
Introduction

The *Transactions of the Digital Games Research Association* (ToDiGRA) collects some of the finest work presented at the DiGRA conferences. This issue continues in that tradition, and further acknowledges the breadth and variety of the scholarly work presented at the 2014 edition of the DiGRA conference held in Snowbird, Utah (August 3-6). We want to recognize that scholarly work of importance and impact can often extend beyond the confines of the traditional written paper. For example, DiGRA 2014 hosted the inaugural *Blank Arcade*, a curated exhibition of experimental, artistic and thought-provoking games (digital and analog), and interactive experiences (Grace 2014). Similarly, there were numerous panels and discussion sessions with significant effects and outcomes. We have invited Drs. Shira Chess and Adrienne Shaw to reflect upon one of these sessions: their fishbowl discussion session “The Playful is Political”.

In the spirit of transparency, we feel it is important to disclose how we selected the entries for this issue. As is customary at DiGRA conferences, all the full-papers were double-blind peer-reviewed. As part of this process, each paper is assigned a score that is calculated based on the individual reviewer’s scores and his/her self-disclosed level of expertise on the papers’ topic. The conference program committee (which we were not involved in) uses the text of the review, the scores, and other factors (e.g. program committee discussions and author’s rebuttals to the initial reviews) to make the appropriate acceptance/rejection decisions for each paper. For this special issue, we took the papers with the highest overall scores, and invited their authors to submit their work. Those authors who accepted our invitation submitted their papers, and we (the editors) had the papers blind peer-reviewed again. The goal here was to provide feedback that would help with necessary improvements for

the “archival” format, which this journal provides. It was essential (depending on the results of the review) that the authors significantly revised their articles before the articles were accepted for publication in this special issue.

It gives us great pleasure to share with you the results of this additional effort by our invited authors, who have chosen to revise and improve their work in order to appear in this issue. We believe they represent an interesting sample of the breadth and excellence of the research that DiGRA has to offer. In this issue, Daniel Vella uses narratology and literary theory to argue for a closer examination of game characters as both individual and semiotic constructions. Gareth Schott and Raphaël Marczak share insights and results from a study that examined the use of biometric measures as a guide for determining which aspects of a game have the most impact on players. John Salisbury and Penda Tomlinson challenge the use of Csikszentmihalyi’s (1991) notion of flow in game studies by articulating the apparent contradictions in its use, and provide us with an enhanced notion, value based flow, which may be more productive for examining videogame playing. Finally, Dylan Lederle-Ensign and Noah Wardrip-Fruin demonstrate how a platform study of the idTech3 game engine can allow us to better understand and describe famous virtual physics phenomena such as strafe jumping.

Games research has never been this deeper, richer or even, arguably, more controversial. We are proud that ToDiGRA and DiGRA 2014 demonstrate how quality creative work, games scholarship, and public intellectualism can, and do fit under the umbrella of games research.

José P. Zagal and Roger Altizer

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REFERENCES

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