

ECREA “Digital Games Research” Section

Mission statement

The “Digital Games Research” section serves as a Europe-wide network for researchers and educators interested in the analysis of all kinds of digital games and gaming. Digital games, as the core topic of the section, encompasses a wide range of interactive entertainment formats and is not limited to a singular end-device or a specific platform, format or genre. The section is interested in digital games as a medium, and in their use, form and content, approaching them from a social-scientific perspective with an emphasis on communicative aspects. In contrast to traditional forms of media entertainment, all digital games require some form of user activity. In this respect, digital games are distinct and require original theoretical and empirical approaches. The section welcomes diverse approaches to the field, from theoretical/critical works and methodological discussions to quantitative and qualitative empirical studies. Given the innovative and cross-disciplinary nature of the section’s core subject, research is encouraged beyond the limitations of traditional disciplinary boundaries, as well as quality research in the fields of communication and media studies, ethnology, sociology, psychology, political sciences, business studies, education studies, and related social sciences.

Main goals

The main goals of the section are to offer an open platform for researchers to exchange ideas, discuss existing approaches, and develop theories, methodologies and research in a dynamically evolving field. The section serves a European community of researchers, and as such, it is aware of the specific European multiplicity of traditions and approaches. This rich heritage of various approaches ensures a cross-disciplinary understanding of digital games by the section, rather than preferring a single approach. Given the inherently innovative and evolving nature of gaming, this plural background is seen as a major strength of the European approach, as it allows for alternative ways of thinking about digital games, rather than simply adopting the mainstream approach to research in this field.

The section encourages junior researchers and offers specific conference/workshop tracks and events for young scholars.

Furthermore, the section cooperates with existing ECREA sections, ECREA networks, ECREA temporary working groups, as well as other communication and games associations. The findings of the section’s members will be communicated to the international academic community and the public via workshops/conferences and publications, as the section strongly supports the transfer of findings outside of the academic realm.

Topics

Topics explored by the section include, but are not limited to:

- Theoretical approaches and methodological advances in digital games research
- The production, content, audiences and regulation of digital games
- Digital game culture and gaming communities
- Social interaction in and around digital games
- Forms of digital gaming, including core and casual gaming, social gaming, mobile gaming and educational gaming
- Communication in and about digital games
- Avatars, identification, and self-representation in virtual worlds
- Digital game experience, gamer motivations, enjoyment and presence research
- Digital games in comparison with other forms of media entertainment