

GUIDING THE PLAYER

Topics

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- **Guiding the Player**

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- **Direct Guidance**

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- **Guiding the Player**
- **Direct Guidance**
 - **Overt instruction**

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- **Indirect Guidance**

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- **Indirect Guidance**
 - Covert instruction

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- **Teaching New Skills and Concepts**

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 - **Direct Guidance** - The player knows that she is being guided
 - **Indirect Guidance** - The player is guided without realizing it

Methods of Direct Guidance

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 - May annoy the player by pedantically presenting information she already knows

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 - The short-term goals are directly tied to the long-term goal of reaching the Great Deku Tree

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 - Can lead to players spending most of their time just following the directions of the virtual GPS
 - Players don't thinking about a destination and choose their own path
 - Takes longer for the player to learn the layout of the game world

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 - Pop-ups with the icon for the controller button and a very short description of the action appear when a contextual action is possible

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- **Example: Kya: Dark Lineage**
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 - As it is falling, the game shows the player the message "Press X to jump" at exactly the time she needs to know that information

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 - But only **30.7%** of owners on Steam have ever finished the main quest

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 - For the player to understand everything she needs to know about cover, she must also be told about the damage reduction.

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 - If given a choice of Red or Green, the player won't try to pick Blue
- **Without constraint, players run the risk of choice paralysis**
 - A person is presented with so many choices that she can't weigh them all against each other and instead just doesn't make a choice
 - This is why a restaurant menu might have 100 different items but only feature images of 20

■ Goals

- **Goals can also be used to guide the player indirectly**

Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

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 - Example: *Minecraft* – Players in danger are given the ability to craft

Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

- **Physical Interface**

Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

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 - The shape of a physical interface can be Indirect Guidance

Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

■ Physical Interface

- The shape of a physical interface can be Indirect Guidance
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 - Example: Rumble strips in racing games

Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

- **Visual Design** — The broadest category of Indirect Guidance

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 - Light

Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

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 - Once a player has seen that something in the world is good in some way (helpful, healing, valuable, etc.), she will seek out similar things

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 - **Trails**
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 - The player picks up a certain item and then follows a trail of similar items to a location that the designer wishes her to explore

Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

- **Visual Design**
 - Landmarks



Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

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 - Large interesting objects can be used as landmarks



Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

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 - Once she reaches the top, the camera rises above her, revealing a towering mountain with light bursting from the top
 - The camera move causes the mountain to emerge from directly behind the stone marker, showing the player that the mountain is her new goal



Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

- **Visual Design**
 - **Arrows**

Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

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Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

- **Visual Design**
 - Camera



Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

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– Camera

- Commonly used in traversal puzzles (looks in direction of next move)



Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

■ Visual Design

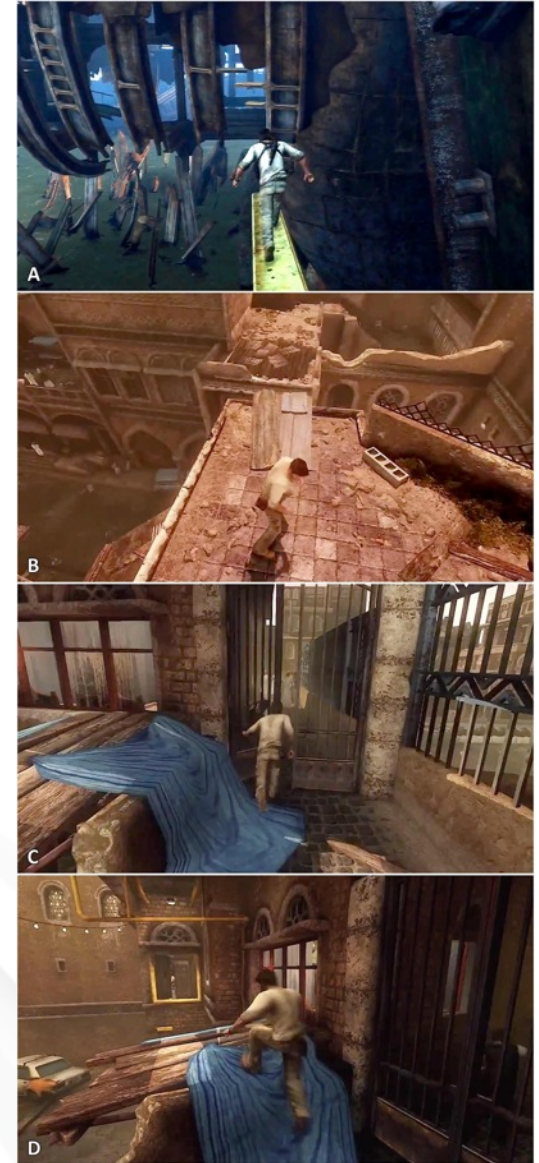
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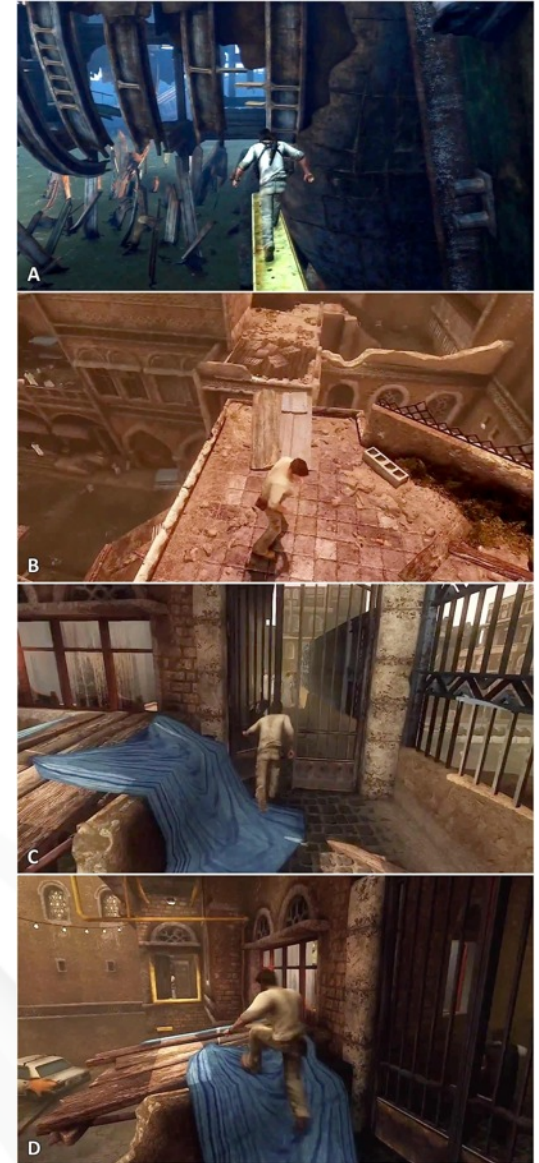
Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

- **Visual Design**
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Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

- **Visual Design**
 - **Contrast**
 - Used to draw attention to certain objects

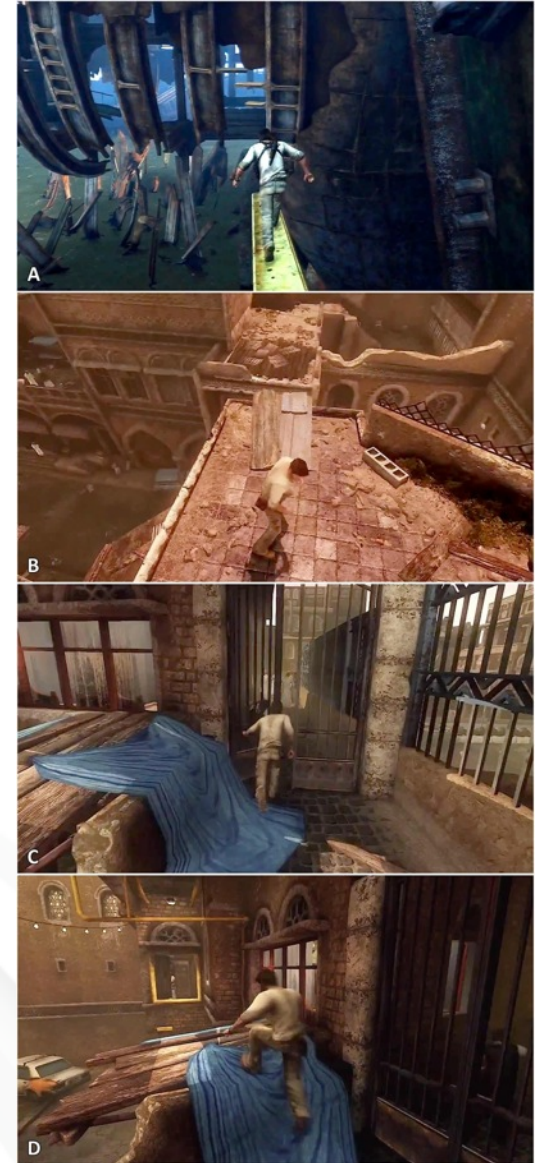


Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

■ Visual Design

– Contrast

- Used to draw attention to certain objects
- Directionality



Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

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 - Image A: Horizontal rungs contrast with vertical elements in scene



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 - Image C: Smooth cloth texture provides texture contrast with rough rock and wood

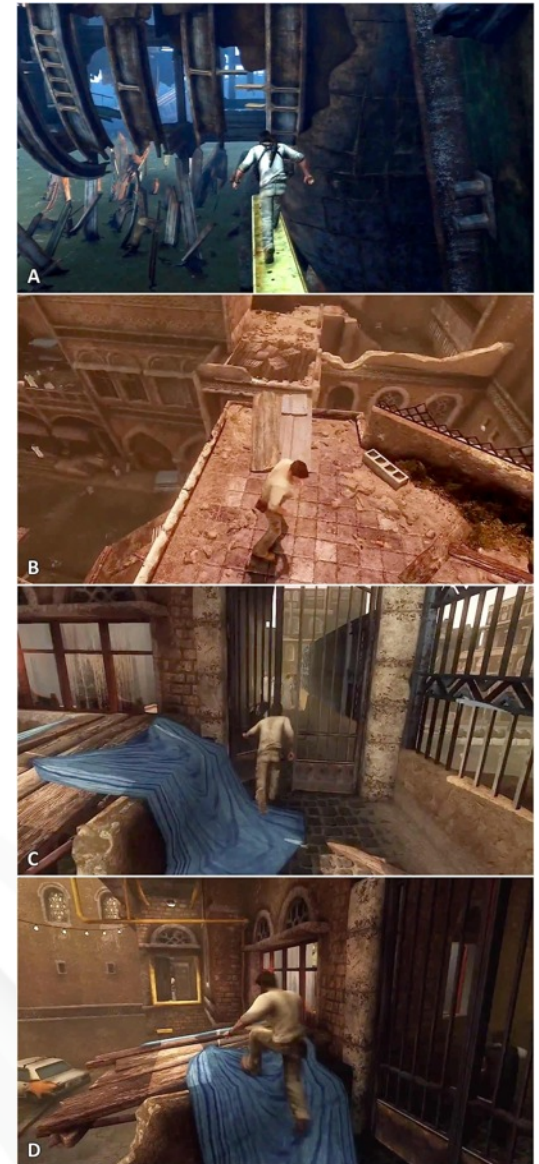


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 - Image C: Smooth cloth texture provides texture contrast with rough rock and wood
- Color
 - Image D: Blue cloth and yellow pipes contrast with beige environment



Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

- **Audio Design**

Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

- **Audio Design**
 - Music can influence a player's mood

Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

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 - **Music can influence a player's mood**
 - Slow, quiet music can lead the player to be more stealthy

Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

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- Slow, quiet music can lead the player to be more stealthy
- Raucous, boisterous music can make the player more bold

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- **A player's character model can have a strong guiding effect**

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- **A player's character model can have a strong guiding effect**
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 - The player will expect for her character to be able to play music

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- **If the player character has a sword...**
 - The player will expect to be able to hit things and run into combat

Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

- **Non-Player Characters**
 - Modeling Behavior



Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

- **Non-Player Characters**
 - **Modeling Behavior**
 - The NPC shows the player good or bad behavior and the consequences



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 - Image A: Red circle shows a Nativ who stepped in a trap and was caught



Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

■ Non-Player Characters

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– Example: Kya: Dark Lineage

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- Image A: Green circle shows Nativ jumping to avoid trap
- Image B: Green circle shows Native stopping to wait for wind trap



Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

- **Non-Player Characters**
 - **Safety**



Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

■ Non-Player Characters

– Safety

- Image C & D: Green circle shows Nativ taking potentially-dangerous action



Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

■ Non-Player Characters

– Safety

- Image C & D: Green circle shows Nativ taking potentially-dangerous action
- Because the Nativ shows confidence doing so, the player doesn't fear



Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

- **Non-Player Characters**
 - Emotional Connections



Seven Methods of Indirect Guidance

- **Non-Player Characters**

- **Emotional Connections**

- Players can be influenced by their emotional connections to NPCs



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- Image A: The player encounters the first other creature she has seen in the game



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– Players also chase NPCs out of anger (*Assassin's Creed 4*)



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- **With so many controls, training of the player must be *sequenced properly***

Teaching New Skills and Concepts

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- **Sequencing** — The art of gently presenting new information

Teaching New Skills and Concepts

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 - Isolated Introduction

Teaching New Skills and Concepts

- **Sequencing** — The art of gently presenting new information
 - **Isolated Introduction**
 - The player is introduced to the new mechanic such that she must use it to continue

Teaching New Skills and Concepts

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 - **Integration**
 - Once the player understands the mechanic, she is required to integrate it with other mechanics in the game

Teaching New Skills and Concepts



Teaching New Skills and Concepts

- **Example:**



Teaching New Skills and Concepts

- **Example:**
 - *Kya: Dark Lineage (PS2)*



Teaching New Skills and Concepts

- **Example:**
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 - Isolated Introduction: A



Teaching New Skills and Concepts

■ Example:

- *Kya: Dark Lineage (PS2)*
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 - Player must press X to drop below the wall



Teaching New Skills and Concepts

- **Example:**

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- **Expansion: B**



Teaching New Skills and Concepts

■ Example:

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 - Player must pump X to hover



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 - Can pass C without pressing X
 - Can just hold X to pass D
- **Increased Difficulty: E & F**
 - Player must pump X to pass without damage



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 - How aware were the players that their actions were being influenced?
 - How important is it to you that the guidance is covert?
 - In other words, how important is it to you that the player feels like she made the decision on her own?

Chapter 13 – Summary

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