



ALIEN REVOLT

A location-based mobile
game in the context of
Brazilian urban space



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Presentation outline:

1. Conceptualizing mobile games

- Game design and narrative
- Game community and collaboration

2. *Alien Revolt* and the use of cell phones in Brazil

3. Location-based services (LBS) and the future of mobile technologies



I. Alien Revolt: changing the concept of a mobile game

Game design and narrative

- + MInd Corporation
- + Oi
- + Nokia
- + Siemens



Location-based mobile games (LBMG) vs. mobile games

- + mobile phones
- + location awareness
- + Internet connection



I. Alien Revolt: changing the concept of a mobile game

Game design and narrative

Contextualizing Alien Revolt among existing LBMG



Botfighters (Sweden), 2001-2005



- Can You See Me Now?, 2001-2006
- Uncle Roy All Around You, 2003
- I Like Frank, 2004
- Blast Theory (UK), 2003-2006



Mogi Mogi (Japan), 2003-2006

I. Alien Revolt: changing the concept of a mobile game

Game design and narrative

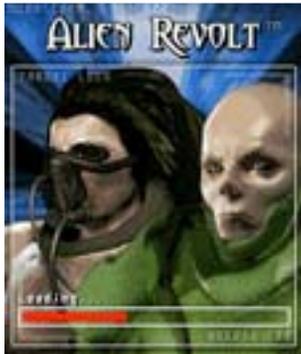
Characteristics of LBMG:

- Game character: Player = avatar
- Game interfaces: mobile technologies and location sensitive devices
- Game Space: mobile screen | desktop screen --> physical world



I. Alien Revolt: changing the concept of a mobile game

Game design and narrative



Splash Page



Main Menu



Character Selection



Character Creation



I. Alien Revolt: changing the concept of a mobile game

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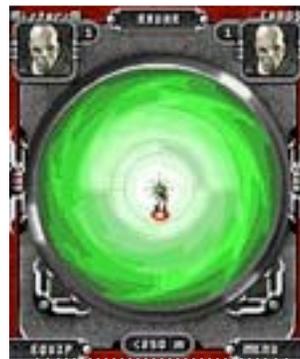


I. Alien Revolt: changing the concept of a mobile game

Game design and narrative



Character Stats



Radar



Combat



Equipment

Non-playable characters (NPCs)

I. Alien Revolt: changing the concept of a mobile game

Collaboration and Community

Collaboration and competition in MMORPGs

(‘On-screen encounters’, Licoppe & Inada, 2006)



-Beta testers:

-Scheduled encounters

-Random encounters

I. Alien Revolt: changing the concept of a mobile game

Collaboration and Community

Random encounters:

“On Wednesday, before the holiday, I was playing inside the bus in Gávea. I found another player, called Maget lvl 6. At the moment the player showed up on the radar, 8 NPCs appeared as well. I tried to attack the player, but the system didn’t allow me. I was frustrated.

After about 15 seconds, however, I was in the combat screen together with Maget lvl 6, and we were fighting. I don’t know exactly what happened; she must have attacked me. I killed her with three shots and I was merciful not stealing anything (there was also nothing that interested me). After the combat, everything went back to normal. I killed some more NPCs and they killed me, I lost a lot of experience points, which is nothing out of ordinary.

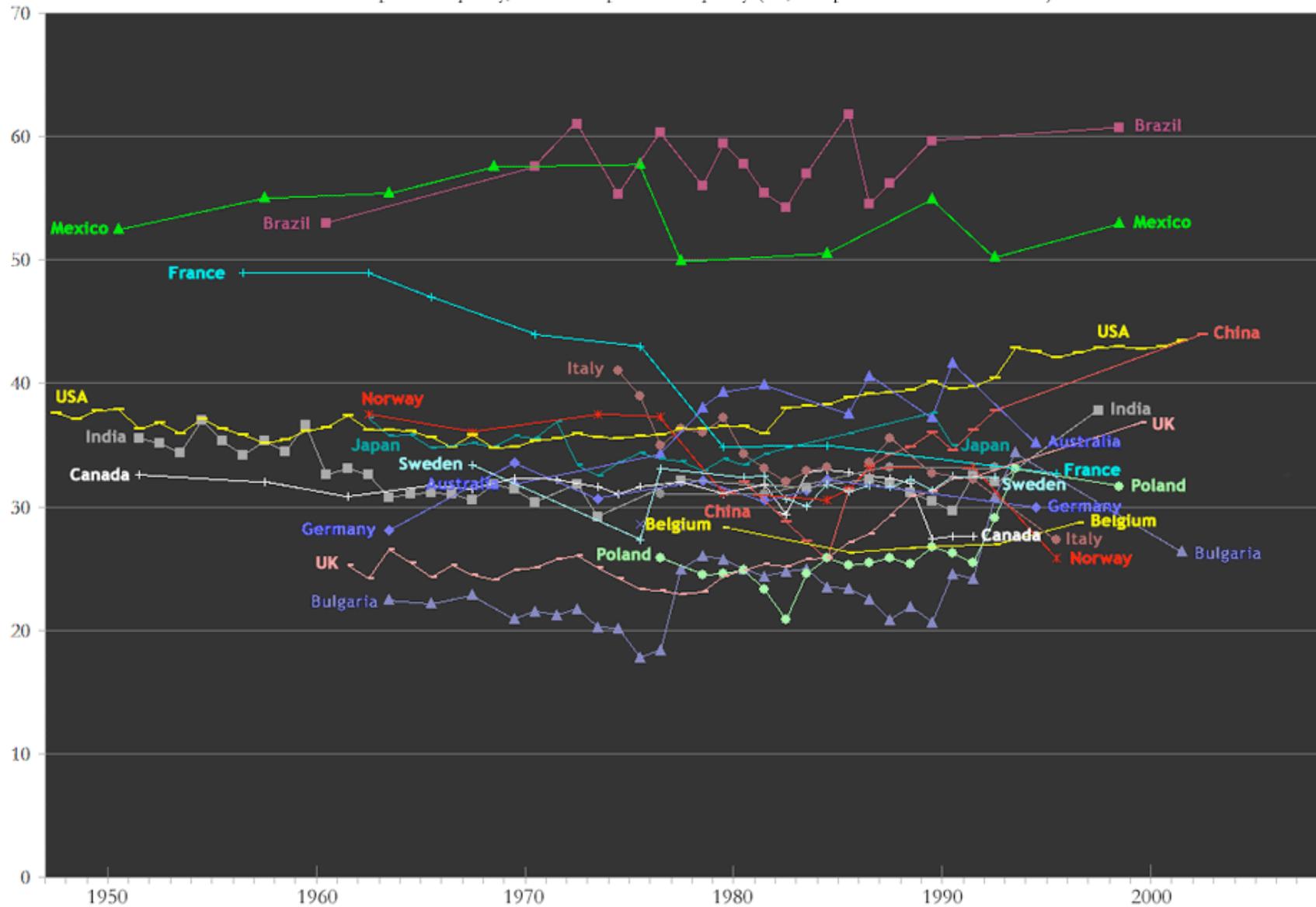
It was one of the most exciting game experiences I’ve ever had. Beautiful!” [Mage Perereca. Sept, 10, 2006].

After reading this message, the attacked player explained what happened on the email list:

“I meet the alien Mage Perereca on Wednesday. Although I am in level 6 and he is level 13, I called him for a combat just for the sake of playing with a real player, and not with a bot. The funny thing is that he showed up on my radar unexpectedly. I was in Downtown Rio.” [Maget lvl 6. Sept, 11, 2006].

2. Contextualizing Alien Revolt in Brazil

Income Disparity since World War II – the Gini Index
where 0 is perfect equality, and 100 is perfect inequality (i.e., one person has all the income)



2. Contextualizing Alien Revolt in Brazil

Characteristics and influences of cell phone use in Brazil:

1. Pre-paid phones
2. Price of the service
3. Price of the devices

2. Contextualizing Alien Revolt in Brazil

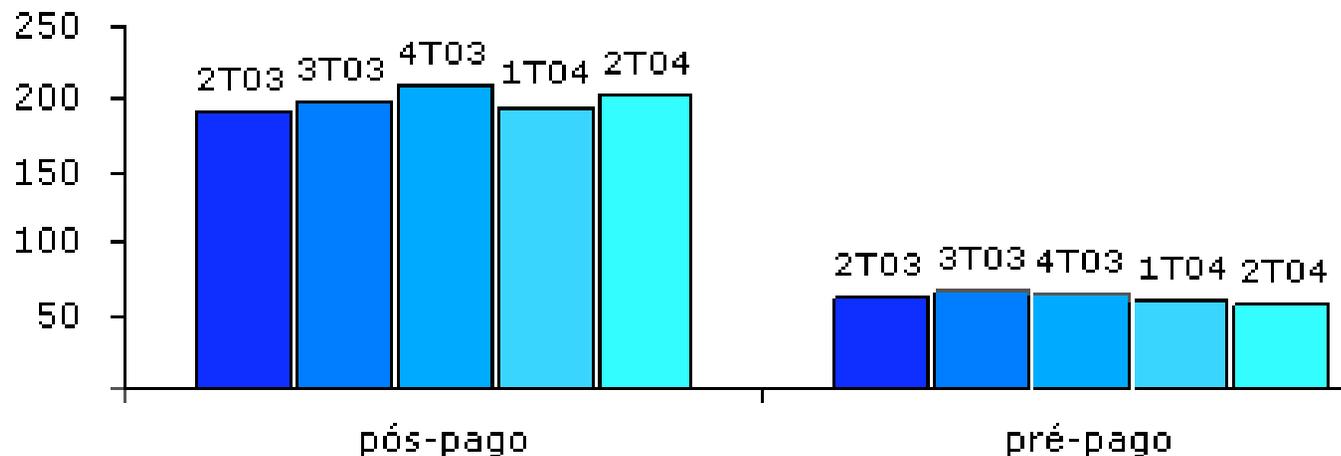
Pre-paid phones

- 80% of cell phones in the country
- “free” phone (CPP)
- Users are not willing to pay for high-end services
- Cell phones mostly used for voice communication
(like US, unlike Asian and Scandinavian countries)

2. Contextualizing Alien Revolt in Brazil

Price of the service

- Brazil: 6th country in the world in absolute number of cell phones (92 million)
- Number of monthly spoken minutes of use (MOU) is one of the lowest in Latin America
 - Cause I: Number of pre-paid phones (more expensive)



2. Contextualizing Alien Revolt in Brazil

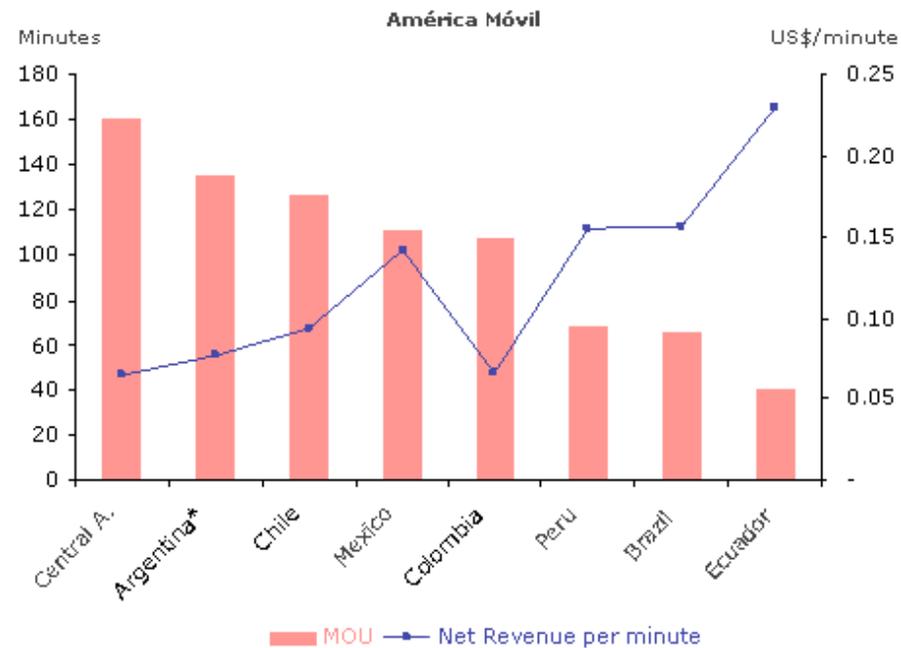
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- Price of the service

Alien Revolt:

- Each combat SMS: 0.07
- Each chat message: 0.15
- GPRS connection: 7 / Mb



2. Contextualizing Alien Revolt in Brazil

Price of the device

Nokia S60 (642 - 1000 USD)



50% of the Brazilian population lives with less than 162 USD / month

2. Contextualizing Alien Revolt in Brazil

Consequences:

Small amount of players

hard to find other users



MI nd corporation strategies to increase the game popularity:

1. Expand to other federation states (October 2006)
2. Increase the radar range to include 5 nearest players
3. Development for Nokia Series 40 (most devices under 200 USD)
4. SMS version (December 2006)

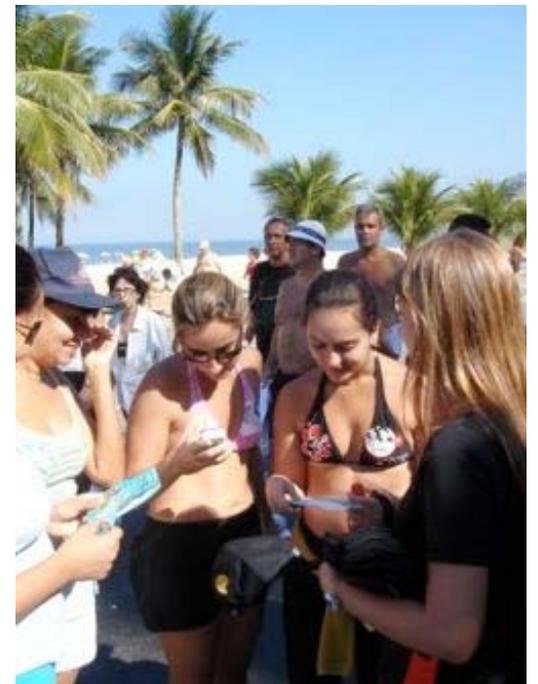
3. LBS: Changing the concept of the mobile phone

Mobile phone vs. personal computer
vs. wired telephone

LBS allows to link information to physical locations

Redefining interaction with:

- other users
- space

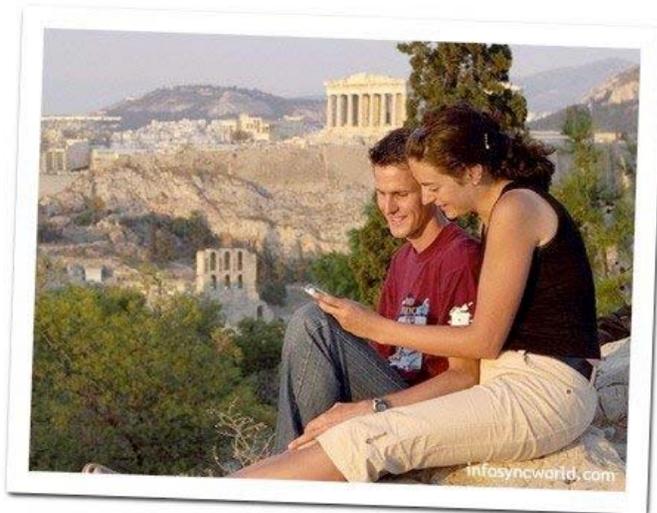


3. LBS: Changing the concept of the mobile phone

2 complementary directions:

(1) Linking information to places

(2) Creation of social networks and interpersonal communication



Digital Graffito (Siemens), 2007



GeoVector (New Zealand), 2006

3. LBS: Changing the concept of the mobile phone

2 complementary directions:

(1) Linking information to places

(2) Creation of social networks and interpersonal communication

Engineering of traffic encounters + on-screen encounter (Licoppe & Inada, 2006)

Location-tracking (Barkuus & Dey (2003))



ImaHima (Japan), 2001



Alien Revolt (Brazil), 2005

+ other LBMG

3. LBS: Changing the concept of the mobile phone

LBS seen as the “killer app” of mobile technologies (Rheingold, 2002)

Main issue in Brazil (+other developing countries?):

- NOT availability
- BUT price and accessibility



3. LBS: Changing the concept of the mobile phone

How to adapt technology for use in developing countries?

How to develop applications that target more than 1% of the population?

Possible solutions (explored by Alien Revolt development team):

- Availability of more inexpensive devices able to run LB applications
- Lower price of GPRS Internet connection (flat fee)
- Development of simpler versions of LBS for low-end users (*Oi Transito*)

3. LBS: Changing the concept of the mobile phone

Shift in meaning:

Private two-way voice communication device

- Safety / security (Ling, 2004)
- Micro-coordination (Ling, 2004; Ling & Yttri, 2002)
- Isolates people (Puro, 2002; Fortunati, 2002; De Gournay, 2002)



Social collective interface (many-to-many device)

- macro-coordination (Rheingold, 2002)
- Mobile Internet access (Matsuda, 2005; Ito & Okabe, 2005; Miyata, 2005)
- Remote control
- Navigate physical spaces

ALIEN REVOLT

