Editorial Board

Journal
Orientation

Acta Ludologica is a scientific journal in the field of games and 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, psychology, sociology, history and the future of digital games and game studies.

Acta Ludologica is a double-blind peer reviewed journal published twice a year. It focuses on theoretical studies, theoretical and empirical studies, research results and their implementation into practice, as well as professional publication and scientific reviews of digital games.

Acta Ludologica

Editorial

Industry 4.0 and the Creative Potential of Digital Games

We are witnessing a gradual, revolutionary change in all areas of society as a result of the new Industry 4.0 revolution. Critical voices are beginning to be heard, warning of the consequences of this techno-technological, digital revolution. They point, in particular, to the threat of unemployment and to the disappearance of many jobs. In the eyes of the critics, the digital technologies of the 21st century are becoming as much an enemy of the people as machines were for industrial workers at the beginning of the 19th century. They saw machines as an evil that was taking their jobs away from them.

Fortunately, there are voices that have a different view of the implications of and opportunities provided by the Industry 4.0 revolution. They see it as a challenge for major changes in the areas of education, retraining of the workforce, and ways of improving human life. Some professions are expected to disappear, but new ones are also expected to emerge. Experts predict that, in the near future, professionals with analytical skills will be particularly favoured on the labour market. These new jobs will require people who are flexible and able to learn, with sufficient creativity, digital skills and the ability to develop innovative programmes. It is now clear that digital games, in terms of their creative and educational potential, can significantly help to retrain the workforce in an enjoyable, entertaining and original way. They can be an indispensable means of maintaining and developing the creative intelligence of individuals. They can help those who have lost their jobs and are looking for a space for self-fulfilment and employment.

The fact is that the discourse of digital games is mainly associated with their entertainment function. Digital games are criticized by a part of the professional public from a purely elitist position, similar to the criticism of the culture industry by the Frankfurt School in the middle of the last century. Contemporary critics of entertainment media culture seek to question what is intrinsic to the human condition – play. Games, and even digital games, are associated in the general and professional public with entertainment, with passing the time, with something unproductive. In people's minds, play and gaming are associated with childhood, leisure, or festive occasions. After all, even J. Huizinga, the father of ludology, argues that play is without apparent utility, but it is one of the factors of human culture. Similarly, E. Fink refers to play. He argues that play represents the cosmos, order, the symbol of the world, the being of man. However, play in general, and digital play, must be seen as both an anthropological constant and the ontological essence of man. Indeed, any game requires the approach of human genius. The latter possesses creativity, imagination, and logic. It teaches us to be disciplined, to follow the rules and to take risks. From this aspect, a digital game can have several features, functions and benefits. It can be fascinating for the player with its fun, escapist possibilities. But it can also enrich a person with other functions, such as various opportunities for self-realisation, self-reflection, the acquisition of knowledge, logical thinking, skills or social contacts. In particular, its communicative, educational, enculturation and acculturation functions should be emphasised. This is despite the fact that R. Caillois argues that play is unproductive and does not create value or wealth. I express my conviction that the opposite is true.

What we are witnessing is that the digital game, as a sui generis phenomenon, has become productive, generating both wealth and value, and not only because it has become professionalised and commercialised. In addition to its entertainment and leisure functions, its other qualities and possibilities – educational – have also been highlighted in recent years. These were already recognised by Plato when he praised children's games. He saw them as a means of learning, a preparation for adult life. The Industry 4.0 revolution underlines this obvious benefit that the digital games sector brings. Digital play mirrors the social world and the relationships that exist between individuals, bringing obvious benefits to players and everyone involved.

The scholarly articles in this issue of our journal can also be read in the context of relationships and benefits. Nigel Robb and Bo Zhang are concerned with player experiences in a 2D digital game. Nele Van de Mosselaer and Stefano Caselli investigate the narrative effects and value of memory discrepancies in digital games. Christine Tomlinson analyses the factors of gender, centre, and persistence in the context of leisure and the complex state of digital games. Hugh Davies investigates the conspiracy phenomenon QAnon as an alternate reality game. An interestingly focused topic – games and sacrificial rites – is also offered by Renata E. Ntelia. And finally, Michal Kabát, Juraj Kovalčík and Alexandra Kukumbergová deal with the history of Czechoslovak tabletop role-playing games.

prof. PhDr. Hana Pravdová, PhD.
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