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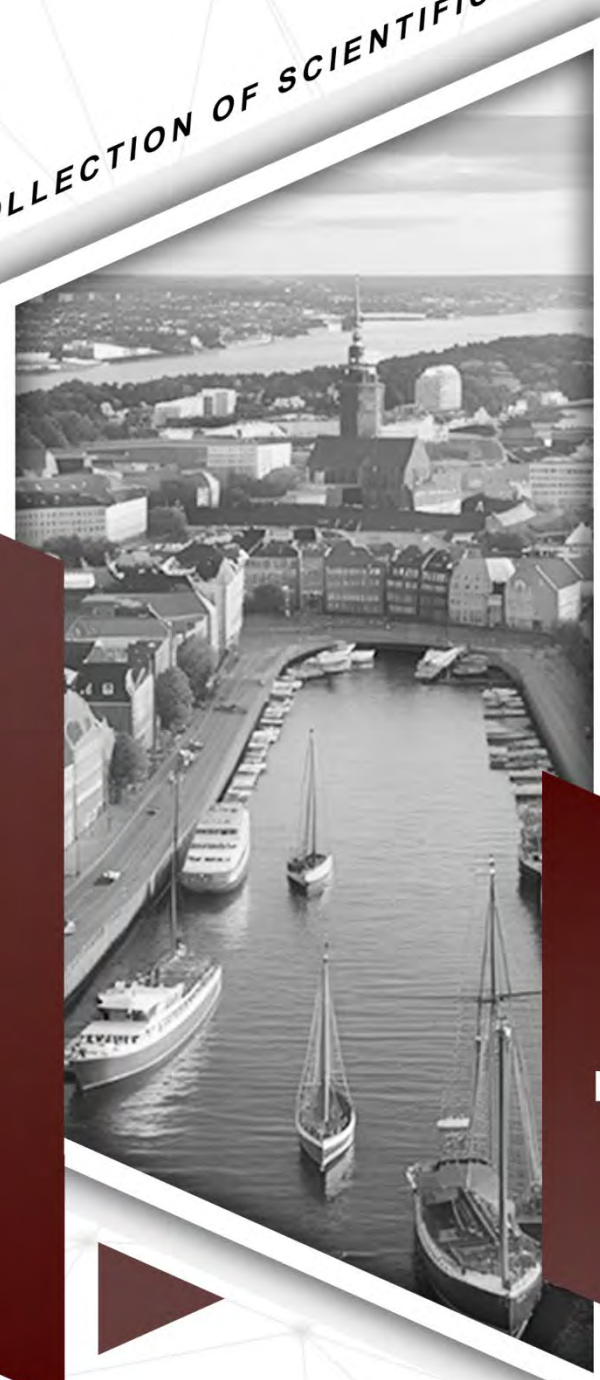

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DESIGN FEATURES OF THE MAIN ELEMENTS AND CARRIERS OF THE CORPORATE IDENTITY OF AN INDIE GAME

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Abstract. The paper investigates the design features of the main elements and carriers of the corporate identity of an indie game as an essential component of its visual identification and marketing communication. The specifics of identity formation for indie projects within the context of contemporary digital culture and the game development industry are analyzed. The roles of the logo, color palette, typography, illustrative elements, and digital media in creating a cohesive visual image of the game are identified. The adaptation of corporate identity to digital platforms, social media, Steam pages, game interfaces, and promotional materials is examined. It is established that an effective indie game identity ensures product recognition, emotional connection with the audience, and competitiveness in the video game market.

Keywords: indie game, corporate identity, brand identity, design, logo, video games, game development, visual communication, brand, digital design.

Introduction. The computer games industry is one of the most dynamic sectors of digital media and contemporary culture. A special place within it is occupied by indie games — independent projects created by small teams or individual developers. Unlike large AAA studios, indie developers often operate with limited financial resources, making an effective corporate identity a critical tool for game promotion.

The corporate identity of an indie game fulfills not only an aesthetic but also a communicative function. It helps establish a recognizable image of the game, conveying its atmosphere, genre specifics, and emotional tone. In the digital environment, brand identity attracts users' attention on platforms such as Steam, Epic Games Store, itch.io, and social media. A defining characteristic of indie game corporate identity is the combination of creative freedom, an experimental approach, and distinctive artistic style. Unlike mass commercial projects, indie games often feature a unique visual concept that becomes the foundation of the game's brand.

The relevance of this study lies in the need to analyze contemporary approaches to creating the visual identity of indie games and to identify the design features of their main elements and carriers.

Research Aim and Objectives. The aim of the study is to identify the design features of the main elements and carriers of corporate identity for indie games. To achieve this aim, the following objectives were set: to analyze the concept of corporate identity and its role in the game development industry; to identify the specific characteristics of indie game brand identity; to examine the design of the main elements of indie game corporate identity and define their typical solutions; to characterize the digital and print carriers of indie game corporate identity; to identify current design trends in indie games.

Research Results and Discussion. The issues of branding and visual identity were studied by F. Kotler, D. Aaker [10] and A. Wheeler [4]. In their works, they examined brand as a system of visual and emotional characteristics that shape the consumer's perception of a product. In particular, A. Wheeler [4] defines identity as a comprehensive system of visual communication that ensures brand coherence and recognition. D. Aaker [10] emphasizes the significance of the emotional component of the brand and its influence on audience loyalty. In the field of digital design, important contributions were made by S. Krug [6] and D. Norman [8], dedicated to analyzing user interaction with digital interfaces and the role of visual design in shaping a positive user experience.

Ukrainian scholars are also actively investigating issues of brand identity and digital design. I. Prodan [9] analyzes the relationship between the concepts of "identity" and "corporate identity," emphasizing the role of visual communication in shaping the emotional perception of a brand. N. Kravchenko [5] explores dynamic identity and adaptive visual identification systems, which are especially relevant for digital products and video games. The study by R. Mykhailova and A. Parfylo [7] examines adaptive logos, modular design systems, and interactive branding elements, which are increasingly applied in the digital environment. Significant attention to digital identity research is given in the works of O. Vasyliev. In the dissertation "Design of E-Commerce Websites: Evolution and Aesthetic Aspects" [1] the author analyzes the visual identity system (VIS), compositional solutions, and the color and typographic features of digital platforms. The researcher identifies the logo, favicon, and both desktop and mobile versions of the website as the primary brand carriers in the digital environment. In other works, O. Vasyliev [2, 3] examines page structure, typography, color solutions, animation, and multimedia elements as key components of contemporary digital identity.

Thus, contemporary research highlights the importance of a systematic approach to creating the corporate identity of digital products, including indie games. Branding issues in the field of indie games remain insufficiently studied. However, current scholarly works indicate the growing role of visual identity in fostering gaming community loyalty and promoting game products in the digital environment [11].

Based on the results of the conducted study, it has been established that the corporate identity of an indie game is a system of visual elements that ensure product recognition and form an emotional connection with the user. Unlike large commercial projects, indie games are often distinguished by experimental aesthetics, an authorial artistic approach, and a unique atmosphere. The defining characteristic of an indie game's identity is its conceptual coherence: all design elements must support a unified artistic idea and reflect the game's genre, narrative, or emotional tone.

The main elements of an indie game's identity are the logo, color palette, typography, illustrations, and graphic elements. Let us examine the design features of each in more detail.

The logo is the central element of an indie game's identity; therefore, its design must be recognizable, emotionally expressive, adaptive, and stylistically aligned with the game's concept. Indie game logos frequently incorporate custom typefaces, illustrative elements, minimalist forms, and symbols related to the game's narrative or atmosphere. Today, three main types of logos are characteristic of indie games: typographic, graphic, and combination. Typographic logos are based on unique custom fonts and are often used in narrative and cozy games. For example, the Undertale logo is designed in a minimalist typographic style that reinforces the game's retro aesthetic and emotional character. Graphic logos feature symbols or visual elements connected to the game's narrative or atmosphere. The Hollow Knight logo, for instance, combines decorative typography with character symbolism to create a recognizable visual image. Combination logos, which merge typographic and graphic components, are used in projects such as Celeste and Cuphead, where the logo design supports the overall stylistic direction and atmosphere of the game. Pixel art games typically feature logos in the pixel art style, while narrative games often use handwritten or decorative typefaces. An important contemporary trend is the creation of adaptive logos suitable for use across various digital formats — banners, icons, Steam materials, and social media.

The color palette shapes the emotional perception of the game and reinforces its atmosphere. Indie games are characterized by the use of a limited palette, stylized retro tones, contrasting accents, and atmospheric gradients. In particular, horror games typically employ dark and desaturated colors — muted tones with reduced saturation, close to grey. Cozy games predominantly use warm pastel tones, sci-fi games employ cold neon colors, while fantasy games favor natural and saturated hues. At the same time, the color system must remain cohesive and consistent across all brand carriers.

Typography is an important tool for establishing the atmosphere of a game. In indie game development, custom typefaces, pixel fonts, handwritten scripts, and minimalist sans-serif typefaces are widely used. Custom fonts provide a unique visual style and strengthen the individuality of the game. At the same time, the typeface must remain legible both in the in-game interface and in promotional materials. Beyond its

functional role, typography also fulfills an emotional function by supporting the overall aesthetic style and mood of the game.

One of the defining characteristics of indie games is their distinctive artistic style. Consequently, concept art, characters, patterns, icons, animation elements, and UI details serve as important components of the corporate identity. Graphic elements are typically grounded in the artistic style of the game itself: for example, in pixel art games, all components of the identity may be executed in pixel style, ensuring the visual coherence of the brand.

The primary carrier of an indie game's identity is its page on digital storefronts, particularly Steam, Epic Games Store, and itch.io. This is where the user first encounters the game's brand. Key elements of visual communication include capsule art, banners, screenshots, trailers, the game logo, and icon. The visual design of the page must create a cohesive artistic image and convey the atmosphere of the game.

Social media serve as an important tool for promoting indie games and shaping their visual identity. For digital platforms, branded post templates, teasers, GIF animations, short video clips, and profile designs are created. Teasers are used to attract audience attention through intrigue, vivid visual imagery, or gameplay snippets. Motion design and short-form video content have gained particular importance in indie game promotion, providing a dynamic brand presentation and increasing user engagement.

The interface is also a key component of a game's identity. Menus, HUD elements, buttons, and animations typically align with the artistic concept of the project and support the integrity of the visual style. Contemporary indie games frequently employ minimalist UI design, diegetic interfaces, animated transitions, and interactive elements that contribute to a richer and more immersive user experience.

The promotional carriers of an indie game include posters, digital banners, trailers, presentation materials, crowdfunding platform pages (notably Kickstarter), and merchandise. Indie games are characterized by an emphasis on atmosphere, distinctive artistic style, and the emotional perception of the brand. Merchandise is an important tool for building a community around the game, contributing to increased project recognition and sustaining audience engagement. The most common types of merchandise include T-shirts, stickers, artbooks, posters, and collector's editions. Merchandise design typically aligns with the overall visual concept of the game and ensures the coherence of its brand.

Among the current design trends in indie games, it is appropriate to highlight minimalism, retro aesthetics, pixel art, hand-drawn style, adaptive identity and motion design, as well as the integration of the interface with the game's artistic style. Particular mention should be made of the active use of animation and interactive elements in indie game branding, which enhances emotional reception and user engagement.

Conclusions. The study has established that the corporate identity of an indie game is an essential component of its visual identity and marketing communication. The main elements of brand identity are the logo, color palette, typography, as well as illustrative and animation elements.

It has been determined that the design of an indie game's corporate identity must be grounded in conceptual coherence and correspond to the genre and atmosphere of the project. Digital carriers play a particularly important role in contemporary game development, including Steam pages, social media, game interfaces, and promotional materials.

The study has shown that an effective indie game identity contributes to the formation of brand recognition, increases audience engagement, and ensures the competitiveness of the project in the video game market.

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