Editorial

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This regular issue opens the seventh year of the International Journal of Serious Games, featuring five interesting articles, and one communication.

"The Active Video Game Paradox", by Kirk et al. [1], investigates the paradox for which active video games (AVG) have some positive effects on activity levels and body composition changes, but perform consistently poorly on the commercial market. The authors report a qualitative exploration and highlighted several important considerations; gamer motivation, the lack of quality and variety in AVGs, the stereotype in AVGs, and the practical limitations of the hardware that supports AVGs. They add that perception of an augmented reality platform, a potential solution to the issues, was found to be positive.

"*From Design to Management of Digital Epistemic Games*", by Oubahssi et al. [2], proposes a co-design process and an assistant tool supporting this process to guide teachers in designing digital epistemic games. Their approach is based on: (i) the learners and the situation that emerges when they play the game, rather than the device used to play; and (ii) the teachers who want to manage a game-based learning situation. The paper presents the iterative and participative development process and an acceptance test using an agile approach.

"*Simulation and gaming of resource management in pediatric emergency medicine*", by Zhang et al. [3] presents a serious game based on a multi-method simulation approach of complex healthcare processes as well as the game mechanics selected to promote understanding the logistical features of a hospital emergency department. The goal is to train decision making skills in operative environments. Results of the experiment confirmed that the serious game encouraged participants to proactively manage the human resources of the emergency department. Certain managerial recommendations can be made: a patient flow multiplier of 120% could lead to a significant erosion of the system's defensive ability; however, proactive anticipation from management is the key for making an emergency organization more resilient.

"*Location-based Games as Exergames - From Pokémon To The Wizarding World*", by Laato et al. [4], investigates the gameplay features and initial reactions of early adopters to a game called Harry Potter: Wizards Unite (HPWU). A questionnaire (N=346) was sent to HPWU players to measure the effects playing the game has on their physical activity. During the first week of play, an increase in mild physical activity was recorded, similar to what has been reported with Pokémon GO. Also, almost half of respondents (46,82%) reported to play the game socially, showcasing how location-based games can generally have a positive impact.

"*Patterns in Mainstream Programming Games*", by Areizaga Blanco, & Engström [5], presents a systematic review of publicly available and popular programming games. It analyses which fundamental software development concepts are represented in these games and identifies game design patterns used to represent such concepts. The study shows that fundamental programming concepts and programming methods have a good representation in mainstream games. But the authors also indicate an important set of topics that should be addressed in future research.

The Communications section features *"Can digital games serve as potential intervention or suicide risk?"*, by Elsie Ong [6], which stresses the fact that many developers are

pushing ahead with apps for suicide prevention with unclear benefits and risks. The communication highlights that the use of digitized gamified intervention holds great promise for a radically new approach to deliver prevention programs, trying to overcome barriers inherent in traditional therapeutic approaches.

References

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