

# LUDIC PASTS: “Game Simulations of Past Cultures and Places” Workshop

## ORGANIZERS:

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The fusion of archaeology and gaming has become known as archaeogaming, although this term covers several approaches. For example, Reinhard (Reinhard 2015) wrote: “I had originally thought of Archaeogaming as a framework around studying how archaeology and archaeologists are portrayed by game developers, and how they are received by gamers. I was also curious to see how (or even if) I could apply real-world archaeological methods to virtual spaces, studying the material culture of the immaterial.” However, this is not simply a workshop about archaeogaming, there are other related fields interested in the ludic simulation of past places and past cultures (art history, museum studies, media studies, anthropology, sociology, urban design, geography, to name a few). There may be specific issues that distinguish, say heritage-based games (Champion 2015) from history-based games (Chapman 2016) but there are also common themes, authenticity, accuracy, imagination and how interaction helps learning.

Despite increasing interest in archaeogaming theory, there is little discussion of the field in terms of actual game design. And despite the increasing range and quality of courses (Schreiber 2009), books (Fullerton 2014) and presentations (Lewis-Evans 2012) on game design and game prototyping, there is still a paucity of available game design tools and techniques specifically for capturing and communicating the past (Manker 2012) (Neil 2016, 2015). In addition, we face a lack of venues for archaeogaming developers and related experts to present, pitch, playtest and perform their game prototypes (Ardito, Desolda, and Lanzilotti 2013, Unver and Taylor 2012, Ardito et al. 2009). Hence content experts in history and heritage-related fields often lack the experience or knowledge to test game ideas, and, conversely, game studies scholars may not be aware of discipline-related problems in history, heritage, museum studies and archaeology.

This half-day (4 hour) workshop brings together researchers and designers interested in evaluating and tackling issues in the simulation of past places, events and cultures through computer game interaction. The format will combine the presentations with a discussion centered on the question of how games can support cultural heritage. Each participant will present on a particular theme, challenge or case study.

We invite contributions from any domain, including game analysis, interaction design, digital humanities, play studies, among others. In the second part, we will identify key issues arising from the presentations and in small groups will suggest a game design scenario that could address the issue in an interesting way. We are also interested in theoretical papers that examine and suggest answers for issues in converting history, heritage and general archaeology projects into potential games.

## SUBMISSION:

1. Please email a one page proposal to [erik.champion@curtin.edu.au](mailto:erik.champion@curtin.edu.au), with the title “DIGRA workshop-LUDIC PASTS-<your surname>”.
2. Provide a short but descriptive title.

3. A description of the issue that you wish to present, whether it is a theoretical theme, design challenge or case study
4. Mention any examples that exist.
5. Outline any potential solutions or ideas that you wish to discuss.
6. Is there anything you would like to bring, show or demonstrate?
7. In one short final paragraph please explain your related background, why this issue is significant to you and which audience would be interested in a potential solution, is it specific to a field or of wider interest and impact in game studies?
8. Lastly include contact details, your name, job title and any affiliated institute or organization.

#### **DEADLINES:**

6 March 2017                      deadline for papers  
10 March 2017                     announce selected authors  
3 July 2017                         LUDIC PASTS workshop, DIGRA2017, MELBOURNE (<http://digra2017.com/>)

#### **WORKSHOP GOALS:**

- Critical discussion from multiple related domains of archaeogaming.
- Design sketches indicating possible approaches to address them.
- We will discuss a potential shared book publication about the topic.

#### **THE FORMAT AND ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR THE WORKSHOP:**

- 1) Individual presentations of key challenges.
- 2) Identify shared themes and concerns to form small groups developing game sketches for archeogaming and related fields.
- 3) Presentation of the concepts and conclusion.

#### **WORKSHOP SCHEDULE (4 hour workshop, 240 minutes total):**

160 minutes: 8 presentations, each a maximum of 20 minutes long (including questions).  
60 minutes: work on game scenarios (scene) in one of 4 groups.  
20 minutes: summarize and report findings to all attending.

#### **POTENTIAL TOOLS:**

Whiteboard, pen and paper. If there is a video projector or large screen, then digital game scenarios/sketches could be shown as well.

#### **AUDIENCE**

Of interest to content experts in history and heritage-related fields, game studies scholars, game designers and developers.

**Ideal size of audience:** up to 32 not including the 8 speakers

#### **PUBLICATION**

We will discuss approaching a creative publisher (Liquid Books, University of Michigan Press or other) to provide an online or printable output of the demonstrations and the audience feedback.

*If you are interested in submitting a chapter, but cannot attend the workshop, please email the organizers a proposal similar to the 1 page workshop proposal outlined above.*

#### **CITATIONS AND REFERENCES**

Ardito, Carmelo, Paolo Buono, Maria Francesca Costabile, Rosa Lanzilotti, and Antonio Piccinno. 2009. "Enabling Interactive Exploration of Cultural Heritage: An Experience of Designing Systems for Mobile Devices." *Knowledge, Technology & Policy* 22 (1):79-86. DOI: 10.1007/s12130-009-9079-7.

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- Chapman, A. 2016. *Digital Games as History: How Videogames Represent the Past and Offer Access to Historical Practice*.
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- Lewis-Evans, Ben. 2012. "Introduction to Game Prototyping & research." Slideshare, Last Modified 16 December 2012, accessed 24 January. <http://www.slideshare.net/Gortag/game-prototyping-and-research>.
- Manker, Jon. 2012. "Designscape—A suggested game design prototyping process tool." *Eludamos. Journal for computer game culture* 6 (1):85-98.
- Neil, Katharine. 2015. "Game Design Tools: Can They Improve Game Design Practice?" PhD, Signal and Image processing. Conservatoire national des arts et metiers, CNAM.
- Neil, Katharine. 2016. How we design games now and why. *Gamasutra*. Accessed 24 January 2017.
- Reinhard, A., 2015. Excavating Atari: Where the Media was the Archaeology. *Journal of Contemporary Archaeology*, 2(1), pp.86-93.
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- Unver, Ertu, and Andrew Taylor. 2012. "Virtual Stonehenge Reconstruction." In *Progress in Cultural Heritage Preservation: 4th International Conference, EuroMed 2012, Limassol, Cyprus, October 29 – November 3, 2012. Proceedings*, edited by Marinos Ioannides, Dieter Fritsch, Johanna Leissner, Rob Davies, Fabio Remondino and Rossella Caffo, 449-460. Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

#### **TO CONTACT THE ORGANIZERS**

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