CALL FOR PAPERS

Gaming and Gamers in Times of Pandemic

Edited by Piotr Siuda, Jakub Majewski & Krzysztof Chmielewski

The editors of this CfP are already in discussion with the
MIT Press GAME HISTORIES SERIES editors
who enthusiastically voiced support for the collection.
The website of the series:
https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/series/game-histories

The Covid-19 pandemic is a historical moment with social, cultural, and economic repercussions and unprecedented government responses. The pandemic has impacted virtually every aspect of our lives regardless of where we live. This volume seeks to examine the impact of this epochal and significant period and resulting government policies, especially the lockdowns, on one particular cultural sphere: games.

In the initial months, many industry reports noted the unexpected positive impact on online digital game sales. Games weren't just lockdown-proof, but boosted by lockdowns: stay-at-home orders triggered a rush toward games as an alternative form of entertainment, and the ubiquity of mobile phones allowed wider than ever participation. This was seen in esports as it was a successful "extension" of traditional sports, and it forced immediate brand innovation and far-reaching changes in marketing strategies. On the other hand, the growth in esports online viewership came with a price, as many local arena events had to be canceled.

However, sales growth and marketing aside, the impact on the game industry overall was more complex and often pernicious. Game developers experienced a rapid and often challenging shift to remote work. This shift towards virtual communication also affected universities, where students could no longer be hosted in campus laboratories, requiring new forms of student engagement. Some digital games encountered unexpected challenges: how indeed to adapt a location-based augmented reality game to a locked-down world?

Equally complex was the impact on non-digital games. Typically designed for direct face-to-face contact, board games, pen & paper role-playing games, and even live-action role-playing games and their players were forced to move online, or to employ complex safety protocols to minimize transmission risk and conform to legal requirements. With the manufacturing and shipping chain of board game components being drastically distorted, the market for board games has undergone a dramatic change. Also, the virtual market management concept overtook a fair share of the market, with the leading role of crowdfunding specialists. Large-scale events were canceled, postponed, downsized, or virtualized. The same, indeed, was the case not only for game-playing events but also for industry and academic conferences.

The pandemic also affected game players, game developers, game journalists, and game scholars alike in many other ways, starting with the most direct – illness, and sometimes death. New cultural rifts also opened up due to political tensions. Some effects are temporary: others are here to stay. All deserve to be studied.

In this volume, we invite authors to reflect on the various impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on gaming, gamers, as well as those who make and study games. The volume encourages, but is not limited to, the following topics:

- Digital and non-digital games in the pandemic
- Visions of Covid-19 and other pandemics in games
- Pandemic impact on the game industry and game-related events
- Will the pandemic accelerate the evolution of the game industry (games as a social platform, expansion of the free-to-play model, mobile leading the industry, etc.)
- The pandemic and esports (e.g. growth and virtualization of esports, ongoing relations between traditional sports and esports)
- Pandemic impact on game culture and gamer communities
- Teaching and developing games in the pandemic
- AR and VR Games and VR in the service of education online
- Games and players' well-being (games as tools for therapy and the improvement of anxiety vs. excessive use, abuse, and possible addiction)
- Ludology in the time of the pandemic
- Serious games developed for and around the pandemic
- Digitalization of board games and LARPs

TIMELINE

Deadline for Initial Proposals (Extended Abstracts): May 1, 2022
Notification of Acceptance: June 1, 2022
First Drafts Due: October 1, 2022
Editor Comments: November 1, 2022
Final Drafts Due: January 1, 2023

Please note that the dates of "Notification of Acceptance"; "First Drafts Due"; "Editor Comments"; "Final Drafts Due" may change due to the publishing process – the authors will be informed in case of any changes happening.

SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

Prospective authors should submit a short chapter proposal as a Word document to games.covid.book@gmail.com. The proposal should contain:

- The name and contact information of the author(s), along with a brief bio
- The title of the proposed chapter
- Extended abstract of approximately 1000-1200 words excluding references. The abstract should indicate the consistency, rigor, and relevance of the work.

Paper submissions should articulate the issue or research question to be discussed, the methodological or critical framework used, and indicate the findings or conclusions and/or the relevance to general volume. Papers can present any kind of research, analysis, or theoretical

framing, but should be written so that the importance of the work can be indicated. Please note that empirical chapters should include the research question and data to be analyzed.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Please use the latest edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style](). The editors strongly recommend that authors follow the [Chicago Manual]().

Please note that chapters not adhering to the guidelines will be returned to the author(s) for revision.

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