

Editorial

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I am proud to introduce this issue that is composed of three regular papers and three papers selected among the best presented at the Games and Learning Alliance Conference (GaLA Conf), that in 2019 was held in Athens. These three papers have been selected by a special reviewers group headed by the conference organizers. The introduction to the conference and the paper is given by the chairs, Antonios Liapis (General Chair), Georgios N. Yannakakis, Manuel Gentile and Manuel Ninaus in [1].

In a couple of months, the 9th edition of GaLA Conf will take place, organized by Iza Marphisi and her team, and we will meet each other, even if only virtually, and continue the advancement of our growing community of academics and practitioners in the field of serious games.

Beside the special issue, this number of the International Journal of Serious Games also features three regular papers, that I briefly introduce in the following.

“Exploring the use of participatory design in game design: a Brazilian perspective”, by Wanick and Bitelo [2], reviews the current body of literature on participatory design (PD) for game design, including participatory design elements, participatory design in education, and the current challenges that game designers and developers encountered. This paper also contains the findings of a survey among game designers in Brazil, showing that playtesting is the most common technique that they utilise in order to improve player experience. The paper concludes with a critical overview of the role of participatory design in game design and potential uses for games for learning.

“Designing a Fantasy Bike-based Exergame to Foster Physical Activity”, by Pons Lelardeux et al. [3], This paper presents the usefulness of using extrinsic fantasy and a commonplace real bike to address a wide audience. It depicts the interactive universe in which the player pedals a bike equipped with sensors to control the flight altitude of an imaginary character. One hundred and seventy-eight fan park visitors from all age groups from youths to retirees tested the game during the ‘Tour de France 2019’. Analysis shows that using extrinsic fantasy makes exercising fun and it engages people of all ages regardless of their interest in video games or sports.

“Designing educational escape rooms: validating the Star Model”, by Botturi and Babazadeh [4], address the emerging genre of escape games. While being fun for groups or team building, escape games have a great educational potential, which can be capitalized if teachers integrate them in their professional activities. The authors introduce the Star Model, a tool for teachers to design and play their own educational escape rooms, which was built on top of previous literature and experiences. The model validation suggests that the Star Model can be proposed as a valid tool for educational escape rooms design.

References

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- [1] A. Liapis, G. N. Yannakakis, M. Gentile & M. Ninaus, “Introduction to the GaLA Conf 2019 Special Issue,” *International Journal of Serious Games*, 7(3), 77-78, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.17083/ijsg.v7i3.390>



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- [3] C. Pons Lelardeux, M. Galaup, F. Hall, P. Lagarrigue, “Designing a Fantasy Bike-based Exer-game to Foster Physical Activity” *International Journal of Serious Games*, 7(3), 21 – 39, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.17083/ijsg.v7i3.362>
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