

Video Game Cultures 2023

Exploring New Horizons



7 September - 9 September 2023 / University of Klagenfurt (Austria)

Exploration, the excitement of the new and unknown, is a superstructural driving force in game design, -engineering, and -studies. Yet, it is a concept of prevalent paradoxes, too, making it necessary for developers, coders, and scholars to navigate along a fine line between established ideas of investigations in key issues and the unorthodox overcoming of boundaries. Those making video games can facilitate exploration with genre conventions supporting the sensation or dare to discover new configurations of video game experiences. Those involved with gaming hardware are keen on pushing the limits of current-gen technology or usher in the next hardware sensation to literally change the game. Academics of all disciplines are keen on finding the right tools for analysis within their respective orthodoxies or to prepare their collapse in favour of sustainable interdisciplinarity. To find out where the future of the medium lies, what is left to do is explore exploration as such.

Video Game Cultures 2023 will therefore investigate various ways in which video game cultures, technologies, practices, communities, paratexts and genres develop within the framework of five thematic tracks. As digital games encompass an expanding range of highly complex and variant phenomena, this often leads to an overlap of issues across themes, so we are inviting participants of all backgrounds (academic, developer, producer, player, fan etc.) to submit proposals to this interdisciplinary event. The results of the event will be archived in two ways. There will be a publication of proceedings broadly dealing with exploration, as well as a thematic anthology concerned with a special focus:

Walking simulators as games of exploration. How they facilitate the exploration of avatars in a virtual geography, how they incentivise developers to explore mechanics, aesthetics, and narration off traditional genre grids, etc...

Participants are encouraged to think broadly within and across thematic tracks, and submissions can address topics and questions relevant to games such as, but not limited to:

1) Narrative and History:

Histories and historical narratives. Historical practices of developers and players. Time and textuality. Creation and analysis of interactive narrative media. Intertextual and comparative perspectives. Adaptation and media exchange.

2) Gender and Sexuality:

Changing player demographics. Love/Romance/Desire/Sexuality in videogames. Gender socialization and young players. Sexual harassment in virtual gaming environments. Gender- and sexual politics in the industry.

3) Ethics and Affect:

The affective turn in game studies and design. Ethics of design and experience. Roles of affect and emotion in play. The role of agency. Games as (dis-)empowerment. Affective and emotional design. Fan engagement and -cultures.

4) Hardware and Space:

Inventions in gaming and their socio-cultural impact. The correlation of processing power and video game history. Control, input devices and movement. Virtual reality devices and gaming cultures. The future of immersion and embodiment.

5) Ludification and Simulation:

Gameplay models beyond video game studies. Playful elements in non-gaming applications. Economic, social sciences, healthcare applications of ludic activity. Playful elements on users in serious applications.

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Potential approaches related to the above-mentioned areas include:

Video Games and Gaming:

- Theories and concepts of play.
- Video game spaces.
- Video games beyond entertainment.
- Convergence culture.
- Multidisciplinary approaches to video game analysis.
- Game genres.

The Designer's Perspective:

- (R-)evolutionary game design.
- How to overcome the dictates of fun and/or challenge.
- Music and sound design for games.
- Visual design and art for games.
- Videogame design post-mortems.

Video Game Cultures:

- Usage trends and emerging practices in online and offline play.
- Games as cultural artefacts.
- Pervasive gaming.
- Representation and identity.
- Studying fan cultures and stardom.
- What is 'fun'?

We encourage the submission of proposals for academic papers, short workshops, practitioner-based activities, best-practice showcases, how-to sessions, live demonstrations, performances, and pre-formed panels. We particularly welcome short film screenings, photographic essays, installations, interactive talks, and alternative presentation styles that encourage engagement.

Further details can be found at our conference website:

<https://vgc2023.itec.aau.at/>

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What to send:

300-word abstracts, proposals and other forms of contribution should be submitted by 15 April 2023. All submissions will be minimally double reviewed, under anonymous (blind) conditions, by a global panel drawn from members of the Project Team and the Video Game Cultures Advisory Board. In practice, our procedures usually entail that by the time a proposal is accepted, it will have been triple and quadruple reviewed.

You will be notified of the panel's decision on 29 May 2023.

Abstracts may be in Word, RTF, or Notepad formats.

Two versions are required:

- 1) One with the following information and in this order:
 - a) author(s)
 - b) affiliation as you would like it to appear in the programme
 - c) e-mail address
 - d) title of proposal
 - e) body of proposal (300 words)
 - f) up to ten keywords
- 2) Another version without items a) to c).

All abstracts must be submitted via **easychair**: <https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=vgc2023>.

(Please note: If you do not have an easychair account yet, the link will ask you to register before submission.)

Ethos

This event is designed to be an inclusive academic research and publishing project. It aims to bring people together from different areas and interests to share ideas and explore various discussions which are innovative and exciting. Currently, we therefore plan for a fully on-campus conference and remain keenly aware of the potential necessity for hybrid or online modes of participation.

We believe it is a mark of personal courtesy to and professional respect for your colleagues that all delegates should attend for the full duration of the conference and participate in all presentations. While limited options for hybrid participation can be made available under exceptional circumstances, the main intention of Video Game Cultures 2023 is to create a personal, in-presence experience for its participants and to facilitate community building. Please consider this carefully when submitting an abstract for presentation.

All papers accepted for and presented at the conference must be in English and will be eligible for publication. Selected papers will be developed for publication in a themed hardcopy volume.

The Video Game Cultures 2023 Organising Chairs are:

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