Map, Hourglass, Ship – Saving, Pausing and Playing with the Nintendo DS

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In this paper I address some of the core issues of this conference through an examination of storage, pausing, saving and playing with the Nintendo DS. I approach the nature of play on a handheld videogame system as an illuminating case of the tension between time-based storage media and space-based transmission media. Storage and Transmission are intertwined and complicit in the ways in which the DS is used/played. I argue that we can arrive at a thicker, more adequate description of play by investigating activities that are generally considered to be external to game play, activities including pausing and saving. By engaging with these non-diegetic aspect of the video-game experience we can begin to address the materiality of handheld videogaming systems as objects with which we play with time and space.

My hope is that this analysis might also be fruitful for examinations of other media assemblages and situations including texting, mobile email and personal computing, and perhaps as well for older forms of travel-based play and games, such as cards, dice, crosswords and portable board games[i].

I begin with a reading of Nintendo DS play that addresses the space-based nature of medium through a focus on the sociality of the space we create and inhabit through public play. I next focus on a key hardware feature of the DS, its stylus, a feature that resonates with Harold Innis' "The Bias of Communication," and allows us to approach the experience of play through the materiality of the DS/player assemblage. I move then to questions of time-based aspects of media and how we can rethink these issues through a close reading of storage, saving and the protection of play on the DS. Finally I suggest how these perspectives might allow us to ask larger question about the nature of play and the subject who plays, particularly in regard to the nature of experience.

Transmit - Space Based

The DS was (and is) trumpeted for many features, one of which is its ability to connect, wirelessly, to other units, allowing partnered or team play, competition, and the sharing of games as well as the "picto chat" function. However, as Christine Szentgyorgyi and her team have shown, and as any of us who have a DS can attest to from our own personal experience, this feature is overhyped and rarely used (Szentgyorgyi 2008). My focus here is on another kind of

connectivity offered by the DS, on the kind of interactions, connectivity and, in keeping with out "Innisian themes," the manner of *transmission* which we can and do readily observe in casual play with the DS.

Even without using the "wireless" feature, we do play, interact, and communicate with others with the DS. These others, whether they like it or not, share in some way in our play. When we bring our DSs out and about, when we play in public space, we perform our play for people who have varying degrees of interest, comprehension and attention to our activity. To better understand this I will draw on the work of Erving Goffman, and on some Goffmanian work done on the dramaturgical and framing issues we can find around the use of mobile phones in public.

To invoke Bernard Suit, what we share, what we show when we play in public with our DSs, is a *Lusory Attitude*, an intention and bearing bent on play. While the DS's design and use overlaps with many other portable electronic devices, particularly Palm Pilot type organizers that have a stylus, it still is recognizable as a device primarily for games and for play. With rumors[ii] of the next iteration of the Iphone being more game friendly and with Sony selling intellectual property or content through UMDs, this distinction between phones, game playing devises, and organizers is rapidly losing meaning[iii]. But for now, it is still clear that the user of a DS is a player and the use of the DS in public is therefore a performance of play, a display of a lusory attitude.

What is it we transmit when we play with the DS? First and most importantly what we share in our public DS play is that we are in fact playing and that the space we share with our onlookers is a space that whatever its other functions is now, at least for the moment, also a site for play. To appreciate the significance of this play, we need to blur the boundaries between who is playing and who is present, watching, merely tolerating or not noticing at all.

As James Newman (2002) writes in "The Myth of the Ergodic Video Game," "(V)ideogames are not exclusively solitary experiences, regardless of what popular discourses might suggest about their inherent asociality." Newman argues for a more expansive role of what he calls "offline" players or second players, by which he means people who without a controller in their hands nevertheless watch and help and play, which is a different level of engagement than that of onlookers, fellow travelers and people in line who share, willing or not, the play space created by the public use of the DS. I am extending Newman's concept to make a more elastic definition not just of whom a player is but what it means to engage with or have a relationship to videogames. Just as Newman used the concept of "off-Line ergodicity" to move beyond the controller-in-hand-pressing buttons as delimitting the definition of a game player, I want to move further to a kind of area-effect reading of pubic play, a reading in which there is no room for asociality or in fact where asociality is just a specific kind of sociality.

In her work on how space and affect are managed and transformed by public use of cellphones Chantal de Gournay (2002) suggests that cell phones allow users to draw in, announce and otherwise signal something about their own emotional and social state and status. What is key here is the public-ness of the use of the cell phone and the way this public use creates an

overlapping of spaces. Public cell phone use communicates something about the state of the user to people who share public space with them. While it might at first seem a stretch to compare the communicative power of mobile phones, which after all are defined as communication devices, with the communicative power of the DS, which is defined as a personal game playing device, the comparison is useful[iv].

Signs warning against the use of music players and cell phone calls in travel spaces are an institutional acknowledgment of the potential of these devices to engage willing or unwilling others who share space with the caller, listener or game player. There are many other forms of play, some non-technological, that can be performed in public, engaging, annoying, signaling, and announcing contested versions of the meaning of "public" in public spaces as well as what kind of space they are. Playing in public announces that any given space, whatever its other uses are, is now, and potentially always, one of play.

There are of course also other portable media, both old and new, which can be played with in public places, including "travel sized" board game and playing cards, perhaps one of the most evocative of ludic mobile technologies[v].

The Prisoners' Ball

In this section I will focus on the kinds of communications we participate in when we play in public, both communications with past and future versions of ourselves through saving, pausing and loading games, and also the way we communicate and perform with these devices in the presence of others and proximity to others. Here, as throughout this paper the subway and its platform is a key space, but also waiting rooms, and any room in which we wait.

The question is what is at stake in these situations? What kinds of habits and systems are we required or asked to cultivate, engage with, tolerate and even enjoy to occupy and move through these spaces? Ultimately this might have less to do with games and more to do with what it means to live in and under cities and travel across and between them. What does it means to experience time and space in this particular manner, one which we may either strive to make playful, recast, or transform or one which we suffer through and under, as governed by regimens revolving around work, which we go to, return home from, and/or try to avoid. Is play in this situation merely a form of time-killing, a calmative measure, a way of coping? Erving Goffman suggests a more hopeful (and contradictory?) reading. Goffman's reading is one that is important for my larger argument, one that is centered on a material practice, the social-technical power of tools or toys to change space and time. I am referring here to Goffman's concept of irrelevancy.

Irrelevancy, for Goffman, is how in micro-social encounters certain aspects of an object, either material or social (or both) are flattened or made invisible (and thereby irrelevant) while others remain intact. Goffman uses games as his prime example. In games what disappears most often is the economic value of an object that in other situations would be highly or lowly valued. Gold chess pieces do not checkmate better than clay ones, or cardboard and the cost of purchasing

play equipment does not effect the game play, though the value might matter to the players in their lives outside the frame of gameplay. (For example, high end sports equipment, such as well known brands of golf clubs, from moment to moment, from the club house to the golf course, move in and out of contexts that change their form and function.) In Goffman's concept of "irrelevance," as determined by inclusion and exclusion from the gameplay, value ceases to be defined economically and instead is defined in terms of decisions, as in his description in *Encounters* of the coin in coin games, as a "decision machine" rather than as currency (Goffman 1967, 151).

I read Goffman's concept of irrelevancy here a bit awry to expose a sharper edge. In the coin toss, while the exchange economy of the coin is made irrelevant another kind of value is created, recovered, even saved. If we push this concept further we can approach what is at stake in DS play not merely from the prospective of exploring the explicit potential opportunities of social game play, as for example through the DS's wireless potential or from a reading of a DS game's diegetic level, and instead look at how irrelevance flattens some material functions of the DS while transforming others.

Consider how the irrelevance of materiality in game playing works not just to smooth over differences of wealth between the players but also to redefine space and circumstances, as can be seen in Goffman's example of prisoners' ability to play "wall games" in which within the duration of the play the prison wall becomes relevant as a game space and not as an imprisoning enclosure (Goffman 1978, 20). Irrelevance shifts focus and meaning, re-contextualizing and recasting time, space, and relationships. The rules of the game do not just proscribe what is permissible and what is not; they also allow new possibilities. Goffman's use of game playing provides a nuanced understanding of situations and structures (social as well as in games) as both productive and restrictive. In this way he describes a relationship between regular life/ reality and play in a way that is more complex than at first might seem. In *Fun in Games* realities of everyday life are not wholesale ignored nor are they totally present in play; rather, as in his example of the prison wall-cum-baseline, they have a potential to be recast and radically changed, if only for the moment of game play, as relevant in ways they could not be otherwise.

Stylus Traces

Like many owners of the DS, I purchased a thin plastic transparent screen or slip-cover to protect the bottom touch-screen from enthusiastic use. If we remove the prophylactic screen and hold it up to the light, we can see a flurry of scratches, indentations, and loops and whorls made by the stylist as well as the smudges and the oily residue of our fingers and thumbs. Unlike the palimpsest of Archimedes we can uncover here no written language, but that does not mean there is nothing here to be recovered. How should we think about a palimpsest that lacks words? We might usefully look to work done on the history of the book and on architectural theory for profitable uses of palimpsests as metaphor. But this would be a digression and the task at hand is to see what is recorded by the DS's stylus.

What are these smudges and scratches? Evidence? Information? Records of exertion, of use, yes but of what kind of use? Specifically are these evidence of play? The sweat stains and the grime are traces associated not with ludic activities but rather of activities belonging to the broader category of things we use with our hands, of things that can become well-worn through this use and attention. This reading emphasizes the materiality of not just the thing, but also of the relation of the thing and its user. The blister on the user's finger shows how hard it has been pushing against the surface and interface of the thing; the sweat stains and scratches on the surface in turn show with what effort the thing has been marked by the user.

The traces are like a tiny version of an ice rink after the skaters depart. What the scratches on the screen protector show is a digital record, not in the electronic sense of digital, but rather in the tactile sense, that someone was here and they did something here with a tool, in this case not with a skate, but with a stylus. This is a scribbled-over map of play time. The patterns and the shapes of the scratches remind us the tangle of light-lines made in the photographic Soviet and Taylorist movement studies: one part Marey, one part Muybridge, one part raver with a glow stick. Here Anson Rabinbach's study of movement study provides a historical and aesthetic guiding image (Rabinbach 1992).

The stylus, in concert with the touch screen, sets the DS apart from not only other hand-held game systems but games system in general and is at the same time that which connects it, with other handheld devices, such as some types of palm pilots. That the "touch screen" can be used without the stylus is also important as this is increasingly (post I-phone) a model for HCI design. The stylus and the finger both are addressed in a passage in which Walter Benjamin discusses the typewriter and its relation to the hand and to the (receding) fountain pen. While Benjamin is talking about writing/typing/or otherwise creating text and not "merely" playing with these tools the key here is his explicit description of the change in input device as being a tactile, manual issue and that different ways of interacting with mechanical systems can be both innervative and mimetic, performing/referencing the finger and hand while also incorporating these gestures as technologies (Benjamin 1996).

The stylus of the DS works in a number of ways. Much of the loading and game selection screens that a player must go through when the unit is first turned on (figure 1) are operated by the touch screen. These activities can be done with the stylus, but in my experience, particularly when used in short bursts of casual play, it is much more likely that one would use a thumb than pull out the stylus for these tasks[vi].

The stylus also works in the save capacity, in more than one-way. First, prosaically but importantly, in some DS games there is a function by which a player's avatar can open a notebook in which, using the stylus, to write notes, often about a hint or other piece of information which must be remembered for later use (e.g. a location of a hidden item in *Legend of Zelda: The Phantom Hourglass* or a code in *Retro Game Challenge*). Of course a pen and paper can work in much the same way (an interface that was "built in" via blank "notes" pages at the back of many old NES manuals), it is important to remember that the use of a pen and paper is

less likely when playing with a DS in transit. In this situation we are unlikely to pause, close and store the DS in a pocket, or purse and to pull out a notepad on which to write down by hand where the key to the dungeon is hidden.

At another, more abstract level, the DS stylus saves and stores. But what is it the stylus can store save if not the data on its attendant cartridges? The fact that this data, the files of our gameplay, are saved to the game cartridge and not to the (operating) system suggests that we need to look for other ways in which we save with the DS. The stylus, though not the only interface option, works as both an index and symbol of this potential towards a more open-ended perspective on what saving or storage could be/mean in videogames. Is it useful to expand our conception of record(ing) to include these signs of use? If these marks are readable, what can we read in them beyond proof of labor and struggle? The computer memory records in-game achievement, but not the sweat and muscle invested. It is a question of digital versus digital recording. The physical version of digitally inscribed memory doesn't seem capable of transmission. It is recorded not in the center of the machine, but rather on its surface, in the accrual of bruises and scratches produced by physically effortful and even damaging palimpsestic play, leaving a patina which links the DS to that range of artifacts which achieve the status of "well-used."

I focus in this section on the stylus but we could just as easily look at issues such as screen burn, screen cracks, damaged or missing buttons, and cracked casings. We could also note the wide range of minor but persistent aches and pains the video gamer and especially the player of portable games suffers, the blisters, the dull ache in the wrist, which both supports the unit and functions as the fulcrum for the operation of the buttons, the tired eyes, and the sore necks. The stylus is important because it presents us with its own host of associations, both laterally into the world of Wacom-tablets and Palm Pilots but also vertically through a genealogy of media and technologies of writing and of script.

However, this stylus and its "clay" do not bear language; rather all they can say is that "here something happened; here someone did something." My point here is not to suggest that one could read the screen's marks as evidence of a particular sequence of gameplay, but rather that there is a way we can read this residue and markings on the DS as evidence of labor or other productive effort. Play is as often the source of these (and perhaps all markings) as is work or any other drive motivates the activities of humans and other beings.

This evidence of use, a proof of the reality and materiality of game play, while interesting to theorists (or it least this theorist) is usually a headache for players. After all, we wouldn't purchase slip screens if scratches on the touch-screen were good for the DS. Here Stallybrass and Co.'s article, "Hamlet's Tables and the Technologies of Writing in Renaissance England," provides a historical resonance (Stallybrass 2004) Hamlet apparently traded information and tips on how to keep these tablets fresh and ready for new notes, transcriptions and whatever else they wanted to inscribe on them with their stylus. This was a form of ancient FAQ for how to clean and if needed reset these fragile tablets, what sort of compound of gum and milk might be

painted over stubborn stains, how to maintain and thus prolong the uses of these expensive and important handheld devices. We find a very similar discourse online about maintaining handheld videogames and cellphones in contemporary FAQs, Youtube videos, and discussion boards[vii].

What the modern user has in common with users in the Renaissance is an interest in the restoration or renewal of their systems. These were and are recipes for the recovery not of text but of potential, that is of blankness, a return to a clean slate, that is ready to play, like fresh snow for skis or an empty football pitch, or a fresh RPG PC sheet ready to be filled in with paladins, vampires or cyborgs. While this desire to create a clean slate might seem to be at odds with my reading of the screen's accrual of scars and imperfections as a trace of the effort put into play, in fact both displaying scars of use and restoring the screen reflect the player's desire to prove agency.

Storage - Time Based

The Nintendo DS, like practically all modern portable video game systems (excepting Game and Watch style and other dedicated one game systems) allows a player to save a game and then to continue it later, or else try a tricky part of the game again. However what is interesting about the DS use in this regard is how saving in the diegetic in-game mode which writes directly to the cartridge is not as important in general as the ability to *pause*, which is nigh universal in portable video game play.

It is not merely by code and program that we find our play saved. Surely our progress through a game space or narrative or procedure is saved and stored at the level of data. However we do save when we use the DS in other ways as well. Certainly we also save something in the form of experience, memory, and acquired skills but my focus is on how we save these experiences materially, in and on the device itself, the object not the code, as well as in our own bodies.

Effort, work, and bodily activity, are all stored, not in data but also throughout and all over the material aspects of the DS and the DS assemblage. This kind of conceptualizing of storage forces us to reevaluate what it is that is stored or saved. I will finish my exploration by arguing that we need to account for the evidence of interactions and uses which can be read through traces, strains, and wear and tear across the assemblage and technical situation from palimpsestic scratches to worn buttons and callused thumbs[viii]. By animating this kind of storage and saving and in focusing on it I hope to (when combined with my reading of transmission and interaction with the DS from the previous section) map out not only a more robust conception of what playing with these things is like but what is at stake and suggest larger questions we all are addressing at this conference.

The Pause that Refreshes

We should also consider that players at times stop playing without formally pausing, which would require closing the DS or pressing "start" in the middle of a game. This kind of action is

risky in terms of preserving play, because in most games there are only a few moments open to such moments of respite and relaxation. J.P. Wolf, in the *Medium of the Videogame,* discusses these events, conceptualizing them as part of the game but extradiegetic in that they are not, to his thinking, moments when the player is actively engaged in gameplay. He calls these moments "interludes," "moments in which the game's interactive potential is briefly suspended" (Wolf 2001), which he says can be mechanical, as for example moments of stillness that occur when code the program is loading new information or refreshing a screen, or moments designed to provide a modulation of tension and a sense of "pace" to the game, or "breathers" for the player, as well as scripted death animation sequences or avatars' victory dances.

Load screens, pause buttons, item inventories and other non-deigetic moments allow the player to sit back, to stretch and otherwise withdraw from the game-posture, and the demands of time and speed. The controller works differently in these nondiegetic contexts. In the innovatory or setting screen the controller becomes mousey. The gameplay pauses (literally) for data-management; the interface owes much to a Windows or Mac desktop, as well as to the old high-score screen of the arcade. The setting screens may not be part of the play, but they are still part of the game. The "load" screen works differently. The "load," or between moments screen comes into play (or not) as the system brings up the next stage, "level" or area of the game. The interface, the controller here is a superstitious, nervous one. A and B buttons are tapped like worry beads. This is the gameplay version of flicking your fingers under the faucet waiting for the water to get hot. The commands given here go nowhere (they go where the typing between active windows go). Something happens but nothing registers; you are talking to yourself[ix].

Harrison Gish, a doctoral student at UCLA suggests that these moments that usually come at the beginning or end of a level of play are usefully charged with information, and therefore are part of playing the game well if not actually what most would call "gameplay" (Gish 2009). My interest, however, is in what the player can do in these moments beyond this kind of game-space reconnaissance and that this is where Wolf's "breather" is particularly useful. We use these moments in any kind of game play situation to attend to things, our person (can one ever need to scratch one's nose more than in the midst of heated game play?) and otherwise take care of something, but briefly. If we think about situations of public portable play (as opposed to the more relaxed domestic arrangement of the couch and console), particularly in transit as in a subway, we also may need a second or two, to let someone by, or to shift our weight. While these kinds of pauses are outside of the game, they are all about out relation to the play we are trying, however precariously, to inhabit and thus they follow the themes I'm trying to unpack in this section: how we pause to save play.

To pause is to save play from the specter of labor, from completionism, from instrumentality. To take a phrase from RPGing (a popular genre for the DS) to save us from the dubious pleasures of "grinding." The play that pausing saves is casual. The save function in contrast has more to do with the kind of play which starts to feel more and more like work.

Pausing has no promised history like saving does, no potential outside of play itself and its

ability to fill up the wait of the waiting room, to make more bearable the coach seat, the lecture. Given the contingent nature of the kind of play I examine here – a matter of minutes not hours, or if of hours then hours made of one more minute at a time. In this casual play nothing is promised, what is stored is not meant, cannot be meant for an archive. While the high score exists and it maybe be reached in this sort play, that would be incidental, at best a happy surprise but not the inspiration to open the DS. The difference is one of duration, intent and (lusory) attitude. Playing for high scores is a kind of playing for keeps it has more in common with the kind of playing which we plan for, work toward, which to quote David Sudnow, one must "care" about[x]. In contrast what the DS and its pause feature allows is a kind of redemption of play as category of action that is in Goffman's sense of term, irrelevant.

Play Time

I have endeavored to keep my focus on the material, almost toy-like character of the DS and to offer a material and embodied as opposed to a game oriented reading of play on and with the DS, with my focus on its life in our hands, and on how we touch it, open and close it, and carry it around with us. But in combination with this focus on the material aspects of DS play, I need to address the workings of time, an aspect of play with the DS that goes beyond my discussion above of pausing.

Goffman's prisoner's with their bouncing balls were trying to transform, through playing a game, their prison wall, to change the prison wall into a goal, net or backboard (he is not clear, but I picture them playing handball), and in this way we see how play works to redefine, recover, and recuperate space. However, the other key dynamic of his game is that the play situation is temporary, lasting only as long as they are playing; as soon as play stops the backboard reverts to being a prison wall. The other time-based dilemma of the prisoners is the time they spend in confinement –the duration of their play occurs against the backdrop of the much larger time frame until they are free (by serving their time or dying in prison or even being executed). At the risk of being overly dramatic, I would suggest that this is the situation in which we play with our DSs, a situation not of a prison but of empty time spent in depot waiting rooms, airport boarding areas, subway platforms, and in transit. As Henri Bergson says: "When we evoke time it is space that responds to the appeal" (Bergson 1972). The ethical and political problem we face when we describe play this way , as transformative, even liberating, but only temporarily, is that no real freedom can be contingent, and yet this is where we are left. If we need to kill time, it is because that time is arduous and oppressive. Maybe there is possibility for a more lasting, freer, transformative play. But the situation I describe here, in which I describe the DS functioning as a stopgap, a time filler and time killer, a palliative technology – is not to say that it is not legitimate, or germane or important. The prisoners would admit the ball wasn't going to free them but that doesn't mean they didn't want or need it.

My goal for this paper has been to contribute to the evolving critical discussion of play as concept, category, activity and ideal, a discussion that is as yet under theorized. People are

playing a lot, and a lot of what they are playing with are hand-held devices. Over 330 million games were sold in the past year for the Nintendo DS, and while raw masses of numbers are not reason enough to study something, they do point toward a gap between what gets written about in game studies and what is actually played. The scope of play with hand-held devices is much larger if we include people's play with their mobile phones, music players and other new technologies, and I suggest we do. This paper is an attempt to explore the play of hand-held devices and to explore how it is that in play and for play we create and work with fundamental tensions of media now where key conceptions like time, experience and space are reworked. By focusing on a new reading of play attuned to just these themes, (which are also the themes that bring us to this conference), we can open up fundamental questions of pleasure, bodies, technology, interface and the subject.

Play is often described as a kind of sprawling radical position, as freedom itself, as a counterpoint to labor, to violence, to oppression. I am interested in a smaller reading of play, albeit one which posits play as a key activity of modern life and a site of technological interaction. In *Gamer Theory* McKenzie Wark exposes the flaws in the over-reaching reading of play as creativity exploited through logic of "gamespace." In Wark's account, play is spent as a critical force; it fails because its boundaries subsume everything else. Non-play has become unthinkable. This reading of play critiques its utopian pretensions, its claims to importance, and its co-option by "gamespace." What Wark leaves open and what we might get from a careful reworking of some of the issues of the relation between play and non-play and between player and plaything is something like his "hack" or Benjamin's "innervation" a kind of contact with, in, and through games, like the "dynamite of the tenth of a second" which Benjamin saw in cinema, and which illuminates otherwise ignored or hidden aspects of our own lives. In this paper I refer to how it is we manage to insert pleasure or action into in-between times and how we leave our mark when we do so (Benjamin 1969). Wark suggests that in games we might feel the present and think through it (Wark 2007). Even if the concept of play as a radical way of being is co-opted, it is still the act by which we engage and do things with games, toys and other objects and systems. Play is best addressed from exactly this position: as ways to feel and think through what we do and how we do things together. By looking at play with the DS and in the way we rework issues of time and space in/of media we can do just that.

Figure 1. Nintendo DS load screen, stylus and game cartridges (coin for scale). Image credit: http://osdl.sourceforge.net/main/documentation/misc/nintendo-DS/homebrew-guide/pictochat.jpeg

ⁱ Here we have another connection to the DS. Nintendo was originally a fairground and gambling equipment company located on the outskirts of Kyoto. Nintendo's main business was making Hanafuda playing cards. Perhaps here we see the germ of the Nintendo two-handed gamepad, which is held in many respects (tension, angle, and intent) like a card hand. The hands mirror each other when using the gamepad; each hand's movements are in general the same, thumbs working the inputs while fingers hold the device. This style of controller became the standard, if not because of the merits of its design, then because of Nintendo's emerging market dominance.

ⁱⁱ http://blog.wired.com/gadgets/2009/01/third-generatio.html

ⁱⁱⁱ The advent of the DSi dose not, it seem to me, lessen this backward glancing focus which is such an important part of the DS's design, a glance which see clear back to the Game and Watch series of the 1970s and 80s.

^{iv} For an overview of how Goffman's legacy and in particular, his dramaturgical and framing concepts have been used to address related issues in the use of mobile or cellular phones see

Amen Jaffer's review of the subject in *Impact of Consuming Mobile Phones on the Social Constructions of Public and Private Spaces*.

^v Goffman 1967,149

^{vi} Jonathon Metts, an amateur (and expert) game historian breakdown the three ways the dual screens are used in DS games:
a) The touch screen is not used at all.
b) The touch screen is optional or is used for minor features.
c) The touch screen is the primary method of control.
Nintendo World Report (nintendoworldreport.com/editorialArt.cfm?artid=554)

^{vii} See one such example:
www.gamespot.com/pages/forums/show_msgs.php?topic_id=26438195 - 63k –
There also is official Nintendo care manuals – but they only say to only buy official Nintendo products and to pay to have things replaces and so are of little use theoretically or actually.

^{viii} See "*Nintendo thumb:*" A repetitive stress injury that causes swelling at the base of the thumb due to overuse of video games. *Nintendinitis* and *Ulcerative Nintendinitis* are terms used in the medical community to describe thumb tendon strains and lesions of the palm resulting from overuse of interactive games".
http://www.mja.com.au/public/issues/173_11_041200/koh/koh.html

^{ix} Unless of course, you are cheating or entering codes: The in-active liminal limbo moment (pre-game, load and pause) is when most cheat codes are entered. Like the curse uttered under-breath, or the careless "Shazam," these sub-vocal utterances have potential power.

^x "Temptation of completion increases, a diffuse subcutaneous malaise gnaws and festers to mobilize a new degree of caring for the first shot of the next attempt, and you play a bit better because each move is charged with an attentiveness reaching forward in anticipation"(Sudnow 1983).

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