



MOTION SENSING FITNESS GAME

CCGL9064
BODY PRACTICE
BLOGGING PROJECT

WANG XINJIE/CRYSTAL



WEEK 1 INTRODUCTION OF MOTION SENSING FITNESS GAME

★ My Reflection on Gendered Fitness

The pandemic has dampened my enthusiasm for the gym and fitness since 2020. After a long period of inactivity, I decided to turn my attention to home fitness for my body practice. Those typical fitness applications in the app store perpetuate gender stereotypes in fitness, recommending courses and exercises for you based on your registered gender. I did an interesting experiment to testify the connection between gender and fitness program recommendation in applications. When I registered myself as a female, those apps recommended weight-loss, leg slimming and yoga courses to shape better body curves, which reflects the social expectations of the female body as lithe, slim and graceful. While when I identified myself as male, the home page was dominated by muscle-building courses targeting different parts of the body, indicating the ideal male body as physically strong. These phenomena prove Judith Butler's viewpoint that gender is "a construction that one puts on." (1999). Traditional fitness applications indicate gender binaries and stereotypes in different exercises, suggesting exercisers reinforce underlying gender labels through body practices. Gender construction consolidates through such gendered physical training.

★ My Choice of Motion Sensing Fitness Game

The motion sensing fitness game Active Arcade arrests my attention for its gender-neutral design. It provides a variety of physical training without the emphasis on gender. The exercise for reaction velocity, bounce and flexibility is no longer preserve for one gender but open to all gender.

Apart from being gender-neutral, this application impresses me significantly with its motion sensing design and its fusion of fitness and game. One can play interactive games with the mobile device through body control. It is convenient for me to exercise with a mobile device without expensive equipment and wearables. The application is also friendly for those inactive people who can enjoy their fitness through interactive games this app offers. My roommate Gracie and I tried the exercise "Whack A Mole" in two players mode, a practice for hand reflexes. We were so engrossed in the game that we forgot the exhaustion of fitness. "Don't exercise, just play," this is how the app introduces itself, and this app does take the burden off the fitness.

Nevertheless, does this app still burden the social discipline of the body under the disguise of the game? Will it be problematic for its privacy protection and digital surveillance? What is the connection between this app and the quantified self? I will explore these questions in my following body practices.





WEEK 2 EMPOWERMENT OR DISEMPOWERMENT?

✦ My Changing Impression on Fitness Game

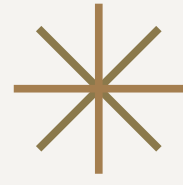
My impression of the motion sensing fitness game has gone through subtle changes over the last two weeks. At the outset of my bodily practices, my enthusiasm mainly focused on trying various games and supported me in constantly updating my best scores to enter the next level. For maximum playability, this fitness application continues the stage mode prevalent in games, constantly records your highest scores for highlights, and rewards every achievement you make. The stage mode enabled me to get a sense of achievement. The quantified scores made my progress visible, prompting me to practice continuously for self-transcendence. During the first week, opening Active Arcade and completing bodily practice became my obsessive habit. I was obsessed with pursuing self-transcendence and continuous progress, believing this app would contribute to my self-discipline.

However, my enthusiasm waned when my bodily practices hit a plateau. This phenomenon was common to every exerciser, but the stagnant quantified scores still frustrated me as if they were suggesting the stagnation in my physical function. These data imperceptibly represented my body yet imposed an anxiety on its function. This obsessive pursuit of bodily progress even overwhelmed my passion to fitness itself, eventually turning the fitness game to psychological burden.

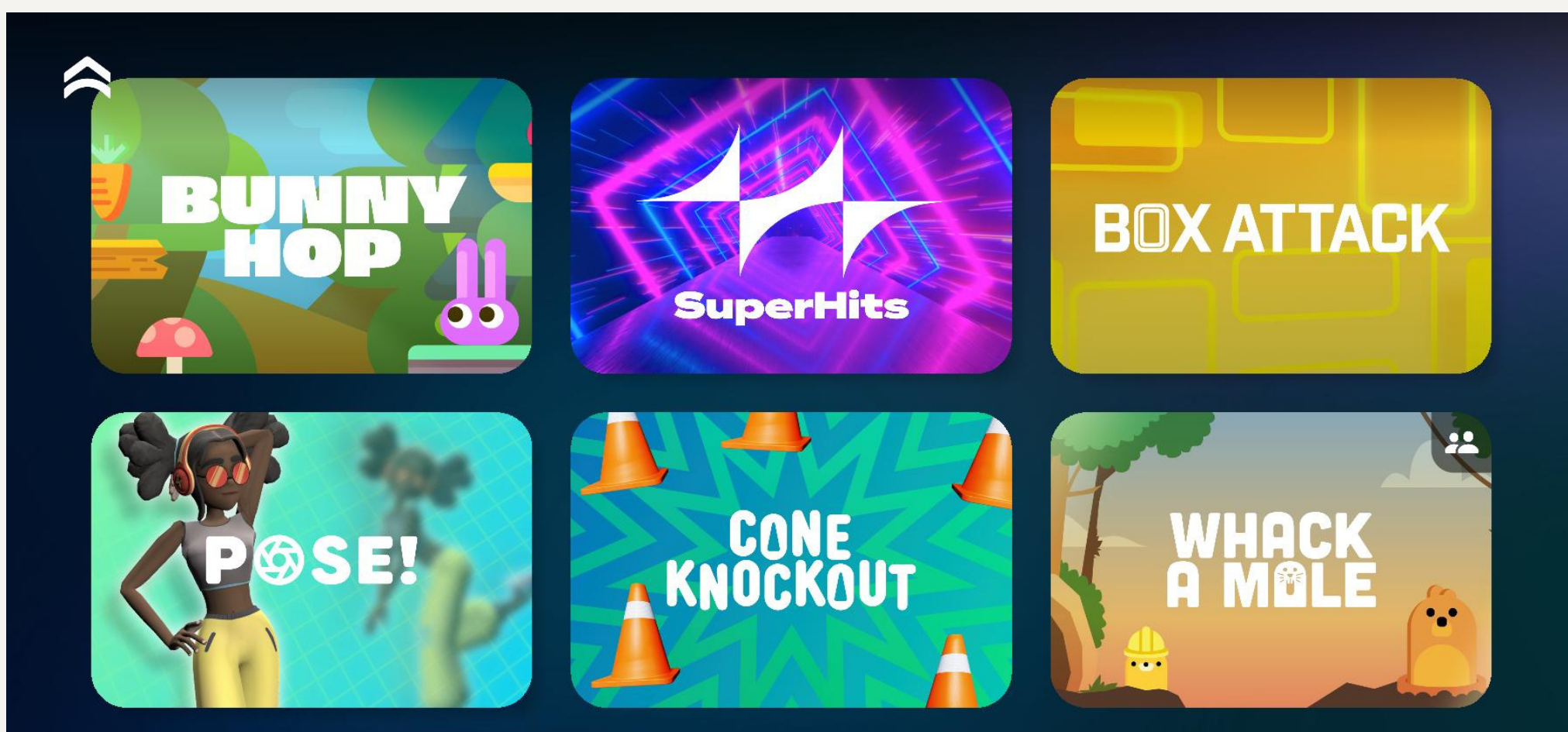
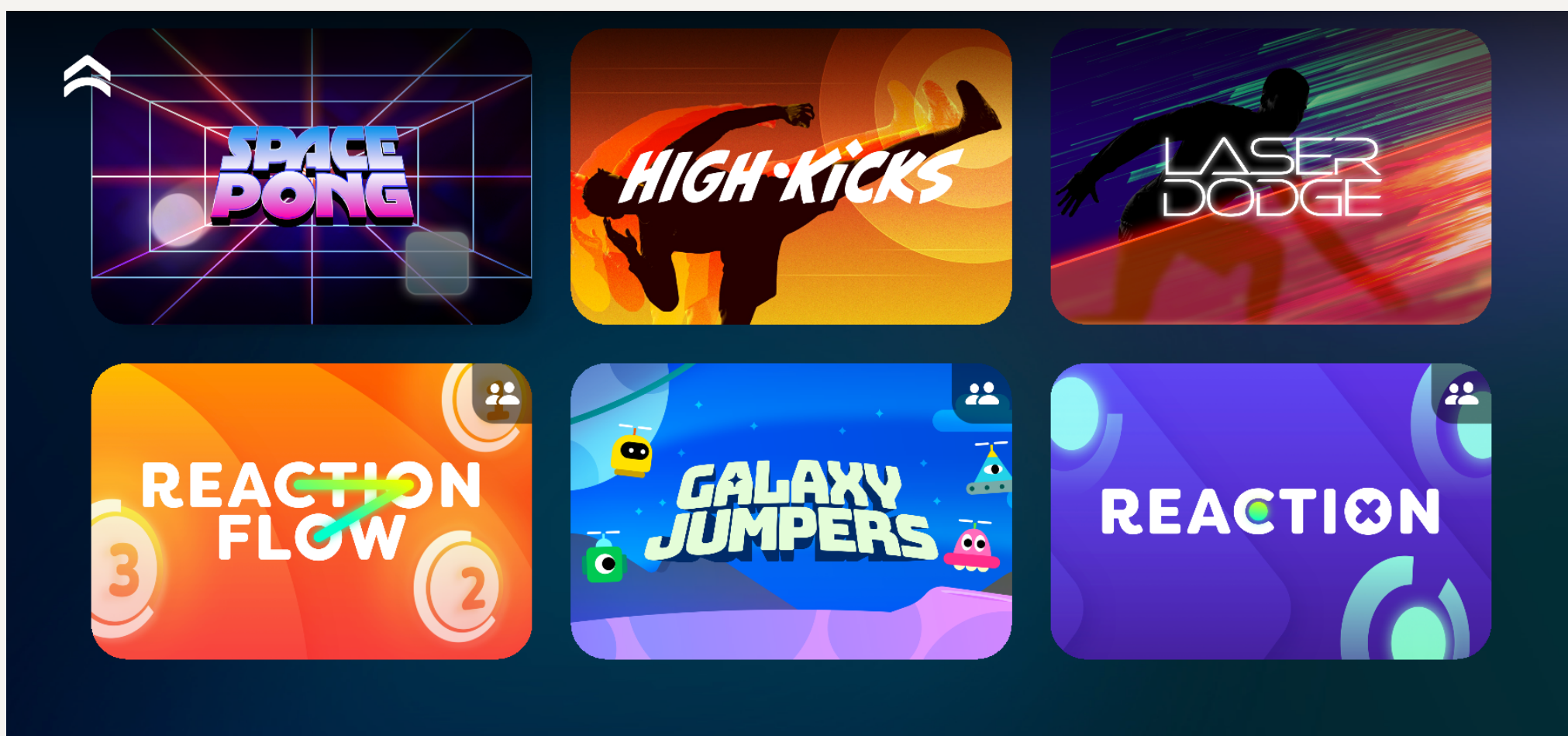
✦ Empowerment or Disempowerment?

The second tutorial triggered my reflection on my bodily practice and mentality transformation. The most significant pursuits in my bodily practice are progress and fitness. In traditional bodily practices, the fitness effect depends on the exerciser's personal sensation and takes time to see the results. That's how the "experiential self" functions (Song 2021: Lecture 2, September 8). However, this app directly transforms the fitness effect into quantified data and the number of levels you passed, enabling bodily progress visible through statistics rather than personal feelings. That's how the "quantified self" functions (Song 2021: Lecture 2, September 8).

Nowadays, the "quantified self" mode plays a significant role in life with the prevalence of wearable devices and self-tracking apps. The founder of the Quantified Self community, Gary Wolf, regarded data as "a tool for introspection," the "digital mirror" for discovering ourselves (Natasha Schüll 2016: 196). One interviewee in Quantified Life indicated that self-tracking empowered himself as "a better listener" to his own body (Btihaj Ajana 2017). However, I found these quantified figures have changed my attitude towards fitness and reinforced the cultural hegemony promoting progress and fitness. Does data veritably reflect our bodies or imperceptibly transform our bodies through the ostensible "reality"? Does "the quantified self" empower us to control our bodies or disempower our autonomy over bodies? The answer proved to be the latter ones through my bodily practice.



ACTIVE ARCADE



The Homepage of Active Arcade





WEEK 3 VIDEO SHARING & PRIVACY PROTECTION

★ The Balance between Sociability and Privacy Protection

This fitness game attracted my attention because of its sudden popularity on social media platforms - Instagram, RED, YouTube, etc. Many bloggers, from fitness ones to lifestyle ones, shared their user experiences and videos of playing fitness games to display the records they created. The app integrates fitness and entertainment, satisfying users' desire to keep fitness at home during the pandemic. In the original version, this app would automatically save the practice video and show the user's rank worldwide, allowing users to share videos on this platform and other social media platforms for display. However, I can no longer see my global ranking and other highly ranked users' videos in the updated version I downloaded. This change can be seen as a sign that the platform is transforming itself into less social and more privacy-friendly. However, will privacy security risks still exist after this privacy-friendly turning? I will explore this issue through my personal user experience and the app's mechanism.

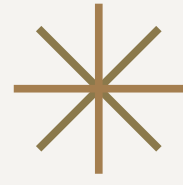
★ The Invisible Disciplinary Gaze

I appreciate this fitness game app's effort to promote privacy protection, as it prioritizes users' experience than social functionality and popularity. However, although this game no longer functions as a social media platform, it still automatically save your highlight videos by default until users turn this off. Every time I set a new record, the video will be kept in its entirety where my facial expressions, body movements and fitness environment can be fully seen.

Moreover, users' videos and data will be saved to its cloud for improving app quality. Here's how the software designers explain this setting:

"When you play games, your scores, time of recording, and the game highlight videos are automatically uploaded to our cloud infrastructure. This helps us maintain your personal records and improve app quality. Your records and videos are not accessible by any other user from Active Arcade, and we never share them without your express consent." (NEX Team Inc 2021)

The app claims to protect users' privacy from being spread and exploited. But once the user's video is uploaded to the cloud, we know nothing about how the data is stored and used. Therefore, the issue of privacy protection and digital surveillance still exists imperceptibly under the disguise of statements and policies. This app brings the question of the invisible disciplinary gaze, reminding us to rethink our autonomy over bodies in such a digital time.



ACTIVE ARCADE

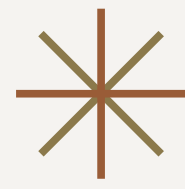


Users Experience Sharing from YouTube



My Highlight Video for "Whack A Mole" Game





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