Introduction to the Special Issue

Selected Articles from the 2017 International DIGRA Conference

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE

The 2017 Digital Games Research Association International Conference (DiGRA 2017) was held in Melbourne, 3-6 July 2017. Swinburne University of Technology, RMIT University and The University of Melbourne joined together to host the conference.The DiGRA International Conference series offers a venue for research from all disciplines to present and discuss games-related research. Founded in 2003, DiGRA is the premiere non-profit international association for academics and professionals who research both digital and analogue games and

associated phenomena. Since its beginnings, it has encouraged high-quality research on games, and promotes collaboration and dissemination of work by its members.

DiGRA 2017 received 55 full paper submissions. From these submissions, 21 full papers were selected for publication in the DiGRA 2017 conference proceedings and to be presented at the conference. All submitted full papers were subjected to a peer review by an independent international reviewing committee. All full papers were reviewed in their entirety by at least three reviewers. DiGRA 2017 also received 97 extended abstract submissions. From these submissions, 67 extended abstracts were selected for presentation at the conference. All extended abstracts were peer reviewed by a panel including track chairs, program chairs and other reviewers as required. DiGRA 2017 received 10 panel proposals. From these proposals, 7 panels were selected for participation in the conference. Panels were selected by a panel of the conference and program chairs.

From the 88 full paper and extended abstract submissions, 10 submissions were invited to participate in this special issue. Papers were selected from the conference submissions that were given the highest rating by reviewers in each track. Track chairs were also asked to recommend the best submissions from each track. Effort was made to select submissions from across all tracks in the conference to reflect the diversity of submissions to the conference in the special issue. Papers for the special issue were each reviewed by two reviewers and a meta-reviewer. Feedback from reviewers was used by authors to revise and rework the seven papers in this special issue.

In the first paper in this collection, **Fraser Allison**, **Ewa Luger** and **Katja Hofmann** report on an observational lab-based study of high school students playing Minecraft alongside a companion AI character that learned from their actions and inputs. **Mia Consalvo** and **Christopher Paul** explicate the concept, value-crafting, through an examination of the way indie game

developers rhetorically construct the heterogenous array of practices they use in making, marketing and selling their games as being successful in some fashion. **Emily Crawford** explores collective anxieties concerning the fallibility and limitations of digital technologies through an examination of fan fiction narratives of horror and game "glitches". **Emilie Reed's** paper examines the tensions and intersections between spectating and interacting experienced by visitors to museum exhibitions of digital games. **Alexandra To** and her co-authors discuss the design and playing experience of a board game, *Outbreak,* which they designed to create "comfort" around curiosity through the mitigation of aversion to failure, and "comfort" around questioning to further support players' curious engagement. **José Antonio González Zarandona**, **Adam Chapman** and **Darshana Jayemanne** consider the ethical challenges with representing the destruction of historically and nationally significant heritage sites in video games. Finally, **Jasper van Vught** and **René Glas** revisit and reconsider important methodological concerns with using play as a research approach to studying games. They move beyond recommendations around reflexivity to more fully consider issues around playing choices and contexts of play.

The papers in this special issue highlight the strength and breadth of research and scholarship in the game studies more broadly and at DiGRA in particular. We hope that you find this special issue interesting and thought-provoking. Finally, I would like to thank the other program chair, Casey O'Donnell and the general chair, Marcus Charter, for their assistance with the DiGRA 2017 program.

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