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# Journal Orientation

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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.

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## The New Dimension of the Relationship Between Digital Games and AI: From Behavioural Challenges of NPCs to Generative Realms

In the ever-evolving landscape of digital games, the relationship between gaming experiences and artificial intelligence (AI) has transcended traditional boundaries, from scripted challenges to generative realms.

The conventional perception of AI in the context of digital games is usually twofold. Firstly, the algorithms and mechanics behind the gameplay are responsible for the behaviour of the game system and its components, especially non-playable characters (NPCs). Since the days of *Space Invaders* and *Pac-Man*, AI has evolved significantly towards more intelligent and adaptive NPC behaviour. For example, the Goal-Oriented Action Planning (GOAP) AI system in *F.E.A.R.* lends human-like behaviour to enemies, allowing players to experience unique, unpredictable action sequences even in single-player mode, similar to the groundbreaking Nemesis System utilised in *Middle-earth: Shadow of Mordor*; or the AI in *Alien: Isolation* that allows the xenomorph to learn from the player and adapt its hunting strategies, pushing the boundaries of game horror to a new, personalised level. But AI has not been just about perfecting enemies. Let us not forget the companions that AI can turn into 'real' helpers, such as Elizabeth from *BioShock Infinite*, Ellie from *The Last of Us* or Atrius from *God of War*. The second perception used to be of AI as a story character. There are a number of famous AI villains in digital games (as well as in popular culture as a whole) – such as SHODAN from the *System Shock* series, GLaDOS in the *Portal* games, or the Reapers from the *Mass Effect* series – but lately, we have also seen AI more and more often as protagonists, such as the characters from Detroit: Become Human.

The more modern perception of this relationship is increasingly expanding to include a generative dimension, as games are currently employing AI to procedurally generate content (the game world, animations, conversations with NPCs, etc.), for example the seemingly endless universes in *No Man's Sky*. However, the real challenge facing the contemporary digital gaming world is in the realm of the implementation of generative AI tools into common game production processes,

from development to testing. As generative AI tools become more widely available, small and independent game studios can use them to create games and improve their quality beyond that which they could achieve without them. Will generative AI remain just a tool to relieve game developers of trivial tasks in order to speed up development or reduce costs, or will it have a more significant impact on the entire creative process, especially in terms of authorship issues and plagiarism? Anyway, it seems to be a double-edged sword – unlimited opportunities but accompanied by the threat of homogenisation and copyright infringement. The not-too-distant future will show whether "great power comes with great responsibility".

Just as generative AIs produce a wide range of content for their users, through the present issue of *Acta Ludologica*, authors and contributors are generating knowledge, research, and discussion across a variety of topics within the discourse of the gaming world. Esteban Vera, for example, examines the role of heroes' memories in the process of constructing and reconstructing the world in the narrative of *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*. Oleg Dietkow investigates how gamers see themselves in relation to the way they play digital games. The influence of the audiovisual appeal of games on the gaming experience and enjoyment in the Turkish environment is explored by Naz Almaç. Emmanoel Ferreira deals with understanding the relationship between aesthetic experience and digital games in terms of agency, appropriation and politics. Maria Koscelníková focuses on the practices of crediting translators and localisers in Slovak digital games. In the final game study, Anna Hurajová, Alexej Slezák and Vladimíra Hladíková analyse the situation of women and their working experiences in the game industry in Slovakia.

Salomé Honório discusses the shifting sensibilities and use of dissonance in the games of indie studio Analgesic Productions in an interview with game designers Melos Han-Tani and Marina Kittaka. The following section consists of academic reviews of the book *The Rules We Break Lessons in Play, Thinking, and Design* by Eric Zimmerman, the *Cyberpunk 2077* expansion titled *Phantom Liberty*, and the book *Videogames and Agency* by Bettina Bódi. In the add-ons, Matthew Kelly outlines the use of digital games' educational potential for ethical examinations in the classroom.

On behalf of *Acta Ludologica's* editorial team, I sincerely wish that our readers discover enriching insights during the exploration of this issue's content.

**Mgr. Zdenko Mago, PhD.**

*Acta Ludologica's* Editor-in-Chief



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