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global network player authority PewDiePie guilt god Let's Play angel undead wtf authentic mediatization Skill pvp contest  
game rule system avatar WoW blessing noob kills demon pact body fight pop's spe ingame PSt discussion digital  
religion game analysis The Last of Us healing you're into-scape soul dialo ritual virtual identity buff priest genesis clan wedding  
simulation ludology death resurrection funeral runes immersion community symbols salvation mage Xbox 360PVE  
narrative

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(re)used by the researcher community in all cases where such context information is needed.

While context analysis always remains standardized and as such unmodified irrespective of the research question(s), the next steps of analyzing Let's Plays of course need to be chosen according to what is asked in detail in the respective research. Existing analytical approaches are numerous and diverse and may involve various analytical techniques, also when it comes to questions regarding Let's Plays and religion. For instance, depending on details of the research question(s), approaches involving coding techniques, thick description, or film analysis may be of use for certain studies, as much as network analysis may support other studies.

This article forms the first part of a planned series of articles presenting Methods for Analyzing Let's Plays. Following the detailed discussion in this article of context analysis as the indispensable first step of any Let's Play analysis, future articles will subsequently highlight and illustrate precise analytical approaches (such as thick description, coding, network analysis, etc.) including concrete and practical analytical steps, discussed again using one game as an example. Look out for these articles in the following regular issues of *gamevironments*!

### **Prerequisite: Archiving**

Contextualization, the initial step forming the first part of the analysis, necessarily begins with data archiving. In the academic discourse it is without doubt, that the material of analysis has to be archived so it can be accessed and verified at any time. But, a particular problem of digital media research in general and of the research of *gameenvironments* (Radde-Antweiler, Waltemathe, Zeiler 2014) in particular is the

















































Play.

When it comes to language, the differentiation between comments and commenters of course is blurred. While the majority of the discussion may take place in one language, a number of commenters may choose to use another language. This may disclose personal choices, opinions and preferences of a commenter. Especially in the global context, which language(s) are chosen in which context may be a conscious statement of a commenter referencing to normative language uses of the commenter's cultural, national, or regional background.

Example from the case study:

The comment discussion for the Let's Play takes place (by far) predominantly in English. Only very few individual comments are posted in another language.

*Time frame, date, frequency*

This gives basic information on the temporal frame of the comments, and of their frequency. When was the first comment on a specific Let's Play posted? How long was this after the Let's Play itself was uploaded? In which frequency were the comments posted, how are the intervals between postings? How did these intervals change as more time passed since the Let's Play upload, indicating how the commenters' interest in the Let's Play changed over time? When was the last comment posted?

Some of these details may be difficult to retrieve as YouTube does not display exact information on the posting date of a comment. What is always immediately traceable is the total number of comments and the information on when the last comment was posted (for example 'four days ago'), the latter by using the "Newest first" display















