

Study on Character Costume In Online Games

– Centering on RPGs

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I. Introduction

Games have become widely-adopted culture content, as production and consumption in everyday life are now based on video and audio, which use digital technology in a variety of interface and interaction. Since most of culture content is produced with video media, game content also adopts video content combining video and audio. These commercial games continue promoting production and consumption of video content that adopts digital technology. Although video content includes a wide range of knowledge, art and technology throughout this course, costumes of game characters only refers to some illustration books abroad and are tinkered into patchwork. This ignores significance of characters' costume in online games. The purpose of this paper is to examine the patterns and characteristics of costume that appears in online games so as to present the role and the far-reaching effect of costume in online games, thereby stressing the significance of study on online game character costume.

The scope of this study is limited to Lineage II, Ragnarok and Mu, which are commercially successful role-playing games (RPGs) introduced from 2000 through 2004, and the methodology of this study is empirical since I played games myself, as well as used game books and magazines

II. Discussions

1. Concept of Online Games

Online games refer to network-based games, which allow a number of people to enjoy games over computer networks instead of playing games alone. They are multi-play games that overcome the limited space by using the Internet to get out of the old way of a human vs. computer match.

2. Concept of Character costume In Online Games

The costume refers to things worn on many different parts of the body including hats, shoes and belts, as well as dress worn on body part, arms and legs. In online games, the costume is seen as items. Item refers to the smallest unit of categorization of products. In online games, items are essential elements of playing games, and they are categorized into

garment, armors, weapons and other accessories.

3. Characteristics of Costume In Online Games

Costume in online games is characterized by post-modernism, multi-class (various tribes and vocations), stage costume in a virtual world and exaggeration. Character costume in games that transcends time and space is seen as post-modernist. Post-modernism is a thought in the late 20th century, which includes such trends as post capitalism, uncertainty and globalization that are based on new organizational rules, culture, thoughts and emotions. In games, a variety of tribes and vocations, including humans, fairies, dwarfs, magicians, warriors and merchants, appear with different characteristics in terms of not only physical but also costume features. Each tribe forms either a friendly or a hostile relationship with another tribe from the main character's perspective, affecting growth and activity of the character. In online games, players create characters that represent themselves. Game players assign a new role to themselves through these characters. This world is a stage where the player expresses him/herself in a different way through a different role. The costume is the stage costume in the virtual world. The performance in the virtual world continues. Costume in games is exaggerated in some parts so as to represent the characteristics of characters.

4. Role of Costume in Online Games

In online games, costume creates digital fashion as in the real world, and it represents the nature of character and economic power held by the player. Game players keep a number of invisible relationships with others in online games. The experience with the new relationships and the new community, which are based on characters, not only satisfies the player's desire of self-expression, but also gives excitement of playing with something that replaces him/herself. Players tend to create new images for themselves rather than express themselves aggressively based on anonymity of cyber space. Players are conscious about 'the imagined audience' in this space. Throughout these stages, fashion of the virtual world is created. In this paper, it is called digital fashion. Digital fashion represents the same characteristics as the real world. Games are mostly set against the background of ancient legends, myths, doomsday stories or animations. Costume also reflects this phenomenon, and it is called nature of character. Characters in RPGs have the element of growth, so they do not stay with what they are, but changes continuously. The characteristics of such growth are shown in costume outwardly. Costume also represents the nature of character for the player by separating it from other characters. In cyber space, costume is an item, and it becomes an image product that satisfies the desire of relationship and self-expression like in the real world. Multi-role play online game is more like a society than a simple game. Items are not only tools used to represent the character's power and ability, but also things that are desired by people. This is why people trade these items with money

in the real world, and give value to these imagery items.

III. Conclusion

This paper examines the concept of online games and costume in online games to understand the characteristics and roles of costume. Costume in online games is characterized by post-modernism, multi-class, stage costume in the virtual world and exaggeration. And it also plays the role of digital fashion, nature of character and items, giving a far-reaching effect to entire games. The online game industry is not only expected to grow fast, but also seen as an area with great research interest. Therefore, further study must continue to explore character costume in online games.

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