Doritos Crash Course: using a game as a platform for advertising and branding

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we seek to analyze the use of a game named *Doritos Crash Course* as an advertising piece for the Doritos brand. We discuss the hybridization of a video game experience and a branded content inside the gaming universe; also known as an advergaming strategy. Wanako Games developed the game in 2010 for the Xbox 360 console and this ludic content starts a series of related actions using entertainment for Doritos. As a digital downloadable content for the Xbox platform, the game could reach a great audience by the gap of few clicks and it establishes an interesting and strategic point to highlight in the contemporary ambient of marketing and communication. We intend to discuss the main points of *Doritos Crash Course* and explore some important information from the global gaming market. We understand that, in this context, video games could be considered a product to be sold and a media platform for advertising.

1   Introduction

The contemporary multiplatform environment, with so many connections between different devices, became a privileged ambient for advertising and marketing campaigns. In this context it is also possible to cast a message for a global brand using a ludic language through a gaming format. To understand this part of the communication ecosystem, we will explore some data from the gaming industry, the potential for communication/marketing efforts inside the gaming universe and some details from *Doritos Crash Course* to enlighten our discussion. We also highlight the idea of advergame and some possible formats to explore communication strategy inside this context.

Acknowledging the prominence of digital culture in today's *mediapolis* (Silverstone, 2007), the large amount of video game platforms can be considered a privileged space for communication and marketing strategies of all kinds. In this complex communication environment, we want to observe the impact of the gaming culture in the mediatic scene, how important it can be for new advertising strategies in the contemporary world and how it can challenge the creative potential in marketing for global brands, products and services.

In this context, video games are leading landmarks of contemporary culture. The new category of mass self-communication (Castells, 2009) poses further challenges to understanding current modes of sociability and consumption. As Castells says (2009:135) the great amount of content access by multiple platforms - digital TV, tablets, smartphones, video games etc. - offered to the public is one essential characteristic of global communication in the digital age. In this digital scenario many governments, citizens, business groups, brands and entertainment companies have begun to explore advantages and have started to integrate these multiple platforms in their everyday communication processes.

In this text we observe and discuss the game named *Doritos Crash Course*, created in 2010 by Wanako Games Studio for the Xbox 360 console. This game fits the casual game category that, according to Trefay and Kaufmann (2010, p.1), can be defined as games that are quick to play, accessible to players with different ability levels and with simple mechanics. In this kind of game: the rules and goals must be clear; players need to be able to quickly reach proficiency; casual game play must adapt itself to a player´s life and schedule; and the game concepts must borrow familiar content and themes from life.

In *Doritos Crash Course*, the player controls his own Xbox avatar that must run in a type of fantastic roller coaster to reach the finishing point before time runs out. With rich visual graphics, the game is a fast and casual experience for all ages and already has downloadable expansions and even earned a sequel: the *Doritos Crash Course 2*. The game is free for download and consists in a 2.5D side-scrolling platform (essentially a 2D-like gameplay within a 3D environment) with online ranking that allows players all around the world to share their scores.

Doritos Crash Course has two features we would like to highlight: first of all, the game is an experience sponsored by Doritos and the brand appears in the beginning of each stage. The second important feature is the in-game advertising possibility inside some floating outdoors in the game interface. As we can see in the image below, the outdoor displays an ad for *Crash Course 2* (the second game of the franchise) and it supports many types of advertising for the brand.

Picture 1   Interface of the game with some branding content
Source: print screen from the game *Doritos Crash Course*.

As Poels and Herrewijn (2011, p.1) define, this kind of in-game advertising refers to the use of digital games as a medium for the delivery of advertisements, and the authors point out that there is one player branding experience during the gameplay.

Based on these appointments, we intend to deliberate about the construction of the in-gaming advertising proposed inside the *Doritos Crash Course's* interface by observing some relevant data from the billionaire gaming industry. We will discuss the strategies behind the concept of a game integrated with a global brand and some results achieved with this campaign. As an online product, Crash Course has a social strategy with the players of the Xbox network and Doritos is investing

heavily in business strategies for entertainment. Definitely, this brand seems to have understood how to adapt itself to the ludic context of some features that permeates our contemporary world.

It is important to say that this kind of strategy - that uses games as an advertising piece of a campaign - does not fit for all kinds of products, brands or services. An essential point in this context is to observe the target public and what kind of language it is possible to use, creating a dialogue between consumers and the brand. As Trentmann (2006, p.11) reminds us, "the bounded nature of consumers was not, of course, fixed or static".

For an international company like Doritos, to think about promoting its brand to the public in different ways is fundamental in today's competitive scenario. As Davis (2013, p.191) says, promotional culture "has become a more central, influential part of communication and social relations, just as financialization, globalization and new communication technologies have"; this same author (2013, p.199) also says that today is very common for a brand or a franchising to amplify its message in multiple formats. In this sense a "film may also be a television series, a computer or a board game, a theme-park ride, an interactive website and a fanzine – all in addition to being a sequel, a prequel, a DVD, or a digital download for computers and mobile phones".

To achieve the desired results for our empirical research, we used some texts from the fields of communication, consumption, games, entertainment and cyberculture. Based on academic studies on communication and consumer culture, with special emphasis on digital social networks, our empirical research is done by applying the virtual ethnographic approach (Hine, 2000/2005; Kozinets, 2009) observing the digital ecosystem of the game and how the Doritos brand is placed inside this virtual ambient full of different users. Hine (2000, p.63-64) emphasizes that cyberspace is not to be thought of as a space detached from any connections to "real life" and face-to-face interaction. (…) The challenge of virtual ethnography is to explore the making of boundaries and the making of connections, especially between the "virtual" and the "real", so one challenge for this study has been to explore the process of making connections while crisscrossing boundaries related to online and offline media for the brand Doritos and the game interface.

To better understand this scenario where brands and games hybridize, we need to explain some important points of the gaming industry. Nowadays, the gaming market is a huge colossus inside the field of entertainment and some points from this area are essential for our study.

2   About the gaming industry and games as media platforms

According to IQU[1], the game industry income was of US$ 67 billion in 2012, while another Newzoo research shows that, in 2016, this revenue will be about US$ 86 billion. In the eyes of consumers, these numbers may seem to have astronomical proportions, but they represent relatively little when compared to the revenue of major industries in the world[2], such as oil, banking, food, mining, weapon makers, chemical industry and retail stores. For instance, Wal-Mart, a chain of retail stores, earned more than US$ 450 billion dollars[3] in 2013.

We know that in recent years the game industry had the fastest growth within the entertainment area. If we observe the entertainment industry specifically, we can see many of its players investing in games. This is quite relevant if we remember that in the first half of the 1980s game developers and publishers went through a major crisis that became later known as "the video game crash" (Kent, 2001). Now, it is considered the biggest opportunity of investment on the entertainment business.
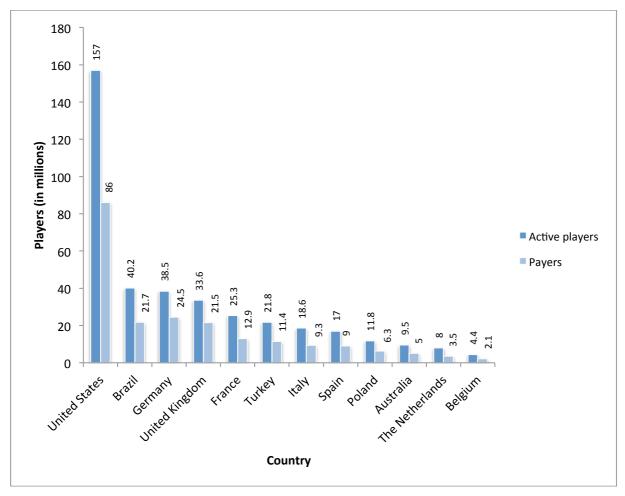
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[1] Global video games revenue in 2012 and 2017 (in billion U.S. dollars). Available in:
<http://www.statista.com/statistics/237187/global-video-games-revenue>. Accessed 11/4/2014.
[2] Available in: CNN Money <http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/global500/2009/performers/industries / fastgrowers / >. Accessed 11/4/2014.
[3] Available in: <http://services.corporate-ir.net/SEC.Enhanced/SecCapsule.aspx?c=112761&fid = 8,721,155>.
Accessed 11/4/2014.

However, the importance of this remarkable growth is less of economic proportions than the impact of the growing consumption of this entertainment product in society. What the numbers really show us is that people are increasingly using digital games as means of entertainment. This can be seen on the table below, which shows the number of active video game players who actually paid for their games.

Graph 1 Number of active gamers and paying gamers worldwide in 2012 (in millions)

Source: STATISTA. "Number of active video gamers and paying gamers in selected countries worldwide in 2012 (in millions)". In: STATISTA: The Statistics Portal, 2014. Available at <http://www.statista.com/statistics/195768/active-video-game-players-and-payers-in-selected-countries/>. Last access on 11/4/2014.

By "paid for their games" we understand that these numbers should be even higher if we consider all the digital games available for free on entertainment websites, mobile applications and computer games which don't sell the access to the game, but rely on other monetization strategies (Perry & DeMaria, 2009). After all, there are many ways available for the consumer to play games of all kinds. Mostly by purchasing video game consoles, PCs, gaming web portals, mobile devices and Massive Multiplayer Online games (MMOs), which, technically, are one kind of computer game, but with particular business models and game mechanics.

About these business models, Perry and DeMaria (2009, p.43-44) also say that we can find interisting formats to earn money in this ecossystem: direct sales of games, advergames (with brands and products), around-game advertising (banners around the game window), try before you

buy, expansion packs, and equipments/powers for the gaming characters, just to name a few examples.

From this, we must understand that the consumption of games is significantly growing and is becoming more relevant, socially. We can not forget to highlight an important point of this discussion: that games are products with various business models and media platforms for sponsors, brands, products, services and companies.

Another way to see the relevance of game consumption is to see the amount of money spent on it. Below, we can see how much money players spent on digital games per platform per country.

Table 1   Total money spent per platform per country (in local currency)

	Consoles	PC games	Game Portals	Mobile devices	MMOs
USA	$15,140,000,000	$4,150,000,000	$2,780,000,000	$1,100,000,000	$2,120,000,000
UK	£ 2,390,000,000	£ 740,000,000	£ 270,000,000	£ 190,000,000	£ 190,000,000
GER	€ 1,540,000,000	€ 1,320,000,000	€ 430,000,000	€ 180,000,000	€ 180,000,000
FR	€ 2,430,000,000	€ 690,000,000	€ 190,000,000	€ 100,000,000	€ 160,000,000
NL	€ 315,000,000	€ 170,000,000	€ 55,000,000	€ 10,000,000	€ 45,000,000
BE	€ 310,000,000	€ 150,000,000	€ 60,000,000	€ 10,000,000	€ 40,000,000

Source: NEWZOO. Games Market Report - consumer spending on key platforms and Business Models. Gameindustry.com: no local, 2010

It may look obvious but, to play digital games, you must have access to an appropriate hardware. It is not uncommon for a consumer of games to have access to different gaming platforms, owning at least one at home and carrying it along any other devices that support games – like a portable console or a smartphone. This became evident from the survey numbers of the Entertainment Software Association (ESA Essential Facts 2013): 68% of players play on videogames, 63% on PCs, 43% on Smartphones, 37% on portable consoles and 30% on other mobile devices.

The fact that the sum of this percentages adds up to more than 100% shows us that players have multiple access to gaming today. People want to have different accesses to the same content through the many digital devices that are around them. Although the data is specific about the North American market, we understand that the effect of multiplatform media consumption is already established as an important element of contemporary culture. This point reinforces the idea of video games as media platform and a new way to establish a dialogue with different kinds of consumers.

The amount of video game systems is impressive: there are 157 million Playstation 2's and 154 million Nintendo DS's sold around the world. If we only consider the platforms sold in the market today, we can sum up to 332 million officially sold devices around the globe. This is more than the population of Russia, Germany, United Kingdom and France, the four most populous countries in Europe, put together.

The table below shows us some impressive number from this industry and synthetizes the economic reach of the video games. Nowadays, United States is the first country in terms of production and profitability, followed by Japan, Canada and Brazil.

Table 2   Total sales of the gaming industry

Pos.	Console	North America	Europe	Japan	Rest of the World	Global
1	PlayStation 2 (PS2)	53.65	55.28	23.18	25.57	157,68
2	Nintendo DS (DS)	57.37	52.07	33.01	12.43	154,88
3	Game Boy (GB)	43.18	40.05	32.47	2.99	118,69
4	PlayStation (PS)	38.94	36.91	19.36	9.04	104,25
5	Wii (Wii)	45.17	33.75	12.76	9.28	100,96
6	PlayStation 3 (PS3)	28.38	32.98	9.91	11.36	82,63
7	Game Boy Advance (GBA)	40.39	21.31	16.96	2.85	81,51
8	Xbox 360 (X360)	46.36	25.23	1.66	7.87	81,12
9	PlayStation Portable (PSP)	21.39	24.14	19.97	15.26	80,76
10	Nintendo Entertainment System (NES)	33.49	8.30	19.35	0.77	61,91
11	Super Nintendo Entertainment System (SNES)	22.88	8.15	17.17	0.90	49,1
12	Nintendo 3DS (3DS)	13.25	12.36	15.35	2.74	43,7
13	Nintendo 64 (N64)	20.11	6.35	5.54	0.93	32.93
14	Sega Genesis (GEN)	16.98	8.39	3.58	0.59	29.54
15	Atari 2600 (2600)	23.54	3.35	0.00	0.75	27.64
16	Xbox (XB)	15.77	7.17	0.53	1.18	24.65
17	GameCube (GC)	12.55	4.44	4.04	0.71	21.74
18	GameGear (GG)	5.40	3.23	1.78	0.21	10.62
19	Sega Saturn (SAT)	1.83	1.12	5.80	0.07	8.82
20	Dreamcast (DC)	3.90	1.91	2.25	0.14	8.20
21	PlayStation Vita (PSV)	1.91	2.51	2.67	0.84	7,93
22	PlayStation 4 (PS4)	3.06	2.36	0.47	0.67	6,56
23	Wii U (WiiU)	2.56	1.26	1.68	0.42	5,92
24	Atari 7800 (7800)	4.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.30
25	Xbox One (XOne)	2.79	0.98	0.00	0.26	4,03

Source: VGCHARTZ. "Platform Totals". In VGCHARTZ. Available at <http://www.vgchartz.com/analysis/platform_totals>. Last access on 11/4/2014

By observing these data, we don't want to show the economic significance of digital games but to emphasize that the games (while media) are an important consumer product in ascencion. So we can expect an increased influence of it's structure, aesthetics and ideologies in cultures where it is marketed. Compared with revenues of Energy, Retail or Transportation Industries, games are insignificant to the global economy. Similarly, car radios or television sets are also not significant, but this does not mean that these devices are not responsible for strongly influencing our contemporary culture.

The philosopher Douglas Kellner (2001) says that media productions (films, TV shows, soap operas, songs, books...) are less related to an artistic content but are transformed into products, whose "images, sounds and spectacles help to weave the fabric of everyday life, dominating leisure time, shaping political views and social behavior, and providing the material with which people forge their identity". Although this is not the focus of this philosopher, we see that this is a description that fits games too - because, like other media, its symbolic universe is present in our culture, (re)producing it.

Just as an exercise, we invite the reader to think about Mario Bros., Pac Man and Space Invaders as part of these media productions, and about the contact we have with its characters, scenery and other symbols which are no longer limited to its presence in the game. We can find them in ringtones, tattoos, spray-painted on city walls, used by advertisers etc. McLuhan himself (1964) has considered games as media, because they are "situations that allow simultaneous participation of many people in a given structure of your own corporate or social life". Thus, we can identify games as part of media production that influences contemporary society, cultural products that belong to our common repertoire, our daily lives.

About this multiple possibilities, it is valid to remeber also that games today even could be used in the medical field (Araujo; Carvalho; Ferreira; Vasconcellos, 2013, p.343) to promote children's learning (Tóth; Poplin, 2013, p.194) or ecological purposes (Mastrocola, 2013, p.330), proving, one more time, the maturity of the industry in the contemporary business scenario.

By becoming a relevant media, digital games also become a breeding ground for consumer brands. This is what happens in the case of Advergames.

As we already discussed (Berimbau, 2010, p.61), there are many strategies in which brands can buy advertising space in the cyberspace of the game, like in-game advertising, dynamic in game, game skinning, pre-game and post-game, static in-game and so on. More than to try to define the ever-changing meaning of these practices, we need only to understand that these communication strategies in video games do not differ much from newspapers, TV programs, radio etc., in terms of the strategic usage of the media by ad makers. In a similar way, brands buy or rent a place in between the main content of the media.

What the media consumer really wants to see is the informational/entertainment content that the editorial team, producers or game designers have made available through the media, with ads appearing in a (hopefully) pertinent way both to the media consumer and to the brand. Here, the relation of the brand with the game content looks more distant than the strategy of the advergame, that are, as defined by IAB[4], games created specifically for a brand, built for a product or service. Here, the brand is not placed like an ad or a sponsor, somewhat dislocated from the experience generated through the game rules and aesthetics.

In advergames, the myriads of meanings that constitute a brand are materialized within the dynamics and aesthetics of the game, producing experiences that are uniquely relevant to that brand. Sports games, on the other hand, may seem as an exception, because the sponsoring brands in racing cars or the ads on the edges of the soccer fields or tennis courts seem to give the player a better sense of reality, trying to make the environment less fictitious by giving the experience of the consumption of the sport. In these cases, brands can be noted as "in the game", and maybe even making the experience better somehow

By now we can realize that games can be used to convey meaning. The main question that remains is "how does it happen?" As consequence of that question, we can think of others: If games are different in structure from other media, because it requires user participation (it's not optional), does that not change the communication strategies of a brand, that needs to worry about the particularities of the media? And what are those characteristics?

3   How games convey meaning

Gonzalo Frasca (2007), a researcher in the field of digital games and a game designer, began his doctoral thesis with an important question: "What does it mean that a game makes a point? Can a game –which, by nature, involves multiple different scenarios – convey a lesson?"(FRASCA, 2007, p. 15). His intention through his research is to investigate how the games convey ideologies, thus being understood as media, rethinking the definition of what is a game and its core elements

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[4] INTERACTIVE ADVERTISING BUREAU. Game advertising platform status report: let the games begin. Available in: IAB <http://www.iab.net/media/file/games-reportv4.pdf>. Accessed 11/4/2014.

for this purpose. Although our study does not wish to go that far, Frasca's questions and, above all, the ways in which he gets to the answers, are very relevant when we think of advergames in general. After all, if Frasca is correct and games can also be used as education tools, then advergames can be an important strategy to educate consumers about products and services, or even give them a "consumption experience", simulating the entire symbolic territory of the brand.

This line of thought begins with Frasca studying the work of the ludologist Espen Aarseth (1997). In his book "Cybertext: perspectives on ergodic literature", he seeks to understand how to build a discourse through a video game - or, more accurately, a cybertext: the mechanical organization of textualities that requires more effort from your reader than eye movement and the arbitrary and regular turning of pages (Aarseth, 1997, p 1). This effort, which Aarseth calls *ergodic,* is related to the data input made by the player, and the machine's answer revealed by some output. In this repeated process, the system produces *sense.* This exchange with the system is not a mere reflex response made by the player, but it is a communication process that produces sense on two levels: the semiotic, which involves the interpretation of signs and where theories of semiotics and narrative and other communication studies can be useful; and the ergodic - without the effort of the player, the production of meaning is limited. Unlike a book, painting or a film, where all available information is evident and the production of meaning depends mostly on the interpretation of the observer, in a game is required some "action" in order to obtain a response from the system and, therefore, have something to be interpreted. That way, it is the ergodic level that differs games from the other media.

In this way, we can see that both player and machine work together in the composition of the meaningful gaming experience, although many authors (e.g. Schell, 2008; Adams, 2010) defend that it's the set of rules that allows ergodic literature to exist. For them, rules are the fundamental and common element of any game. But rules alone do not produce meaning – the aesthetic experience produced through the output, like a TV screen, is interpreted by the player.

That way, we want to introduce that digital games have particular characteristics when we compare them to other media. Its structure contains unique elements that need to be understood so that we can use them strategically in the production of meaning.

To Frasca (2003), every game designer is an author, managing to convey his or her paradigmatic beliefs through games. Therefore, he calls them "simauthors", joining the words simulation and author, as someone who has the ability to construct meaningful situations for users through a set of rules and made sensitive through aesthetics, which builds limited possibilities, gives players a sense of freedom and, in some level, is related to our reality – even if it's a symbolic, abstract reality, like a brand experience. At the same time, it differs from a narrauthor, (author and narrative) who is the player himself. After all, the game not only promotes a story, but it is a machine capable of generating a multitude of stories that vary according to the actions and reactions of the user, although constrained by the set of rules that make it possible. Frasca (2007) also believes that there is an inseparable relationship between player and machine in production of meaning.

In this sense, a simauthor can convey ideology through four methods: 1) The game's aesthetic characteristics; 2) it's permissions, given to the player by the game rules, 3) A determination of goals or conditions of victory and defeat, and 4) using meta-rules, or the permission given to the player for partially modify the form three aspects (FRASCA, 2003).

Thus, an advergame should worry about conveying it's advertising message through these four elements. The aesthetics of the game (music, setting, characters) must respect the aesthetic of the brand and its core meaning. This does not necessarily mean that the game should use the same visual identity of the brand, but its aesthetic elements are concerned with respecting the current perceived brand values without breaking a symbolic contract existing between the player/consumer and the designer/manufacturer. In other words, a game of Doritos could treat aesthetically happiness, vitality, friendship and youthfulness, for example.

But what can the player do? Can he collect Doritos? Can he eat them? Destroy them? Throw them in the trash? These verbs are enunciated by the player through gameplay (Schell, 2008), by pressing a button, for example. They are programmed into the system – it's the game designer who allows these verbs to be enunciated. These verbs don't need to relate to the consumption situation of the product, but must respect brand values. It may not be necessary to eat Doritos, but the other verbs listed by the player during Crash Course (running, jumping, hanging up, sprinting) cannot go against the brand image and, if possible, should complement it.

What is the victory condition? In Doritos Crash Course, victory happens when it reaches the end of the course, preferably within the time limit. Despite being relevant to the game, it is unclear how "to be the fastest" or "to be the first" is contributing to the brand proposition. Anyway, we cannot deny that "happy to have won" or "defeating other competitors" may not be interesting to associate with Dorito's brand values.

In the case of meta-rules, only games structured as open-worlds, such as Sim City, The Sims or Minecraft, for example, could display variations in game structure made by the game player. That is not the case in Dorito's Crash Course. This does not mean that the player does not transform the game with his actions - for example, if the player wants to die consecutively at the same obstacle as he finds it funny. The player's action is transforming the outcome of the game, the narrative supposedly intended by the game designer, but is not transforming the rules, it's victory conditions or it's aesthetics. Therefore, in the case of Doritos Crash Course, the meta-rules do not apply.

In final analysis, we can say that a game where Coke is present is not a game about Coke – and that applies to any brand. We understand that the brand must materialize its own semantic universe through the constituting elements of the game, and not simply buy space (in that case, digital space) to be seen and remembered. In this sense, the game *Doritos Crash Course* looks more like a pertinent advergaming example as most constitutive elements of the game (rules and aesthetics) supposedly seek to give out experiences to the player that promotes the symbolic consumption of the brand. Of course, to understand it in depth, we should invest more time analyzing the rules of the game, its aesthetic elements and intentions of the player. But this seemed unnecessary for our intentions: to demonstrate that games are a culturally relevant media that has its own peculiarities which must be respected in order to convey strategically constructed sense to an audience.

4   Brand simulators

Perhaps common sense understands that an advergame should highlight the product you intend to promote. Using the same example as before, we invite the reader to use common sense and think: What would be of a Coca-Cola game without focusing on someone happily drinking its icy and sweet content from that remarkable curved bottle? If this content is in the game, does it make it a better advergame? From this point of view, Doritos (a savory snack made of corn) and *Doritos Crash Course* fail to relate the consumption of the product to the game in any way. But in terms of brand strategy, it does not fail. It portrays other aspects of the symbolic universe of the brand, like the relation of the fun moments of the game with the fun of consumption.

Andrea Semprini (2006) teaches us that brands, especially consumer brands, have the ability to build and convey meanings. Semprini defines a brand as a set of discourses about itself, constructed through discursive practices (supported by the brand through advertising, for example) and the reception of these discursive practices (the discourses of the receivers of the brand message about itself). In other words, games can strategically assist in the construction of a set of meanings if we consider it a process of communication, simulating a brand consumption experience. *Doritos Crash Course* is a game that adds or strengthens certain brand values that are associated with the moment of entertainment/ consumption.

Of course we cannot categorically state that *Doritos Crash Course* is a good game or a good advergame. So that we get closer to the possibility of making these statements, we would need to

delve on the constituent of the viewpoint of game design game aspects, and also to investigate deeply the socially constructed meanings of Doritos in a given social context. However, we do not want to address these issues here - just to make clear that the game, as a socially relevant medium in contemporary consumer society, may be a relevant strategy to simulate the experience of symbolic consumer brands.

5 Final thoughts and conclusion

In this paper, we saw that the digital games industry has shown remarkable growth, which has drawn the attention of investors and entrepreneurs. But, above all, we saw that research data shows us an increase in its consumption, becoming more and more a culturally relevant media in many societies. Upon entering deeper into the people's media habits, we can find that games are also becoming interesting for communication studies and practices in general, but especially for advertising territory. Its ludic structure can also promote a fertile ground for brands that, in turn, can use digital games to simulate consumption of their own semantic space - and that is what supposedly happens to *Doritos Crash Course*. It is interesting to observe the game as a product in this context that operates as media for another product/brand (Doritos) and how entertainment and new models of business are no longer worlds apart.

Much research must still be done in this field. Can digital games privilege a specific social discourse? If so, how? Can we promote any discourse to any audience through a game? What can we learn from the game design theory to find appropriate strategies that promote desirable behaviors on the user - such as to buy the product/ service in question, or generate a desirable brand recall, for instance? Which brand meanings can or should be highlighted in this simulation of the symbolic consumption? These are questions that many researchers can investigate, along with the ludologists in a probable particular position, as they conceive games as unique simulations that are not, but can generate narratives.

Nevertheless, digital games are becoming more socially relevant and we need to think of them as new media that deserves special attention to its particular characteristics. And, considering recent market and industry movements, we suppose that different gaming platforms increasingly integrated and connected will generate more and more possibilities for companies to strategically think business for their business brands, services and products.

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