Opt In/Out Out Out Safety Systems

Johanna Koljonen
Odyssé / Participation Design Agency

Presented at the Living Games Conference
May 21, 2016, Austin, TX
Overview

• Designing safety in larp – or really any kind of participatory event

• I will talk about a framework, not give you guidebook...

• ...and explain why
Key Points

• What is Opt in/Opt Out Design?

• Designing Games, "Safety", Experiences and Communities

• “Safety” Systems = Safety, Trust, Calibration (and Communities)
Opt In/ Opt Out Design

• Active Choices

• Informed Choices

• Larp is Unimaginable
Enabling Opting Out

• Player must be able to know about *types of things* in advance

• Player must be able to leave (the game, the situation) at all times
  • Physically
  • Without loss of face for player
  • Without loss of face for character

• In-game reality, culture design, location and space, character design, rules systems, status hierarchies

• Gamist and Play-for-Story Systems equally risky!
Enabling Opting In

• Trust is a basic requirement of playing together. Your brilliant larp idea might *inspire* participants – but the trust to play is EARNED through the standards of your work and your community.

• Designing trust between players: rules systems are not enough

• Participants need to feel safe (= trust in themselves, you and their co-players) to dare to be brave (= participate, engage & create)
Why Not Just Game Design?

- On location
- Larp preparation & player selection (WORKSHOP)
- Informal activities (WORKSHOP)
- Runtime (mostly in character)
- Formal activities
- Larp afterlife & legacy
- Debrief (WORKSHOP)
- Informal activities

People talking about your game
Why Not Just Game Design?

- Calibration Mechanics
- Simulation Mechanics
- Trustwork & Trust Design
- Event Safety
- Community Norms
- Community Safety

“Safety” systems

Community Design

Experience design

Game design
The “Safety” In Safety

• Safety implies danger – don’t talk about “player safety” when you mean fundamental human interactions. Safety is about dehydration, fire, bears and other predators.

• “Consent” is a troublesome word in the context of cocreation! Nuanced negotiation requires flexible calibration tools.

• Trust is a prerequisite for play, but also allows the player collective to stray from [poorly designed] rules and escalate engagement!
Conclusion

• “Larp safety” is a useful but imprecise umbrella term that collapses the players’ need to *be safe* and their need to *feel safe*.

• When we design safety, we are not just designing run-time rules and practices. You can’t copy safety mechanisms blindly because they operate in wider systems.

• Your design must distinguish between that which makes safety, trust and “consent” (but they can overlap, and they all always interact)
Find Out More!

Safety in Larp – Understanding Participation and Designing for Trust is happening! (Johanna Koljonen on Patreon)

participationsafety.wordpress.org
Contact Information

Johanna Koljonen
Odyssé/ Participation Design Agency
johanna@odysse.dk