Introduction to Organizational Impact of Online Games Minitrack

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For over a decade, online games have impacted how we engage in work and play. Organizations are using online games to create new business models and companies are training their employees with game-like systems. Furthermore, digital video games increasingly blur the line between online and offline content, while “gamification” blurs the line between games and information systems.

This minitrack provides a forum for researchers to discuss the design, use and impact of online games in various contexts. Topics discussed in this minitrack include: gamification, game adoption, and the psychology of online games.

Many studies have investigated how people socialise using features in online games and how game design affects interactive play. For instance, Bartle’s (2004) work on player types in multi-user dungeons shows how online multiplayer games satisfy the needs of different types of players.

Meanwhile, businesses increasingly use games to improve employee engagement and embed games in customer facing business processes. While businesses have long used games to train employees (Keys and Wolfe 1990, Michael and Chen 2005), information systems development is increasingly adapting techniques and concepts from digital games to engage customers and employees (Zichermann and Cunningham 2011, Deterding et al. 2011).

The papers in this minitrack reflect the important research being done in these areas. The first paper (Why Do People Play Games? – A Review of Studies on Adoption and Use) by Juho Hamari, Lauri Keronen, and Kati Alha reviews existing literature to determine the reasons for game play. It reviewed over 60 studies, published in the last ten years, that investigated game adoption. The paper identified the independent and dependent variables used in the studies and compared studies that used similar variables.

The second paper (Brand Memory, Attitude, and State Aggression in Violent Games) by Eui Jun Jeong, Hye Rim Lee, and Jung Hyun Woo determines whether the violence in a video game can affect how players remember and think about brands. Since people are drawn to violent imagery in video games it is possible that tying a brand to that imagery will increase brand memory; however the negative affect related to the images may harm the brand’s image. This paper uses in-game branding in a modified first-person-shooter to determine the effect.

The third paper (I’m not a Transvestite: Antecedents and Consequences of Gender Swapping in Online Games) by Haeyeop Song and Jaemin Jung explores whether gender-swapping in online games is an indication of transvestite behavior or a beneficial game choice conducted by rational actors. The authors also tie avatar gender in online games to micro-transaction behavior.