

The semiotic ecology and linguistic complexity of an online game world

STEVEN L. THORNE

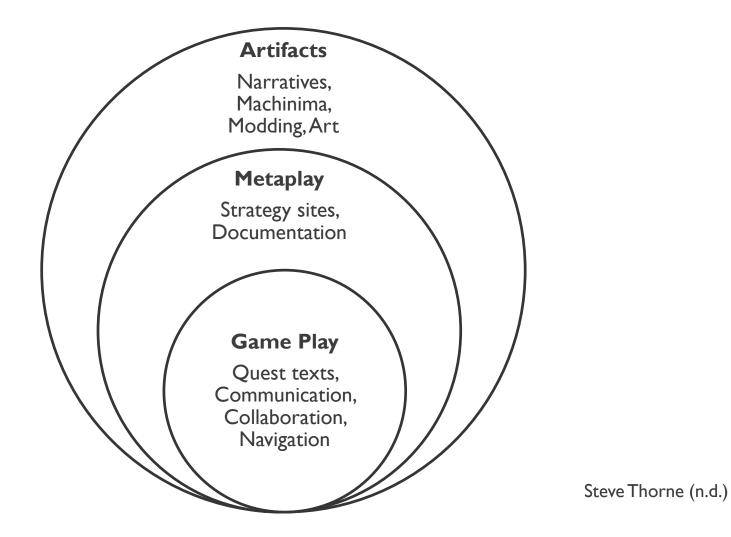
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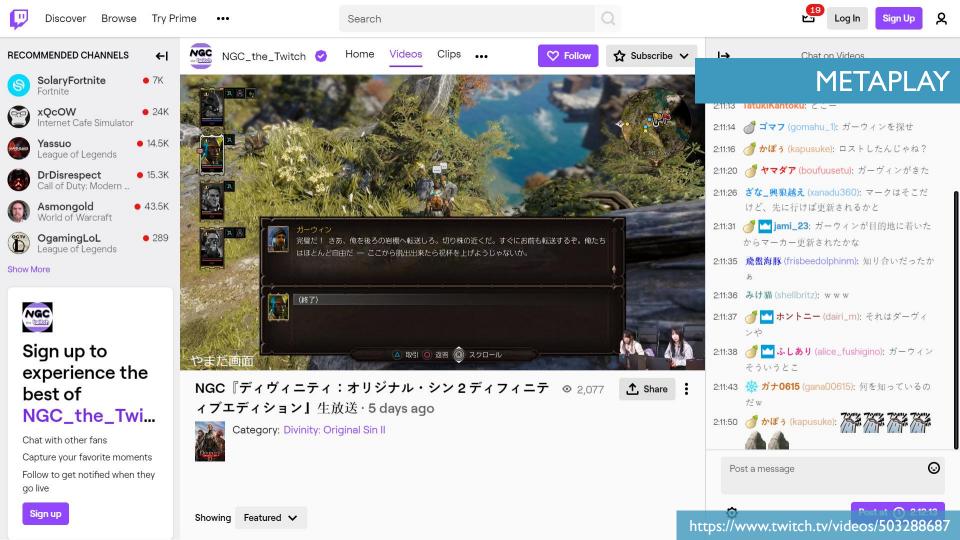
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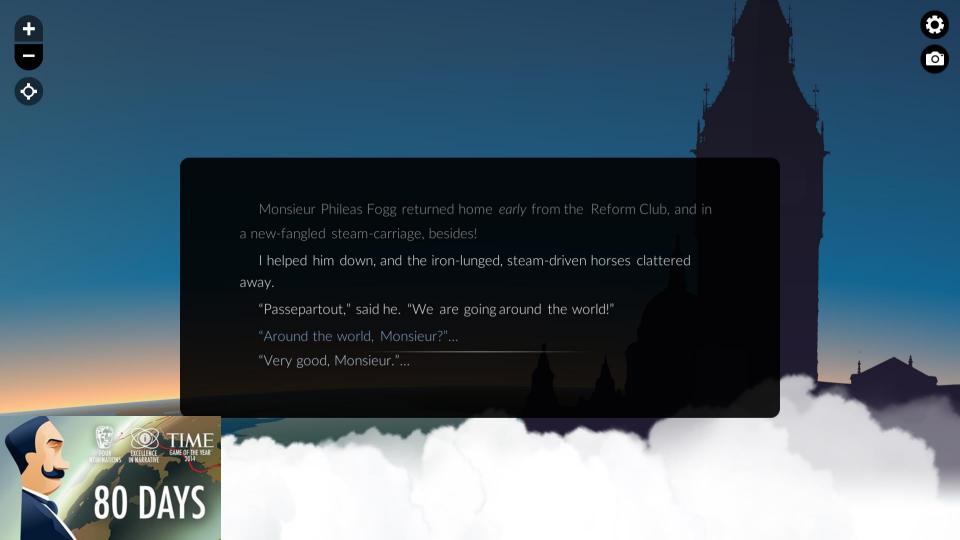
MORE GAMING AND L2 LEARNING 'IN THE WILD'

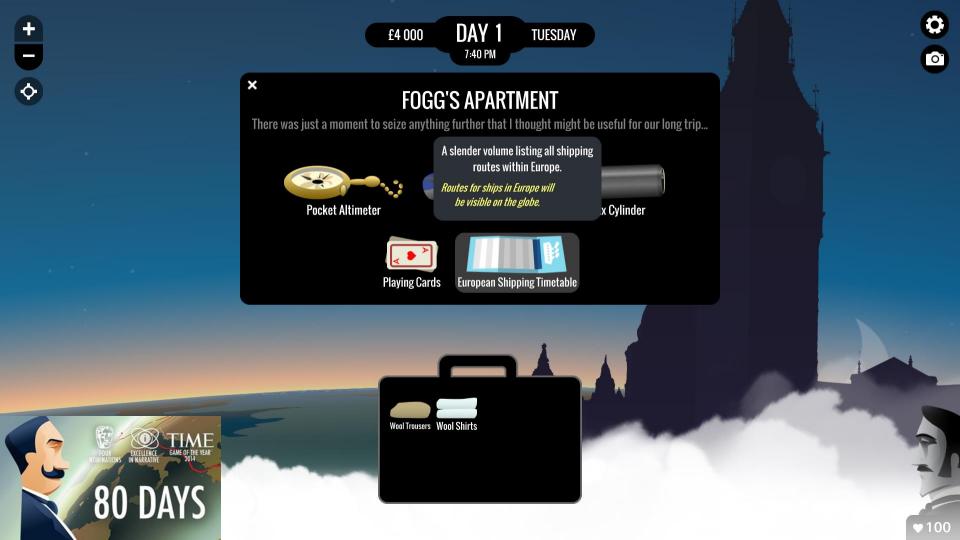
LONDON, 1872

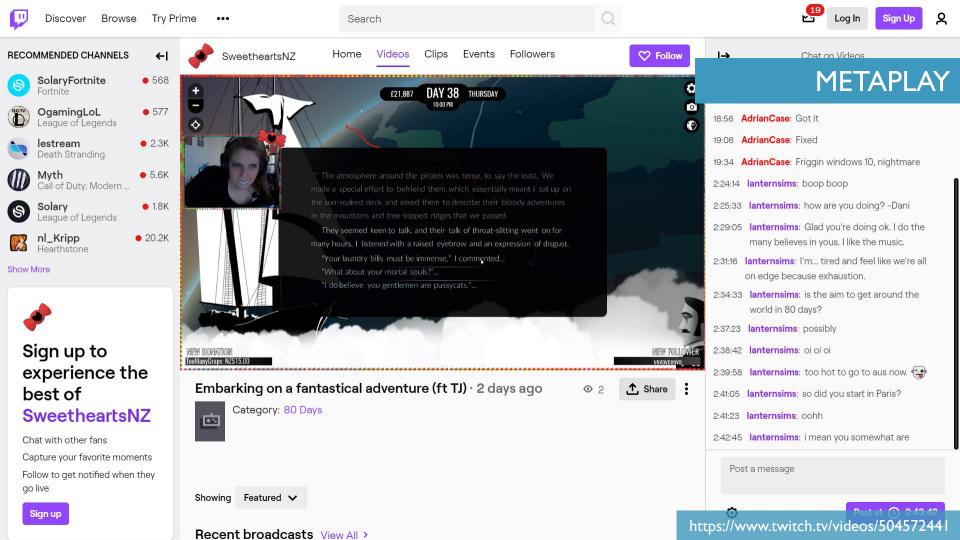
I have entered into the service of a new gentleman.

It would seem he is a gambling man.











GAMING AND L2 LEARNING 'IN THE WILD'

WHAT THE RESEARCH TELLS US

- Players engage in activities that can promote the development of communicative competence
 - high-stakes communicative activity with other players, often in plurilingual settings (Thorne, 2008; Zheng, Newgarden, & Young, 2012)
 - construction of scientific discourse (Steinkuehler & Duncan, 2008)
 - meaningful attention to and appropriation of linguistically complex texts (Thorne, Fischer, & Lu, 2012; Piirainen-Marsh & Tainio, 2009)
- Also very young language learners (7-11) (Hannibal Jensen, 2019)
- Time spent on gaming 'in the wild' correlates with measures of L2 proficiency (Kuppens, 2010; Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012; Hannibal Jensen, 2017)
- Playing games results in large L2 vocabulary gains (vs. 'traditional instruction') (Chen, Tseng, & Hsiao, 2018)
 - OK, but so does extensive reading or viewing
- → What are the defining features of gaming environments that drive L2 learning?



DESIGN OF GAME ENVIRONMENTS: TASK-BASED LEARNING!



Super Mario © Nintendo

- non-linguistic goals
- meaningful use of language
- scenarios and mechanics
- interactivity and feedback

cfr. Ellis, 2003

Baltra, 1990; Cornillie, Thorne, & Desmet, 2012; García-Carbonell, Rising, Montero, & Watts, 2001; Purushotma et al., 2009; ...



JUST PLUG GAMES INTO THE CLASSROOM, THEN?

66

the reflex fallacy ... the assumption that it is our job to re-create in our classrooms the natural conditions of acquisition present in the external environment. Instead, what we want to do as language teachers, it seems to me, is to improve upon natural acquisition, not emulate it ... we want to accelerate the actual rate of acquisition beyond what the students could achieve on their own ... accelerating natural learning is, after all, the purpose of formal education

"

HOW TO ACCELERATE NATURAL L2 LEARNING THROUGH GAMING

pedagogical adaptation & implementation of commercial off-the-shelf games

'game-enhanced' (Reinhardt & Sykes, 2012) 'computer as tool' (Levy, 1997) / resource

→ role for language teachers





Mawer & Stanley, 2011

design & development of games specifically for L2 learning

'game-based' (Reinhardt & Sykes, 2012) 'computer as tutor' (Levy, 1997)

→ role for instructional designers

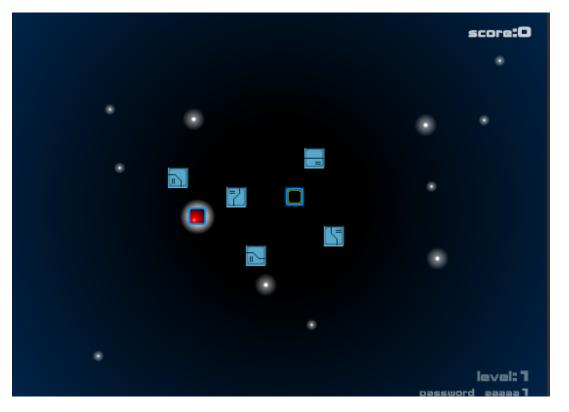


GAMES FOR INSTRUCTED L2 LEARNING

	'game-enhanced'	'game-based'
mini-games		
immersive games		
interactive fiction (text games)		
location-based gaming		

MINI-GAMES – GAME-ENHANCED

ORBOX



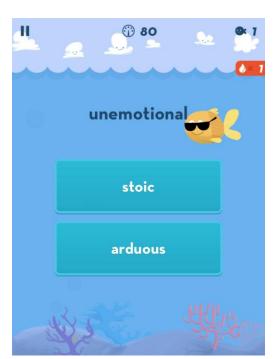
https://www.mathsisfun.com/games/orbox-game.html

MINI-GAMES – GAME-BASED

(CORNILLIE & DESMET, 2016)



Verb Mayhem





Mindsnacks

Duolingo



the solution for our students
who aren't knowing English grammar anymore

The evidence is **IN**:

drills are **OUT**

(at least for the development of communicative competence)



http://barrynabdahl.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/drill-kill.jpg



drills, drills, drills

Beyoncé, ESL expert

mechanical drills

meaningful drills

communicative drills

I dig, I dug, I have dug



, I ..., I have

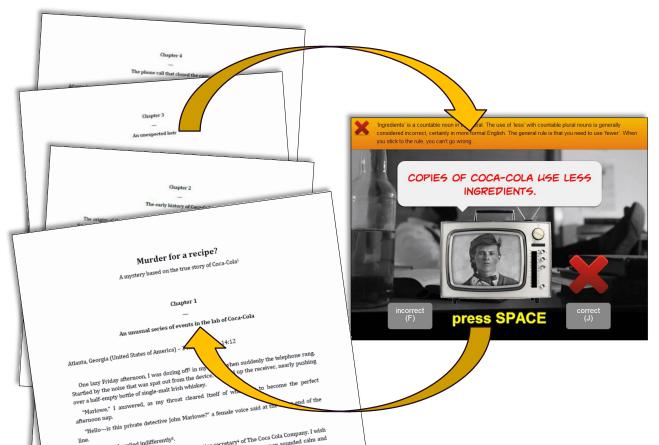
Yesterday, my dog ... up a bunch of bones.

Tell me what your dog found in the garden yesterday, and use the verb 'to dig'.

• • •

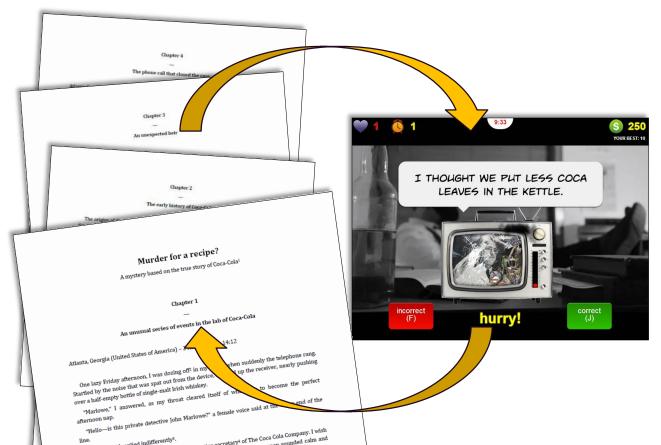
EMBEDDING DRILLS IN MEANING-FOCUSED READING

MURDER FOR A RECIPE ? (CORNILLIE ET AL., 2017)



EMBEDDING DRILLS IN MEANING-FOCUSED READING

MURDER FOR A RECIPE ? (CORNILLIE ET AL., 2017)



GAMES FOR INSTRUCTED L2 LEARNING

location-based gaming

'game-enhanced' 'game-based' mini-games immersive games interactive fiction (text games)

SYNTHETIC IMMERSIVE ENVIRONMENTS – GAME-BASED

TACTICAL IRAQI (JOHNSON, 2007)



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUr8k73D8zY



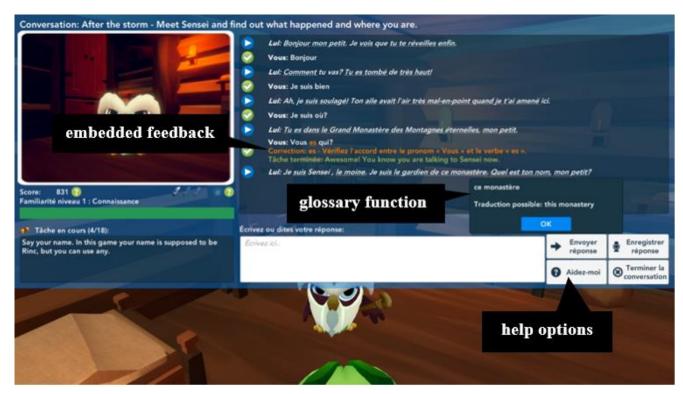


SYNTHETIC IMMERSIVE ENVIRONMENTS – GAME-BASED LANGUAGE HERO





SYNTHETIC IMMERSIVE ENVIRONMENTS – GAME-BASED LANGUAGE HERO





SYNTHETIC IMMERSIVE ENVIRONMENTS – GAME-ENHANCED

RAGNAROK ONLINE (REINDERS & WATTANA, 2014)



Table 3. Example of a Mapping of Learning Objectives to Game Activities (Quests)

Unit 1		Computer Users
Objecti	ives for this unit	
	1.1	Talk about how they and people from different professions use computers.
	1.2	Exchange information about the use of computers in their free time.
	1.3	Understand the difference between the Past Simple and the Present Perfect and use these tenses fluently and correctly.
	1.4	Read and comprehend an article in IT and computing contexts.
	1.5	Understand basic guidelines of how to write a good paragraph.
	1.6	Write a paragraph describing the use of computers in their study and free time.
Quest		
	Event:	Finding how David uses his new computer
	Description:	In this quest, students needed to help the starting NPC* named Austin find out how his student uses computers in his study and free time. Students had to interact with several NPCs to complete particular tasks, i.e. talking about computer use (1.1, 1.2), reading paragraphs in IT (1.4), and engaged in nonviolent combat with monsters to earn required items.
		During communication in the game, students had opportunities to use and practice the language they had learned in class, such as using appropriate tenses to talk about what they had done in the game (1.3).

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location-based gaming

'game-enhanced'









'game-based'



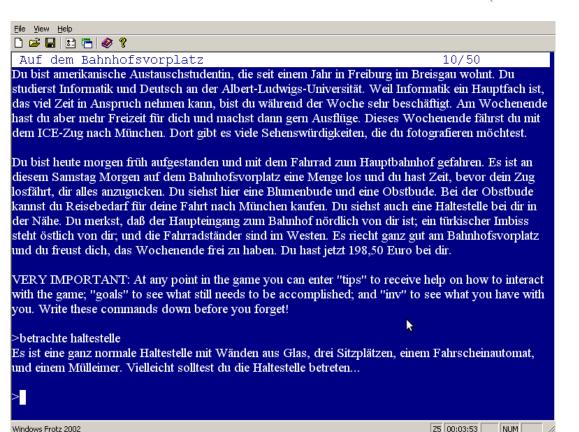


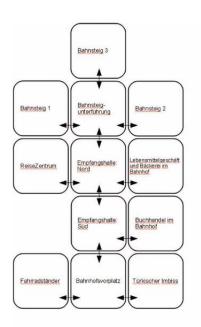




INTERACTIVE FICTION – GAME-BASED

AUSFLUG AM WOCHENENDE NACH MÜNCHEN (NEVILLE, SHENTON, & MCINNIS, 2009)







INTERACTIVE FICTION – GAME-BASED

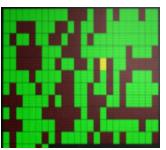
TRACITALK (HUBBARD, 2002)



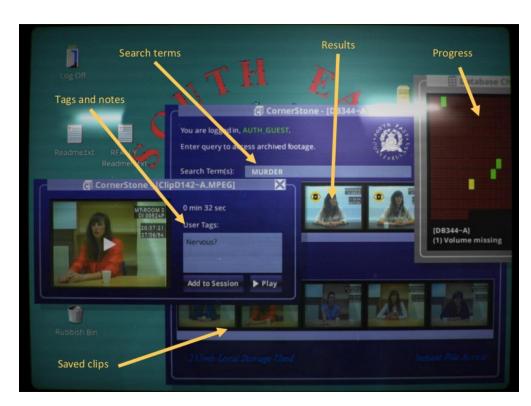
INTERACTIVE FICTION – GAME-ENHANCED

HER STORY (LEE, 2019)





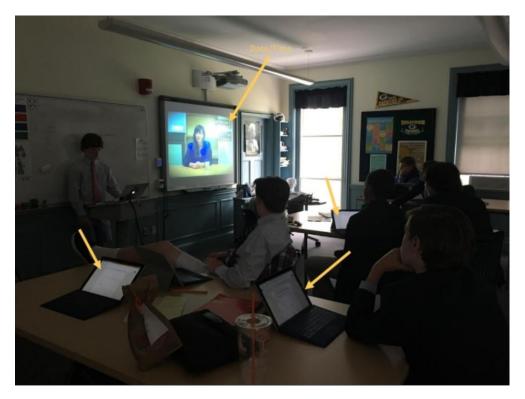




Screenshot and annotations by @johnCfallon

INTERACTIVE FICTION – GAME-ENHANCED

HER STORY



Picture by @johnCfallon

GAMES FOR INSTRUCTED L2 LEARNING

'game-enhanced'



The state of the s





'game-based'









mini-games

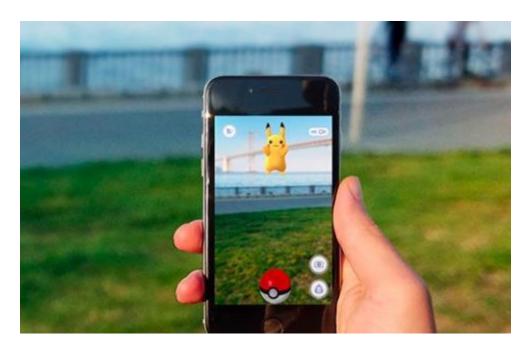
immersive games

interactive fiction (text games)

location-based gaming

LOCATION-BASED GAMING – GAME-ENHANCED

POKEMON GO



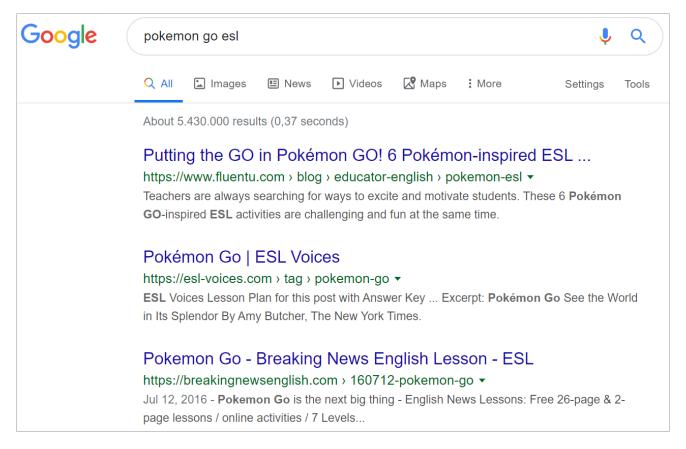
Picture by The Daily Metro



https://www.reddit.com/r/gaming/comments/8in4e6/hardcore_pokemon_hunter_grandpa/

LOCATION-BASED GAMING - GAME-ENHANCED

POKEMON GO



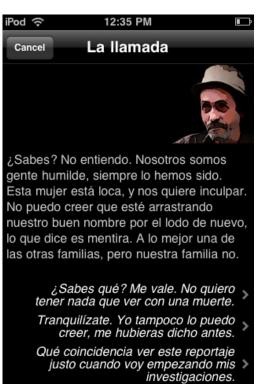
LOCATION-BASED GAMING – GAME-BASED

MENTIRA (HOLDEN & SYKES, 2011)



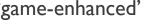






GAMES FOR INSTRUCTED L2 LEARNING

'game-enhanced'



'game-based'

mini-games





immersive games





interactive fiction (text games)





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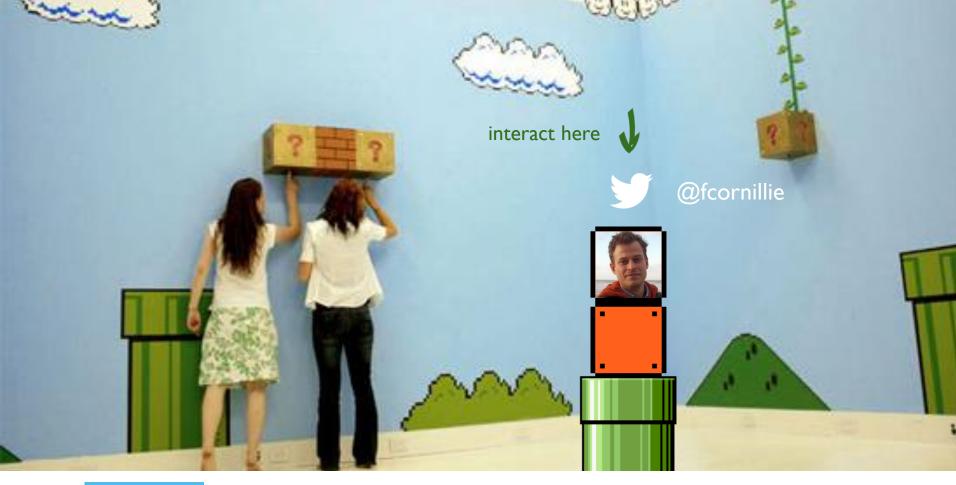


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