

Annenberg Workshop on Games for Learning, Development & Change

Annenberg School for Communication
University of Southern California
Los Angeles, California, USA

May 21-22, 2007

Hosted by Annenberg Studies on Computer Games (<http://games.uscannenberg.org/>)

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Background

As you know, there have been many new developments in the gaming industry in recent years. For one, a new field of serious games has emerged as designers and developers use gaming for non-entertainment purposes such as education, healthcare, policy-making, and corporate management. Leading organizations in this area have initiated conferences like the Serious Games Summit, Games for Health, and Games for Change. Funding agencies such as the MacArthur Foundation have indicated an interest by investing in research projects that focus on the potential of games to produce socially desirable outcomes.

The University of Southern California is among a handful of educational institutions that are at the cutting edge of these developments. At USC, the Annenberg School for Communication, together with the Viterbi School of Engineering and the School of Cinematic Arts, has been an active player in a collaborative effort to advance serious games. Launched in 2003, the Annenberg Studies on Computer Games (aka ASC Games Group) is an interdisciplinary research team that seeks to conduct systematic and innovative research about the influence of game playing on individuals, groups, and society at large.

Given the pressing need for theoretical development and scientific research on this topic, the ASC Games Group has decided to hold a workshop on games for learning, development, and change. The goals for the workshop are to (1) promote the value of social science for advancing the field of serious games research, (2) summarize the state of the art research on serious games effectiveness, (3) define the problems and opportunities involved in advancing this field, and (4) develop perspectives for future collaborative work.

Workshop Format

This event is purposefully designed as a rather small-scale, but intense workshop that is organized around 30 invited speakers and respondents. Various sections are structured to encourage dialogues and discussions. We will have interactive poster sessions in which interested graduate students and scholars can share their studies on serious games and get feedback from others.

Call for Posters

The workshop will be a state-of-the-art investigation and in-depth discussion of the theories, methods and research findings regarding serious game play, and is organized around three central themes: learning, development, and change.

Content themes: “*Learning*” is defined as the intentional acquisition of skills or knowledge through deliberate practice and training and therefore has a pedagogical focus. With “*development*” we emphasize the rather incidental psychological impact of game play on processes of human development such as identity or attitude formation or emotional regulation that may be facilitated or initiated through game play. Finally, “*change*” addresses the aspect of social intervention, for example political or health behavior. Although not completely distinct, these three dimensions will ensure coverage of a broad range of issues relevant to researchers who study serious games.

Scientific approaches: For applied research, we expect participants to give an up-to-date overview on *empirical findings*. Regarding theory we expect a contribution about the assumed underlying *theoretical mechanisms* of impact. These may address cognitive, affective or social processes, explore principles of Entertainment-Education, identify possible mediators and moderators for learning, development and change through serious games. Finally, we intend to address the specific *methodological challenges* imposed through interactive media in creating individualized content, measurement of exposure, multitasking, deeper learning, and transfer from the virtual into the real.

Submission Guidelines

- Submissions are considered only for interactive poster sessions.
- Interested authors should submit an extended abstract (5-7 double-spaced pages of text excluding tables, figures, and references in APA style).
- On the title page, please indicate the full name of all authors, academic affiliation, contact information (mailing address, phone number, and email), and whether 1) the poster is about learning, development, or change; and 2) whether it is theoretical, methodological, or empirical.
- All abstracts must be submitted electronically on <http://games.uscannenberg.org/osubmission.php>

Important Deadlines

- Submission for workshop poster session: March 30, 2007
- Notification of acceptance: April 10, 2007

Approximate Costs

- Registration fee: USD \$150 for both days / USD \$80 for one day only <http://games.uscannenberg.org/register.php>
- This will cover all the meals during the workshop.
- Participants will be responsible for their own travel arrangements and expenses.