Television shows based on video games 1975-2019: Original data and preliminary analysis

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1. Foreword

This dataset consists of data of different types of television shows based on video games from years mentioned in the title. The data has been used in articles and conference presentations before (e.g. Kerttula 2019; Kerttula 2020). The data is free to use in any future publications with proper references to the author and the original data.

Should the data be used in further research, it is to be noted that the dataset is not 100% complete. The reasons to this are difficulties with language and cultural barriers. It also needs to be mentioned, that some of the television shows and production companies have probably being forgotten over time, which means that a complete list would quite likely prove to be very difficult to gather.

Some of the data included is missing classification information. This is because in these cases, the data needed was not available or hard to figure out. For example, the time slot data was missing for these shows, or there was not enough information available to make conclusions about the structure of the show. This applies only for a handful of shows, however.

This data does not compromise or endanger any copyrights or personal information. All the data gathered here is publically available from different internet sources. No personal information, such as addresses, phone numbers or contact persons was recorded in the data. Some shows feature episodes from video depositories around internet, but if the production company wants to take the episodes offline, it does not harm the dataset.

2. Gathering the data

The data was gathered during 2018-2019. The sources were found using different search engines, such as Google and Bing, with also reading online magazines and articles (e.g. Hester 2013; Diver 2015). Many sources were found by reading forums and message boards around the world. The search were mainly conducted using English language. Throughout deeper research, I was able to use search strings in other languages as well. This was possible by finding sources in different languages and learning proper search strings through that.

In some cases, I used Google Translate with multiple different search string to find the data. This was the case in for example Russian and Japanese shows. The classification for the shows behind a language barrier was made by watching the shows multiple times and through that, making conclusions of what the shows were about. The visual information in the shows that had episodes stored in Youtube or other video depositories was luckily informative enough.

Other sources used were old television guides stored in the internet (e.g. Classic TV Database). These were unfortunately very scarce to find, but thankfully the time slot and duration information could be gathered from other internet articles and watching the videos.

3. Basic information

The dataset holds information of 253 original programs. This amount includes also some shows that did not feature video games, but contributed otherwise to the evolution and timeline of the shows (n=11). The master list is divided to original programs broadcasted by public and commercial television stations (n=194) and to programs broadcasted by channels dedicated to video game content (n=59). The latter programs are marked in the data as greyed areas and are not part of the timeline as original programs as instead they are listed according to the years the broadcaster operated.

The information about the shows is classified with sections, which feature information about the programs. If a column reads "TBC", it means that the information about said subject is still to be concluded, usually because the information was not available during the research period. The columns and their explanations are as follows:

Name of the program – This section features the complete title of the program in Latin alphabet. If the title was available to find in the original alphabet, that title is also featured in this section.

Years running – Here is the timeline information about the years the programs were broadcasted. The programs are listed according to the first year of broadcasting in ascending order. It needs to be noted here, that the information includes only the information about the broadcasting year without more specific detail. As an example, if a show had only one or two episodes broadcasted in the year 1997 before cancellation, the last production year is still 1997.

Tags_1 – See below

Tags_2 – To create a preliminary taxonomy of the shows, I created some tags to help identifying the shows and their content. Most of the shows are presented with multiple tags, as the shows were varied in their content. The tags go as follows:

> *Tags_1:*
>
> *Gameshow*: These are shows that featured competitive gameshow elements
>
> *Participatory*: These shows featured audience participating in the show.
>
> *Infotainment*: Shows with a main purpose to share information
>
> *Lifestyle*: Variety shows, which represented video gaming as a lifestyle.
>
> *Reality*: Different types of reality shows, different from the participatory ones.
>
> *Channel*: Channels dedicated to different aspects of video gaming

Tags_2:

Competitive: Shows which featured two or more players compete against each other.

Esports: Shows with competitive elements, but in a more serious tone.

Play-by-phone: Shows in which the audience could call in to participate.

Trivia: Shows featuring trivia questions to the competitors.

Event Coverage: These shows featured coverage from video game –related events.

Features: Shows featuring interviews, visits to game studios or other similar content.

Team: Competitive shows which had teams against each other instead of individuals.

Reviews: Shows featuring video game reviews.

News: Shows featuring news content from video game industry.

Narrative: These shows had narrative content over video game footage.

Minigames: These shows featured different types of minigames along other content.

County of origin – The country where the shows was originally produced and broadcasted. As some of the shows were syndicated and broadcasted abroad, the originating country is a vital information.

Original broadcaster – Under this column is mentioned the original broadcasting channel of the show. Many of the shows were later in their life cycle broadcasted on other channels, as the broadcaster wanted to transfer the show to another time slot or show block. This also applies to shows that went abroad.

Producer – This section features the original producer or the production company of the show. Some of the shows were transferred to other producer during the life cycle, but those producers or production companies are not listed here.

Duration – The duration of the show, with or without commercial breaks counted, depending on the information found. In some cases the duration of the show was expanded during the life cycle and if the information was available, it is listed here.

Original time slot – The original time slot of the show. Many shows were transferred to other time slots during the life cycle and if the information about that was available, it is listed here.

Notes – Some notes and mentions if the show has any qualities, that warrant a mention but was not something that could fit under the other columns.

Episodes/Weblinks – Episodes from video depositories or weblinks to sources and other information, if available. Note that especially the episodes were put in the data during the collection process, but because of possible copyright infringements, some of the links may disappear if the producer wants to take the episodes off from the internet.

4. Preliminary analysis

Through the classification, some basic information about the data is easy to see. The amount of different countries featured in the data is 31. The country with the most video game based – television shows featured in the data is Russia (n=34) and the least China, Israel, Guatemala, Chile and Ukraine (n=1). I also counted the mean value of shows in different countries (n=4), as well as the average value (n=6,35).

Other counted numeral values from the data go as follows:

Median year of production: n = 2000

Average year of production: n = 1999

Year of production mode value: n = 1993 (n = 12)

Amount of current shows: n = 15

Median end year of production: n = 2002

Average end year of production: n = 2002

End year of production mode value: n = 1995 (n = 13)

Shows years in production median value: n = 2

Shows years in production average value: n = 4,29

Shows years in production mode value: n = 1 (n = 41)

These values show a couple of things. First of all, over half of the shows listed were produced in the year 2000 or later. However, the early 1990's saw a peak in the amount of the shows, as the most occurring production year in the data is 1993. Also when looking at the years when the shows went out of production, it can be seen that many of the shows were quite short-lived, as the most usual end year of production was 1995 and in average, the shows were cancelled in the early 2000's. This is also supported by the amounts that the shows were in production. In average, the shows were in production a little over four years, but nevertheless one in six of the shows (n = 41/242=16,9%) lasted for only one year. The shows categorized as "random" were not included in the calculations.

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