Read/Write/Play:
Digital game-based storytelling
with Interactive Fiction

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What's in a game?

Rules

Goal

Feedback

Digital Game-based Learning

- Motivation
- Flow
- Challenge
- Engagement
- Control
Interactive Fiction

Video Game

participatory storytelling

Literature

"Will you read me a story?"

"Read you a story? What fun would that be? I've got a better idea: let's tell a story together."
A computer programme
A non-linear narrative
A simulation of a world
A game

When the seventh day comes and it is time for you to return to the castle in the forest, your sisters cling to your sleeves.

“Don’t go back,” they say, and “When will we ever see you again?” But you imagine they will find consolation somewhere.

Your father hangs back, silent and moody. He has spent the week as far from you as possible, working until late at night. Now he speaks only to ask whether the Beast treated you “properly.” Since he obviously has his own ideas about what must have taken place over the past few years, you do not reply beyond a shrug.

You breathe more easily once you’re back in the forest, alone.

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**Bronze**
A fractured fairy tale by Emily Short
Release 11 / Serial number 060503 / Inform 7 build 3K27 (16/v6.30 lib 6/10N)

Have you played interactive fiction before? > y

If you have not played Bronze before, you may still want to type HELP to learn about special commands unique to this game.

**Drawbridge**
Even in your short absence, the castle has come to look strange to you again. When you came here first, you stood a long while on the drawbridge, unready to cross the moat, for fear of the spells that might bind you if you did. This time it is too late to worry about such things.

An iron-barred gate leads north.

> examine me
You are nontrivially the worse for your journey – hungry, dirty, and tired. But all that can be seen to later.

> n
(first opening the iron-barred gate)
You shouldn’t be able to open it, heavy as it is, but it swings aside lightly at your touch. The Beast said that it knows friend from enemy; and the castle, at least, still regards you as friend.

**Entrance Hall**
There is no fire in the big fireplace, and no one is waiting for you here; the air is very cold. Over the gate, the old familiar warning sign is painted.

Various passages lead deeper into the castle: north towards the central courtyard, southwest to the guard tower, east and west into the libraries, the offices, the galleries. Somewhere in this maze, he waits; and he should be told as soon as possible that you did return.

An iron-barred gate leads south to the drawbridge.

> read sign
You read: Those who seek to leave the castle depart at peril of their lives and souls, unless another servant be provided in exchange, or a fixed term of absence be granted by their master.

> w
The IF Lexicon

You just started up a game and now you’re staring at text and a blinking cursor and you don’t know what to do!

Don’t panic kids—Crazy Uncle Zarf is here to help you get started...

You are standing in an open field west of a white house with a boarded front door. There is a small mailbox here.

You can try all sorts of commands on the things you see.

Try the commands that make sense!

Doors are for opening; buttons are for pushing; pie is for eating. (Mmm, pie.)

If you meet a person, these should work:

TALK TO name
ASK name ABOUT something
TELL name ABOUT something
GIVE something TO name
SHOW something TO name

Each game has slightly different commands, but they all look pretty much like these.

You could also try:

EAT it
DRINK it
FILL it
SMELL it
LISTEN TO it
BREAK it
BURN it
LOOK UNDER it
UNLOCK it WITH something

Or even:

LISTEN
SLEEP
WAKE UP
UNDO†

† Take back one move — handy!

These commands are very common:

EXAMINE it
TAKE it
DROP it
OPEN it
PUT it IN something
PUT it ON something

When in doubt, examine more.

What if I only want to type one or two letters?

N/E/S/W/NE/SE/NW/SW: Go in the indicated compass direction.

L: LOOK around to see what is nearby.

X: EXAMINE a thing in more detail.

I: take INVENTORY of what you possess.

Z: WAIT a turn without doing anything.

G: do the same thing AGAIN

A service of the People’s Republic of Interactive Fiction:

http://pr-if.org

Does the game intro suggest ABOUT, INFO, HELP? Try them first!
The Bedroom is a room. “The bedroom is a total mess. You can barely make out a bed underneath the piles of discarded clothes. There is a door to the south”.

A room called Bathroom is south of the Bedroom. “The Bathroom is surprisingly clean. The pink walls and flowery toilet seat look somewhat out-of-place. The exit is north”.
Writing IF

Quest 5

http://www.textadventures.co.uk/  http://quest5.net
Where to find Interactive Fiction (and yes, it's free!)

Play online:

Interpreter + game files:
Interactive Fiction Database: www.IFDB.tads.org

Recommended interpreters:
  Gargoyle for Mac, Linux and Windows
  Frotz for iOS
  Twisty for Android

Lesson plans and further thoughts on IF for teaching and learning: IF ONLY - www.theswanstation.com
Learner Perceptions of IF

It's a game because you have fun playing it and because it has the characteristics of a game. It's educational because the educational component is always present during the game. In IF, although you are learning English, you sometimes don't understand it because you are really enjoying the game”.

We learn English because we have to pay more attention to the words because we want to move on.

I had the freedom to make my character do what I wanted him to do and I didn't know what to expect - that's what makes IF fun.

It could be an important tool to learn different vocabulary that is used in more practical situations and not typical classroom behaviour.

English is being practised when you command your character and sometimes you have to try to find other words to say the same thing you meant for the computer to understand what you are saying..

Pereira (2013). Cases in Digital Game-based Learning. IGI Global
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> Thank audience

Joe thanks you!

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