Happy Gods - Paradata

Name of the game: Happy Gods

Name of the team: Ludi deï concilium

Website of the game:

https://happygods.wordpress.com/

Team Members:

- Sam Devlin
- Juan Hiriart
- Edwige Lelièvre
- Matthew Tyler-Jones

Macro Paradata

1. Why has the resource being created and for what audience?

The Happy Gods! video game has been created to make people discover roman gods of York, displayed at the Yorkshire museum, in addition to information on roman religion and habits.

The target market for the game is the family visitors that is currently a growing segment for the museum. It is designed to be accessible to children aged eight to thirteen, and their parents. However with the supporting website, the potential audience of this game is quite vast as the only requirements are to be able to read English language and to have a computer with access to Internet.

2. How will the resource be put to use? Is it sustainable and accessible?

The game will be hosted initially on http://www.armaghia.fr (website of Edwige Lelièvre), but could also be hosted on the York Castle museum website in the future. As it only requires a web navigator and an internet access, the game should be vastly accessible.

3. Why have you chosen to use the approach/methods applied?

We were very keen to involve the people in the active creation of their own interpretation. For example we discussed getting people to paint the stonework, as it might have been painted when originally created. But we were so inspired by the variety of gods one display, that we quickly switched to finding a method of getting people of "create" this gods in their own mind, just as the Roman dwellers of York will have done. The breakthrough came when we compared making regular sacrifices to a god with the demands of a Tamagochi toy upon its owner. This led to our desire to create a tamagotchi style game of making offerings to gods. The collection of gods in the museum also made us think of the game Pokemon, where you have to collect all the little monster. Having decided to create a digital game, we chose to use Unity as this is a cross platform development environment. The game has a 3D environment but a fixed camera so most interactions are done using the user interface. We also used Blender for 3D modeling, Photoshop for image editing and Google document for data sharing and collaborative writing between the team.

Micro Paradata

1. What are the basic steps you followed in putting together the resource?

   We began by taking pictures of the Yorkshire museum collection on roman period, both objects and their labels. After this initial data gathering trip, we did about two hours of brainstorming defining the gameplay and setting up a model of our game. We then

began simultaneously to create the graphics, to develop the game logic and interface and to search the Yorkshire museum website for information to use in the riddle.

2. What supporting evidence did you rely upon?

York's museum has an amazing collection of representations of, and altars dedicated to, roman and other assimilated gods, all found in York. Many of these objects were actually offerings to the gods, to keep them happy. We were really inspired by this idea and this collection, so we decided to create a game about keeping the gods happy and collecting them. The gods represented in the game are all modelled from gods' statues found in York Castle Museum. We also very much liked the "Mrs Banglelady'" the remains of a resident of Roman York, herself of North African descent. So she also appears in the game, under the name of Lucia, as an helper for the player. As she has been living in York during roman times, she knows how to please the gods. But to get her help players need to answer her questions.

3. How have you acknowledged uncertainty in the resource? Where might alternative interpretations have been made or where are such interpretations otherwise available for viewing audiences to refer to?

The museum's online online catalogue uses quite authoritative (certain) language, and the quiz element requires a single "correct" answer. Sothe supporting website www.happygods.wordpress.com has been created to offer an additional layer of interpretation inspired by, but distant from the museum's own labels. It is written in a style that encourages speculation, and individual interpretation before offering a link to the relevant entry in the online catalogue.

Synopsis

The gods need to be worshipped! Genius, the roman god of the home, needs to be offered food, chicken or wood. If you manage to find out what he wants, you will make him happy, but beware! Its mood and interest can change! If you manage to get him very happy though, you will get him grant you a wish of your choice and you will also get another god for your collection! Unfortunately, it is not easy to know what the gods want. But you are not alone in this! Lucia, the Bangle Lady, will be happy to help you discover what the god wants if you can answer her riddles.

Along the course of the game you will be able to discover ancient gods that were worshipped in York during the Roman period and whom votive altars and sculptures can be found in Yorkshire museum. You will also be able to meet the Bangle lady (Lucia in the game), an inhabitant of

York from the roman period, as well as other gods worshipped in England. Lucia will ask you riddles about information you can find in the roman section of the Yorkshire museum.

Credits

The Happy Gods! video game has been created by *concilium deorum ludendi*, which is composed of Sam Devlin, Juan Hiriart, Edwige Lelièvre, and Matthew Tyler-Jones.
It is based on the collection, labels and website of Yorkshire Museums Trust, and has beencreated during Heritage Jam 2015.
Many thanks to Tara Copplestone, Issy Bartley