'Slave Trade' video game altered after social media backlash

September 3 2015, byDerrik J. Lang

This photo shows the educational video games, "Playing History: The Plague," "Playing History: Slave Trade" and "Playing History: Vikings," on a computer screen Wednesday, Sept. 2, 2015, in Los Angeles. The creator of "Playing History: Slave Trade" removed a level which featured black slave characters being dropped into a ship similar to the video game "Tetris." (AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes)

An educational video game has been edited following a social media backlash over a scene depicting slaves being packed into a ship.

The creators of "Playing History: Slave Trade" removed a level Monday which featured black slave characters being dropped into a ship similar to the video game "Tetris."

"Apologies to people who were offended by us using game mechanics to underline the point of how inhumane slavery was," read a statement posted on the game's page on Steam, an online store. "The goal was to enlighten and educate people—not to get sidetracked discussing a small 15-second part of the game."

The scene was also removed from the official trailer for the title, which was originally released by Copenhagen-based developer Serious Games Interactive in 2013.

"Slave Trade," which is intended to teach children ages 11 to 14 about slavery in the 18th century, casts players for most of the game as a young slave steward named Putij, who serves on a ship crossing the Atlantic Ocean.

The game captured attention last week when it went on sale on Steam and was promptly chastised on social media for trivializing slavery with the stacking segment. Serious Games founder Simon Egenfeldt-Nielsen took to Twitter to defend "Slave Trade" against the controversy before deleting his account Tuesday.

"Our decision to adjust a small part of the game was not because people were screaming and threatening us, which they of course still are, but because contrary to some we actually want the discussion to be about using games for learning difficult topics, and not whether we are sensationalist, inflammatory and racist," said Egenfeldt-Nielsen in an

email Thursday. "It was attempt to create a room for people to bend towards each other, and not make it about who is right or wrong."
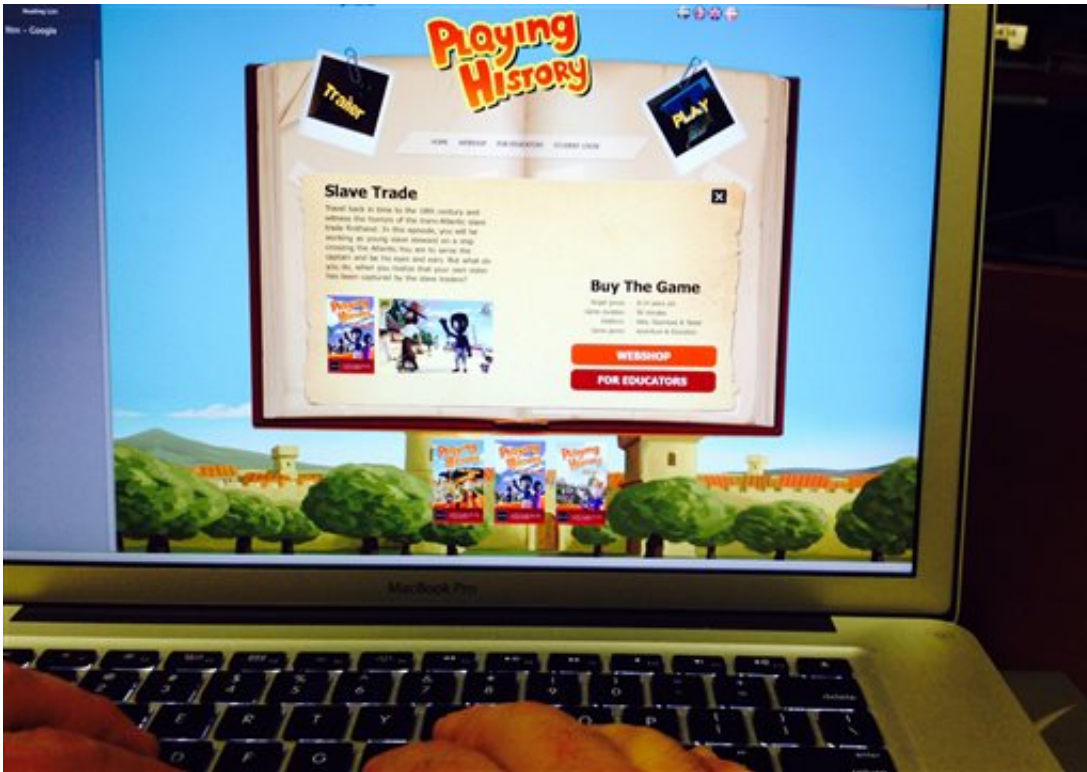
This photo shows the educational video game, "Playing History: Slave Trade," on a computer screen Wednesday, Sept. 2, 2015, in Los Angeles. The video game has been edited following social media backlash over a scene depicting slaves being loaded into a ship. (AP Photo)

While the "Tetris"-like slave-stacking level has been excised from the game, a talking mouse character who guides players still says at one point: "Slave traders didn't look upon slaves as people but as a product. They therefore stacked the slaves on top of each other to get as many as possible shipped."

Other titles in the Serious Games' "Playing History" series include

"Playing History: Vikings" and "Playing History: The Plague."

More information: www.playinghistory.eu

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