Musical Embrace: Socially Awkward Interactions Through Physical Proximity to Drive Digital Play

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Abstract

Socially awkward interactions are often regarded as something that is to be avoided, nonetheless encompasses the potential to be ingredients for compelling play. Although examples exist in the non-digital games domain to support this point (e.g. Twister), we've found that there has been little exploration conducted on social awkwardness when it comes to digital play. In response, we present Musical Embrace, a digital game that calls for strangers to collaboratively apply pressure, in the form of awkward whole-body movements in close physical proximity, to a novel suspended pillow-like controller; as means of traversing a virtual environment. We use Musical Embrace to identify design tactics that utilize social awkwardness, to drive digital play. With our work, we hope to encourage designers to consider socially awkward interactions as a compelling ingredient for digital games.

Author Keywords

Exertion game; social awkwardness; digital play; body contact; tangibles; uncomfortable interactions; exertion interface

ACM Classification Keywords

H.5.2. Information interfaces and presentation (e.g., HCI): Miscellaneous.

General Terms

Human Factors; Design