

Short paper (4 pages in ACM-format) Research project and academic publishing, DMD 15 ECTS - referee's comments

Course description:

https://mit.itu.dk/ucs/cb/course.sml?course_id=1232604&mode=search&goto=1351772138.000

Author(s) of article: **Communicating Future Energy Challenges through Games**

Title of article: Tim Løye Skafte, Martin Hansen, Bjørn Toft Madsen, Lau Nielsen, Lars Westergaard Thomsen

Referee's name: Brit Ross Winthereik

	<i>Strong Yes</i>	<i>Weak Yes</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Weak No</i>	<i>Strong No</i>
Is the paper interesting, timely and thought provoking?	5	4	X	2	1
Is the subject matter relevant to the DMD area?	X	4	3	2	1
Is the intellectual level appropriate?	5	4	3	2	X
Is the paper written and structured clearly?	5	4	3	2	X
Are there adequate references to related work?	5	4	3	2	X
Are there sufficient graphics?	5	4	X	2	1

Recommendation (select one only)

- Accept with no changes
- Accept with minor changes
- Request a major revision
- Reject X

Comments for the editors only:

Comments which may be shown anonymously to the author(s):

The refereed short paper reports from an attempt to design a board game that would raise awareness about some of the challenges involved in the transition to new energy infrastructure. The authors have designed a board game and tested it on various people, who played the game two and two. The paper concludes that the game did not achieve what it had been designed to achieve, namely to stimulate gamer reflection on challenges involved in relying on an energy infrastructure of renewables.

There are a number of shortcomings in the paper that I would like to point to in the hope that the authors would like to explore these issues further. My comments, to be sure, are not meant to discourage, even if they are critical.

The main strength of this project lies in its recognizing of the problem that even if the government has a strong wish to move energy consumption in a direction where fossils are phased out, there may be various obstacles to this vision among citizens. The question of where to place wind turbines in the landscape therefore seems to be an immensely important one. I also find reason to believe that researching how citizens relate to renewables in general is important. And finally, I find a research approach attractive that does not shy away from actually working on people's attitudes while researching what those attitudes are.

The main weakness of the project is that the authors do not have sufficient information and insight into the challenges of scaling up on wind turbines. They seem to mainly/only draw on a report from the Climate Commission and seem to have very little understanding of this being but one position in the debate. It seems that their 'scientific prototyping' has kept them from getting a more nuanced picture on the problem. I wonder why they have not written a section which describes what the issues at stake are. What are the problems surrounding wind turbines. What kinds of dilemmas are people living in the countryside where huge wind mills are put up facing?

Recently, in 2010, there was a huge controversy in Østerild, Northern Jutland. Lots of media coverage and lots of emotion. Why not draw on this or other controversies taking place in the locations where wind turbines are put up in order to understand what the challenges are seen from the perspective of citizens.

Put differently, it seems to be unfruitful to design a game that is meant to stimulate reflection, if the designers do not have a very detailed and elaborate understanding of what the stakes are.

Therefore, I also think it is quite suspect to blame the gamers for not being able to understand the artifact and state that gamers are more interested in winning than in changing their minds about the wind turbines.

The authors need to do more research on NIMBY. NIMBY is a social movement that evolved in a very particular historical context in the UK. The authors need to explain to us the origins of the concept NIMBY and let us know why they find it relevant in a Danish context.

There is no 'NIMBY theory' as it is stated in the beginning, and if there is the authors should explain it to the readers. In fact the paper seems to be void of conceptual work, which is

another weakness, and I urge authors to think about how to use interaction design notions to understand what is at play, so to speak, when a game designed on the basis of a government report does not immerse gamers into reflecting on the matter at hand.

Minor issue: Denmark in fact has geothermal energy (in Thisted municipality), and there are ongoing experimentation with wave energy in several places in Denmark.

Good luck in further work.

Referees are asked to complete this form electronically and return it to:
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