

Educational Digital Games

McDonald's Video Game

Website: <http://www.mcvideogame.com/index-eng.html>

Summary: In this game, players manage the profitability of the McDonald's corporation. Players control agriculture (raising cows in the rainforest), beef production (slaughtering the cows and adding dangerous hormones and other ingredients to their food to speed their growth), distribution (hiring crew members in a McDonald's restaurant to keep up with customer demand, then firing them when they don't smile enough), and advertising/public relations (putting a positive spin on the nutritional value of McDonald's food or just bribing important people as needed).

Review: The game never misses an opportunity to criticize the company's practices. For a Web-based "mini game," it's quite elaborate and engaging. The game uses a lot of exaggeration and humor to communicate the game designers' opinion of McDonald's in a not-so-subtle way.

Reviewer Rating: 9 out of 10

Relevant Subjects: Political Activism, Global Economics, Consumerism, Advertising, Public Relations

Ayiti: The Cost of Life

Website: http://www.unicef.org/voy/explore/rights/explore_3142.html

Summary: In this game developed for Unicef, players guide a Haitian family of five through their struggle to survive with limited resources and few opportunities to better themselves. The game forces players to balance the health, education, and happiness of each player, while trying to prevent the family from going into debt.

Review: The game is very well designed and provides valuable lessons on how difficult it can be for people to lift themselves out of poverty.

Reviewer Rating: 9 out of 10

Relevant Subjects: Global Economics, Global Politics, Sociology, Haitian Culture, Political Activism, Poverty

Disaffected!

Website: <http://persuasivegames.com/games/game.aspx?game=disaffected>

Summary: Disaffected! puts the player in the role of employees forced to service customers under the particular incompetencies common to a Kinko's store. Players get

to experience the indifference of these purple-shirted malcontents first-hand, and consider the possible reasons behind their malaise -- is it mere incompetence? Managerial affliction? Unseen but serious labor issues?

Review: If you've ever been frustrated with the service at Kinko's, you'll definitely appreciate this game. Although it's quite entertaining, the game also does a decent job of simulating key problems that come with almost any service-oriented business. Exasperated customers come in from time to time with unreasonable demands, items are misplaced, people grow impatient, and employees make mistakes.

Reviewer Rating: 8 out of 10

Related Subjects: Business Management, Persuasive Games

Darfur Is Dying

Website: <http://www.darfurisdying.com/>

Summary: In this game, you must forage for water while avoiding capture by militia members in Darfur. You must bring the water back to your refugee camp and help the camp members survive by nurturing a small garden and trying to stay healthy. The game features a "take action" link that allows players to learn more about the crisis in Darfur and contact politicians to ask for increased support of African refugees

Review: The game itself isn't that great. (There isn't much strategy.) However, it's a good example of a game being used to promote and directly link to additional online activism resources.

Reviewer Rating: 6 out of 10

Relevant Subjects: Global Politics, African Politics, Political Activism, Genocide

Oil God

Website: <http://www.shockwave.com/gamelanding/oilgod.jsp>

Summary: This game allows the player to use natural disasters and other catastrophes to raise the price of gas to a particular price target.

Review: There's not much strategy involved, but it's a good example of how games can be used to promote a particular political perspective.

Review Rating: 6 out of 10

Relevant Subjects: Global Economics, Global Politics, Persuasive Games

Super Columbine Massacre RPG (Role-Playing Game)

Website: <http://www.columbinegame.com/>

Summary: This game takes players through the events of the morning of April 20th, 1999 and asks players to relive that day through the eyes of Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, the students who shot their classmates at their high school in Columbine, Colorado.

Review: This game has not yet been reviewed.

Relevant Subjects: Media Violence, Bullying, Gun Control, Psychology, Sociology

Food Force

Website: <http://www.food-force.com/>

Summary: In this game developed by the UN Food Program, players take the role of a relief worker who, as part of a team, races against time to feed the starving inhabitants of Sheylan.

Review: This game has not yet been reviewed.

Relevant Subjects: Global Politics, The United Nations, Disaster Relief

Bacteria Salad

Website: <http://www.shockwave.com/gamelanding/bacteriasalad.jsp>

Summary: In this game, players plant crops and try to maximize profit by selling produce to customers. Players must destroy contaminated crops before they cause an e-coli outbreak.

Review: There's not really much strategy and it's not clear if there is a particular political message. It might be more of an artistic statement about consumerism.

Relevant Subjects: Consumerism