Editorial

Alessandro De Gloria[1]

[1]*University of Genoa, alessandro.degloria@unige.it*

This issue opens the ninth year of publications of the International Journal of Serious Games. This edition features five papers, that I briefly present in this editorial.

Just recently, the call for paper of the 11th edition of GaLA Conf has been released. The conference, organized by Kristian Kiili, of Tampere University, will be held in Tampere (Finland). I am confident that the CFP will attract a wealth of valuable manuscripts and that the conference will give the opportunity to gather together and continue our talks and analysis face by face as we were acquainted to do until a couple of years ago. As per the tradition, the best papers from the conference will be invited to appear in a special issue in our journal.

In the following, I briefly introduce the five papers of the current issue.

"*Serious Games for Healthy Nutrition. A Systematic Literature Review*", by Ifeona Adaji [1], reviews existing serious games for healthy nutrition over the past five years and summarizes the main findings based on three main themes: the design and development of the game, the evaluation of the game, and the findings from the evaluation. Results indicate that most games are designed in collaboration with a team of experts such as nutritionists, psychologists, HCI designers, and software developers. In addition, most of the games for kids are web-based while most of those for adults are mobile-based. Most games used a self-report approach to evaluation which was carried out over a range of period of 30 minutes to 90 days with between 10 to 531 participants. There were mixed results from the evaluations with most games partially achieving their aim. The manuscript finally suggests guidelines for developing serious games for influencing healthy nutrition.

"*Redesigning for Accessibility: Design Decisions and Compromises in Educational Game Design*", by Cezarotto et al. [2], focuses on the process used by one design team to prioritize accessibility in the redesign of their older educational games, while creating a process to inform development of new games. The article presents a framework for thinking about games and accessibility vis-a-vis educational games, and documents an action research study with the development team of the Math Snacks project. Using a participatory and qualitative approach, researchers provide a description of the team redesign process to address accessibility: how the team reviewed accessibility gaps in their games; made specific design choices in redesigning for accessibility; and determined which actions could make the games more accessible. The work yielded a process other design teams can implement in their review of existing games.

"*Virtual Game Jam: Collaborative Pathway to Serious Games for Health*", by Matthews and Thomas [3], aims to understand if a game jam during a global pandemic could be used as an effective method to facilitate a collaborative, multidisciplinary team's ability to develop a serious game on a health-related topic (i.e., COVID-19). The authors examined the 2020 game jam hosted by the National Academy of Sciences to evaluate one method to organize a serious virtual game jam and provide a roadmap for implementation using qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to evaluate its efficacy. In addition to identifying best practices and lessons learned from the authors' experience, the presented results demonstrate that a virtual game jam can in fact be a powerful tool for creating a scientifically sound, population-level, big picture–thinking serious game used for health

education, facilitate collaborative multidisciplinary teams and be a practical learning experience for game jammers.

"*Examining immersion in a game-based experiment to study extreme behavior* ", by Boonekamp et al. [4], investigates whether immersion in a game-based experiment can be used to observe authentic behavior, for example in the case of studying extreme behaviors under unfamiliar circumstances. A graphic adventure game (Opponent Immersion Game) was developed, in which participants could experience and act on various known risk factors and triggers for violent extremism. Results from an experiment with 188 participants show that authentic reactions are positively correlated with the flow experience, a subcategory of immersion. More authentic behavior is related to less violent behavior. Contrary to expectations, there was no effect of the exclusion of visuals on the level of immersion. Response coding shows the majority of participants had positive sentiments towards the game. The authors argue that the study shows that game based experimentation for studying human behavior in extreme and unfamiliar circumstances is a promising approach.

"*Design Framework for Social Interaction with Location-based Games*", by Fonseca et al. [5], studies the forms of social interaction that previously identified types of game activities elicit by analysing the nature and types of the exchanges they trigger. Based on this analysis, a design framework is proposed to 1) analyse existing location-based games and describe the forms of social interaction they trigger, and 2) help practitioners design new game activities that target specific forms of social interaction. This contributes to the enhancement of current understanding on the impact that these games can have in local communities, and on the way they can be better designed and used to promote social exchanges that are desired by players.

References

[1] I. Adaji, "*Serious Games for Healthy Nutrition. A Systematic Literature Review,*" International Journal of Serious Games, 9(1), 3-16, 2022. https://doi.org/10.17083/ijsg.v9i1.466

[2] M. Cezarotto, P. Martinez, B. Chamberlin, "*Redesigning for Accessibility: Design Decisions and Compromises in Educational Game Design,*" International Journal of Serious Games, 9(1), 17-33, 2022. https://doi.org/10.17083/ijsg.v9i1.4369

[3] S. Matthews, R. Thomas, "*Virtual Game Jam: Collaborative Pathway to Serious Games for Health,*" International Journal of Serious Games, 9(1), 35-42, 2022. https://doi.org/10.17083/ijsg.v9i1.454

[4] R. Boonekamp, T. Schaap, H. van den Berg, "*Examining immersion in a game-based experiment to study extreme behavior,*" International Journal of Serious Games, 9(1), 43-58, 2022. https://doi.org/10.17083/ijsg.v9i1.453

[5] X. Fonseca, S. Lukosch, F. Brazier "Design Framework for Social Interaction with Location-based Games," International Journal of Serious Games, 9(1), 59-81, 2022. https://doi.org/10.17083/ijsg.v9i1.481