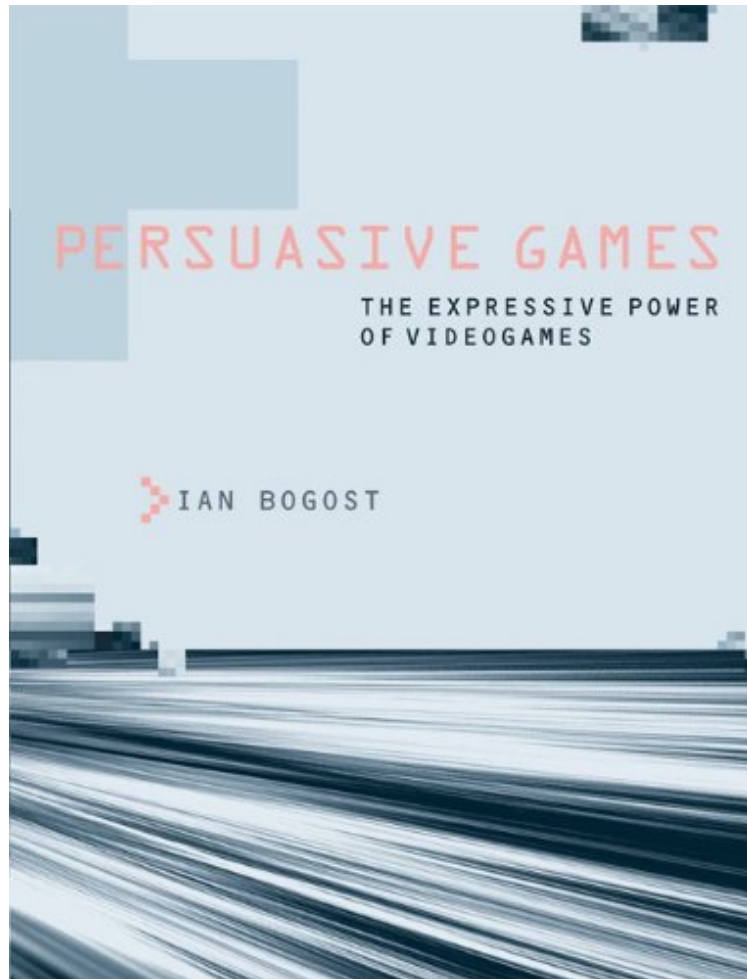


(Read now) Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames (MIT Press)

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Ian Bogost

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Ian Bogost : Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames (MIT Press) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames (MIT Press):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Highly RecommendBy Justine S.Read this for a course called "Writing about Video Games". Very thought provoking book. Highly recommend to anyone who likes to think beyond the surface of games and the gaming world.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Wide reaching, informative, and entertainingBy Mary Jo MathewIan Bogost is both an progressive thinker and eloquent writer, and he applies them both to videogames in a way that is both academic and page-turning. The book is divided into discrete sections to which the procedural logics of videogames can be applied. He gives illustrative examples of what he

means - examples that will just as often expand your mind about what future games can be as expand your conception of some older classics. The title of the book comes from the ability of this procedural logic to make implicit and explicit arguments to the player. Most people have a sense that it's the interactivity of videogames that makes them special, but Bogost takes it one step further by discussing "procedural rhetoric," a systemic form of persuasion. As you play such a game, the way its system responds to your input builds cause-effect relationships in your mind. These cause-effect relationships can easily make "claims" about how similar real-world systems work. Overall - excellent book. Very thought provoking and inspiring to the would-be game maker. 5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Easily one of most important books in game studies and design. By Michael A. Treanor. This book rules. If you've ever thought to yourself (or screamed on the internet) about how videogames are as important or should be respected as much as other forms of art (painting, literature, film, etc.), then you should read this book. By describing and analyzing many examples of what he calls "persuasive games", Bogost clearly describes how games have already been used for expressive purposes by a variety of people. To me, one of the most interesting parts of this book is its implicit call for, or at least emphasis on, a cognitive or rational approach toward expressive game design (and possibly art making in general). Bogost describes games as procedural representations of how the world, or some part of it, works (which, of course, are in themselves processes). Because videogames run on computers and the very nature of computation requires explicit and exact specification, when representing with systems it can be said that one is creating a complete "theory" of what is being represented. The canonical example of a game representing an ideological position through its processes is SimCity. SimCity presents a world that takes for granted that various forms of governmental planning produce very specific results (which are literally hardcoded into the system). Players are placed in a role where zoning, etc. is unavoidable and naturalized. To be successful at the game, players must understand and then enact the rules of the system. Depending on the player's criticality, or how successful the game's procedural rhetoric is (a very important term explored in depth in this book), he or she may accept the solutions to the problems into his or her worldview. Bogost practically goes right out and admits that this approach to game design, whether taken intentionally or not, is propagandist. Though, a significant portion of the book is dedicated to describing a strategic mode of engagement for players to avoid blindly falling prey to procedural rhetoric. Part of this involves developing "procedurally literacy". This more or less means to be able to interpret systems or processes (a skill that no doubt has relevance in life in and outside of games). Next, he describes the "simulation gap" as the difference between one's existing ideas about something and the ideas that one believes the system to be representing. It is through awareness of what happens in this gap, or the dissonance created between the mental models (this shares many similarities with theories of dialectic/montage), that one avoids being blindly persuaded and instead learns/grows from a persuasive game. For example, because I am procedurally literate, my outrage at the "truths" presented in SimCity only strengthen my case against the state because it teaches me new things to be outraged about as I recognize where I disagree with what is presented or what passes for political reasoning (and for that I love and am indebted to SimCity!). A large portion of Persuasive Games is spent on how videogames, like SimCity, can be used as a way for citizens to express opinions, persuade and communicate about complicated processes. The product description really sums it up: "Videogames are both an expressive medium and a persuasive medium; they represent how real and imagined systems work, and they invite players to interact with those systems and form judgments about them." How can that not sound profound, or at least enticing? Humans live in systems. This is meaning of life kind of stuff! Though it may be dense to some non-academic readers, Persuasive Games is one of the best books out there that describes how videogames can uniquely express ideas that are central to the human experience and I fully recommend it.

An exploration of the way videogames mount arguments and make expressive statements about the world that analyzes their unique persuasive power in terms of their computational properties. Videogames are an expressive medium, and a persuasive medium; they represent how real and imagined systems work, and they invite players to interact with those systems and form judgments about them. In this innovative analysis, Ian Bogost examines the way videogames mount arguments and influence players. Drawing on the 2,500-year history of rhetoric, the study of persuasive expression, Bogost analyzes rhetoric's unique function in software in general and videogames in particular. The field of media studies already analyzes visual rhetoric, the art of using imagery and visual representation persuasively. Bogost argues that videogames, thanks to their basic representational mode of proceduralism (rule-based representations and interactions), open a new domain for persuasion; they realize a new form of rhetoric. Bogost calls this new form "procedural rhetoric," a type of rhetoric tied to the core affordances of computers: running processes and executing rule-based symbolic manipulation. He argues further that videogames have a unique persuasive power that goes beyond other forms of computational persuasion. Not only can videogames support existing social and cultural positions, but they can also disrupt and change these positions themselves, leading to potentially significant long-term social change. Bogost looks at three areas in which videogame persuasion has already taken form and shows considerable potential: politics, advertising, and learning.

Do not wait: start reading this stimulating book. (Jan H.G. Klabbers Game Studies) Videogames lack the cultural stature of 'legitimate' art forms because they are widely perceived to be trivial and meaningless. But Ian Bogost makes a powerful argument that they are capable of informing and persuading as well as entertaining; in short, that they possess the power of rhetoric. Backed by numerous examples from the fields of politics, advertising, and education, *Persuasive Games* is an important addition to the debate over what games are, do, and can be. (Ernest W. Adams, game design consultant and educator) Bogost's book provides a new lens -- procedural rhetoric -- to use in the analysis of games and an excellent survey of the history of games of this ilk. (Steve Jacobs American Journal of Play) Bogost creates and writes about serious games, seemingly simple diversions that deliver educational political and advertising content alongside entertainment. In *Persuasive Games*, he offers an academic but accessible introduction to their potential, and it is very meaty reading for anybody interested in where the interactive arts meet real-world topics. (Scott Colbourne The Globe and The Mail) Analyzing the power of video games to mount arguments and influence players, Ian Bogost does again what he always does so very well: thoroughly rethink and shake up a traditional academic field -- rhetoric -- while lucidly building the foundations of a new one -- game studies. (James Paul Gee, Mary Lou Fulton Presidential Professor of Literacy Studies, Arizona State University) Whether we call them 'serious games', 'persuasive games', or simply 'video games', it is clear that there is much of rhetorical significance to mine from the electronic representations and interactions that have captivated such a large portion of the world's population. Ian Bogost's book is an excellent step towards understanding and appreciating these materials from an intellectual, critical, and humanistic perspective. (Rudy McDaniel Literary and Linguistic Computing) About the Author Bogost is both an academic researcher and videogame designer, and *Persuasive Games* reflects both theoretical and a game design goals.