

The Information Behavior of Adult Independent Game Designers

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ABSTRACT

Changes in technology and consumer buying habits created a niche for independent games. Independent game designers have created both informal and formal groups for information seeking, information sharing, and information creation. One popular activity in the game design community is the game jam, a playful activity where small groups create prototype games within a deadline. Relatively little is known about independent designers as a new group of information users. Using the Radical Change Theory as a lens, this case study sought to better understand the information behavior of adults participating in an independent design community.

The research included a case study of beginners, hobbyists, and professional game designers by examining a gender and racially diverse selection of participants in the Portland Independent Game Squad (PIG Squad), a game design organization in Portland, Oregon. Narrative data was collected through individual semi-structured interviews of ten intentionally selected participants and an observation at a game jam.

Independent game designers who participated in this study were highly collaborative in information seeking and used play as part of their informal learning system. While this study focused on adult participants, there are implications for the organized learning experiences of youth and children of all genders. The game design process includes experimentation, playtesting, and incorporating feedback, which are powerful skills that can be generalized to other subjects.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

information seeking; information use; specific populations

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

Radical Change Theory; indie game designers; independent game designers; game jams; women in game design; game design; information behavior