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Paper 5 – RPGs and the Future of Interactive Entertainment

Computer-based role-playing games present a new way of human/computer interaction by giving more power to the player. In the early days of video games, the goal was simply "to beat the game": to learn the tricks of the program, and counteract them on various levels until no more levels or missions are left. Having no way to save game progress reinforced this mentality. In the past ten years or so, there has been a constant change. Video games now give players the opportunity to explore and discover the worlds created for them, and embrace the roles of the story's playable characters.

Since the 1980's, as video games has progressed, they have brought with them increasingly complicated controlling devices, making them more and more "video gamey." Although more buttons make more capabilities, they also make the games less accessible to the general population. The future of interactive entertainment presents new ways of human/computer interaction by implementing reality into the experience. Future devices have a common 'real world' element. With driving simulation, you use pedals and a steering wheel. With combat simulation, you walk around with a gun controller.

In my opinion as a producer of interactive media, the Nintendo Wii is the most futuristic consumer interactive entertainment device available today. The graphics are not quite as good as the Xbox 360 or Playstation 3, but the Wii focuses on play instead of high definition graphics. The highlight of the Wii is its implementation of motion sensor technology, which gives consumers a glimpse into the future mixed reality. By having a more natural interface, as well as a lower price tag, Nintendo has intrigued non-gamers

into their virtual world of play. The Wii is not perfect, but it is the closest thing to future technology that consumers have access to.

At Sci-Fi City, I played the Red Dragon Inn card-based role playing game. With game such as this one, the enjoyment of the experience is based largely upon the players. The players have to get into the story, and get into character. Because of this I say, I could have improved my experience. I had no previous experience with role-playing games. In hindsight, I did not have the right attitude going into the experience. I was worried about acting too nerdy. I was thinking too much about the rules. My experience reminded me of the Hoboes.com article that reads:

"Many times, games will not have a specific rule to cover a rare or odd situation. The second rules-lawyer trap is to believe that there should always be a rule to cover every situation. In this case, you waste time and interrupt the flow of the story by searching through the rule-book for rules that aren't there."

With role-playing games, you have to let go of your inhibitions. You have to play like a kid again. This is where RPGs and the future of interactive entertainment coincide. The two venues have common goals of escapism, exploration and play, and give you one the chance to forget the rules, and just have fun.