A Nice Little Wolf, 3 Evil Pigs and the Art of Strategy

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The word strategy goes beyond the idea of a plan. In itself, it is an embodiment of a concept steep in culture and history. As we dig deeper into the ideas behind strategy, we find that not only is it a process affected by time and other parameters, it also plays a part in the smallest things of our daily lives, such that we often overlook it. Above all, it serves as a link between the past and the present, closing the gap between the distant past and our present lives. In this work, we aim to portray our examination of the nature of strategy, as a concept and its link between both our past and present day society, as well as the concept of time. In the end, we hope to provide the user with valuable insights of strategy and allow him to appreciate the interdependent nature of our world beyond the surface of individualism in a globalizing world.

Though the work seems to revolve around the game section, the game is not its actual emphasis. It serves only as a hands-on illustration of what we are trying to say. The real message lies in the archive, the main page, and the structure of our whole work. It is here that we use strategy as a basis to comment on the idea of history, hence showing that strategy is a tool in itself, especially when it comes in between the past and the present. Through that, we will show that history is not simply a record of events but the manipulation of people's attitudes through the selective record of events such that only events or perspectives of events favorable to the victors remain. In this way, history is but a strategy, and it is the strategy of the victors.

The work comprises of three sections, a title page, a game and an archive of snapshots of previous rounds of games. Written HTML, it presents the idea of the universality of the concept of strategy, that strategy is used by anyone, just like how the HTML code can be decoded by all browsers. Set against this backdrop is the idea of past versus the present, as signified by links to the game and archive to excerpts of previous games. This contrast also shows two aspects of strategy; the idea of strategy as a plan one derives in reaction to a situation, which is true of a game, against that of strategy as past experiences, reused by later generations as formulas of success.

The title page was aimed to set the user thinking about history. It includes four pictures with the words "some things fade with time…" and "…others remain to form history". Of which the latter appears after two pictures on the right fade away. Of the four pictures, there are two taken from the war in Iraq and another 2 are cartoons featuring the three little pigs. The contrast between the 2 pictures in each category is that in each category, one is the unconventional perspective, the perspective of the loser, and it is this perspective that fades away. In a way, it emphasizes that history belongs to the victors, that though we get to access history, it is often not the complete picture. Hence, history becomes a strategy in itself, to control the perspective of the future generations on the victors. This shows the strategy of history, as a link from the past to the present, since it molds attitudes future generations, and hence shows the obvious in our daily life, us as receptors of strategy, as people affected by strategy.

The rationale for the game section is simple. As a symbolism of strategy, the game serves to highlight the interaction between the parameters of the game and the player, emphasizing how a changing environment brings about the need to adapt with the new and changed environment,

thus creating the basis for strategy. Here, the user becomes the creator of strategy, strategy as something we come up with. It is strategy in this instance that is often overlooked, as players get too absorbed in what they are doing to take note of the thought process going on behind the fun. In view of this, we played up the roles of specific components of the game, with the intention of drawing the player's attention away from the superficial aspects of the game, hence preventing the players from being caught up and absorbed with the game.

To begin with, we introduced the limited game time, which consists of a clock counting down time, the minute the user is done with reading the introduction of the game. Strategy begins here, in the form of a choice between viewing the archive, statistics, a demo-clip as well as jumping straight into the game. Here, the ever-changing commodity of time is placed against four choices which symbolize the choice between referring to knowledge from the past, listening to ideas of social norms, the media or simply ignoring them all, respectively, which parallels the dilemma we are often caught in when making decisions. While it is good to listen to other views, at times it is better to jump straight into the problem and tackle it ourselves, much like how the player can go straight to the game without forfeiting his time to view the demo-clip or the statistics. How much we want to familiarize ourselves with our new surroundings and how much risk we are willing to take is all part of the weighing of consequences one does in deciding on strategies to apply, thus highlighting the need to strike a balance between factors and manage the knowledge we are provided with for what is most beneficial to us, just as much as how strategy is about making sure that we make the right choices with whatever knowledge we have.

The aim of the game is to prevent the wolf from starving by destroying the pigs' houses and eating up a pig before he starves to death. Upon entering the game actual, one finds that he is confronted with not only time independent parameters, like the location of the pigs' houses, and the materials it is made of, but also time dependent parameters, like the weather, weather forecast, wind, temperature, tools and the hunger of the wolf. This calls for him not only to anticipate when the time dependent parameters change, since they would affect the outcome of his strategy, but also to recognize the right time and to size the opportunity. These are yet another two interpretations of strategy, and in a sense are aspects of strategy in its very essence.

When the player finishes his game, he is immediately linked to the archives page, a collage of the snapshots of every game played; which can be accessed also from the title page. The only difference is in the meaning of the archives page before the player finishes his game and after. The former marks the collection of the various strategies taken by many other players, which serve as consultation material, as highlighted before, hence it serves as a reference for the present. In addition, because the archive is a collection of what others have done, it becomes a representation of the past. When the archives page is viewed again when the player completes his game, a snap shot of his game joins in the archives, in other words, his game, the strategy he used, is now much like the rest of strategies employed, history. The present becomes the past. Hence, it presents a cycle of the passing of time, whereby strategy serves to facilitate, since it is because of strategy that the present refers to the past and that the present, because of its modifications of past strategies becomes the past itself, when it is completed. Here, we become the analyzers of strategy, strategy becomes knowledge which we analyze, a non interactive concept which does not impose on us to act in a certain way, like illustrated by the main page, or for that matter we do not make strategy, like in the game.

To emphasize that history belongs to the victors, the idea in the main page, screenshots of successful games in the archive would turn black and white, while the screenshots of unsuccessful games fade away, like as if there were a transition from present to past, causing the screenshots to turn black and white, while at the same time, it is the victors that live to tell the tale, while the others disappear with the past.

With this, the user is also brought to the title page again, whereby, the idea of history being reinforced, with an added perspective. Thus it is as if it were our strategy to get the user to understand history from our perspective, and to make it seem as though he thought of and realize it himself.

In examination of the whole website from the macro perspective, it seems to highlight strategy as the link between possibilities and success. This is illustrated by how the in the beginning of the game, the player is provided with 3 choices to inform himself of the game, like how from one point, there are many possibilities of which path to take, while the end, the wolf being satisfied highlights success of the player. The in between, how the player uses the tools he has, how he decides on when to do what emphasizes the process of the route from possibilities to success, the route illustrated by the idea of strategy, like how we start out on our journey of life with many roads of possibilities, each road representing a form of strategy, among which we choose one to tread on, towards success.

Work load:
Ho Ee Min, Ng Xinyi, Koh Ying Zheng, Tan Qin Fen and Tay Hongjuan- concept
Ho Ee Min, Ng Xinyi, Tay Hongjuan- power point presentation
Tay Hongjuan- write up
Koh Ying Zheng- programming and image adjustment
Tan Qin Fen- imaging and looking for the images