Welcome to the inaugural issue of the International Journal of Game-Based Learning (IJGBL), a journal dedicated to the latest empirical research findings in the field of Game-Based Learning (GBL).

It is a great pleasure to introduce the inaugural edition of the journal. The enthusiasm and support surrounding the start of IJGBL has been very encouraging and promising. I hope that it will foster the exchange of new ideas among researchers and practitioners, and contribute to a better appreciation and a wider adoption of GBL.

IJGBL publishes articles, from a wide range of disciplines, which contribute to the understanding of the successful design and implementation of video games for learning and training purposes (e.g., literature reviews, case studies, or controlled studies). These articles should be relevant to academics, researchers, students, and practitioners who want to comprehend the important roles and applications of educational games, in terms of teaching strategies, instructional design, educational psychology, and game design. Whilst students and researchers will find valuable publications on the process of designing and developing effective educational games, educators will find articles that inform best practices for the integration of video games in instructional settings. Company managers should obtain information pertinent to innovative and cost-effective game-based learning solutions. Policy makers should discover papers that present new and effective media for learning.

The objectives of this journal are to publish empirical evidence on the design and deployment of GBL, to understand the cognitive and psychological processes involved in GBL, to compare the development and use of GBL across different research fields and countries, and to provide practical recommendations to developers and instructors.

All papers submitted to IJGBL shall contribute to the existing body of knowledge in GBL. They should describe the collection and analysis of empirical data, present theoretical models that further explain how motivation and learning occur in GBL systems, or provide practical information on the integration of GBL in educational settings.

IJGBL is committed to publish high-quality papers. Papers submitted to IJGBL should adhere to the journal editorial policy. Upon submission, each manuscript is sent to at least three reviewers, and evaluated through a double-blind review process, which guarantees anonymity and a fair and impartial evaluation. IJGBL’s review board includes international
experts from more than 15 countries, proficient in game design, instructional design, psychology, eLearning, and multimedia technology. The quality and relevance of the manuscripts submitted to IJGBL is also assessed by the editor, the associate editors and the International Advisory Board (IAB), who have a significant experience and publication record in the area.

IJGBL will also publish book reviews and at least one special issue per year. Papers in these special issues will be selected from workshops and conferences. If you are interested in becoming a guest editor for a special issue of IJGBL, please feel free to contact the editor.

The articles included in this issue touch on the most important challenges in GBL, and provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of play in Europe and the United States of America. These papers, authored by noted scholars, illustrate key debates and trends such as the formalization of guidelines for GBL (Pivec and Pivec), the assessment of educational video games (Becker), the design of environments that accounts for users’ emotions (Raybourn), the creation of adaptive and personalized game mechanics to improve learning and motivation (Kickmeier-Rust, Mattheiss et al.), the utilization of video games for science education (Anagnostou and Pappa), and the improvement of motivation and engagement in educational video games (Whitton).

The first article, entitled *Digital Games: Changing Education, One Raid at a Time*, is written by Paul and Maja Pivec who define and explain the requirements for successful educational video games. As prominent scholars in the field of GBL, Paul and Maja Pivec have contributed to an in-depth understanding of the cognitive and motivational aspects of video games. In this article, they describe the challenges faced by designers and instructors for the successful design and deployment of educational video games, and provide relevant guidelines to address these issues.

The second article is entitled *The Magic Bullet: A Tool for Assessing and Evaluating Learning Potential in Games*. This article is written by Katrin Becker, an expert in the field of educational technology and instructional game design, whose research centers on the design and analysis of commercial games for serious purposes. In this article, Katrin Becker highlights the lack of methodologies to assess digital learning resources, and supports the need for a simple yet effective framework to evaluate educational video games. She presents her model, that she has named ‘The Magic Bullet’, which classifies learning opportunities in video games, and provides a means to evaluate and compare educational video games.

The third article, written by Elaine Raybourn and entitled *Honing Emotional Intelligence with Game-Based Crucible Experiences*, explores how emotional intelligence can be accounted for in the design of GBL systems. Elaine Raybourn, an authority in the conception of personalized training systems, describes a case study where a GBL training system, that featured crucible experiences, was employed by the United States Marines to improve intercultural communication, cross-cultural coordination, and decision-making skills. The system included a non-violent intercultural mission with six scenarios, each with different levels of difficulty and emotional experiences. Elaine Raybourn describes how the system made it possible for the marines to harness their emotional intelligence and to improve their decision-making skills under stress.

The fourth article is written by Michael Kickmeier-Rust, Elke Mattheiss, Christina Steiner, and Dietrich Albert, who have significant experience in the design of adaptive educational video games. In their paper entitled *A Psycho-Pedagogical Framework for Multi-Adaptive Educational Games*, they address the challenge of developing non-intrusive adaptive GBL systems. Using an innovative approach that accounts for both the didactic and dramatic aspects of educational video games, they explain how micro- and macro-adaptivity can help to improve both players’ enjoyment and skills. They illustrate the effectiveness of their framework with descriptions and analyses of two case studies they conducted in France and Austria.
The fifth article, entitled *Video Game Genre Affordances for Physics Education*, is written by Kostas Anagnostou and Anastasia Pappa, two prominent researchers from Greece, who use virtual worlds and video games to teach physics. By combining their background in both astrophysics and computer graphics, they developed highly interactive GBL environments to support the understanding of physics concepts. In their article, they describe the limitations of traditional school settings to teach physics. They explain how simulations and video games can provide learners with more opportunities for hands-on experiences, where they can learn by doing. The authors present guidelines that inform the choice of video games for teaching, based on game genres, featured types of interaction, and opportunities for reflection.

In the sixth and last article entitled *Encouraging Engagement in Game-Based Learning*, Nicola Whitton, from Manchester Metropolitan University, describes her experience of designing, deploying and evaluating an Alternate Reality Game (ARG). ARGs usually provide a high level of engagement, and involve users in a series of interactive and collaborative challenges that foster problem-solving skills, and stimulate curiosity and collaboration between users. Nicola Whitton explains how an ARG was used to support the student induction process in both Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Bolton. She identifies issues preventing the increase of users’ engagement in ARGs, and proposes solutions based on her experience.

I hope that you will enjoy reading the inaugural issue and that you will consider contributing to subsequent issues of this journal.

I would like to express my gratitude to the authors for their invaluable contribution and collaboration. I would also like to thank the members of the International Editorial Review Board (IERB), the International Advisory Board (IAB) and the associate editors, who have joined me for this exciting new publication.

Patrick Felicia  
Editor-in-Chief,  
IJGBL

*Patrick Felicia, PhD, is a lecturer, course leader and researcher at Waterford Institute of Technology, where he teaches and supervises postgraduate students. He obtained his MSc in Multimedia Technology in 2003 and PhD in Computer Science in 2009 from University College Cork, Ireland. His research interests and expertise are mainly in Game-Based Learning, Multimedia, Educational Psychology and Instructional Design. He has served on program committees for international Game-Based Learning and Technology-Enhanced Learning conferences, and is also editor of the forthcoming Handbook of Research on Improving Learning and Motivation through Educational Games: Multidisciplinary Approaches, IGI (to be published in 2011).*