A Comparative Analysis of Design and Motivation in Slot Machines and Video Games

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Introduction
The slot machines of today reflect an impressive design feat: translating cold win/loss probability into an unpredictable, whimsical, and engaging experience. A successful spin offers more than a quick payout; it's an opportunity to experience hidden secrets within the machine: creative bonus games, rich animation and movie clips, even the chance to play simultaneously with other players on linked machines. Many of these characteristics are similar to design and gameplay elements of video games. Separate research into both slots and video games often reflect similar questions about design, motivation for play and addiction. This poster presents a visual and theoretical analysis of the convergence of video game elements into slot machines.

Implications for Research
As slot machines include more video game elements into their designs, research must follow suit. Studies have not yet fully measured the impact of these changes. Video games are popular with diverse demographic groups, including cultures that have been slow to warm to slot machines. A better understanding about how the interaction of slot design with video game design impacts player interest can provide important insights that fuels industry growth. Like slots, video games also face scrutiny over their own addictive properties. Though some debate still exists, a consensus is building that certain video game structures can lead to addictive behaviour among a minority of players. It is prudent to ask whether the introduction of immersive, achievement, and social elements into slot machines is having an impact on problem gambling and what effect that might have on treatment.

Video games come in many shapes and sizes (as do the players). Some are designed for casual play on a portable device, other games present vast intricate worlds that demand significant time investment. This diversity makes a comprehensive theory of why people play video games difficult. Yee's (2006) highly-cited, empirical study of player motivation in online social games establishes three specific motivations of play:

- **Immersion**: The opportunity to actively engage with the environments and characters the game provides and sometimes create your own meaningful in-game identity.
- **Achievement**: Exploration, discovery, and accomplishment with the game-world structure.
- **Social**: Collaborating, competing, or simply socializing with other people represented through the digital medium of the game.

These three are highly complimentary with each other. For example, accomplishing tasks or goals within games gains heightened significance in an immersive environment that can be shared, through avatars, with real people.

Citation: