

Suomalainen pelitutkimus ja Pelikulttuurien tutkimuksen huippuyksikkö

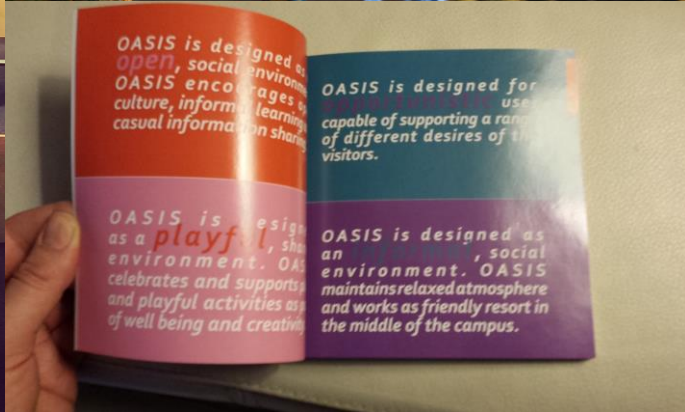
Avoimen korkeakouluopetuksen päivät 2022
Professori Frans Mäyrä & Tutkijatohtori Usva Friman



Moderni pelitutkimus

- Pelien tutkimusta on tehty eri muodoissa esimerkiksi historian, kasvatus- ja kansatieteiden parissa jo yli sata vuotta
- Myös pelin ja leikin teorioita on kehitelty mm. psykologian ja evoluutiobiologian piirissä
- Pelitutkimus taiteen ja kulttuurintutkimuksena on uudempi tutkimus- ja oppiala
- Digitaaliset pelit ja verkkopelaaminen mullistivat pelikulttuuria 1970-luvulta lähtien
- 1980- ja 1990-luvuilla syntyivät monet modernit pelilajityypit ja peliteollisuus alkoi hakea nykyisiä muotojaan
- Moderni pelitutkimus syntyi vuosituhaten vaihteessa
- Taustalla erityisesti humanistinen hypertekstitutkimus, mediatutkimus, sosiaalipsykologinen pelaamisen tutkimus ja kriittinen kulttuurintutkimus

Tampere University Game Research Lab



Tampere University Game Research Lab



- Vuonna 2002 perustettu tutkimusryhmä
- Sijoittuu Tampereen yliopiston Informaatioteknologian ja viestinnän tiedekuntaan
- Taustalla kulttuurisesti orientoitunutta pelien ja digitaalisten teknologioiden tutkimusta ja koulutusta 1990-luvun alusta
- Pelitutkimuksen maisteri- ja tohtorihjelmat perustettu 2009
- Pelitutkimuksen koulutusta kandi-, maisteri- ja tohtoritasolla

Tampere University Game Research Lab



- Noin 20 tutkijaa
- Monitieteinen tutkimusryhmä, jossa pelejä ja pelaamista tutkitaan monenlaisista näkökulmista:
 - Tutkimusaiheita esim. pelaajat, pelit, pelikulttuurit, pelien tekeminen ja tuotanto, peliteollisuus, elektroninen urheilu, pelillisuus ja leikkisyys...
- Yli 50 merkittävää kansallista ja kansainvälistä tutkimushanketta
- Tutkimus, opetus, tapahtumat, uutiset: <https://gameresearchlab.tuni.fi>



Pelikulttuurien tutkimuksen huippuyksikkö

Johtaja Professori Frans Mäyrä, Tampereen yliopisto

Varajohtaja Professori Raine Koskimaa, Jyväskylän yliopisto

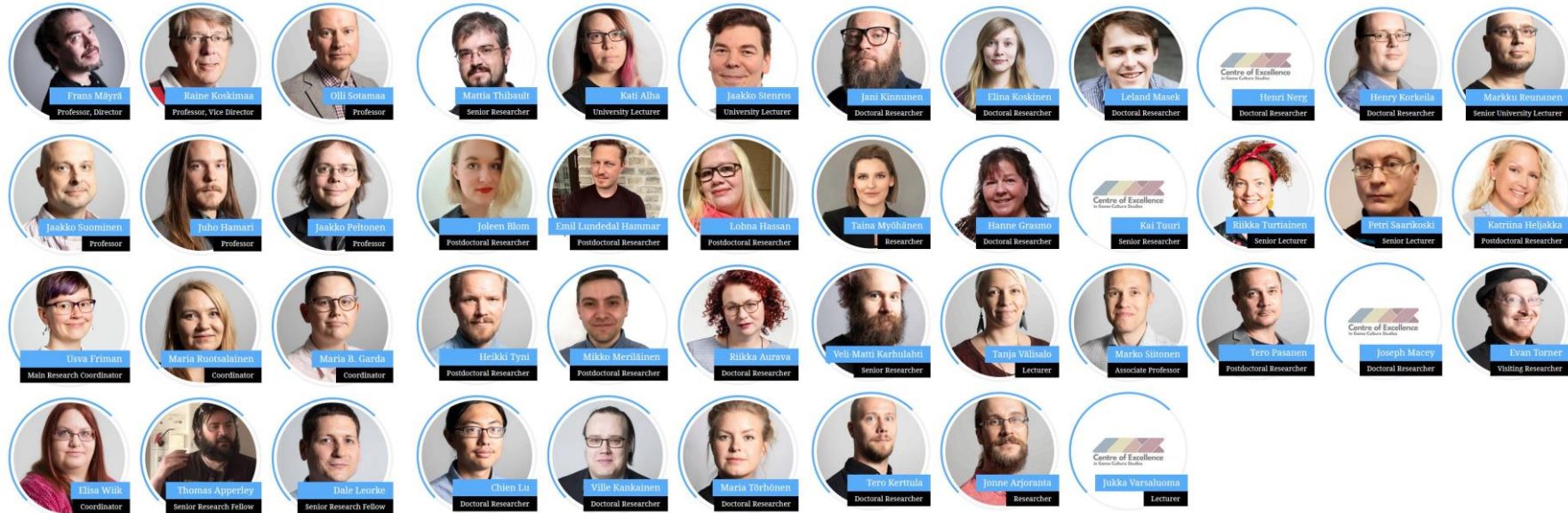
Tiimijohtajat ja tutkimuspaikat:

Professori Raine Koskimaa, Jyväskylän yliopisto

Professori Olli Sotamaa, Tampereen yliopisto

Professori Jaakko Suominen, Turun yliopisto

Suomen Akatemian huippuyksikköohjelma 2018–2025



Pelikulttuurien tutkimuksen huippuyksikön tutkijat (2021)

Julkaisut, vaikuttavuus, uutisia: <https://coe-gamecult.org>

CoE-GameCult: Aims and goals

- Develops original and ambitious, integrated framework for *analysing, understanding, anticipating and influencing* the culture of games in society
- Dual perspective: culture as 1) acts and processes of meaning making, and 2) as cultural agency
- CoE-GameCult has developed the “circuits of game culture” model, which is used in organising the theoretical and empirical work in CoE
- Next: the four research themes are taken further into their special research areas, while joint effort is put into creating a larger synthesis of this research area



Exceptional nexus of expertise

- The CoE-GameCult brings together several area-leading research groups, with complementary domain and methodology expertise areas
- The extended CoE team has grown to include many special interest groups, totalling to over 50 researchers, with over 40 in current core teams
- Key teams are in Tampere, Jyväskylä, Turku - but also active hybrid collaborations reaching to e.g. India, Australia, Asia, North America

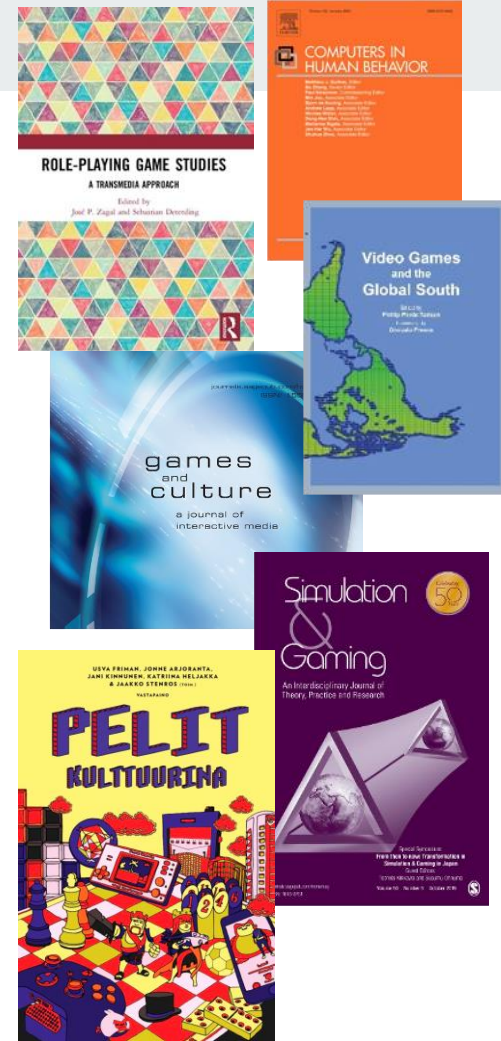


CoE-GameCult: high output, visibility, impact

- CoE-GameCult outputs in a nutshell:
- Organisation of work: 4 themes, Special Interest Groups, events, joint publications, spin off projects
- Hundreds of outputs, targeted both at leading research venues, emerging publications, small language areas - to academics, to professionals, and to educate the general audiences (total recorded number now: 463)
 - 300 peer-reviewed research articles
 - 56 book chapters, conference papers
 - 26 monographs, edited books, special issues
 - 31 publications for professionals
 - 35 publications for general audience
 - 5 public artistic & design activities
 - 8 PhD theses
 - 3 websites
- Spin-off projects, new openings (e.g. universities' major profiling actions, ERC, other funding)
- New researchers are constantly being trained, and talented CoE-postdocs are taking up tenure track positions both nationally and internationally

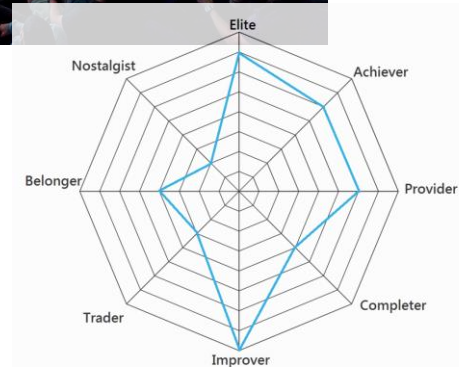
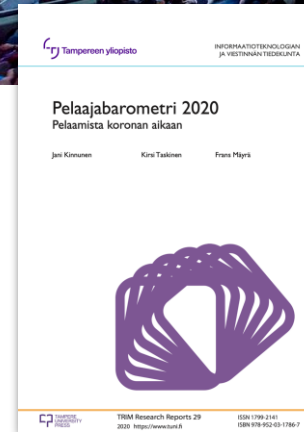
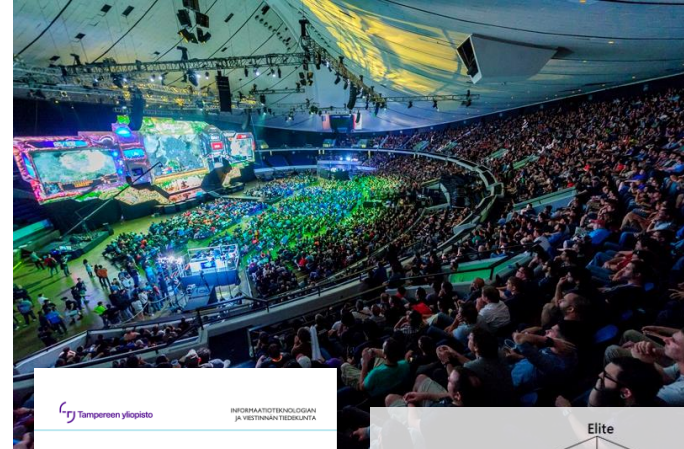
Findings, examples

- CoE has discovered how agency and meaning-making have been closely connected in the transforming game cultures, including research that has shown how games are increasingly part of transmedial formations
- CoE studies have shown how the production model, like crowdfunding, strongly shapes games, and also described how alternative game making processes, like game jams, can sustain cultural heritage
- CoE has engaged in critiques of contemporary game cultures e.g. on how the agency and roles of women, sexual or ethnic minorities are being limited, and CoE has also studied the co-creative and supportive agency of larp culture for sexual minorities
- Major CoE contributions focus on rethinking the cultural preservation of games, while 'cultural heritage' itself is undergoing changes, while also greatly contributing to the understanding and applications of gamification in society, including studies on how gameful civic engagement operates



New data, new methodological innovations

- CoE has produced large, nationally representative and international survey datasets, focused player surveys, and interviews of various player demographics and game jam participants
- The CoE has also engaged in computational text analytics for game culture studies, focusing on such materials as game developer post-mortem reports, forum discussions, game stream chats and online AMA sessions
- The ambitious methodological experimentation has been possible with the interdisciplinary expertise of CoE teams and international collaborators combining their skills in cultural, media and information studies.



Awarded impacts via excellent science

- The original goals have been exceeded in several areas
- Special effort has been put on researcher training and support, responsible research practices and Open Science
- The CoE received the national Champions of Open Science Award in 2021. Strategic priority has been on “bibliodiversity” and multidisciplinary collaboration in high-profile research and publication



Interaction

- CoE has close dialogue with diverse stakeholder groups, including game culture professionals, game developers, game player communities, minorities and policy makers, leading to significant societal impact in five key areas
- See the CoE-GameCult impact stories: <https://coe-gamecult.org/tag/impact-story>

Impact story:
Advancing game
cultural literacy and
agency in society



Impact story: Well-being
and (e)sports



Impact story: Creating
opportunities for inclusive
game creation



Impact story: Recognizing
the demoscene as digital
cultural heritage



Impact story: Play in
public spaces



Impacts via researcher training

- CoE-GameCult researchers who have already been appointed into academic positions:
 - Aleena Chia, Assistant Professor, Simon Fraser University (Communication Studies)
 - Sabine Harrer, Senior Lecturer, Uppsala University (Game Design)
 - Mattia Thibault, Assistant Professor, Tampere University (Translation in the Creative Industries)
 - Jan Svelch, Research Fellow, Charles University (Game Production Studies)
 - Lobna Hassan, Associate Professor, LUT University (Sociotechnical Transitions in Services)
 - Thomas Apperley, Senior Research Fellow, Tampere University (Tampere Institute for Advanced Study)
 - Tero Kerttula, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Jyväskylä (Multiliteracies of Social Participation - Profiling Area)
- Researchers who have been employed in private sector positions:
 - Jonna Koivisto, R&D Lead, Solsten
 - Jukka Vahlo, Chief Scientific Officer, Kinrate Analytics
 - Janne Paavilainen, UI/UX designer, BON Games
 - Maria Törhönen, Technical Project Manager, Gofore

The expansion: Spin-offs

- Intimacy in Data-driven Culture (IDA), Academy of Finland strategic research, 460 000€ (Overall budget 4,6 M€), Scientific director prof. Susanna Paasonen, University of Turku, Olli Sotamaa deputy PI in WP5 “Datafication and creative work”.
- “UNITE” Flagship (over 13 million euros): “Forest-Human-Machine Interplay - Building Resilience, Redefining Value Networks and Enabling Meaningful Experiences”
- “Games as a Platform to Tackle Grand Challenges” section the Tampere University’s new research profile (PROFI6 funding 12,7M€).
- Growing Mind, Academy of Finland, UTA share in game research 828 279€ (consortium total c. 5 888 000€)
- Ontological Reconstruction of Gaming Disorder (ORE), 5-year ERC project, dir. Veli-Matti Karhulahti (2 M€)
- MultiLEAP - *Multiliteracies for Social Participation and in Learning across the Life Span* JYU Profiling area including game literacy
- MultiLeTe2 - *Multidisciplinary research on learning and teaching* JYU Profiling area including educational games and simulations
- FIN-Clariah - Consortium for developing digital humanities res.infrastructure, included in the Academy of Finland Research Infrastructure Roadmap, a WP focusing on game streaming



erc

IDA



Esimerkkejä Pelikulttuurien tutkimuksen huippuyksikön Tampereen tiimin / Game Research Labin tutkimuksista

Friman, Ruotsalainen & Ståhl: Equity in Esports

- **Goal:** To examine if and how Finnish esports organisations present themselves as inclusive and accessible environments for marginalised players in their public communication
- **Material:** Websites of 53 organisations
- **Results:** Limited inclusivity contents and diversity of visual representations, but some positive examples
- **Next steps:** Best practice benchmarking and development in collaboration with the organisations



Photo: SEUL ry / Jussi Jääskeläinen / Insomnia 2019

Meriläinen: Youth gaming in Finland

Qualitative exploration into young people's everyday gaming behaviour and their views on gaming culture.

What do young people enjoy about gaming?
What limits or enables their gaming? How do they see public discourse on gaming? What do they think of issues such as hostile online behaviour or excessive game play?

Current stage: analysing open-ended responses from 180 game players aged 15–25.



Aurava: Game jamming in schools

Doctoral dissertation, forthcoming in 2022

Game jams are events where people gather to design and make (digital or non-digital) games together.

Game jams can be used in schools to support learning of several skills, e.g.:

- Communication, cooperation
- Learning to learn
- Time management
- Creativity, innovation



Photo by Riikka Aurava: participants of a game jam, 2019

Blom: Mediated intimacy – Affection with game characters

Postdoctoral research project. General objective:
Constructing a framework for the analysis and implementation of responsible monetisation models of games using fictional characters for in-game purchases.

Current publication topics:

- Transmedia storytelling and video games (book manuscript – AUP).
- Players' interpretative agency and authorship in *Overwatch* (book chapter).
- Linearity in JRPGs (book chapter).
- Game characters and affect in *Genshin Impact* (book chapter).
- Player market economies of the characters in



Screenshot taken by Blom of *Genshin Impact* (miHoYo 2020)

Koskinen: Memorable Moments with Pokémon GO

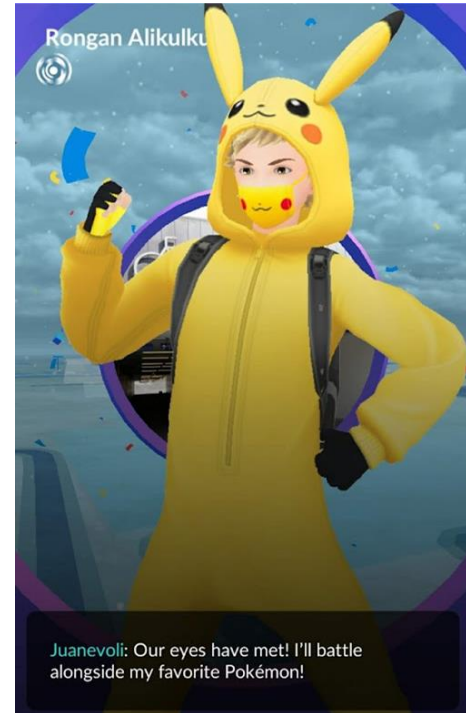
Doctoral dissertation (forthcoming, 2023)

What kind of memorable experiences *Pokémon GO* players have described? What did these reveal about experiences with location-based augmented reality gaming during the early days of *Pokémon GO*?

Interesting findings:

- The social atmosphere and communality created by *Pokémon GO* in the game's early days was a unique phenomenon, the virality of which is hard to repeat.
- *Pokémon GO* had transformational power in two aspects: physical places were inhabited in new ways, and the social atmosphere between unfamiliar people changed towards more open due to communality.
- *Pokémon GO* had a widespread impact on the accessibility and everyday experiences of games for middle-aged players, a player group that has traditionally played less.

Work-in-progress: Memorable encounters with strangers while playing *Pokémon GO*



Screenshot by Koskinen

Kankainen: Tabletop games as Spreadable Media

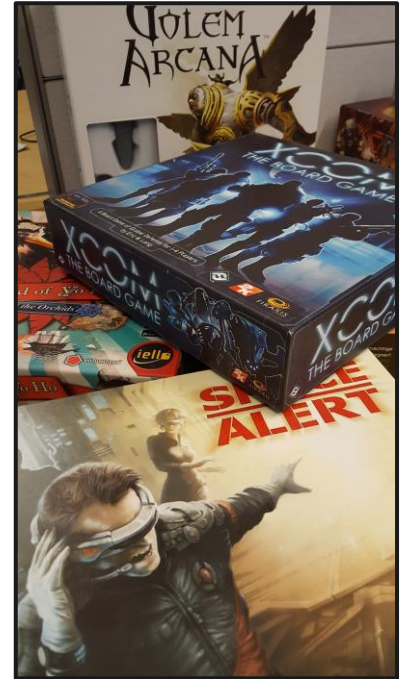
Doctoral dissertation (forthcoming, 2022)

Digitalization, online connectivity, and social media practices have major impact on the recent popularity of tabletop gaming. In current post-digital environment, social sharing practices expand the game experience beyond the physical play situation, transmedia and hybrid trajectories blur the line between contents and technologies, and participatory culture processes affect the spread of latest trends, playable content, and creative influences.

- What are the creative and entrepreneurial possibilities of this *hybrid media ecosystem of tabletop gaming*?

In the dissertation this is considered from two key perspectives:

- How does social shareability re-define the design space of tabletop games in post-digital culture?
- What are the key principles and best practices of combining analog and digital affordances in tabletop game design?



Picture by Kankainen

Stenros: Game Rules

One of the few things that scholars of games have agreed upon during the last 100 years as being central to games has been 'rules'. However, it there is significant disagreement on what 'rules' mean.

This constructionist ludology research project looks at the foundations of games and seeks the answer to what kinds of rules account for the construction of a game, and how do the rules work

FOREWORD

The Official Code in French was finally passed by the Council of the F.I.D.E. at Venice in July, 1929, and the Units were requested to have the Code translated into the necessary languages in order to secure universal adoption. The B.C.F. undertook the translation into English and finally submitted to the President of the F.I.D.E. a British Edition which was passed as conforming to the arrangement and expressing the true intent and meaning of the French Official Code, a literal translation being found inadequate. Notes on several laws are necessary to avoid ambiguity and these are given in italics as British Notes additional to the official text.

THE LAWS OF CHESS

AUTHORISED EDITION OF THE OFFICIAL CODE COMPILED
BY THE
FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DES ECHECS
PUBLISHED BY THE
BRITISH CHESS FEDERATION
1931

The Italicised commentaries in inverted commas in this reprint are by J. T. Boyd. Other notes are by the Federation in the 1931 edition.

I. DEFINITION AND OBJECT

i. Chess, a game in the play of which there is no element of chance, is played by two persons on a square called the Chess Board and divided into 64 squares coloured light and dark alternately. Each person shall play with a series of Sixteen men, one series to be light coloured and called White, and the other series to be dark coloured and called Black.

ii. The object of the play is to checkmate the Opponent's King and the Player who checkmates thereby wins the game.

The meaning of the technical terms used in this law will be found in 3, 4 (iv), 10 (i).

Grasmo: Designing for Erotic larps 25 Nordic larps 2011-2021

Method:

Qualitative text analysis of websites, sign-ups, and other electronic material for the larps, made available to participants.

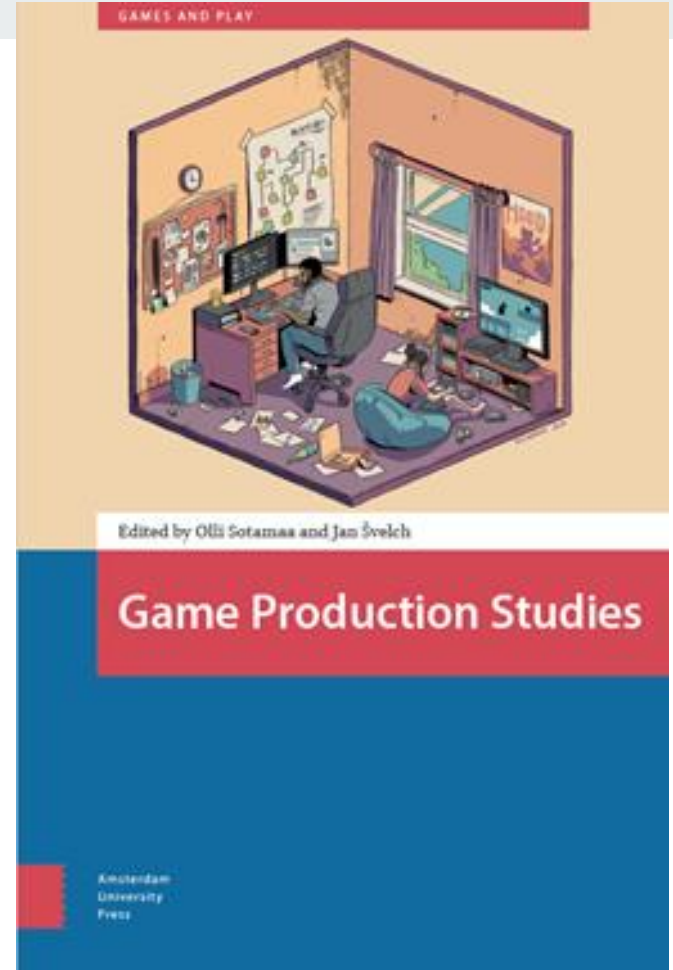
Next up: Players Sexual Arousal



- How larp designers signal erotic larps.
- Sexual mechanics used to cater for play.
- Inclusion of queer and non-normative sexualities.

Sotamaa: Game Production Studies

- Game production studies is a specific perspective that emphasizes cultural, economic, political, and social circumstances under which games are created, produced and circulated
- Check out the Open Access book from Amsterdam University Press:
<https://www.aup.nl/en/book/9789463725439/game-production-studies>



Tyni, Myöhänen & Sotamaa: Data work in the Finnish game industry

Research area: Finnish game industry workers

Focus: The current work culture saturated by data, analytics and algorithm-based work practices

Explore: What the datafied work involves, emerging data-related jobs, how does datafied work feel like from individual workers' perspectives, how is datafication changing traditional game work and the cultural industries in a larger sense

Current stage: A qualitative analysis of a data set consisting of 18 industry interviews

OPEN JOBS:



Seriously

Data Engineer
SERIOUSLY / Helsinki
Finland

Jul 12, 2021
Program



read more



SciPlay

Analyst Team Lead
SCIPLAY / Finland

Oct 9, 2021 | Data and Analytics



kuuhubb

Data Scientist
KUUHUBB / Helsinki

Aug 6, 2021 | Data and Analytics



read more

Data Analyst, Dream
Blast
ROVIO / Helsinki
Metropolitan Area

Oct 14, 2021 | Data and Analytics



read more

Hammar: A comparative analysis of labor conditions in the Finnish & Danish games industries

- Making games has a reputation of being very difficult with lots of workhours and relatively low pay
- But do the Nordic game industries such as Finland and Denmark have relatively better work conditions thanks to, among other things, their Nordic welfare state?
- How are the working conditions when making games in Finland and Denmark and how do they differ from the usual conversation around working in the North American game industries?



Mäyrä: Player Agency as a Hybrid

Series of theoretical studies into the fundamental character of player agency:

- Player must give up certain freedom and agency, following the rules of games
- There is complex power dynamics, involving also players' cognition, body, emotions - and material elements such as controllers, other technologies
- Mental and physical mix: player "is" both the cursor-like in-game character, while also remaining outside of the game
- The player agency is simultaneously human and non-human, empowered but also defined and limited by game rules, technology, economics, other power relationships
- Studying these power relationships has consequences for game studies
- Modern game studies has many roots, notably in aesthetic formalism and in 20th century literary studies
- The focus of game studies today should be on the rich interrelations of structural, representational, cultural and societal dimensions of agency & meaning-making



Friman: Women players' game cultural agency

Doctoral dissertation (forthcoming, 2022):
Understanding game cultural agency in the post-gamer era: Gender, game cultural participation, and gamer identity in Finnish women's gaming

Important findings:

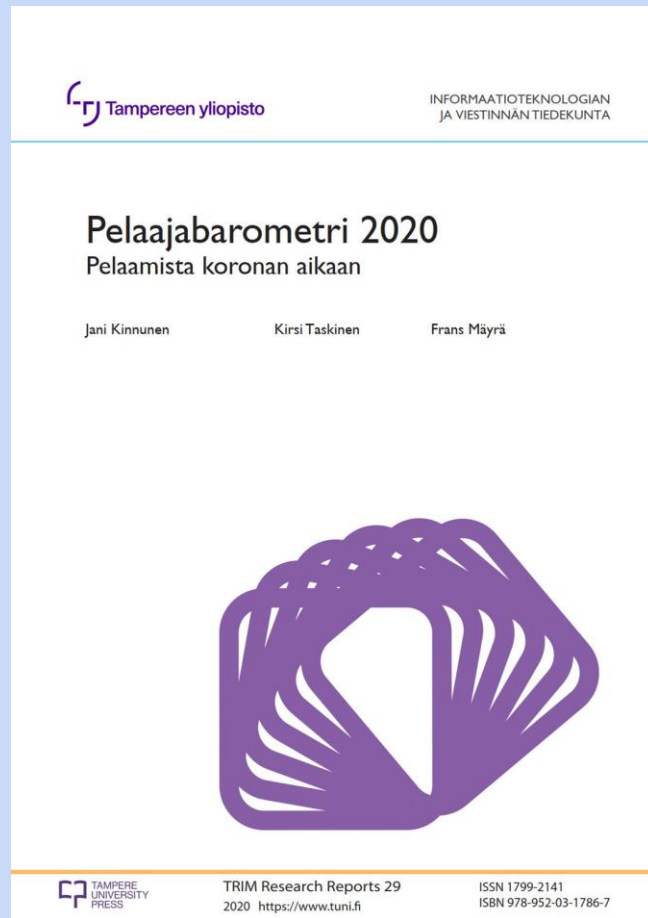
- Women gamers play actively, on various platforms, and many different genres
- Gender affects women's gaming and game cultural participation, mostly negatively
- Women may choose to reject gamer identity and construct their game cultural agency on their own terms, against cultural expectations



Photo: Pax Prime 2015 by SupportPDX (used under CC BY 2.0)

Player Barometer Studies (Pelaajabarometri)

- What games do Finns play?
- What kind of changes in ways of playing?
- How has COVID-19 influenced gaming in Finland?
- How much money and time Finns use in gaming?
- **Nationally representative questionnaire study**
- Player Barometer 2022 forthcoming



Kiitos!

