Panel: Press Start and Press On – Navigating Postgraduate Research in Game Studies

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ABSTRACT

Much discussion has revolved around the interdisciplinary nature and institutional status of game scholarship, since the first international computer games conference in 2001 (Aarseth 2001), and indeed over the past 13 years of DiGRA. As a field inhabited by scholars from a wide variety of backgrounds (Quandt, van Looy, et al. 2015), it can be a challenge for early career scholars to discover their orientation. This panel examines the interdisciplinary nature of game studies and what this means for early career researchers attempting to navigate the field, particularly in the face of different philosophies, disciplinary expectations, styles of research output, and publication practices. Challenges include: contending with issues relating to the paradigm(s) of game studies (Kuhn 1970); identifying what methods and methodologies are acceptable; avoiding stock arguments or

debates; exploring gaps in current research and formulating appropriate research questions; working with supervisors and colleagues from a variety of disciplines; as well as finding support among a broad range of resources and peers.

This panel explores these challenges from the perspective of early career scholars. Uniquely, the panel is comprised of members of the editorial board for *Press Start* — an international student-led game studies journal that aims to publish high quality work produced by students. All are involved in the study of games, from a wide range of nations and disciplines, ranging from the Arts and Humanities to the Computer Sciences. With these backgrounds, the panel is in an excellent position to both provide insight into the current state of game studies and to examine how this affects (post)graduate research. Further to this, they each also have experience in seeking to establish an international community of practice (Lave & Wenger 1991) that can offer peer support and peer evaluation over the course of research projects in this field, including those aspects associated with academic writing.

More broadly, the panelists will discuss what it means to pursue a PhD or other postgraduate research qualification in game studies, the value of such qualifications, and the nature of the research and dissemination process. The panel will also ask how junior researchers can support each other in this field, drawing on experience of managing the community of practice that has developed around *Press Start*. As students, the panelists are currently experiencing these types of situations and can help junior researchers navigate key issues in game studies. The panel will also argue that such a discussion is of interest to the wider DiGRA community, including more established academics who are engaged in the recruitment, supervision, and training of research students. Namely, to look to the future of game studies, and ask those in attendance to explore the ways in which their individual institutions could cultivate, or are already cultivating, a supportive environment for emerging game scholars.

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