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The Invention of Malaysian Traditional Game into Mobile Game Apps: A Case Study of Tarik Upih

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ABSTRACT

Malaysian traditional game was a popular culture once. Unfortunately, these precious tradition are fading from the memory of Malaysian society especially young generation. Furthermore, the preference of today's teenagers towards mobile game endangered the existence of traditional game. This research provides an attempt to commercialized and promote the value of traditional game which can be preserved and suit today's trend. Several methods such as observation and reference were used in the study. Although the research is not very extensive, the findings suggest that the traditional games are possible to be innovate into the screen based application. The objective of this research is to identify the most suitable content in design and gameplay that can be developed into mobile game and to measure the effectiveness of mobile game in preserving our culture that suit today's generation. Nevertheless, this is the preliminary conceptual game based on Tarik Upih, which will open a new dimension of commercializing the traditional games. In a nutshell, the Tarik Upih game would be another new approach that is capable to be introduced to the society.

Keywords: Mobile Games, Malaysian Traditional Game, Culture, Tarik Upih

INTRODUCTION

"Tarik Upih" is one of the most popular traditional games in Malay culture. Unfortunately, this precious culture has been fading from the memory of Malaysian society especially young generation. Moreover, the preference of today's teenagers towards mobile game endangered the existence of traditional game. However, this local content can be preserved by transforming it into the screen based application. This research aims to commercialized and promote the value of traditional game by promoting the technique of playing traditional "Tarik Upih" in a new approach, new dimension and transforming the traditional game into the screen based application that will be more interesting, exciting and fun to learn and at the same time suit to the current trend of mobile apps. Thus, this research also aims to develop an interactive, animated and informative mobile game about local content that is appealing to the youngsters as a learning tool.

The game prototype has been developed using Construct 2.0 software. The process of game design development has been recorded from the beginning (the preliminary ideation and sketches) until the final testing including the process of paper prototyping which involve the originality, creativity and the uniqueness of idea. In a nutshell, the Tarik Upih game would be another new approach that is capable to be introduced to the society. The invention of traditional game into mobile game application will help the young generation to sustain the root knowledge of how to play "Tarik Upih" in a creative way and at the same time preserving this culture among Malaysian society especially young generation.

Furthermore, in preserving the culture, the Malaysian government has come up with number of strategies for the growth of local content as well as to encourage local creativity. The Information, Communication and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim (2010), in his speech reported in The Star, has called for more cultural content for mobile phones. This could stimulate the minds of Malaysians in an era of sophistication and borderless communication (Shamsul Arrieya Ariffin, 2012). In achieving these goals, the Malaysian government together with a number of key industry players has provided many funding incentives specifically for local content production. This is expected to provide adequate local contents that reflect Malaysian culture and values. Roslan (2007) reports that highly wanted local content development are needed for education, entertainment and games.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Malaysian Traditional Game: Tarik Upih

Malaysian traditional games are among our unique traditions that have been ignored by our society nowadays especially when today's generation grown up with game consoles, computers and electronic gadgets. It supposed to be among the precious cultural heritage that should be practiced continuously as this precious culture may develop their skills in learning process later on.

Tradition refers to the cultural features which, in situations of change, were to be continued to be handed on, thought about, preserved and not lost (Graburn, 2000). Therefore, traditional game is any pastime game that is played and passed from one generation to another as one of the cultural heritage of own perspective race. Values and skills can be learned indirectly throughout the games as well as becoming one of the holistic way of learning as it is fun and interactive to the youngster. In order to play the traditional games, people who know about the rules and everything about the game will transmit to the younger generation in the form of education and socialization (Naofusa, 1983).

"Tarik Upih" is one of the most popular traditional Malay games, also known as children invented games that were environment-friendly because the game only involved the *upih pinang* (dried palm leaf). Furthermore, the rule of playing this game require balancing technique whereby a player sits on the *upih* and he will be dragged by his friend with as much speed as he could. The team that brings the *upih* to the finishing line on first and provided the "passenger" to still on top of the *upih* will win the game. The balancing act required by the race is enough to send every one into fits of laughter if the player gets thrown off from the *upih.* Previously, this traditional game also contributes to a positive value among players and becomes social glue that brought children from different ethnic groups together, strengthening the already easy relationship between village residents (Yeong Chong, 2012).

Figure 1.0: Traditional "Tarik Upih" Game

Mobile Game for Learning

In Malaysia, the research study of implementation on local content in mobile learning is still in the early stages. However, there are numerous researchers in the country exploring the potential and implementation of mobile application in the Malaysian educational system. Moreover, there is an issue where the precious traditional game are fading from the memory of Malaysian society especially young generation. The preference of today's teenagers towards mobile game endangered the existence of traditional game. Furthermore, in the year 2010 the Malaysia government announced the policy of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education which encourages the educators to utilise the ICT in teaching and learning (MOE 2010).

Mobile game have no longer alienated nowadays. Moving towards the era with a campaign of one home one computer; the youngsters these days impressively exposed to digitalized entertainment especially games. Educational games are the ones that are usually encouraged to be played as these types of games provide educational contents and high moral values. Thus, the idea of bringing traditional games to its digital versions is a great idea as a medium to bring forgotten traditional games to life and excitement once again. Introducing the highly valuable traditional games to youths today helps preventing the asset from dying out in time. Furthermore, as for the attractiveness issue, keeping in mind the importance of game design is a bonus as it plays an

important role to ensure the games environment look incredibly engaging and interesting.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Figure 2.0 shows the development framework for this research. For whole project methodology is ADDIE model which are Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation. In development phase, multimedia production process is used for developing the product methodology (Nur'ain, 2013). It is a suitable method in developing multimedia product as well as for game design development.

Figure 2.0: Developmental Framework

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, the researcher categorized the game development process according to the ADDIE model implemented in this research:
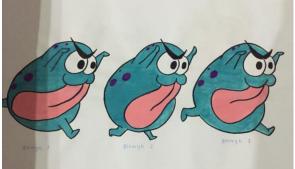
1) Pre-Production Process

In pre-production process, the design development started with mind mapping that allow the researcher to do some research on the case study and brainstorming the initial ideas and then come out with the sketches. This is to identify the most suitable content in design and gameplay that can be developed into mobile game. The important content in the idea development includes main characters, supporting characters, graphical user interface (GUI), the environmental and props design as well as the gameplay. Furthermore, paper prototyping is also another instrument that helps much in order to structure, organize and understand in-depth the flow of the gameplay. Paper prototyping helps to increase the user interaction as well as increasing the level of user experience. Plus, it also helps to analyze the development and process of interface and layout design for interactive multimedia.
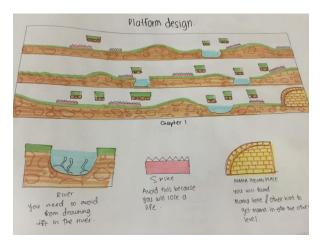
Figure 3.0: Mind Mapping and Ideation Process

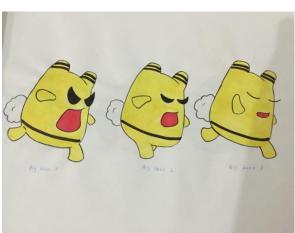**Figure 4.0: Character and Environmental Design**
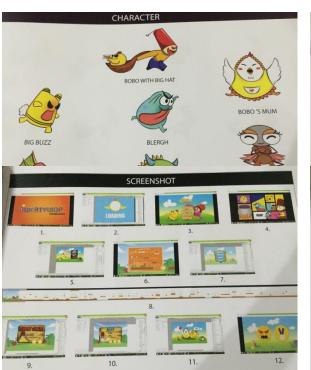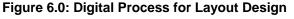
Figure 5.0: Sample of Paper Prototype

2) Production Process

On the other hand, digital processes also important in the game design development. This phase requires a lot of works and creativity in transforming the ideation from paper into an outstanding interface design. Currently for the interface design, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop and SAI software are required in this

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phase. In digital process, it involved the process of digitalize (tracing) the design according to the drawing ideation using Adobe Illustrator software followed by applying colors into the layout design to enhance the game appearance by using SAI software.

Figure 6.0: Digital Process for Layout Design

3) Post-Production Process

In the authoring process, Construct 2.0 software helps a lot to bring all the elements works together to become a successful mobile game application. On this phase, the navigation process is important that connecting each scenes to run the game. Other elements also need to be imported such as music background and sound effect to enhance the game environmental value and encourage for outstanding gameplay experience. Plus, the researcher has come out with continuous testing on the game prototype in order to identify any problems regarding the scripting and programming.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Promoting local content in mobile game application can be considered as an effective way to expand the Malaysian local identity internationally especially on aspect of traditional game. Hence, the game application inspired from "Tarik Upih" can widely promote our treasure due to the variety of mobile game application in the current market. The finding shows that this traditional game is applicable to be commercialized and promoting the technique of playing traditional "Tarik Upih" in a new dimension that will be more interesting, exciting and fun to learn. In a nutshell, the Tarik Upih game would be another new approach that is capable to be introduced to the society as well as preserving our culture that suit today's generation. The research study is also very applicable for future researchers who have highly interest in pursuing this idea or improving the idea for better solution.

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