Towards a Socio-Cultural Cartography of

In-Game Protests

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ABSTRACT

In-game protests are a dynamic part of a burgeoning global cartography of activism and mass mobilisation unfolding across virtual worlds. Such protests nonetheless deserve to be negotiated on their own specific terms if only because these situational inter-plays of political, social, and gaming practices provide a unique means to gain insight into the socio-cultural contexts and imperatives that variously provoke, animate, and enable these acts. By focusing on two extended case study analyses—(1) U.S. artist Joseph DeLappe's online war memorial and protest project, *dead-in-iraq*; and (2) the mass protest triggered by the sighting of a Japanese military flag in the Chinese online game *Fantasy Westward Journey*—this paper is illustrative of interpretive approaches for tentatively mapping and negotiating the socio-cultural constituencies of in-game protests. The chosen case studies exemplify how Web 2.0 participatory culture remains informed at base by an acute sense of locality and place-specificity. Such are the grounded premises and possibilities for developing future and further theorisations on the global cartography of in-game protests.

Author Keywords
in-game protest, socio-cultural, mass mobilisation, online games, Joseph DeLappe, China, Web 2.0