DiGRA 2017
Call for Workshop Participants

Gaming Beyond the Digital Divide:
Video Games and Game Cultures of the Global South

INTRODUCTION

This half-day DiGRA workshop brings together contributors to an anthology-in-progress with the same title, *Gaming Beyond the Digital Divide: Video Games and Game Cultures of the Global South*. The main presenters, who are collaborators on this project, have been pre-selected for this workshop (please see below).

We also seek feedback and participation from the broader DiGRA community, and invite attendees to join the dialogue at this workshop. Seating is limited. If you are interested in participating in this workshop, please contact organizer Phillip Penix-Tadsen (ptpt@udel.edu) at your earliest convenience.

The workshop on *Gaming Beyond the Digital Divide* will consist of two sections, each approximately two hours in length. In the first hour of each section, presenters will offer ten-minute summary descriptions of the research they have been pursuing in relation to the games and game cultures of the global south, highlighting the challenges and opportunities for future research in this area. The second hour of each workshop section will focus on an open discussion related to the material presented.

This workshop will demonstrate that many geographical locales once considered part of the high-tech "periphery" are in fact home to longstanding and widespread technocultures with their own unique characteristics. This is readily evident in the research that will be presented, examining the cultural impact of video games in regions including Africa, the Middle East, the Caribbean, Central and South America, the Indian subcontinent and developing areas of Oceania and Asia. An analysis of the games and game cultures of these less-frequently-examined geographical areas evidences video games' impact on economics, creative production, education, popular culture and political discourse, as well as showing how cultural context impacts games on the levels of development, design, reception and play practices.

The "global south" is a notoriously slippery label, in part because the region it designates is not just a distinct geographical area but rather an imagined region bound by south-south ties in history, politics, economics and culture. Though most academics acknowledge the complicated nature of the term, it has gained popularity as an alternative to the orientalist or anachronistic connotations of the "developing world" or "third world." Caroline Levander and Walter Mignolo have referred to the term "global south" as "an emergent conceptual apparatus" that implies "tensions between ordering and disordering," identifying the region as "the location where new visions of the future are emerging and where the global political and decolonial society is at work." Like the work of these critics, *Gaming Beyond the Digital Divide* uses a focus on the global south to uncover unexpected connections between the diverse cultures of Pakistan and Peru, Indonesia and Iran, Colombia and Cameroon.

Some fifteen years ago, Uruguayan theorist and game developer Gonzalo Frasca spoke of the possibility of creating "video games of the oppressed," using the medium as a tool for education, socio-political awareness and consciousness-raising. A decade and a half later, we can see that many gamers and game developers from across the global south have taken up this challenge, contributing to game cultures and creating games that respond to the obstacles and affordances of their particular geographical, socioeconomic, political and cultural contexts.

Several recent publications have paved the way for the research this workshop presents on the relationship between video games and culture, whether those that have focused on global gaming production and practices (Huntemann and Aslinger 2013; Wolf 2015) or on the game cultures of particular regions (Hjorth and Chan 2009; Consalvo 2016; Penix-Tadsen 2016; Jin 2016). While the global south is a vast and diverse region in and of itself, a comparative analysis reveals the many similar ways in which game technologies have been adapted and appropriated in countries that share many socio-economic similarities in spite of the vast geographical expanses and cultural differences that may separate them.

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

On the whole, this workshop brings together a diverse and balanced group of collaborators from fields including area studies, game studies, communications, media studies, sociology, political science, history, digital humanities and visual culture studies. Organizer Phillip Penix-Tadsen is the author of *Cultural Code: Video Games and Latin America* (2016). Other contributors are well-known experts in their fields, including Larissa Hjorth (*Routledge Handbook of New Media in Asia*, 2015; *Gaming in Social, Locative and Mobile Media*, 2014; *Mobile Media in the Asia Pacific*, 2009), Souvik Mukherjee (*Video Games and Postcolonialism*, 2017; *Video Games and Storytelling*, 2015) and Anthony Y. H. Fung (*Asian Popular Culture*, 2013; *Global Capital, Local Culture*, 2008). Other contributors range from established voices in game studies and related fields to up-and-coming doctoral candidates, independent researchers and game developers, all of whom share a pursuit of cutting-edge work on the games and game cultures of the global south.

CONFIRMED WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Phillip Penix-Tadsen (Organizer)
University of Delaware, United States of America

Thomas Apperley
University of Melbourne, Australia

Rebecca Yvonne Bayeck
Pennsylvania State University, United States of America

Pierre-Alain Clement
University of Quebec at Montreal, Canada

Hanli Geyser and Kieran Reid
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

Larissa Hjorth, Joshua Wong, Will Balmford and Ingrid Richardson
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and Murdoch University, Australia

Souvik Mukherjee
Presidency University, India

Thaiane Oliveira, José Messias and Diego Amaral
Fluminense Federal University, Brazil

Nicola Pallitt, Muya Koloko, Anja Venter and Marion Walton
University of Cape Town, South Africa

Boris Pun and Anthony Y. H. Fung
The Chinese University of Hong Kong and Beijing Normal University, China

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KEYWORDS

global south, postcolonial studies, decoloniality, Africa, Arab world, Asia, Australasia, Australia, Brazil, Cameroon, Chile, China, India, Latin America, Mexico, Middle East, Nigeria, South Africa, South Korea, Venezuela, game cultures, educational games, e-sports, game development

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