game environments

global network player authority PewDiePie guild god Let's Play angel undead wth authentic mediatization Skill dungeon PVP contest game rule system gameplay avatar WoW blessing noob kills demon race body fight hope spelling games FPS discussion digital religion gamer analysis representation the healing you religio-scape Soul diablo class tradition experience Twitch rebirth wedding gamer simulation lol ludology The Last of Us death resurrection funeral runes ritual virtual identity buff priest genesis clan mage XBox 360 PVE narrative immersion community symbols salvation hel

Issue 02 (2015)

IASGAR:
The new International Academy for the Study of Gaming and Religion

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Abstract

Report on the foundation of IASGAR, International Academy for the Study of Gaming and Religion.

Keywords: IASGAR, International Academy for the Study of Gaming and Religion

IASGAR

In March 2015, at the University of Helsinki, Finland, as an outcome of a workshop and network meeting on the Study of Gaming and Religion, Culture, and Society, a new platform for researchers on games/gaming and religion was founded. The International Academy for the Study of Gaming and Religion (IASGAR) aims at bringing together people working in the field, at providing space for exchange, and at advancing scholarly research on the interrelation of video gaming and religion. We understand "video games" to be electronic forms of play across all platforms, from personal computers and consuls to mobile devices.

The network is an international and multidisciplinary forum for ongoing discussion and cooperation. IASGAR's aim, among other things, is to collect, systematize, and develop the various recent multidisciplinary approaches to research and teaching and to contribute to structure and coordinate them as well as the discipline specific discourses. We want to discuss the new emerging questions related to methodological and

theoretical issues and approaches in the study of games/gaming and religion, for instance:

1. The general Relevance of Video Games within the Field of Cultural Studies as seen from different Perspectives and Disciplines

Are games relevant for Cultural Studies? As research on video gaming and religion by today is done in various academic disciplines, we need to explore possibilities of interdisciplinary approaches. Especially many sub-fields of Cultural Studies, like Anthropology, Area Studies, Religious Studies, but also Theology, Media and Communication Studies etc. so far contributed to our understanding of religion and video gaming. How can we benefit from such interdisciplinary approaches?

2. Region Specific Discourses

Video gaming is a highly global phenomenon. Nevertheless, by far most of the existing research was done in Europe and the US. As a consequence, the theoretical and methodical approaches applied today have primarily been developed in 'Western' (European and American) contexts, based on 'Western' gaming settings. IASGAR explicitly goes one step further and also heads out to discuss the different aspects of gaming worldwide. Are there any differences in game design, in game playing as well as in the role of religion?

3. Methodical Approaches

Games as well as gamer generated content provide us with a huge pool of research data. But what are the right methods of researching video games: interviewing, textual analysis, analysis of art history, or just playing the game? And which method can answer which research questions?

IASGAR is open to all interested scholars, researchers and students affiliated with a research institution, but also to educators and interested organizations or persons. Join us on Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/groups/166781063521422/, or contact us. The new website of IASGAR with details about the Academy, its members, activities, accomplishments, etc. will be up and running by the end of 2015. You are welcome to check it out, and to join us!