

Minutes for ICA Game Studies Division Business Meeting, May 26, 2018, Prague

Led by: Julia Kneer (Chair) and Rabindra Ratan (Vice-Chair)

1 Call to Order – Julia Kneer (Chair)

2 ICA 2019 Conference Preview – Terry Flew (President-Elect)

- Flew was present to start the business meeting and briefly shared information on the ICA 2019 conference in Washington, D.C. on behalf of the ICA executive committee.
- The theme of the conference will be Communication without Boundaries. It will be held from the 24th to the 28th of May, 2019, which will fall on a period from a Friday to a Tuesday. Flew urges the division's members to promote interdisciplinary, to think beyond divisions and interest groups. This also extends to activist groups, NGOs, industry, and local communities. Topics that are of special interest to the executive committee are technological advances such as robotics, internet of things, cryptocurrencies.
- The venue will again be split across two hotels, which are the Washington Hilton in Dupont Circle and the Omni Hotel. They are 15 minutes apart on foot, though shuttle buses will be used to bring attendees to either. Crucially, however, all of the paper plenaries will be held in the Washington Hilton, whereas the Omni will likely be used for social events. Flew promises that attendees won't have to move between hotels to get from one session to the other.
- Flew warns that there will be city-spanning conferences in the period exactly before the conference, which not only means it will be harder to get a hotel room before the first day but also that pre-conference organizers would have to prepare a venue long in advance. Although some universities would be well-suited for this kind of event, they are not located close to the main conference venue. He advises that, wherever possible, post-conferences are held instead.
- New policies are also in place with regards to hotel rooms. Rather than coming available on the day that acceptance letters are sent, they will now be made available when the program for the conference is announced (March 1st). This decision was taken to stem the tide of cancellations that follows the program's release, which has in the past led to up to 40% wastage of hotel rooms that are cancelled. Answering a question from Kneer, Flew indicates that the rooms will be held at 179 USD per night in the venue, although he promises to check this figure.

3 Chair's Report – Julia Kneer (Chair)

- Kneer attended the ICA board meeting and opened up several points for discussion. She also welcomed any of the attendees to ask her about the rest of the points made in that meeting via e-mail (kneer@eshcc.eur.nl).
- The ICA logo will be changed in the coming year. The color scheme will stay the same, but the design will be different.
- The Game Studies division will receive two more conference fee waivers (along with the other divisions). They will be awarded to a student member and a member who does not come from a Tier-A country.
- The process behind institutional memberships will also change to become more automatic. This should make membership more accessible for student and regular members.

- Kneer invited a discussion on the rule that said any member can only appear as first- or co-author a maximum of 5 times. She mentioned that the current paper submission system does not actually keep track of these things, which means that there are attendees appearing on multiple submissions (exceeding 5). This rule might in the future be removed, but will more likely be fleshed out more and be enforced. Kneer invites feedback to allow this process to be more fruitful.
 - This appears to pose a problem not for the first authorships, but definitely for those who are acting as co-author on multiple papers.
 - The reasoning behind this rule lies with the issue that several high-powered labs with many simultaneous collaborations were submitting large quantities of papers, which pushed out others who could only submit one or a few works every year. Finally, this rule allowed more (and more diverse) attendees to the ICA conferences.
 - Nicholas Bowman offered that simply limiting the number of papers with a certain member as first author would already improve diversity. If the goal is to encourage collaborations, why shouldn't these people be recognized? Kneer responded that it would then also be unclear which of the listed authors were then actually responsible for most of the work. Christine Cook pointed out that she heard at the student early career reception that unscrupulous supervisors might be inclined to put their students first but then preventing them from attending, which leads to one supervisor presenting multiple papers. However, only letting first authors present creates other issues, so that should not be the end result.
 - Jesse Fox mentions that there are multiple issues already preventing members from attending. This unfairly penalizes students who have trouble getting visas. A statement from ICA related to this is forthcoming.
 - Andrew Pryzbylski pointed out that other disciplines do have reporting guidelines for who was responsible for much of the work. Something like that could help in this case.
 - Bowman mentions that the original intent of the previous task force was not to remove all throttling and simply letting everyone submit as many papers as they wanted. The idea was to limit submissions in a way that was fair while still allowing the most attendees.
 - Another attendee asked if there was any notification of this policy being in effect, and if there was a noticeable change in attendance/diversity when this was put into place? Kneer and other responded that these numbers were not available, and that attendance is also dependent to a large degree on the location of the conference.
- Relating to the submission rule but also on a broader level, an ethics committee will be developed soon. This committee will be supported with a four year planning and development document that will serve as the division memory across changes in division officers.
- Finances: This year the division spent slightly more than it earned, though reserves from last year allowed for it. Nathaniel Poor's generous donation to the preconference was greatly appreciated. The division is currently in sound financial standing, partly due to the increasing membership.
- Officer succession: Joe Wasserman will take over from Elizabeth Newbury as student and early career representative. Ruud Jacobs will take over from Daniel Pietschmann as division secretary.

4 Conference Report – Julia Kneer (Chair) and Rabindra Ratan (Vice-Chair)

- For the next conference: Kneer says that keywords are more important than they are currently regarded. Since reviewers are sought within the division, putting ‘games’ as a keyword is not helpful. Good keywords are, among others: Qualitative, Quantitative, Gender. More submissions lead to a higher number of sessions being allotted to the divisions, though there will still only be one Flashlight session.
- Members are advised to take caution when submitting works. The system currently only registers who submits (regardless of whether the submitter is the first author).
- Ratan delivers the submissions statistics in rap form. There were 81 submission to the division for this conference. Of these, 63 were research papers, 7 were poster proposals, 7 were theory papers, and 4 were flashlights. 5 papers were removed for not adhering to the submission criteria.
 - The acceptance rate was 63%, resulting in 48 papers and 4 posters being accepted being accepted based on a lowest average score of 3.17. These numbers are lower than the 54 accepted papers (70% of that year’s submission). This year, only 15 papers were accepted from authors outside of the US, 10 of which were student papers. In comparison, 17 of the remaining 33 US-based papers came from students.
 - 71 people volunteered to review for the division. 27 reviewers were students, 10 of which from non-US institutions, and they reviewed on average 3.07 papers. 44 faculty members also reviewed papers at a rate of 3.11 per reviewer. 16 faculty staff came from non-US institutions. A total of 216 reviews were written, of which only 5 were completely without comment. Joe Wasserman was the Top Reviewer, writing 5 reviews totaling 4,000 words of comments.
 - There were 6 sessions in the game studies division this year, of which 2 were high-density.
 - The full rundown of the submission statistics with vocals by Ratan, percussive backing, and chorus will be available on iTunes and Amazon from the academic arm of Top Dawg Entertainment/Union Aerospace Corporation in the summer of 2145.
- ICA Game Studies Division Awards were given to:
 - Top *paper*: Game Streaming and Digital Audiences: Awareness, Without Closeness, by Evan Robert Watts, West Virginia U; Nicholas David Bowman, West Virginia U; Kevin Koban, Chemnitz U of Technology; Jennifer Knight, West Virginia U; Andrew Lamont Nicholson, West Virginia U.
 - Top *paper - Runner up*: Bugs on the Brain: Mental Model Matching and Cognitive Skill Acquisition in a Strategy Game, by Joe A Wasserman, West Virginia U; Nicholas David Bowman, West Virginia U.
 - Top *Student Paper*: For whom the gamer trolls: An empirical model of trolling in the online gaming context, by Christine Linda Cook, Tilburg U; Rianne Conijn, Tilburg U; Marjolijn L. Antheunis, Tilburg U; Juliette Schaafsma, Tilburg U.
 - Top *Student Paper - Runner Up*: It depends on how you play! Examining video games’ efficiency as a coping tool for distressing life situations, by Kevin Koban, Chemnitz U of Technology; Jonathan Biehl, Chemnitz University of Technology.
 - Top *Poster*: Learning, Doing, Flow, and Fun: Understanding Relationships Between Difficulty, Enjoyment and Skill Development in Games, by Blake Wertz, Boston U; Qiankun Zhong, Boston U.
 - Top *Flashlight*: Do Video Games Interculturate?: In-game Social Interactions and Intercultural Competence, by Rebecca Carino, U of Hawaii at Manoa

- Ratan and Kneer posed the question of how to improve the interest in Flashlight submissions. Kneer highlighted how it can help students get a submission approved even if the work is in early stages. The best Flashlight presentation will also receive a conference fee waiver. Flashlights should also spread further than this division. Joe Wasserman added that he will put in effort to contact students directly, but that getting students to enlist in ICA is difficult.
 - Bowman adds that Flashlights also lead to future publications, and could confirm 3 so far. He feels the Flashlights should cover topics that 'GS scholars are not looking at but that they should be looking at'. It should also be iterative, helping to develop a paper.
 - Rebecca Carino from the University of Hawaii at Manoa was awarded the Top Flashlight for her submission 'Do Video Games Interculturate? In-Game Social Interactions and Intercultural Competence', and receives a conference fee waiver.

5 Pre-Conference Report – Daniel Pietschmann and Kevin Koban (Preconference Organizers)

- The theme of this year's game studies division preconference was Gaming Everywhere. More information about the program of this precon can be found on the website: <http://games-everywhere.com/>
- There were 37 submissions to this year's preconference. 12 papers and 8 posters were presented. The poster session for the preconference was larger than that of the main conference. The keynote was delivered by Dmitri Williams. 46 attendees registered for the event.
- The preconference was held at the Breznov monastery. Total expenses were 5,800 USD on location and catering. Income through attendance fees was 2,300, and the event was sponsored by 6 organizations to the amount of 2,450 USD. The remaining 1,050 USD came from the division's budget.
- Kneer gauges the interest in a pre- or postconference for the 2019 ICA. She offers that a precon is still preferable because people tend to be exhausted after the main conference.
 - Bowman indicates that attendance is typically between 40 and 60 people, meaning that there is definitely interest.
 - Kneer asks for volunteers to help organize and asks if attendees know any industry or NGO partners that are close. Pietschmann warns that for the 2018 pre-con, 24 game studios were invited to speak though none responded. He believes this will only work with existing connections to companies.
 - Possible contributors mentioned in the meeting: Bethesda Softworks (commercial entertainment game company), Able Gamers (company working on game access for people with disabilities), Tencent, NetEase, Sega. Universities could include West Virginia U and U of Michigan.
 - Bowman offers to take the lead because of geographic proximity, Ratan sets up a Google Doc and starts e-mailing.
 - Volunteers: Maxwell Foxman, Joe Wasserman, Nick Bowman, Chrissy Cook, Doug Schules, Michael Gilbert, Zhenyang Luo, Ruud Jacobs, Jessica Tompkins.

6 New Business

- Kneer proposes a Special Innovation Award for researchers and others who contribute greatly to game studies. Bowman is preparing a call for nominations, although he needs volunteers (3 to 5) to join the committee. The secretary will be on the committee, though student members should also be included. Please contact Kneer (kneer@eshcc.eur.nl) or Bowman (Nicholas.Bowman@mail.wvu.edu) to volunteer.
 - The SIA should especially promote activities that do not fit in the regular program, such as generating open datasets and simplifying the game development process through modular games or accessible engines. It should not just commend those who get many publications.
- Kneer indicates that a new Vice Chair is needed as of next year. The position of the VC involves planning the division's contribution to the conference and overseeing the reviewing process, among other tasks. The Vice Chair position is typically followed by a Chair position. For the duration of either post, the person fulfilling it cannot submit papers to the division or co-author any submissions. Whenever possible, this person should step away from student member supervision to prevent conflicts of interest. Despite not having anything to present, universities do typically fund the attendance of VC and C. The person should hold a PhD. Kneer indicates that entering the VC or C positions entails getting intimately familiar with editorial processes. The call for nominations was not opened during the meeting, interested parties can instead e-mail their (self-)nominations to Kneer (kneer@eshcc.eur.nl). Fox proposes a nominating committee, but Kneer believes there will be sufficient nominations for an election to take place next year.
- Jaime Banks says that some divisions (e.g. Communication and Technology) host doctoral consortiums, and asks if there would be interest in that in the game studies division. A possible format could be 3/4ths of a day format about on-going PhD projects. Students can pitch their work, and partner up with more experienced mentors. This allows the students to go through the process of practicing and presenting ideas and giving feedback to each other. Banks would be happy to take the lead in organizing this.
 - Kneer indicates that this would not be a formal session as part of the main conference, but would be held before it.
 - Fox asks attendees to consider becoming sponsors and offers to help raise visibility. She will promote this to students.
 - Banks advises that this would be a game studies event, and that it is better not to mix with CAT. The director of the CAT consortium is able to give suggestions and tips.
 - Ratan asks if hosting the consortium before the maincon would not cannibalize attendees from the pre-con. Chad Wertley suggests to merge the two events. They could be run in parallel, in different rooms of the same venue, or be intertwined altogether.
- The question was raised [I could not note the name. –sec.] whether the goal is to increase submissions and reach out to game scholars. Would it be possible to have ICA sponsor a weekend game jam that gets promoted to game studies scholars while making developers more aware for the next ICA conference? This should also entail getting recognition at the next conference for the best game, or the lab/group that designed it.
- The issue of harassment of two ICA attendees was brought up. Do we need to make a statement as a division against this issue and harassment within ICA? Kneer welcomes e-mails on the topic (kneer@eshcc.eur.nl). Bowman suggest to contact Julia Randolph before this in order to avoid saying anything incorrect. The ICA Executive Director has released a

statement on the incidents: <https://www.icahdq.org/blogpost/1552252/302645/A-Message-from-the-Executive-Director>.

- Ratan points out that images and other copyrighted material to be used in ICA promotional and presentational material should fall under Fair Use. Put simply, this entails not using too much of other creator's materials and repurposing it. Most presentations adhere to this, but it is good to take notice of it.

7 Old Business

- No old business was raised from the floor.

8 Adjournment

- Kneer and Ratan thanked Jesse Fox, Kevin Koban, and Daniel Pietschmann for their help with this year's conference.
- There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Ruud Jacobs, secretary.