GAMES MATTERS. Innovating game studies and research

SAE Institute – Conservatory of Matera - Polytechnic University of Bari
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The rapid evolution of technology has profoundly influenced the way games are designed, experienced, and interpreted. As a medium that blends artistic vision, technological advancement, and cultural narratives, games represent a fertile ground for examining innovation at multiple levels. The integration of artificial intelligence, procedural generation, immersive technologies, and interactive storytelling has reshaped not only game mechanics but also the very nature of player engagement and creative authorship.

This shifting landscape raises fundamental questions about the future of game studies:
- How do emerging technologies redefine the artistic value and aesthetic language of video games?
- In what ways do advancements in game design—such as AI-driven content creation and adaptive storytelling—challenge traditional authorship and creative processes?
- How does the intersection of technology and gaming impact broader cultural narratives, from representations of identity and diversity to the formation of digital communities?

To address these inquiries, this conference, "On Games Matters: Innovating Game Studies", seeks to explore how innovation in game design, artistic expression, and socio-cultural dynamics is transforming our understanding of video games as a creative and cultural form.

Conference Scope and Key Themes

We invite original contributions that foster a dialogue on the evolving landscape of game studies, particularly reflecting innovative theoretical perspectives and applied research. The conference is structured around **three main panels**, each focusing on a distinct yet interconnected aspect of game studies:

Games and the Arts

Examining the intersection between video games and artistic practices, this panel welcomes research on the aesthetic dimensions of gaming, including visual design, narrative structures, soundscapes, and performative aspects of gameplay. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Games as artistic expression and interactive storytelling

- Visual and sonic aesthetics in video game design

- Experimental and avant-garde game projects

- Games and transmedia artistic practices

Game Design and Innovation

This panel focuses on the evolution of game mechanics, player experiences, and the impact of emerging technologies on game design. Scholars, developers, and industry professionals are encouraged to submit research on:

- AI and procedural content generation in game design

- Immersive experiences (VR, AR, XR) and their implications

- Accessibility and inclusive game development

- The impact of UX/UI innovations on player engagement

- Ethical considerations in AI-driven game design

Games, Society, and Culture

Games are powerful cultural artifacts that influence and reflect social realities. This panel invites research on the socio-cultural implications of gaming, including issues of representation, identity, and community-building. Topics include:

- The role of games in shaping social norms and behaviors

- Gender, diversity, and inclusion in gaming communities

- Games as educational and political tools

- Ethical concerns in game development and monetization

The conference will conclude with a **roundtable discussion** featuring three keynote speakers, offering a broader reflection on the present and future directions of game studies.

Submission Guidelines

We invite scholars, researchers, designers, and industry professionals to submit **extended abstracts** of up to **300 words**, including a title, research question, methodology, and key findings. Submissions should clearly indicate the panel they are addressing. The deadline for abstract submission is **June the 30th**, and notifications of acceptance will be sent by **July the 15th**.

Accepted presenters will have the opportunity to submit a **full paper** for consideration in a peer-reviewed publication following the conference. Further details on the publication process will be provided upon acceptance.

Abstracts should be submitted in **PDF format** via email to **cts.milano@sae.edu** with the subject line: *Games Matters – Abstract Submission*. The abstract should be no longer than 500 words, including a short bibliography. it should be clear the subject, the detail of the methods, and an introduction of the main results. Authors should add two-lines short bio to the abstract.

We look forward to your contributions to advancing the dialogue on game studies and shaping the future of this evolving field.

Timeline

June the 30th deadline abstract submission

July 15th confirmation of acceptance of a selection of abstracts

September the 30th full papers draft submission [4.000 words, references excluded]

December the 1st final version full papers submission

Proceedings will be published in a e-book, by P+Arts Academic Press House; a selection of the extended version of the papers [8.000 words, references included] will be considered eligible for a special issue with an international peer-reviewed scientific journa.. More details will be shared after the first submission.

Conference fee

The conference is free of charge.

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