Introduction

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The Digital Games Research Association – DiGRA - celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2011. Espen Aarseth declared 2001 as the "year one of computer game studies as an emerging, viable, international, academic field" (Aarseth 2001). As of this writing, the DIGRA conference has been organized five times and DiGRA is now taking the next step, to publish its own journal.

However, for many it is still not clear what Digital Game Studies is. In their book 'Rules of Play' Salen and Zimmerman (2004) proposed the study of games as structures, play activity, and the cultural phenomena. Still, this does not describe *how* we can or should study games: what questions do we ask and what methods do we use to answer them? The study of games is often described as inter-, multi- and trans-disciplinary. Is this just another way of saying that anything goes? Looking forward, this is perhaps one of the important questions we need to discuss and consider. This is also where our varied backgrounds can be our greatest strength.

How did such a diverse group of scholars come together? Game studies has a clear origin – it grew out playing games and then reflecting on them. We are curious, intrigued, and amazed by games, players, and everything that surrounds them. The typical DiGRA scholar likes to play, has played many games, and uses that experience in formulating his or her central concepts of study.

For the inaugural issue of the DiGRA journal, the editorial board has selected five excellent articles from the DiGRA 2011 conference. The diversity of this selection mirrors that of the field. We can start by looking at approaches and methods. Jason Begy's approach to game studies is similar to literature studies, in that he discusses how players can attribute metaphorical meaning to a game in a way similar to that of metaphorical reading of a text. He proposes experiential metaphors as a way to understand one particular way of reading highly abstract games. Jonas Linderoth, on the other hand, places a firm foot in ecological psychology to develop a joint model of interactivity in computer games and other forms of games (most notably board games). By contrast, Gareth Schott and Jasper van Vught take an experimental approach to examining the understanding of games that non-game playing parents develop, when their level of game literacy is increased. René Glas proposes a new perspective on our playful identity by observing instances of transgressive play in the pervasive game Foursquare. Finally, Ioanna Iacovides and colleagues are fully committed to developing experimental

methods for studying games and their effects on learning and involvement. Although their methods vary, each of these articles reflect the elusive aspect of games: they aim to capture the meaning of games *as played*.

The variety in methods also extends to the kinds of games studied. The articles span a wide range of games: digital, board games, pervasive, commercial, and experimental. The inclusion and consideration of non-digital games is something that game studies scholars have been calling for a while now. While fairly novel, it is a promising step forward for the field. Digital and non-digital games are similar in some ways but also vastly different: by superimposing and comparing them, we learn more about computer games, and about games more broadly.

We find ourselves in an enviable position. We can look back and see how far we have come in these last years. It is remarkable.

We can also look forward and relish all that we still have left to do. There is no reason to believe that the future will not bring new kinds of games and forms of gaming to study, new ways to study them, and more importantly, more people interested in joining this scholarly field of research. We are confident that DiGRA will continue to play a fundamental role in this field and, as the inaugural editors of its flagship journal, we are grateful for the opportunity to contribute.

REFERENCES

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