

Referencing Digital Games: Developing Shared Guidelines and Citation Practices

Workshop proposal advanced by:

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Organizers' background:

The scholars involved in this workshop proposal have been meeting and collaborating since 2019 to discuss and improve citation practices in game studies. They have formally presented issues and recommendations arising from these discussions at the Digital Interactive Entertainment Conference in March 2022. Paul Martin has conducted bibliometric research that makes use of game studies reference lists as data (Frome and Martin, 2019; Martin 2018). Martin Roth has worked on game metadata and game referencing, and has organized several discussions about the relation between data and games (Arndt et al., 2020). Stefano Gualeni and Riccardo Fassone researched game referencing and game citation in terms of their historical trajectories and political relevance, a study that culminated in a set of guidelines for citation standards in their 2019 paper presented at DiGRA 2019 'How to Reference a Digital Game' (Gualeni et al. 2019). Eric Kaltman managed the US-based Institute of Museum and Libraries Services grant-funded Game Metadata and Citation Project (GAMECIP) from 2014-2018 that investigated formal metadata for game cataloging and bibliographic game citations. GAMECIP work resulted in publications on citing game states and performances (Kaltman et al. 2017, 2021a; Lowood et al. 2017), as well as recommendations for citation standards (Kaltman et al. 2021b).

Abstract:

Scholars and editors working on themes related to games and audiovisual media have, in the past few years, become more sensitive to the problem of referencing games and non-textual communicative artifacts. There is, however, presently no shared practice of or consensus on how scholars should cite digital games in particular. At the time of writing this workshop proposal, only four style guides (namely APA, MLA, Harvard, and Chicago) propose (different) ways to cite video games in the context of academic writing. In the absence of shared guidelines, game scholars often decide how to act on the basis of their academic background, their personal preferences, and what appears to be logical or rhetorically convenient for the academic output in question.

Bringing together researchers working on themes related to games referencing with editors-in-chief of prominent journals in game studies, this workshop aims to discuss (in a roundtable kind of fashion) two key themes:

1) what should we take into account when referencing games and how are such considerations reflected in current referencing practices and

2) how can we work together to ensure better citation standards and establish shared practices in the scholarly community.

Format:

As outlined in the abstract, this workshop will take the form of a roundtable discussion with a very practical outcome: that of discussing steps that we should take as academics, authors, and editors to ensure more comprehensive and consistent referencing practices in our community. It was originally accepted to take place during the DiGRA2020 conference, which - for reasons that are obvious to everyone - did not take place as a live event.

This new version of the roundtable will feature seven invited participants. In order to facilitate this discussion, we will circulate a draft version of a white paper on game citation among the registered and invited participants, which results from discussions among the organizers of the workshop. The workshop then serves as a space to discuss, refine and amend the existing draft, which we hope to share with the wider community thereafter.

The workshop will involve editors-in-chief of influential journals in our community, and will be moderated by Stefano Gualeni, Paul Martin, and Martin Roth. The participation of the audience will be encouraged throughout the duration of the event.

Duration:

180 mins (presumably with a quarter of an hour to introduce the issues and the questions, and then moderating the ensuing discussion)

Invited Participants (coming in person to Seville):

Game Citation Researchers:

- Prof. Martin Roth (Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, Japan)
- Prof. Stefano Gualeni (University of Malta, Malta)
- Prof. Paul Martin (University of Nottingham Ningbo China)

Editors-in-Chief:

- Prof. Sonia Fizek (editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Gaming and Virtual Worlds*)
- Prof. Kristine Jørgensen (editor-in-chief of *Eludamos*)
- Prof. Jose Zagal (editor-in-chief of the *TODiGRA Journal*)

Sent together with this proposal is the latest draft of the white paper we intend to discuss and further refine during the workshop.

Expected outcomes:

What we, as organizers, expect from this workshop is:

- to raise sensitivity and share information concerning the problematic status of game citation in academic literature,
- to further our understanding of the impediments (political and logistical) that prevent the establishing of a shared set of citation guidelines,
- to expand our research network concerning research themes like game referencing and game archiving,
- to influence and help refine citation practices in established journals in our academic community,
- to improve, extend, and amend our 'white paper' about best practices for in-game citation with the aim of circulating it to all other journals (big and small) in our network.

Bibliography

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