



Values at Play in Digital Games

Mary Flanagan and Helen Nissenbaum



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Introducing Values at Play

In 2007, the video game developer BioWare released *Mass Effect*, a role-playing game that contains short flashes of sexual activity toward the end of the game. The game allows players to watch the sex but not to play through the sex, and the scenes are less explicit than many that can be found on network television shows. The relationships between the characters develop over time, there is no complete frontal nudity, and the sex scenes occupy around two minutes of a thirty-hour experience.

The designers of the game were proud of its innovative relationship design and its mix of male, female, and androgynous characters. Players choose to play either male or female forms of the character Shepard, and both versions are equally capable fighters. Intimate relationships are a subplot in the game and are a result of a long chain of conversations and action-fueled missions. *Mass Effect* offers players an opportunity to participate in a complex saga and engage with political and humanitarian issues.

A Fox News Channel television show called *The Live Desk* nonetheless devoted a long segment to the game in early 2008, spurred on by blogger Kevin McCullough, who stated that *Mass Effect* players could “engage in the most realistic sex acts ever conceived” and “hump in every form, format, multiple, gender-oriented possibility they can think of.”¹ A member of the panel discussion described it as “Luke Skywalker meets *Debbie Does Dallas*.” Panelists claimed that the game featured on-demand graphic sex, and a psychological specialist asserted that playing *Mass Effect* could pervert the psychosexual development of young boys.²

These reactions are not unusual. Games are subject to far more scrutiny than network television or Hollywood films and often are condemned by people who do not play them. Most critics adopt a so-called family values stance, and their critiques tend to be either misinformed or intentionally misleading. The claims of psychological damage to youth, such as those made on *Fox News*, are unfounded.³ But such statements help to shape the

common misperception that all video games belong to a hyperviolent, hypersexualized wasteland. No wonder game designers and players get nervous whenever the words *games* and *values* are mentioned in the same breath. Game makers, justifiably soured on the topic, often simply refuse to engage in a discussion about the relationship between games and values.

This is understandable but also unfortunate. As a medium for learning, entertainment, and communication, games are an increasingly prominent part of the current cultural landscape. Ignoring values in games may seem the best way to answer provocations like those of the Fox News panel, but it also means missing important opportunities to diversify the field and promote innovation.

The team behind this book—at Dartmouth College (the Tiltfactor Laboratory) and at New York University—has been studying the territory of human values and games for almost a decade. We call our research Values at Play because we are committed to nurturing a constructive discourse about games and values. Unlike many politicians and pundits who invoke values to advocate censorship or scold designers for controversial content, we approach this topic critically, not moralistically. We're interested in the role that values play in animating personal, political, and artistic expression through any medium. We aim to provide resources for designers and design students who are interested in exploring the creative potential of what we call values-conscious design and who wish to consider, in a systematic way, the moral, social, and political resonances of digital games.

Our work coalesces the activities of making games, playing games, thinking about games, and theorizing about the relationship between digital technologies and values. As both theorists and practitioners, we have discovered that any ideas applied to games must account for the distinguishing properties of the medium, such as its rule-based architecture, player agency, interactivity, and the nature of gaming as a cultural phenomenon. When it comes to ethical and political values in games, this challenge is no different. We have developed game-specific modes of analysis and design methodologies and created actual games manifesting values-conscious design. The methodology that we have developed is complementary to standard design practices in a practical way.

The project has three core premises—that societies have common (not necessarily universal) values; that technologies, including digital games, embody ethical and political values; and that those who design digital games have the power to shape players' engagement with these values. We have coined the term *conscientious designer* to describe those who accept these premises and commit to considering values when they design and



Figure 0.1

Commander Shepard and Liara T'Soni embracing, from the video game *Mass Effect* (2007).

build systems. When our book speaks to the design community, it is less to persuade skeptics to accept these three premises than to invite those who take values seriously—the conscientious designer—to try out Values at Play.

This book includes a theoretical and practical introduction to Values at Play. Part I introduces Values at Play. Chapter 1 introduces core themes that contribute to the book's theoretical grounding, explaining the theory of values adopted in this book and the reasons that values should be a core consideration in game design. Chapter 2 includes deep readings of a handful of games to demonstrate the diverse ways in which values are embedded in all games. Chapter 3 provides a systemic way to look at values and identifies fifteen game elements (including the narrative structure of the game, the game engine that it uses, and the context in which a player encounters it) that together form a game's semantic architecture, through which its values are conveyed.

Part II examines the Values at Play heuristic. In chapter 4, we introduce the Values at Play heuristic, which is a practical guide for conscientious designers that offers a way to incorporate values into the iterative design process. The methodology has three stages—discovering values related to and embedded within a given game project (chapter 5), implementing

those values in design features and game elements (chapter 6), and verifying that the desired values actually appear in the game (chapter 7).

Finally, part III discusses Values at Play at work. In chapter 8, we examine how this methodology can inspire designers, especially through tools that we have developed (such as the Values at Play curriculum and Grow-a-Game cards). Parts II and III include short essays by game designers and thinkers. Their first-person accounts explain how they have put thinking about values and the Values at Play theory into practice—with notable success. Throughout the book and especially in the conclusion (chapter 9), we argue that consideration of values should be integral, not incidental, to the design of all games. Putting values at play helps designers create games that are more fun, more innovative, and more deeply engaged with the world in which we live.

I Understanding Values at Play

1 Groundwork for Values in Games

All games express and embody human values. From notions of fairness to deep-seated ideas about the human condition, games provide a compelling arena where humans play out their beliefs and ideas. To anthropologists, games are paradigmatic among human practices and rituals. From the misty origins of the classic Go game in Asia to the more recent evolution of chess and online games such as *World of Warcraft* (Blizzard Entertainment 2004), games can serve as cultural snapshots: they capture beliefs from a particular time and place and offer ways to understand what a given group of people believes and values. These beliefs may be made visible on the surface (through game characters or other visual features), and they may be expressed through a game's many elements (such as point of view, actions, and hardware). A player's available choices can express a particular understanding of the world, such as the extent to which fate either is in the hands of individuals or societies or is subject to the uncontrollable forces of nature and serendipity. Many elements of games reveal the underlying beliefs and values of their designers and players. Further, because games are engrossing and reach deep parts of the human psyche, they may not only reflect and express but also activate these beliefs and values in powerful ways.

We propose three key reasons why it's important to study values in games. First, the study of games enriches our understanding of how deep-seated sociocultural patterns are reflected in norms of participation, play, and communication. Second, the growth in digital media and expanding cultural significance of games constitutes both an opportunity and responsibility for the design community to reflect on the values that are expressed in games. Third, games have emerged as the media paradigm of the twenty-first century, surpassing film and television in popularity; they have the power to shape work, learning, health care, and more.

Why are there so many games being produced and sold *right now*? Technology has advanced to the point where digital games can flourish in

myriad forms and give players true agency in complex digital playspaces. The large number of games emerging from independent makers and big game design companies demonstrates that there is room for new kinds of game experiences to be created and to find audiences. We pay attention to games because we are players and designers and also because games tell stories and allow players to engage with systems that help them understand the complexities of contemporary life.

Why Games Are Different

Games have become a central way that we tell stories embedded in larger systems of belief and interaction across cultures, and their recurring conventions, themes, player rituals and actions, and music may function as a means of mythmaking. Theories borrowed from literature, television, and film studies do not fully address the psychological, social, and mythic power of games. The emerging generation of game theorists recognizes the role that digital games play as a distinctive cultural artifact and have begun to theorize about player agency, identity, and rules within a community of play.¹

We do not wish to overstate individual player agency. Neither do we wish to understate the debt that digital games owe to the vast contemporary cultural landscape, including science and other art forms. The interactive and iterative nature of digital media is similar to that of analog games, choose-your-own adventure books, and participatory television (such as *American Idol*).² Contemporary computer games offer a range of interactive experiences, from predetermined choose-your-own-adventure stories like *Fable* (Lionhead Studios 2004) to dynamic, unpredictable systems that use physics models, multiplayer interaction, and emergence, such as *World of Goo* (2D Boy 2008) or *Minecraft* (Mojang 2011).

The distinctive effect that games have also may be due to their immersive character: players actively control and identify with playable characters, and their actions typically shape situations within the game experience.³ Whether or not experiences of agency within games transfer out into real-world contexts, at the very least such agency distinguishes the experience of game playing from film or television viewing. Beyond role playing and perspective taking, digital games offer players a dynamic engagement with content through cycles of effort, attention, and feedback. Unlike traditional forms of other media, which do not respond to players' journeys or to their readings and interpretations, digital games are particularly compelling environments in which players explore and act based on at least a

partial understanding of a system's relational dynamics. As Janet Murray has observed, games give us "a chance to enact our most basic relationship to the world—our desire to prevail over adversity, to survive our inevitable defeats, to shape our environment, to master complexity, and to make our lives fit together like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle."⁴ Beyond merely telling stories as traditional narratives do, digital games allow for enactment and provide a systems-level rule set for the story's logic.

What Values? Whose Values?

When we discuss Values at Play, people often ask, "What values? Whose values? And what are values, anyway?" These are entirely reasonable questions given the many meanings of *values* and *value* as they are used both colloquially and in academic scholarship. Values also provoke controversy within and across societies, among individuals, and even within a single person. As Isaiah Berlin notes, "Values may easily clash within the breast of a single individual; and it does not follow that, if they do, some must be true and others false."⁵ Full answers to these general questions lie beyond the scope of this book, but enough must be said about values to convey the basic terms of our theory of Values at Play.

Simply put, values are properties of things and states of affairs that we care about and strive to attain. They are similar to goals, purposes, and ends, but usually they possess a higher degree of gravitas and permanence, and they tend to be more abstract and general. Thus, while you might set a goal to exercise and lose three pounds, it would be odd to cite this as a *value*. Instead, the relevant value might be good health. As a value, however, good health takes on a general importance—that is, if I cite good health as one of my values, then I care about good health for not only for myself but also about good health for others. Values may take a variety of forms—qualities of the environment (such as species diversity), personal traits (such as honesty), and political states (such as justice and democracy). Values may be specific to individuals or shared by groups, and they may bind communities, cultures, religions, or nations. We acknowledge these differences by speaking of personal values, cultural values, religious values, human values, and so forth. We may further differentiate among types of values by talking of ethical, political, and aesthetic values and more. Finally, values are often ideals: we promote them even as we accept that we may never achieve them. World peace, tolerance, kindness, and justice are instances of such ideals.

People express their value commitments in a variety of ways. Some reduce values to an economic proposition: how much are people willing to pay to save a species from extinction, promote the health of a population, or ensure territorial security? Although this approach may be useful for practical public policy decisions,⁶ we adopt a more pluralistic approach. In addition to expressing their commitments through economic decisions, people also express them through symbolic gestures, artworks, words, companions, work, and—as we assert throughout this book—their designs for things they build.

Although the range of values is virtually boundless, here we are interested primarily in ethical and political values. Typical examples of ethical values include kindness, honesty, generosity, fidelity, integrity, respect, safety, autonomy, creativity, peace, pleasure, well-being, friendship, collaboration, health, responsibility, happiness, and contentment. All of these contribute to the moral dimension of our lives—how we treat others and how they treat us. Political values include those that define relationships within and between societies, such as justice, equality, security, stability, cooperation, tolerance, privacy, accountability, democracy, voice, property, liberty, liberation, autonomy, equal opportunity, and government transparency. As the scholar Langdon Winner notes, political values are “arrangements of power and authority.”⁷

Narrowing our attention to ethically and politically significant values still leaves plenty of room for controversy over what values and whose values count. Noting differences in values between people and societies, some have asked, “My personal values may be different from yours, and our societal, religious, and cultural values may be different. How can you presume to select particular values and particular versions of those values?”

Such questions emerged in Western philosophical traditions as far back as the ancient Greeks, and to this day they continue to play important roles in debates over the existence of basic human values, moral and cultural relativism, the politics of recognition,⁸ and critical theory. Plato considered goodness, justice, and beauty to be objective, universal human values. In contrast, the twentieth-century anthropologist Ruth Benedict argues, on the basis of her ethnographic research, that values in human societies are infinitely elastic and that none rises to the status of universal.⁹ Benjamin Franklin’s list of eleven values to guide his life include cleanliness, frugality, industry, moderation, silence, temperance, and sincerity. But why single out these, and should Franklin’s values serve as a guide for others? Social psychologists have conducted research to try to discover which values might be universal across diverse nations and cultures. Milton Rokeach

suggests a core of common values, which he divides into two categories—terminal values (such as a comfortable life and freedom) and instrumental values (such as honesty and cooperation).¹⁰ Although doubts persist about the list's comprehensiveness, there has been general scholarly agreement that the values "cover a broad spectrum."¹¹ Shalom Schwartz and Wolfgang Bilsky posit three classes of universal values that are based on three distinct needs—biological needs, interactional needs for interpersonal coordination, and societal needs serving group survival and welfare.¹²

Although these theories of universal human values drawn from biological, individual, and social needs are of compelling interest, a theory of Values at Play does not depend on them. Our approach does not require universal values, but it does presume the existence of socially recognized moral and political values—that is, the positive ends that a society strives to enshrine in its institutional, political, and social structures and that it encourages individuals to adopt as a guide. Political philosophers, ethicists, religious and secular leaders, teachers, parents, and peers all engage in the study, deliberation, definition, propagation, and communication of these values, sometimes explicitly in words and decrees and other times through actions and reactions. Although deploying the theory presumes a stance on values, it does not presume any particular stance, instead allowing for divergence of worldviews. One system of values might emphasize freedom, and another might favor responsibility, but both provide a sound platform for the Values at Play model.

Here is the stance that we have adopted throughout the book: as citizens of a liberal, egalitarian democracy, we hold a bias in favor of values such as respect for human rights, the rule of law, individual freedom, justice, and the basic equality of all human beings. We are inspired by foundational political documents, including the U.S. Constitution, the Charter of the United Nations, and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We also depend on literatures in ethics and political philosophy as well as ideals embodied in religious documents. From the high-minded to the vernacular, these sources reveal a resilient core. Values that we encounter in these explorations include justice, equality, freedom, autonomy, security, happiness, privacy, tolerance, cooperation, creativity, generosity, trust, equity, diversity, fidelity, integrity, environmentalism, liberation, self-determination, democracy, and tradition. These commonly encountered, socially recognized values are points of departure for Values at Play.

We are aware that there are differences in values across societies and individuals. Gender equity, for example, is explicitly recognized in the United States but not in Saudi Arabia. With even the most commonly encountered

values, differences emerge in the ways that they are interpreted and applied. Plato, for example, favors equality in general but not for slaves or women. A theory of Values at Play is not going to resolve issues that have united and divided people and societies for centuries. There is little choice but to take a stand where a stand is needed. Those who build social institutions and who institute social practices make these determinations all the time: we pass laws, strike treaties, and develop educational systems. We return to our thinkers and writers, and we turn to the people who are served by—or must suffer under—these systems and institutions. These people, in turn, express their values in the ways that they vote, respond to surveys, and make financial and commercial choices.

Values in Technology

Values at Play adds one further dimension to the values landscape. It asserts that digital games—like other technologies and like social practices, systems, and institutions—have values embedded in them. In so saying, we place ourselves within the larger discussion about values in technology. As Langdon Winner argues in his landmark article “Do Artifacts Have Politics?,” the creators of technical systems and devices should consider functional and material properties and also recognize the ethical and political properties of these technologies. The crucial insight of Winner’s article, which has been refined and elaborated many different ways by the author and others,¹³ is that the values expressed in technical systems are a function of their uses as well as their features and design.¹⁴ Privacy is one such value. For example, early versions of the Unix operating system that include the “finger” command to ascertain if a colleague was online might be judged hostile to privacy, and a discussion board that allows anonymous posts might be deemed privacy friendly (more such examples are woven throughout this book). In such ways, we might consider privacy or other values to be embedded in the design of the technology. But reading values into and out of technical systems is not simple as even our two quick examples reveal. “Finger” may seem intrusive to present day users of the Internet but in the early days of Unix, the users of a given system would more than likely be colleagues, even friends or members of a common community and the “finger” command more likely the inquiry of colleague to colleague rather than a problematic intrusion. The expansion to a global environment that many digital systems have attained—both large-scale systems (such as the Internet) and relatively modest sized ones (such as games themselves)—this embedding of values further complicates pressing issues worthy of our attention.

The notion that values are embedded in technology motivates a practical turn in the work on values in design. We can do more than simply demonstrate systematic relationships between technology and values; we can do something about it. If we accept that technology can embody values, the practical turn allows designers and producers to consider ethical and political concerns alongside more typical engineering ideals. System design is typically guided by goals such as reliability, efficiency, resilience, modularity, performance, safety, and cost. We suggest adding items like fairness, equality, and sustainability to the list. Because conscientious designers have the opportunity to integrate values into their everyday practice, they can have a hand in determining which values are expressed.

The idea that values should be considered in the design of technical systems has spurred initiatives such as values-conscious design and values-sensitive design.¹⁵ Values at Play offers an alternative approach for guiding technical design for digital games, which are challenging because of their hybridity: they are games, expressive art forms, and technological engines. The first two aspects—game and art form—are generally visible to users as well as critics and theorists. They include storylines, plots, settings, narratives, characters, colors, shapes, landscapes, sound, music, and interface as well as game goals, rules, challenges, representational systems, competitive constructs, and reward systems. These elements have garnered most of the attention in discussions of the social significance of digital games. This is partly because such elements are immediately experienced and therefore obvious but also because highly developed, time-honored theoretical frameworks—borrowed from media, art, sound, cinema, and literary criticism—are able to address them. In other words, there is a rich vocabulary for exploring the plot, character, and rules of digital games.

The same cannot be said for the technological architecture of games. Scholars of values in technology still push against the received view of technology as neutral, and even though this area of study remains active, controversial, and unsettled, it provokes questions and generates approaches that are explored in this book.¹⁶ Yet just as narrative and game rules carry values, so do lines of code, game engines, mechanics, and hardware. The Values at Play approach is interested in all three of the hybrid layers—expressive, ludic, and technological. Our aim is to contribute to a critical language for technology that is as rich as those that exist for expressive art.¹⁷

Values at and in Play

It is impossible to do justice to the range and depth of inquiry into values in technology, design, and games in the few paragraphs that we have devoted

to these topics in this chapter. We aim primarily to give a sense of the rich heritage that inspires our decidedly pragmatic focus. With concrete cases throughout the book, the text illustrates systematic relationships between values and particular design elements. (Readers interested in plumbing greater depths may find further direction in our bibliographic references.) For example, the bestselling PC game of all time, *The Sims* (Maxis 2000), has been said to inculcate materialist values that define the home as a space that primarily is devoted to consumption. Players are encouraged to earn money and spend it on acquiring goods, especially household goods (such as furniture and televisions) and eventually larger homes.¹⁸ *Saints Row* (Volition, Inc. 2006) is a game series in which crime pays. It portrays the world as a violent place that rewards criminal behavior (such as insurance fraud) and reinforces racial and gender stereotypes. The “Whored” mode in *Saints Row: The Third* (Volition, Inc. 2011) features waves of attacking prostitutes, and “The Penetrator” weapon (a deadly purple dildo baseball bat) is used against them.¹⁹ In a gentler vein, the player in *Okami* (Clover Studio 2006) takes on the role of the animal/goddess Amaterasu, whose job is to make plants and animals happy in the environment. We may say that this game fosters empathy, nurturing, sharing, and care-giving.

Claims such as these, however, deserve close scrutiny if we wish to avoid a similar, simplistic determinism that would have bound the “finger” command to a violation of privacy. The tongue-in-cheek tone of *The Sims*, for example, and its presentation of consumerism as monotonous resist facile interpretations and evoke more complicated responses from players. Although our perspective supports the need for this more nuanced interpretation of values in games, we recognize that there are no simple lines that connect characteristics of a game’s elements (such as content, architecture, and actions) with the attainment (or suppression) of certain values and valued states. Just as the connection between “finger” and privacy required an understanding of subtle dynamics introduced by shifting contexts of use, so the features of a game as bearers of values emerge in the act of play, dynamically, depending on the context of play and who is playing. Designers’ intentions matter but are not fully determinative; unintended values may be served in spite of these intentions, and intended values may fall flat.²⁰

Inspired by games, we chose the phrase *Values at Play* as the label for our framework to acknowledge the multidimensional flux of these complexities in the design domain. The term *play* has many meanings, including “perform a role”; “occupy oneself in amusement, sport, or fantasy”; “play along with and accept the rules in a given situation”; and “allow a space

for movement, as in the free play of gears.” Values at Play shares roots with recent important work in ethics in games, focusing on ethical choices and the ways that ethical and unethical actions are structured within games. Values at Play incorporates a perspective on ethical actions, valued ends, and direct and indirect ways that game elements involve values.²¹ Recognizing these important shared roots, we have included a short contribution by Karen Schrier, one of the leading contributors to the study of ethics in games.

Yet complexity does not mean anarchy. Admitting that the interdependencies along the pathway from design to values (and back again) are complex and diverse does not warrant nihilism and resignation any more here than in the myriad other circumstances in which thoughtful action is required despite uncertainties. Questioning one’s own worldview is a good start. A conscientious designer might proceed by holding fixed certain variables while manipulating others, learning about who is likely to play (and their worldviews), and exploring the likely context of play. These considerations are all part of the toolkit of a designer who is aiming for a holistic approach to making design choices with values in mind. Although the philosophical rubrics associated with values in technology and values in design are the context for this book, the concrete and the nitty-gritty are our dominant vernacular. We examine the ways that values have been and may be enacted, denied, confronted, and manipulated—the ways that values are “at play” in games and design.

Introducing the Conscientious Designer

These are our core premises: (1) there are common (not necessarily universal) values; (2) artifacts may embody ethical and political values; and (3) steps taken in design and development have the power to affect the nature of these values.

Professionals may discover core values while they are working in their respective fields. Donald Schön has related this type of discovery to notions of reflective practice. His work helped us forge thinking about design professions and brought to light ways that design practitioners might be more reflective or, in our terms, conscientious.²² His foundational work takes on the challenges of problem setting (asking the right question) over problem solving, noting that many professionals learn about these challenges the hard way by asking the wrong question and trying to solve for the wrong goal. If problems are not well defined initially, then poor results

emerge. This thinking is relevant to game design processes, especially when designers think that they are instilling one set of values but actually may be embedding another.

Our goal is to help designers seek an active role in shaping the social, ethical, and political values that may be embedded in games. When those values inevitably veer off course during the process of iteration, designers need to be confident enough to bring them back on track even when it is difficult to do so.

Conscientious designers consider values when they design and build systems. They often have a passion for learning, a deep curiosity about the world, and a fascination with human behavior. This passion is expressed in well-thought-through design. Our book does not try to persuade skeptics in the design community to accept these premises but instead invites conscientious designers to try the Values at Play heuristic. If you are interested in taking values seriously in design, you are a conscientious designer. To you, we offer Values at Play.

This book is intended as a resource that is grounded in theory but essentially practical. Values at Play is a theory insofar as it constitutes a structured way to understand values in games. As a theoretical framework, it provides a lens through which designers can appreciate values in a game, just as other theoretical approaches guide people to appreciate other dimensions, such as aesthetics, technological efficacy, or narrative. But the purpose of Values at Play is primarily pragmatic. It is a companion for designers who seek to make new and better games by considering values, who accept relationships between design and values, and who ask how we might convert these insights into practices in the world.

Innumerable decisions fall within the scope of our project, because values may be at play at all levels of a design initiative. From overarching architectural principles to decisions at the finest grain, designers and software engineers can influence the shape of an initiative through choices and problem-solving strategies. Although our book reveals philosophical implications of human values that are at play in digital games, its central claims are asserted in terms of concrete examples—many of them—demonstrating connections between abstract ideas about values and games to moment-by-moment decisions in the design process.

Drawing on theory-based principles and practical insights from scholarship and design practice, this book develops a method for integrating values in the conception and design of games that can serve as a guide for games designers and developers. Conscientious designers are ethical (they are truthful, factual, and alert and have the player's best interests at heart)

and also strive to make a difference through their work. The number of conscientious designers is steadily increasing, and as they work, they will find that values appear in a range of games and their constitutive elements. It is essential to identify the issues and address those moment-to-moment decisions about values in game development. The conscientious designer needs backup—prior evidence, support materials, and methods—and we provide such backup in this book.

In the relatively short history of information technologies, stories of its moral and political significance abound in the informal lore and in carefully researched cases. They discuss the Internet's democratizing potential, the Web's free and equitable access to knowledge, the diminishing privacy brought about by databases and cookies, and so on. Such stories raise questions about whether these social and political outcomes are accidental or whether they can be integrated into the day-to-day goals and practices of technology design, thereby giving rise to better technologies. Can conscientious designers change society for the better with their work? Our commitment to positive answers to these questions motivates the Values at Play project. Although our ideals are tempered with a good dose of realism, we continue to work toward change by putting social and political values on the design agenda so that it can lead to better games and better technology.

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