1UP Symposium on games, gamification, health and wellbeing

January 25th, 2024 – 10:30 – 17:00
Location: [room MLZ 1, MindLabs, Locomotiefboulevard 101, 5041 SE Tilburg](#)

Abstracts:

Nathan Wildman, Assistant Professor, Tilburg University - Serious games combine game elements, learning strategies, and knowledge structures to (try to) teach players specific skills/information and prompt certain world-directed responses. And they have been widly employed in educational and healthcare contexts. But what limitations are there to the effectiveness of such games? My aim in this talk is to highlight how important a player's attitude is here. Players who treat serious games as 'just a game', I argue, fundamentally undermine any educatory aims such games might express. As a consequence, would-be serious game designers need to carefully consider how they will control/guide player attitude.

Sander Bakkes, Assistant Professor, Utrecht University - Who needs applied games that make people reflect on emotionally challenging topics, when one already has entertainment games? This talk with highlight numerous impactful entertainment games and will argue how clever design decisions have yielded notable positive effect on psychological well-being.

Kamiab Ghorbanpour, PhD candidate, Tilburg University - Since the inception of more narratively complex games, such as Ultima VI or the original Fallout, people have pondered the psychological impact of these games and whether they can contribute positively or negatively to individuals' psyche. From the ongoing moral panic to my own research on how games can enhance people's morality, this talk will explore ways in which I aim to further develop a path towards moral improvement. I plan to achieve this by creating a video game specifically designed for that purpose and will share my thoughts on what may be the most effective approaches.

Elisabeth Huis in 't Veld - TBA

Rob Hulsen, co-Founder, Hulan - For almost 9 years, Hulan has been dedicated to creating serious games. In my presentation, I will demonstrate how we utilize game mechanics and gamification strategies to make a positive impact. I'll showcase specific examples of our projects that have successfully engaged users in healthier behaviors and promoted wellness.

Johan van der Meulen - TBA

Mehmet Kosa, Research Scientist, Northeastern University - Meaningful narrative-based content in commercial virtual reality games were found to be effective for both alleviating stress and elevating mood. Additionally, interactivity, immersion and meaningfulness of the content were found to be additive, meaning that when all of these three are included for an experience, it becomes more effective in terms of stress reduction.

Jeroen Janssen, PhD Candidate, Radboud University Medical Center, Nijmegen - For older adults, in-person social interactions are increasingly difficult, making them a risk group for loneliness. Digital tools, like social gaming, are a fun and accessible way to interact without having to be together, thus overcoming these difficulties. In this talk, we will introduce a digital,

chat-based, mobile gaming app (designed by Games for Health), and provide the lessons learned from various studies performed with this app. We will give directions for future digital gaming apps aimed at decreasing loneliness in older adults.

Johannes Pfau, Assistant Professor, Utrecht University - Resilience, the ability of a person to manage their own anxiety and cope with a changing environment, is a key psychological construct that is becoming increasingly salient in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and political and social unrest. And yet, this construct is considerably hard to assess or measure under laboratory settings. By developing an alternate reality game, an interactive narrative superimposed on real world locations and events, we created an environment to study factors of resilience in first-year students of the University of California, Santa Cruz, and simulated situations that could eventually prepare them for similar occurrences in real life. This talk outlines the games we deployed, the analyses we draw, the insights we found and what might be yet to come.