

Ukraine War Stories as Experience Technology

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Abstract

Our research project Multimodal and Intermedial Technologies (MIT) revises the concept of technology so that it is not solely owned by the engineers. We will address the misunderstanding in which the job of the humanists is to produce content for devices manufactured by the engineers. The misunderstanding constitutes a scientific and cultural problem because it restricts innovation between the disciplines, and it affects the way academic research is discussed in public. MIT will fix this problem for experts from across the range of sciences to be able to cooperate with one another in developing the media technologies of the 2020s from the perspective of what user experience (UX) really is and how it is jointly produced. MIT reveals how experiences, as forms of human interaction including narrative and communicative texts, can be understood as technologies both digital and non-digital with specific qualities of design. We will launch new UX evaluation methods for service in public sector and industrial contexts beyond the academia.

As our case study in the presentation, I will analyze *Ukraine War Stories* (https://store.steampowered.com/app/1985510/Ukraine_War_Stories), a video game or digital "set of visual novels" as described by Starni Games who developed the game after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. I will focus on analyzing a walkthrough of the playable demo as an experience technology that is purposively designed in narrative content and medial form to elicit a sympathetic reaction from the end user, or the player.

Keywords

Experience technology, user experience, purposive design, Ukraine War Stories

Bio

Jarkko Toikkanen is Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Oulu, Finland, and Adjunct Professor in English at Tampere University, Finland. He has launched a three-tier model of mediality to study the intermedial experience of non-digital and digital medial environments including literature and television, with articles on Lovecraft, Poe and paranormal reality television shows, among other materials. He contributed an article on medium specificity in the *Palgrave Handbook of Intermediality* (2023) and co-edited the anthology *Shaping the North through Multimodal and Intermedial Interaction* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2022).

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