

Editorial

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I am pleased to introduce the first issue of the second year of the IJSG presenting the special issue dedicated to the Games and Learning Alliance Conference (GaLA Conf), that was held in Bucharest in July 2014. The best conference papers were selected and invited for an extended version – with at least one third unpublished content - to be submitted in the regular IJSG evaluation process. In the end of the flow, I am proud to present four papers dealing with learning analytics, user studies for assessing effectiveness of SGs and of their components, and integration of game-based learning in curricula.

I am happy to inform the readership that the website for the fourth edition of the GaLA Conf, that will be held in the very center of Rome, on Dec. 11 and 12 2015 (<http://www.galaconf.org>). It will be a great occasion to update our knowledge on the various world of SGs and to grow a community that is gathering around the Serious Games Society, especially thanks to the GaLA Conf and the IJSG journal itself.

The CFP seeks original contributions that advance the state of the art in the technologies and knowledge available to support development and deployment of SGs. Experimental studies are strongly encouraged. The conference intends to cover all the aspects concerning design, development and use of SGs, and involves five tracks: technology, SG design, pedagogy, applications, industry.

Like in the previous years, the GaLA Conf 2015 Proceedings will be published on Springer Lecture Notes in Computer Science (LNCS) and the best papers in a special issue of the Int.l Journal of Serious Games (it is planned for October 2016), as the previous years.

I am also proud to inform the readership about another special issue, that will be managed by Kristian Kiili and other colleagues from Finland and the US. The aim is to shed light on usefulness of mathematics learning games and provide knowledge able to support their development. In particular, contributions are sought, that provide knowledge about effectiveness of mathematics learning games, show innovative technological or pedagogical solutions that facilitate learning of mathematics with games, provide empirically grounded design principles, and/or consider such games as assessment tools. As a general rule for IJSG, empirical studies are preferred and strongly encouraged.

Here follows an overview of the papers featured in the current issue. As anticipated, the first four are the best papers from GaLA Conf 2014, while the last one is a regular paper.

Ninaus et al. [1] evaluated the impact of three game elements (namely: progress bar, level indicator, and a thematic setting) on user performance and perceived state of flow when compared to a conventional version of the task. This empirical study indicates that certain game elements can improve the performance and efficiency in a working memory task by increasing users' ability and willingness to train at their optimal performance level.

Imbellone et al. [2] present an evaluation of mobile serious games for development of soft-skills, showing an overall positive impact. When analyzing the role of different dimensions of the games, the most relevant elements influencing players' satisfaction and their will to play again were found to be the levels of fun and difficulty associated with the games, the interest, the sense of reality and the adequacy of duration of the games.

Baalsrud Hauge et al, [3] address the use of learning analytics towards scaffolding and supporting teaching and learning experience. The conceptual model (ecosystem and architecture) discussed in their paper aims to highlight the key considerations that may advance the current state of learning analytics, adaptive learning and SGs, by leveraging SGs as a suitable medium for gathering data and performing adaptations.



Romero and Barma [4] address the curriculum integration of serious games in primary education. A group of 51 pre-service teachers participated in a teaching experience during which they selected a game-based learning (GBL) activity. The paper analyzes the results of the teaching pre-service experience and the opportunities to introduce GBL and SG in pre-service teachers' education.

The last paper is a regular paper, by Petridis et al. [5], presenting a state of the art overview of business games. The findings highlight that SGs can have positive impacts in multiple areas of a business, including training, decision-support, and consumer outreach. The authors emphasize the challenges and pitfalls of applying serious games and gamification principles within a business context, and discuss the implications of development and evaluation methodologies

The evaluation processes for this IJSG issue were managed by Francesco Bellotti, of University of Genoa, Samir Garbaya, of ENSAM Paris Tech, Niki Lambropoulos, of University of Patras, Iván Martínez-Ortiz, of Universidad Complutense Madrid, and Ion Roceanu, of "Carol I" National Defence University.

References

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