New Perspectives In Game Studies:

Proceedings of the Central and European Game Studies Conference

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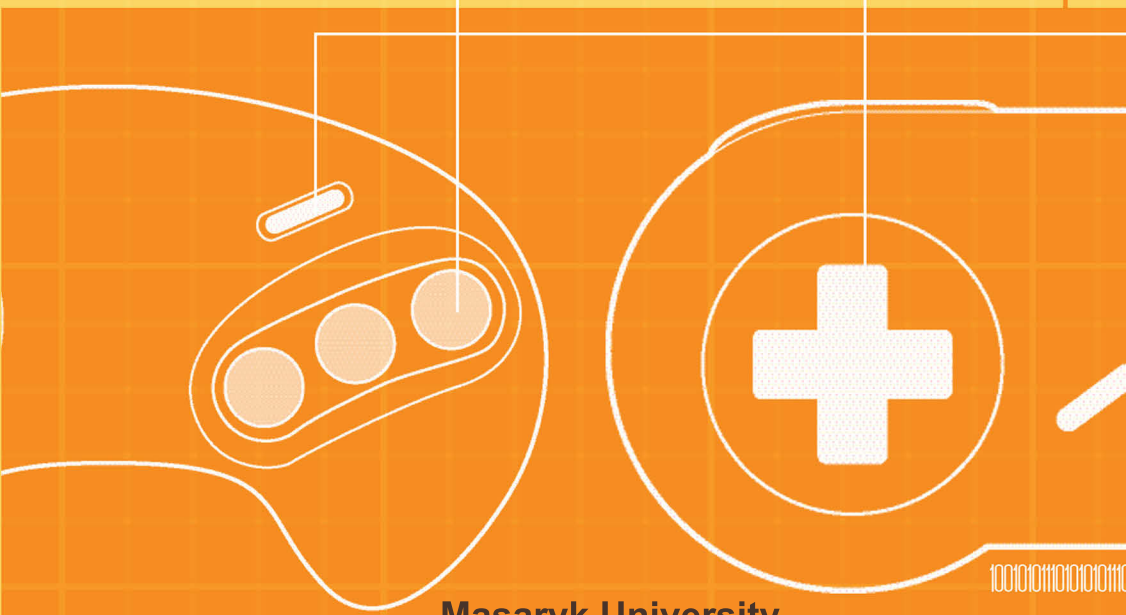

Masaryk University

New Perspectives in Game Studies: Proceedings of the Central and Eastern European Game Studies Conference

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Introduction

On October 10–11, 2014, around 150 people gathered at the Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic to discuss and learn about digital games. It was the first annual Central and Eastern European Game Studies (CEEGS) conference – and it marked an important step in the integration of digital games research across the region. It was the first time when game scholars from different parts of Central and Eastern Europe met to share their research, and the start of many fruitful collaborations, both within the region and with our Western European colleagues.

However, to get to this point, game studies in the region had had to overcome numerous obstacles. First, the discipline had to become accepted as a serious and legitimate discipline. This took a little more time than in the U.S. or Scandinavia. In the case of the Czech Republic, we had at least two courses in game studies at two different universities and at least one course in game development in 2009. The students' reactions were enthusiastic, and the hosting departments were satisfied. Secondly, there had to be an infrastructure that would allow people to organize such a conference. Fortunately, by that time, our academic organization, the MU Game Studies, already existed. MU Game Studies (short for Masaryk University Game Studies) was founded as a non-profit association in 2009 by the enthusiastic students of game studies classes at Masaryk University – along with Jaroslav Švelch, their instructor at the time. Later on, more members from other schools started joining the group, while some of the students started working on their Ph.D.'s and became instructors and scholars themselves. MU Game Studies has since organized numerous

events, provided help and advice to game studies students and held a number of national game studies conferences. In late 2013, the MU Game Studies crew were debating where to go next. We realized how sad it was that we knew next to nothing about what was happening in game studies in Poland, Hungary, or other countries of the region. Out of the discussion arose the plan that next time, we would organize a larger international conference with formalized peer reviews, a call for papers addressed to an international audience, and respected keynote speakers. Although we had next to no budget, we persevered.

Along the way, we were greeted with a great amount of interest and support. Professor Espen Aarseth from the IT University of Copenhagen, one of the founders of the discipline and the editor-in-chief of the *Game Studies* journal, accepted our invitation to become a keynote speaker – a choice fitting the foundational spirit of the conference. He has since remained on the CEEGS team as the chair of the "humanistic theory of digital games" section. We were overwhelmed by the number of abstracts we received and decided to go for a 2-track conference instead of the planned 1-track program. We welcomed over 120 registered participants (organizers and volunteers not included) and around 50 speakers from both academia and game development, including people coming from Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Hungary, Germany, Austria, China and Turkey. The atmosphere was inspiring and relaxed, and thanks to our enthusiastic volunteers, everything went smoothly.

The topics ranged from history to theory, from empirical studies to applied research. Quite importantly, many of the presentations focused on subjects related to Central and Eastern European gaming experiences, histories and developers. As such, the conference started building a regional identity of game studies in Central and Eastern Europe, and helped us to discover common themes in our research. The first day of the conference concluded with a panel discussion about the state of the art of game studies in the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, and Scandinavia (represented by Espen Aarseth).

On the second day of the conference, academics were joined by practitioners from the areas of game design and development. It featured a captivating keynote by Sos Sosowski of McPixel fame, who narrated his personal story of being an Eastern European developer, and a number of other talks which represented the cutting edge of the regional game design, marketing and publishing. And despite the puzzlement of some developers over the academic pursuit of

game studies, a fruitful exchange followed, proving that there is enormous value in the meetings of academics and professionals.

The success of the conference encouraged us to continue. To maintain the international spirit of the conference, it will from now on travel between various cities in the region. In 2015, the place is Krakow, Poland, and the date is 21–24 October. And as the dates themselves suggest, the conference is growing.

The papers in this volume represent the diversity of the papers presented at the 2014 conference. Acknowledging different publication strategies in different countries and departments, we made the participation in the proceedings volume optional, and we worked closely with the authors to deliver polished versions of their talks. The rest of the presentations are available as video recordings on MU Game Studies' YouTube channel, which is accessible from our website at *gamestudies.cz*.

In the first paper in this volume, Stanisław Krawczyk offers a sophisticated look at the social history of gaming in Central and Eastern Europe. In his piece "*You must gather your party before venturing forth*", he analyzes the foundational role that RPG games from around 2000 had in Polish digital game culture and contributes to our limited academic knowledge about the development of gaming communities in the region.

Tomasz Majkowski's paper *Grotesque realism and carnality* is a great example of novel approaches to the medium of video games which build on the continental and Central and Eastern European tradition of literary theory and philosophy. Majkowski's Bakhtinian take on the carnivalesque in digital games is both inspiring and provocative.

Justyna Janik contributed a detailed analysis of the output of the Czech studio Amanita Design. In the paper entitled *The cluster worlds of imagination*, she applies the theoretical instruments of art history and theory of art to games like *Samorost* and treats them as a specific form of collage that subverts the drive for photorealism present in commercial blockbuster titles.

In his paper *Negotiating a glitch: identifying and using glitches in video games with microtransactions*, Jan Švelch explores the phenomenon of glitch and defines it as a never ending process of negotiation among the players, the press and developers. The text examines the discourse about glitches in two well-chosen cases – the infinite respawn glitch from *Dead Space 3* and the missile glitch in *Mass Effect 3*.

In her paper *Potentials of games in the field of urban planning*, Ezster Tóth aptly

presents several examples of urban games designed to raise awareness of urban planning processes, or to foster citizen engagement, as well as urban games utilized in education. In Tóth's view, these games support decision-making and public participation in multidimensional planning processes and can be valuable contributions to the evolution of public spaces.

Zdenko Mago proposes to analyze *Tetris* as a tool of gamification. His research is rooted in a historical understanding of the game and the theoretical foundations of gamification. In his contribution, Mago focused on participants' perception of commercials which apply the principles of gamification and questions the effectiveness of using such practices for marketing purposes.

Mateusz Felczak's paper *Narratives of spectatorship: e-sports in Poland* fulfils the aim of the conference to promote research of gaming cultures with the region. He describes the electronic sport tournament event, the Intel Extreme Masters World Championship finals, which took place in Katowice, Poland. The paper discusses the transformation of videogame spectatorship due to the development of online streaming.

Before we invite you to read the papers, we would like to thank all institutions and organizations who made the event possible: Masaryk University in Brno and its Faculty of Social Studies, Charles University in Prague's Faculty of Social Sciences, the Brno-Center district, and the Regional Museum in Litomyšl. Most of all, we want to express our gratitude to all of our volunteers, colleagues and reviewers who dedicated many precious hours of their lives to the conference.

Tomáš Bártek, Masaryk University in Brno
Jan Miškov, Masaryk University in Brno
Jaroslav Švelch, Charles University in Prague
Zdeněk Záhora, chairman, MU Game Studies

"You Must Gather Your Party Before Venturing Forth": Why Did Computer Games From Around 2000 Become So Important in Poland?

Stanisław Krawczyk[1]
University of Warsaw

Abstract

The turn of the 21st century was a significant period for computer games in Poland, especially in the roleplaying and strategy genres. The titles published at that time include *Fallout*, *Starcraft*, *Baldur's Gate*, *Heroes of Might & Magic III*, or *Planescape: Torment*. This paper seeks to explain why these and other similar games had an important impact on the identities of many Polish players and contributed to the national gaming culture. Several social and cultural factors are analyzed, such as the players' sociodemographic characteristics, the historical development of cRPG (computer roleplaying games) and RTS (real-time strategy) games, the role of Polish publishers, and the significance of technologies. The methodology of the study draws from Wendy Griswold's cultural diamond heuristic, which emphasizes the benefits of investigating cultural objects (in this case, games) in relation to their producers, players, and the general social context. In general theoretical terms, the paper is grounded in cultural sociology.[2]

Keywords: computer games, cRPG, Polish players, strategy games

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[2] The chapter is the author's revised translation of a Polish article accepted for publication in the journal *Homo Ludens.*

Introduction

The phrase "You must gather your party before venturing forth" comes from *Baldur's Gate*, a hugely successful cRPG (computer roleplaying game) first released in 1998. In the Polish version, the words read by the well-known actor Piotr Fronczewski (*Przed wyruszeniem w drogę należy zebrać drużynę*) became a generational classic. A four-second YouTube copy of the recording[3] has been viewed about 150,000 times from June 2010 to March 2015, and typing the phrase into a search engine will yield hundreds if not thousands of unique results.

This paper aims to demonstrate how that has been made possible. But the study is also about many other games from the same period – the games that numerous Polish players still remember with great fondness.

As a matter of fact, I once played a good number of those titles myself. It still strikes me how quickly the feeling of mutual comprehension appears when I talk to friends about those games. And sometimes the memories come at the strangest moments. For instance, after my friend and I talked to a guard of one national park in 2011, the friend said this while we were leaving the park: "I wish we had asked her if she would join the party". A conversation on the *Baldur's Gate* series followed promptly, eventually taking a good part of the day.

Personal experiences can be a valuable resource for social researchers (Lofland, Snow, Anderson & Lofland, 2010, pp. 31–35). However, they may also narrow down the scholars' perspectives, often in a subconscious way. This is why it is important to define the standpoint from which the role of past computer games will be described here[4], even though the study is not an instance of autoethnography.

As was true for many men born in Poland in the 1980s, I developed an interest in cRPGs and strategy games in my teenage years. The experience of this period has shaped my future preferences: cRPGs are still my favorite genre. Such a biography may easily encourage a researcher to overemphasize the social importance and outreach of studied games. It ought to be stated explicitly,

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[3] Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ph0yhtZDWIQ, or by searching YouTube for the Polish phrase.

[4] 'Past games' and 'older games' serve as handy synonyms for cRPG and strategy games published in Poland at the turn of the 21st century. The expression 'computer games' is used throughout the paper to underscore the fact that it was generally personal computers that Poles used to play strategy and roleplaying games at that time.

then, that the paper does not present a comprehensive view of all Poles playing on computers around the year 2000. Instead, the study is mostly concerned with players belonging to specific social categories (briefly speaking, with well-educated young men). In addition, the paper focuses on heavily engaged gamers much more than on casual players.

The current work is related theoretically and methodologically to various sociological examinations of how cultural production is grounded in the social context (e.g., Peterson & Anand, 2004; Santoro, 2008). Speaking more broadly, the paper inspects games from the standpoint of cultural sociology – an increasingly frequent approach in sociological research that builds on the following assumption: "[C]ulture, social life, and social institutions are mutually implicated. Following any single strand of cultural analysis is likely to quickly open out into a broad set of considerations: of personal relationships, everyday life, economic institutions and their cultural bases, public etiquette, transnational differences, technology and culture, global diffusion, and more" (Hall, Grindstaff, & Lo, 2010, p. 2). In terms of its subject matter, the paper is related not just to game studies, but also to media archeology and fan studies.

To avoid confusion, it should be stressed that the key question of this paper is not "How was it possible for those games to appear?" but "How was it possible for those games to become so important?" In other words, the paper concentrates on reception rather than reflection[5].

The next sections present the dominant social and demographic traits of the fans of older games, describe a number of indicators of the long-standing significance of those games, and examine the causes of their popularity. As these topics are understudied, the paper needs to be partly descriptive. Together with the space restrictions and the broad range of games and factors discussed, this means that cultural sociological concepts and methods can only be explained and applied in a limited way. Nevertheless, illustrating their usefulness to game studies is an important, if secondary, goal of the present work.

The players' sociodemographic characteristics

This part of the paper aims to distinguish the basic social categories of Poles interested in cRPGs and strategy games at the turn of the 21st century (it will be

[5] The terms 'reception' and 'reflection' have been applied by Wendy Griswold. The former designates the way people make use of cultural objects. The latter concerns the origins of those objects, treated as manifestations of societal values, class conflicts or interests, social pathologies, and so forth (Griswold, 1986, pp. 9–10).

discussed later why other genres are largely irrelevant to this study). Another goal is to explain how particular sociodemographic characteristics strengthened both the players' engagement at that time and their long-term interest in subsequent years.

Gender

Even though there are no comprehensive statistical data concerning the gender of Polish players around the year 2000, there are grounds to think that most games studied here appealed mainly to men. One crucial reason lies in the impact that general gender differences in society had on the gaming culture in Poland. In analyzing this, the paper borrows arguments from the article of Magdalena Tuła (2013), who has in turn referred to Pierre Bourdieu's notion of symbolic violence.

Polish men around 2000 had more free time than women and their leisure was less frequently interrupted by family activities or household chores. This made it easier for male players to enjoy games that required more time to play or finish. Such titles were also more prestigious than games ascribed to women – an example of typically male activities in general tending to earn more respect than female ones. The games that were more eagerly picked by female players (e.g., *The Sims*) could easily be denied the status of "true games." A man would also encounter fewer troubles than a woman when developing an interest in technology, which was related to becoming a computer game fan. All this had a bearing on the growth of the gaming culture in Poland (cf. Tuła, 2013, pp. 282–284)[6].

The fact that male players were the majority meant that it was less demanding for them to find friends and form groups of the same gender, which became an additional consolidating factor in a mostly male-populated gaming culture. Another consequence was the low visibility of female experiences. There is no doubt that titles like *Baldur's Gate* were attractive to women, too, but their voices have been less audible than male ones[7].

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[6] Of course, gender differences vary across time and space, and none of the remarks here are meant to refer to all contemporary populations. Still, it is worth noting that even in 2010 the amount of spare time declared in a national survey by Polish women remained lower than that declared by men, both in employed and non-employed groups. This was apparently related to differences in time spent on taking care of children and on household chores (Stasik, 2010, p. 3).

[7] Another thing to consider is that some Polish women were strongly involved with

Another reason to think that there was a majority of men is that many past games were tied up with fantastic fiction or with tabletop roleplaying games (such as *Dungeons & Dragons*), and the Polish communities focused on these around the year 2000 were predominantly male. This gender proportion is reflected in convention programs and photographs, readers' letters, mastheads and author names in trade periodicals, etc.

For all these reasons, the claims of this paper may be applied mostly to male players and the gaming culture to which they have contributed. I must also note that my own biographical perspective makes it easier to write about men's experiences.

Age

Three age groups can be distinguished among fans of older games. The first group is composed of the people born in the 1970s or (more often) in the 1980s, who were often high school or university students when the titles in question were released. The initial contact of these players with past games occurred in the crucial period of identity formation, coinciding with the process of peer bonding. Games were a frequent topic of conversation and provided young people with an opportunity to play together in the hotseat mode or through a local network. At present the members of this group are thirty- and forty-year-olds, who do not have as much time to spare as in the 1990s but still value the titles from their formative time.

The sales of the most popular games can testify to the numbers of those players. A clear example is the breakthrough Polish edition of *Baldur's Gate*, which sold 18,000 copies on the very first day of distribution (Jankowski, 2013). Of course, not all those who bought the game would later become ardent players, but the figures are still significant.

Members of the second group were born in the early 1990s. They only came across titles like *Age of Empires II* sometime after the initial release, and this limited their chances to find peers playing those games at the same time. Besides, in 2001 Telekomunikacja Polska – a key telecommunications service provider in Poland – introduced the service Neostrada. Based on the ADSL technology, it began to replace cumbersome and ineffective dial-up modems. Many people could now play comfortably on the Internet, which became a competition both for hotseat get-togethers and for private LAN parties. This technological and

games which are not analyzed in the paper. *The Sims* in itself is a title that merits a separate study.

social change had a negative impact on the number of gaming sessions held as direct gatherings. That may have weakened the cult potential of older games, as experiencing and recollecting meetings with friends appears to have played its role in forming the players' identities.

However, one needs to consider the developments that had opposite effects, such as the rise of gaming festivals (e.g., Poznań Game Arena) and Internet cafés. The latter provided players with opportunities to meet at the time when a fast connection was still very rare in Polish households. On the whole, people born just after 1990 – who are now in their twenties – were not as fascinated with past games as older players were; yet they still had an interest in them.

Only the final group – today's teenagers – never really cared about games published in the late 1990s and shortly afterwards. These players rarely heard about such games or chanced on them in stores; they got used to quick Internet access; and newer titles accustomed them to advanced graphics and an intuitive interface.

Social class

It is time to turn to the players' wealth, profession, and education. Convincing arguments have been raised in support of the view that people who are positioned differently in the class system are also likely to engage in different consumption practices (Bourdieu, 1984; Cebula, 2013). A plausible example of this is the variation in computer game selection and playing style. Even the very fact of playing, as well as the very phenomenon of cult games, has likely been conditioned by class. In practice all this could mean having parents who could afford to purchase computers and original games for their children, knowing about ways to get pirated copies, having friends with interests in games, and so on.

It is reasonable to speculate that computer games in the late 1990s and early 2000s were mostly attractive to people from the middle-class or intelligentsia, and so the appeal of games was grounded in a commonality of economic conditions. While locating relevant quantitative data from that exact period is not easy, a report from one nationally representative survey conducted in 2006 contains a brief note that playing computer games "is a domain of young people, with middle or high education, who consider their material conditions to be good" (Lewandowska, 2006, p. 7).

Indicators of the long-term impact of past games

We already know about certain factors that may have strengthened the original

fascination in older titles. But how can we determine if the latter are still important for the players born in the 1970s and 1980s (and in some cases, in the early 1990s)? The present section examines two possible sources of relevant data.

Informal conversations between players

One source to be considered is informal conversations between players. Let us look at some anonymized examples (in my translation from Polish) from the comment exchange that took place under a 2012 Facebook status in which I had asked friends about cRPG and strategy titles from around 2000. Every example comes from a different person, and I have tried to retain the original spelling of game titles insofar as possible. The conversation was not public but the authors have agreed for their comments to be quoted here. Every quotation is preceded by the author's birthdate.

1. (1991) "I am 100% fascinated by Baldur, Heroes III, Starcraft, etc. (we still play that today with … an old-school LAN cable) … I'll add that my brother, 1999, despite my strong attempts to convince him, only plays Heroes out of all these, but he prefers [part] V [to part III], so unfortunately there is a cutoff somewhere."

2. (1991) "Personally, I played fervently (with younger and older cousins, and friends), mostly strategy games … I still like talking about those games and sometimes I come back to some."

3. (1991) "Strangely enough, I've heard about most of the titles you've mentioned, and I don't think I'll ever find a replacement for 3 of them or something equally good (I still play Starcraft through LAN with my friends). Sadly, I'm getting old fast, because no game after 2005 has impressed me much (there'll be 2–3 exceptions).

4. (1988) "I play the newest games, too, but I rarely go back to them (apart from certain exceptions). But I do go back to older titles."

5. (1986) "My brother was born in 1992 but he began his romance with Heroes III sitting next to me, staring at our first computer. I was 14 and he was 8. I don't know which of us has a stronger sentiment."

6. (1989) "Among my playing friends, both from around 1990 and 1994 … cult and model games are still Baldur's Gate 1, Diablo II, Morrowind, HOMM3 and CS 1.6 [Heroes of Might and Magic, Counter-Strike] … And of course Worms World Party and Warcraft 3."

7. (1992) "For me Baldur's Gate I and II are still the best RPGs, all those new Mass Effects, Skyrims, and other wonders from the 21st century can't hold a candle to the old good Baldurs."

8. (1990) "I still have most of the titles you mentioned on my hard drive, and I sometimes play them."

9. (1992) "I also like Baldur's Gate, Gothic, Starcraft, and Heroes III, although I don't scorn new games, either. And I think that if somebody plays a lot, then no matter when they were born, they HAVE TO know certain games." (One of just 2 comments written by women, as opposed to about 110 comments from men, including mine.)

10. (1987) "'Generational games' in my case are Heroes III, Planescape: Torment, Baldurs, Fallout I and II, Starcraft, Worms, Tomb Raider, Worms, and Unreal: Tournament. I probably forgot about some others."

11. (1995) "I was lucky to find BG [Baldur's Gate] in a shop in the Extra Classic edition and notice that the game was set in 'the bestselling world of Forgotten Realms' … And my cousin, a little older than me, made me love the Forgotten Realms. … Thanks to me my younger brothers also know their BG, Neverwinters, etc. But I think that my case is an exception for people from 1995 or younger."

12. (1987) "We STILL play 'Age of Empires II' TODAY! The gameplay quality is much better than in contemporary titles."

13. (1989) "I've experienced this generational phenomenon, too. A good-sized group of my friends from university understood that they were meant for each other when one intoned 'You must gather your party…'"

14. (1993) "Somehow I still consider the games you mentioned to be generational ones. … I can also talk about them for hours, and I come back to them often!"

The exact reach of these and similar phenomena is hard to define, especially given the fact that the significance of older titles does not need to be apparent in players' everyday lives. Memories of past experiences can remain dormant until triggered by some social situation (a good analogy here would be talking to friends whom one has not seen for a long time).

Nevertheless, even a small number of active players interacting in the ways listed above can shape the gaming culture, contributing to the formation and operation of its key institutions. For this reason, such informal conversations may be a fruitful topic for qualitative studies.

Filmweb game rating

A more systematic indicator used here is the ratings that measure the popularity of computer games. For this paper, I have selected the rating of the Filmweb portal, which shows one hundred titles that received the highest average

ratings from users ("Ranking gier", n.d.). The assessments of many thousands of players, as well as a relatively large number of games included, mean that the list is a more valuable source of information than other similar ratings. Although the players who set up accounts and publicly evaluate games may be different from the general playing population, taking such persons into account is in keeping with the focus of the paper on the so-called core players.

Figure 1 indicates which years have seen the publication of the largest numbers of titles from the Filmweb rating. As at Filmweb itself, world premiere dates (not Polish release dates) have been given, and expansions have been treated as autonomous titles. The graph disregards the exact positions of individual games in the Top 100 (these would be difficult to compare effectively, given the fact that there are sizeable differences between the number of voters that rated each game). For the sake of clarity, the years 1985–1993, represented at the most by a single title each, have been left out.

The most important part of the graph is the data on the years 1998–1999, and more broadly: 1998–2001. The quantitative leap in comparison with the year 1997 is easily noticeable. What is more, a standstill may be observed in the next period (with a brief interruption in 2007). Only in the years 2010–2013 does another set of high results appear.

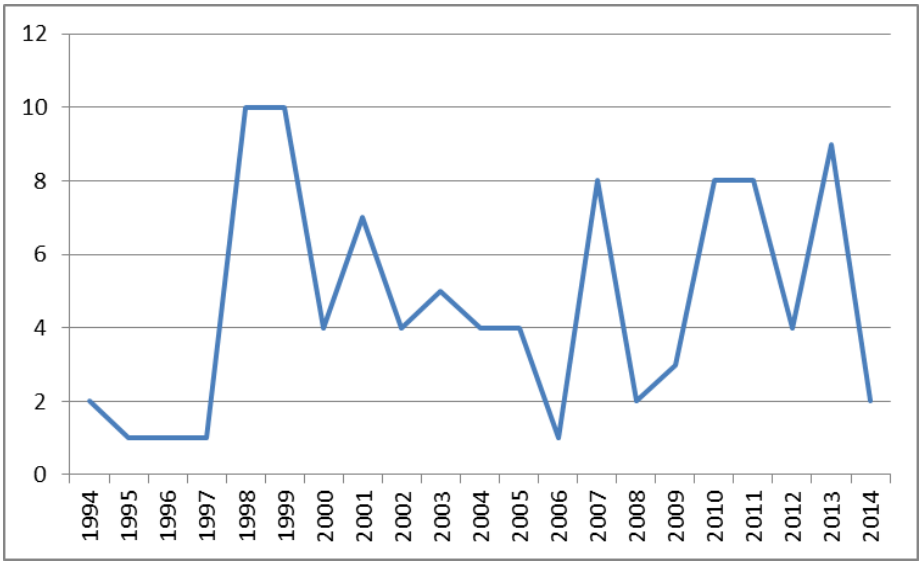

Figure 1. The number of games from the Filmweb Top 100 by date of release (Ranking gier, n.d.), retrieved on May 13, 2014

Interpreting this data is challenging due to the lack of information on voters' ages. Yet we do know that the rating was introduced in 2011, and by that time older games had generally ceased to be officially promoted or distributed. It is therefore safe to assume that the results are not due to young players getting to know *Fallout* or *Planescape: Torment* (and then rating them) but due to more experienced individuals remembering their earlier experiences and perhaps getting back to past games[8].

The data also demonstrates that roleplaying and strategy genres are particularly relevant for the purposes of this paper. The rating includes 20 titles released in 1998 or 1999; 7 of these are cRPGs and 4 are strategy games[9] (adding up to 55% of the total amount). The period between 1996 and 2003 is similar: 44 titles, including 15 cRPGs and 11 strategy games (59%). Only in the entire time span are the proportions different: 100 titles, of which 24 are cRPGs and 15 are strategy games (39%). We can thus say that around the year 2000, roleplaying games had the greatest potential to become classics, and strategy games took second place. It was not until several years later that the role of these two genres became smaller.

Table 1 contains a selection of important cRPG and strategy titles published in Poland at the turn of the 21st century (for the sake of brevity, expansions have been omitted and some titles shortened). Games from the Filmweb Top 100 are listed in bold, and the ones with potentially controversial genre definitions have been given in square brackets. Except for a few titles where the date of initial release in Poland has not been confirmed (those are marked with an asterisk), years in the table indicate the Polish premieres. Some dates are thus different than in the Filmweb rating. The most useful source in determining the years of initial Polish release were the entries in the comprehensive online encyclopedia of the web portal Gry-OnLine.pl (Encyklopedia Gier, n.d.).

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[8] However, the age of people voting on more recent games – *The Witcher 2*, *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*, or the *Mass Effect* series – remains unclear. Therefore, while the rating testifies to the lasting impact of past games, it cannot tell us whether they have been less or more important to their fans than newer ones.

[9] The other nine, in keeping with Filmweb's categorization, consist of a stealth or TPS game (*Metal Gear Solid*), two survival horrors (*Resident Evil 2*, *Silent Hill*), a platform game (*Crash Bandicoot 3*), an FPS one (*Half–Life*), an adventure game (*The Longest Journey*), a racing game (*Gran Turismo 2*), a fighting game (*Tekken 3*), and a mixed racing-platform title (*Crash Team Racing*). None of these genres can compete in numbers with cRPGs and strategy games. (TPS – third person shooter, FPS – first person shooter.)

First release	cRPGs	Turn-based strategies	Real-time strategies
1996		*Civilization II**, *Lords of the Realm II**, *Master of Orion II*	*Command & Conquer*, *The Settlers II*, *Warcraft*
1997	*[Diablo]*, ***Final Fantasy VII****, *The Elder Scrolls II**	*Lords of Magic**, *Warlords III **	*Age of Empires*, *Dungeon Keeper*, *Total Annihilation**
1998	***Fallout***		*Knights and Merchants: The Shattered Kingdom*, ***Starcraft***, *The Settlers*
1999	***Baldur's Gate***, ***Fallout 2***, ***[System Shock 2]***	*Heroes of Might & Magic II*, ***Heroes of Might & Magic III***, *Jagged Alliance 2*	***Age of Empires II***, *Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun*, *Dungeon Keeper 2*, *Might & Magic VII*, *The Settlers III*
2000	***Baldur's Gate II***, ***[Deus Ex]***, ***[Diablo II]***, *Icewind Dale*, ***Planescape: Torment***	*Age of Wonders*	*Homeworld*, *Majesty*, *The Settlers IV*
2001	*Arcanum*	*Civilization III*	*Might & Magic VI*, *Might & Magic VIII*, ***Original War***
2002	***Gothic***, ***Gothic II***, *Icewind Dale II*, *Neverwinter Nights*, *The Elder Scrolls III*		*Age of Mythology*, *Might & Magic IX*
2003	***Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic***	*Warlords IV*	*Homeworld 2*

Table 1. A selection of roleplaying and strategy games in Poland, 1996–2003

The table shows the importance of the years 1999 and 2000 (which correspond to the years 1998 and 1999 in the Filmweb rating). During that time nine titles from the Filmweb Top 100 were published, whereas the remaining six years saw the release of just seven games[10].

[10] An earlier part of the text mentioned 26 – and not 16 – cRPG and strategy classics from the years 1996–2003. The main cause of this disparity is that the table does not include expansions.