator | |
| | community | 156 |
| 8.3 | Table 1—Thirty most characteristic words per | 1() |
| 0.4 | stakeholder group—period 1 | 162 |
| 8.4 | Network structure of OpenSimulator Developer | 164 |
| | mailing list—period 1 | 104 |

viii Figures and Tables

| 8.5 | Table 2—Network structural position measures | |
|-----|---|-----|
| | (Burt 2004; Hanneman and Riddle 2005) | 165 |
| 8.6 | Table 3—Network measures—period 1 | 166 |
| 8.7 | Collapsed node structure: Left without core and | |
| | right with core—period 1 | 167 |
| 8.8 | Table 4—A multimethod approach, challenges, and solutions | 169 |