SAMPLE CASE STUDY - COMPUTER GAMES:

Tomb Raider: Anniversary (2007)

**Genre**
- Third person shooter game. (TPS or 3PS)
- Onscreen character seen at a distance from a number of different possible angles as opposed to first person model in which the player views everything in the game world as if through his/her own eyes.
- Lara is always visible and the camera follows the action from behind or over her shoulder.
- Harkens back to classical form of platform game play.

Details of a range of game genres can be found in *Media and Meaning: An Introduction* (Colin Stewart, Marc Lavelle and Adam Kowaltzke. BFI publishing, 2001)

**Narrative**
- What structure and space does the game inhabit? What kind of environment does it have? Not necessary a linear story in all games.
- Quest or adventure structure.
- The three act structure. Proceeds from an orientation stage through various complications and blockages to a simple resolution.
- Faithfully preserves element of original Tomb Raider game. Brings the original adventure up to date. Lara Croft goes in search of three mysterious Scion artefacts. See www.tombraider.com/anniversary for comparison of original Tomb Raider and Tomb Raider anniversary. Consider the impact of technology on narratives.
- Narrative is interrupted by series of puzzles or games to be solved.

Discussion of Narrative Structures in Games to be found in *Everything Bad is Good for You. How Popular Culture is Making Us Smarter.* Steven Johnson (Penguin, 2005) and in work by Steven Levy. www.stevenlevy.com

**Representation**
- Lara Croft – originally Laura Cruz name changed for US audience. Female archaeologist and action hero.
- Issues of Gender representation. [Mulvey and the male gaze.]
- Lara’s changing appearance. [See photo gallery on www.tombraider.co.uk/anniversary]
- Issues of realism
- The Role of the ‘Hero’
- Representation of Place. Use of exotic locations and acceptability of “tomb-raiding” Postcolonial perspectives.
INDUSTRY

Production
- Published by Eidos Games (named as Britain’s most successful company 1999) Based in Wimbledon, South London, Eidos Interactive Ltd, part of SCi Entertainment Group Plc www.eidos.co.uk
- Developed by Crystal Dynamics.
- Release date June 2007
- Platform - Play Station2 and PC. PSP version will follow soon as well as a release date for the Nintendo Wii.
- Detailed information to be found at www.tombraider.com/anniversary

Background and Context
- Original Tomb Raider released 1996.
- Designed by Tony Gadd.
- The ground-breaking 3D game design ensured financial success and cult status.
- Sold over 7 million copies of the original game and 16 million copies worldwide of the first three games.
- Heralded as classic and one of the best action adventure games ever.
- Boosted Play Station brand with initial exclusivity deal. Subsequently now available on many platforms including PC, Mac, Dreamcast and Game Boy Advance. The Seventh game in the series (Tomb Raider: Legend also released on PSP, X-Box, X-Box 360 and Nintendo DS)

Marketing
- Magazine Adverts/TV Adverts/Promotional Game Demos/Trailers/Bus and Billboard campaigns.
- Cross channel and On-line campaign strategies.
- Linked to film releases where relevant. Eidos Interactive hopes for Tomb Raider 9 to combine film and game.
- Website for Tomb Raider and specifically Anniversary edition.
- Lara Croft’s My Space account.
- Electronic newsletter.
- Photo-shoot with all ‘Lara’ models including Nell McAndrew and new Lara Karima Adebibe (June 2007)
- Range of merchandise.
- In the past Sony have targeted youth market with Play Station room at London super club Ministry of Sound. Using cutting edge DJs and the mass appeal of dance music.
- Distributing fliers at Glastonbury and other festivals.
- Focus on youth orientated stations such as MTV.
- Advertising deals with Lucozade and Nike
- Profile and appearance allowed for much so called ‘free marketing’ with many newspapers and magazines keen to examine the phenomena that was, Lara Croft. The cover of the The Face magazine and the Douglas Copeland book Lara’s Book are just two examples.
- Tomb Raider II, III, IV all produced in 10 months in order to release for pre-Christmas market.
• Films to accompany games. Tomb raider 1 and 2. Announced that TR3 will be made. All starring Angelina Jolie.

Global Implications
• Worldwide Phenomena
• Over 28 million copies of Tomb Raider series sold worldwide.
• Number one selling franchise in Europe and the US.

Distribution and Exhibition
• European and US Distribution.
• Internet sales as well as major retailers.
• Game Tap and Steam providing digital download distribution for the first time.

AUDIENCE
• Who are the audience for video games and has this changed?
• Information concerning changing video game audiences can be found in:
  • *Trigger Happy: Videogames and the Entertainment Revolution* Steven Poole (Arcade Publishing, 2000)
  • There are also key chapters in:
  • *Teaching Videogames* Barney Oram and James Newman (BFI Education)

Target audience
• Are games gender biased? Provides positive female role model? Introduces gaming to female audience? Sexualized appeal sells to men? Yet, it is important to note that much of the success of “Tomb Raider” is due to its astonishing 3-D graphics, audio, challenging strategy and innovative game play.

Audience Positioning
• Does the user identify with the character of Lara Croft?
• What is the preferred reading?

Debates
• Feminist Icon or Cyber Bimbo?
• Issues around violence
• Negative responses to the increased use of videogames.
• Moral Compass – within the universe of the game.
• Effects debate and video gaming.

Responses
• Audience response to increasingly gratuitous artwork and commercialisation was negative and Lara Croft has undergone many changes due to fan pressure. They were unhappy with the ‘less clothing and bigger breasts’ character that had developed.
• Fan sites/ Fan fiction / Chat Rooms/Web Forums.
• Uses and Gratifications – How can different audiences have different experiences of the same game?