Editorial Preface

Why Do We Do It – Play the Game?

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This issue kicks off 2017 with game research on the players. Authors have investigated a range of problems across a range of players – from the young to the elderly, why people play. When it comes to games, the question is not "what is appropriate?" but rather, "what do people enjoy? Who should we design for? How does it affect their lived experiences away from games? And, how do we provide access to games to those with limited prior experience?"

In our opening article, Harnadi examines four research questions: (a) Which factors have an influence on an individual's intention to adopt online gaming technologies? (b) What are the relationships among these factors? (c) Which relationships represent significant causal effects and which represent significant moderation effects? (d) What are the theoretical and practical implications of the answers to the preceding three questions? Through these questions, we see the differences between what experts and novices pay attention to in game play. This approach provides insight into skill development ranging between beginners and accomplished practitioners. The study replicates the observation that experts are not always consciously aware of all the knowledge and skills they use within their practice – also known as the expert blind spot. A mixed-method approach was implemented in this study; drawing from game metrics, eye tracking and in-person interviews for analysis.

In article two, Zaharias, Chatzeparaskevaidou, & Karaoli examine 2D and 3D games for their potential for helping students to learn geography in primary school. They explore whether 2D and 3D games offer greater motivation and learning effectiveness, and general user experience. They noted differences in familiarity in students' experiences with 2D and 3D games, and observe d a novelty effect with 3D games, and observe the challenges of providing educational games that are capable of sustaining engagement – chocolate covered broccoli syndrome. Interestingly, the 3D game increased cognitive load, and provided some challenge for users as steep learning curve, but as providing greater motivation to students.

In article three, DeSchutter presents an analysis of potential roadblocks and opportunities for the design of games (and other playful activities) for ageing players. They propose a framework for games designed for older adults. This framework prioritizes meaningful play as the objective of game design for older adults, and identifies iterative player-centered design as its recommended design approach, and 3) extends the MDA (Mechanics, Dynamics and Aesthetics) framework for older adults and strongly rejects ageist views on games in later life. The author aims to inspire designers to focus on the inherent qualities of digital games, consider ageing as a process of both growth and decline, and to steer the discourse of game design for the elderly into a positive and inclusive direction.

In article four, Siyahhan, Ingram-Goble, Barab, & Solomou offer support for the view that video games can be designed to provide opportunities to aid children in developing dispositions of caring and compassion. The article provides a reflection upon the design and implementation of TavCats, a game designed to provide children an opportunity to advance on the Compassionate Wisdom social

commitment in the game platform Quest Atlantis. The game was designed so that children experience the value and meaning of acting in compassionate and caring ways, rather than explicit instruction, where children are told the meaning and importance of compassion and caring.

The articles offer insights and some new directions about design, player motivation, and the people who play games, and new audiences, as in the elderly. Game research should provide studies from many perspectives. Not just for the player, but how game play transfers into the lived experiences of people away from games, and also as entertainment for spectators. As game researchers, we have been given a potentially rich area for psychological research for studying game play, and the players from a variety of perspectives. Enjoy!

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