CALL FOR PAPERS

The Social Side of Gaming

International Conference on the Social Aspects of Digital Gaming

Thursday 21 July to Saturday 23 July 2011

Venue: University Hohenheim, Stuttgart, Germany

Topic

In the past decade, digital games have become a widely accepted form of media entertainment, even outside the traditional 'core gamer' segment. In tandem with this shift into the mainstream media market, we have seen an increasing interest in 'social' multiplayer gaming activities, from both the audience and the gaming industry.

The development of social games is of great academic interest. Wide-ranging studies have been initiated to investigate the sociality of virtual worlds, massively multiplayer role playing games (MMORPGs), multiplayer shooters, e-sports, and cooperation in party-oriented console gaming, yet games research remains a relatively new field. Despite explosive growth in the field over the past decade, many aspects of social gaming still remain largely unexplored.

This international conference, titled *The Social Side of Gaming* and hosted by the University Hohenheim (Germany), will take a closer look at the various forms of human interaction in digital games.

The aim of the conference is to bring together researchers from a variety of disciplines interested in social interaction in games, including (but not limited to) the fields of communication research, media studies, sociology, psychology, education studies, and economics.

Papers and presentations will address one or more of the following conference topics:

- Theoretical and empirical approaches to social interaction in digital games
- Forms of communication in digital games
- Interaction among co-located gamers
- Game communities and cultures, social interaction in and around games (e.g., clans and online discussions)
- Avatars, identification, and self-representation in virtual worlds
- Development of interaction rules and social norms, including questions of ethics, morality, economy & justice in digital games
- Entertainment through social interaction
- Design and implementation of social interaction
- Methodology of research on social interaction in games
- Violent interactions, griefing, and sexual harassment in digital games
- Excessive use and forms of addiction related to social aspects of gaming

Anyone wishing to propose a paper for presentation at the conference is invited to submit an extended abstract to the organizing committee.

Abstracts

An extended abstract of no more than 3 pages in length (7500 characters in total) should be prepared for blind review as a Word file (.doc or .docx). When submitting the abstract, please include a separate cover page including the following contact details:

- paper title
- name
- department/organization
- postal address
- e-mail address

The abstract should provide a clear outline of the status of the proposed work (for empirical studies: status of data collection and analysis) and confirm that the research will be ready for presentation at the conference. By sending an abstract, the author(s) agrees to personally present the research at the conference.

The abstract should be sent to the organizing committee by email (gamescon2011@uni-hohenheim.de) before 28 February 2011. The double-blind review process will take place during March, with the results returned on 31 March 2011. Further information on the conference program, including keynote speakers, will soon be available on the conference Website at sofoga.uni-hohenheim.de/conf2011.

Location

The conference will be held on the campus of the University Hohenheim, situated in the southern part of Stuttgart (capital of Baden-Württemberg), close to Stuttgart International Airport (approx. 10 minutes by taxi) and easily reachable by train (approx. 30 minutes via metro from Stuttgart Main Station). The University Hohenheim, one of the few campus universities in Germany, is the oldest and most beautiful university in Stuttgart. Surrounded by botanical gardens and research fields, the university was built around an 18th century castle. The university prides itself on its strong international ties: approximately 16% of the more than 8000 students at the university are from abroad, representing more than 90 countries.

Main Building (Castle) at
University Hohenheim

The city of Stuttgart is well known for its vehicle industry (the city is home to the headquarters of Mercedes and Porsche), yet despite its strong industry, it remains a very livable city with world-class art galleries, theaters, opera, and a broad cultural spectrum. Stuttgart consistently ranks among the cities with the highest living standards in Europe. The city is located close to the Black Forest and the Schwäbische Alp, which are some of the most renowned scenic areas in Germany. During the conference, day trips to the city and surrounding areas will be organized based on demand.

Organization

- The ERC (European Research Council) project group *The Social Fabric of Virtual Life*
- The *Sociology of Media Communication* section of the German Communication Association (DGPuK)

Additional Information

The conference language is English. The conference proceedings will be published after the conference. Papers selected for the proceedings volume should be prepared for a book publication until October 2011.