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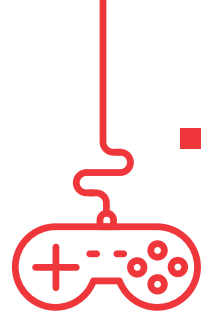

Acta Ludologica is a scientific journal in the field of digital games. The journal contains professional scientific reflections on digital games; it also offers academic discourses on games, especially media and digital competencies, creation, design, marketing, research, development, psycho-logy, sociology, history and the future of digital games and game studies.

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Editorial

Gaming as a Human Right

In 2019, we celebrated 30 years of freedom in Slovakia as well as in the Czech Republic. During this year, we were reminded how our lives would look if socialism had not disappeared from our society. It was not so long ago that respect for basic human rights existed only in the imagination. The one and only governing political party indoctrinated society by its ideology from early childhood and people could not choose how to live their lives. Do you want to be successful at your job? Enter the communist party. Did you express your opinion? You may end up in prison. People born under this ideology did not even know they had being influenced or manipulated and they considered the regime as normal, which is the saddest thing about the years before November '89.

The years before the end of socialism were pretty rough for artists, too. Movie makers, painters, writers, musicians and people whose work was based on creativity, as well as intelligent and highly educated persons could not work as freely as they should. Their work was controlled and in many cases also censored. History remembers forbidden movies, songs and books but you will not learn about digital games created during socialism in Czechoslovakia. Back in the age of the Iron Curtain, there were many people playing games and even creating them. In some cases, those games were an expression of opinion against the regime. It was more difficult to make any game when compared to the western world as creators did not have such technological options but they compensated for it with creativity and ideas. We can assume that making and playing games before '89 was a brave activity knowing about the possible punishment even though communist officers and agents did not know a lot about games in general, not even about computers as it was technology coming from the western world. Maybe, they did not consider games as a 'dangerous' artistic statement and part of a culture.

Czech researcher Jaroslav Švelch understands them as cultural heritage. He tells the story of gaming behind the Iron Curtain in the book of the same name which was published by the prestigious MIT Press. He dedicated his research work to his hobby computing and the history of digital games made during the socialist era. In our interview, he also explains the connection between games and politics, especially using gaming culture nowadays and in the past. Digital games as marketing tools in politics are the subject of one of our studies, too. The authors focus on digital games that have become powerful persuasion tools and which can be utilized for political marketing purposes. It is important that we as researchers will bring those games to the public's attention in case they are used in negative ways. Just as communists did not see the potential of digital games, we can encounter this opinion in the public about this pop cultural phenomenon today. Our next study is dedicated to digital games helping the treatment of mental disorders, especially ADHD-ADD. It proves that digital games are not only the product of art and fun but they can be also helpful in a series of various problems.

In this issue, you can find other interesting studies and articles about games and the virtual world which you can read because freedom has existed for 30 years now which provides us with an endless stream of culture from all over the world. Freedom as we know it has been in danger during recent years and influences the gaming industry in many countries. What we can do is not to leave the fight to artists but to support their effort every time they need help, and what is more important – we should do everything possible to prevent such things like censorship and creativity repression.

Magdaléna Švecová
University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava

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