

Video games as performance art

December 3 2013

A new Videogames Research Network, supported by funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, has been created to bring together games developers, performance practitioners and academics to explore new concepts in the design and creation of movement-based video games.

Performance artists and researchers are joining forces to create a new type of [video game](#), further blurring the boundaries between real and virtual worlds.

The Videogames Research Network has been set up by the Games Research Group at the University of Lincoln, UK.

It involves several researchers from Lincoln's School of Computer Science, including Dr Patrick Dickinson, Dr Duncan Rowland, Dr Conor Linehan and Dr Ben Kirman, working with Dr Kate Sicchio from the School of Performing Arts and Dr Grethe Mitchell from the School of Media.

Collaborating with Performance and New Media Professor Gabriella Giannachi, from the University of Exeter, the aim is to bring together [games developers](#), performance practitioners and academics to explore new concepts in the design and creation of movement-based games. Arts Queensland, based in Brisbane, is also a project partner.

The project is being sponsored by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), as part of a wider initiative to develop the creative

industries and put Britain back at the forefront of creative technology.

Dr Dickinson said: "The concept of performance has already become important in games; for example, Microsoft Kinect, Nintendo Wii and Playstation Move are based on direct physical movement rather than pushing buttons on a controller. However, it's an area of interaction that's not been fully explored in terms of innovative mechanics in a commercial setting. We want to take a fresh look at from the perspective of performing arts research and practice, and use them to develop new [game](#) design ideas. We will also be looking at location-based gaming - games that are situated 'in the wild'."

The emergence of movement-based interactions and mixed reality mobile platforms have profoundly changed the types of experiences game designers are able to create.

Project performers will participate directly in the game creation process through a series of workshop activities. This will drive development of new performance-led game mechanics, and playful audience interactions, which will inspire new types of experience in contemporary gaming platforms.

Dr Rowland explained: "The mechanics of video games can now be expressed using naturalistic body movements and behaviours, blurring the boundaries between the real and virtual worlds. We will address this challenge using the perspective of performing arts research and practice, enabling performance practitioners and researchers to engage directly with the game development process. It's about how concepts of expression through performance could create new and engaging game play mechanics and how the role of audience could create playful interactions and be used to generate competitive and collaborative play."

Professor Gabriella Giannachi added: "Performance and Audience in

Movement-Based Digital Games is an exciting opportunity to collaborate with colleagues in computer science and the commercial sector to look into how we can use practices and theories from performance and new media to create game play mechanics in commercial games. The theoretical framework being used is documented in a set of publications, including the MIT book *Performing Mixed Reality*, written by computer scientist Steve Benford from the University of Nottingham and myself, which documents a series of landmark performances and installations that mix physical and virtual environments, live performance, game mechanics and interactivity."

Provided by University of Lincoln

Citation: Video games as performance art (2013, December 3) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-12-video-games-art.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.