Call for Participation

Digital games have complicated notions of what a body is and what it means during and apart from play. Both digital and physical bodies are understood to influence – or be influenced by – gameplay experiences according to their unique traits, states, abilities, materialities, and governing systems. In gamespaces, digital bodies may be considered both as signifiers and agents of players’ intention and as independent entities functioning according to their inherent design. On the other side of the interface, physical bodies may be considered both as manipulators of game content and as being influenced by game events that they help create. In many ways, these interplays between digital and physical bodies are central to notions of play.

The goal of this pre-conference is to shed light on the natures, functions, and interplays of digital and physical bodies in games, and how bodies are engaged in and influenced by play. “Bodies,” for purposes of this event, are broadly defined, including textual, visual, logical, and physical manifestations of players or their agents. As the main conference theme is “Communication Across the Life Span,” contributors are encouraged to consider gaming bodies as they evolve over stages of life and play.

In the interest of fostering lively discussion and synthesis of scholarship, the pre-conference welcomes abstracts for research from various theoretical, methodological, and disciplinary backgrounds. Possible pre-conference topics related to gaming bodies include (but are not restricted to):

- Traits: anthropomorphism, abstraction, aesthetics, mechanics, materialities
- Social interaction: co-present bodies, intimacies
- Effects: violence against bodies, bodily effects of VR and AI
- Space/movement: proxemics, gestures, spatiality
- Interplays: shifts or synergies in identities, agencies, narratives, awareness
- Embodiment: representations, performance, pleasure
- Cultures: norms, assumptions, privileges and legitimacy
- Body-mind issues: neuroscientific/psychological responses rooted in biological functions
- Interfaces: wearable/embeddable controls, quantified self, natural mapping
- Applications: bodies in serious/ed games, health (e.g., exercise, aging), motor learning
- Industry topics: body-driven game design challenges, monetization of the body
- The role of the body in serious/educational games
- Methodological challenges: measuring body states or movements, manipulating avatars
Proposals may be submitted to four categories: translational brainstorming questions, research reports, posters, and game demos. Research reports and posters will undergo double-blind review by volunteers, and will be evaluated for a) fit with the pre-conference theme of ‘Gaming Bodies,’ b) quality of theory methods, c) theoretical and/or empirical contributions. Translational questions and game demos will be chosen by the pre-conference committee, after evaluating for theme fit and other criteria outlined below.

**Submission opportunity 1: Translational brainstorming questions**

The translational brainstorming session is intended to jump-start the preconference by talking about notions of bodies and why they matter to games and gaming, even for games scholars that do not specifically attend to issues of embodiment. In particular, we will invite three scholars to cooperatively lead a discussion, and each will pose a provocative question to debate. One question will focus on digital bodies, one on physical bodies, and one on the intersections of the two.

Anyone interested in posing a question and facilitating its consideration is invited to submit a ~500-word abstract that includes the following: a) the question to be posed; b) the rationale for posing that question; and c) anticipated discussion outcomes. The submission should also indicate which of the three categories the question should be programmed as addressing (the physical body, the digital body, intersections of digital and physical bodies).

These submissions do not need to be blinded for review.

**Submission opportunity 2: Research report (extended abstract)**

The research report sessions will be traditional paper sessions, programmed into one of three tentative themes: the physical body, the digital body, intersections of digital and physical bodies. Note that these themes may shift, depending on the nature of submitted/accepted abstracts.

Anyone interested in presenting a research report at the pre-conference is invited to submit an extended abstract of 1000-1500 words in APA 6th style.

These submission should be blinded for review.

**Submission opportunity 3: Research report (poster)**

Anyone interested in presenting a poster at the pre-conference is invited to submit in one of two formats:

Option 1: An extended abstract of 1000-1500 words in APA 6th style.

Option 2: A draft of the poster, in pdf form. Please ensure that the text and graphics are of a legible size and quality.

These submission should be blinded for review.
Submission opportunity 4: Game demo

The purpose of the game demonstrations is to experience and reflect on the many ways that digital and physical bodies are engaged in gameplay. Game demonstrations should include a live, playable game, and demonstrators should be prepared to offer a thesis about how bodies are engaged in the game and why that engagement matters, to answer questions about that thesis, and to offer assistance with gameplay. All game genres, platforms, and subject matter are welcomed, so long as the ‘Gaming Bodies’ theme is addressed.

Anyone interested in demonstrating a game is invited to submit a ~500-word abstract that includes the following: a) the name of game to be demonstrated, and a brief description of gameplay and aesthetic b) a statement of the themed thesis and supporting points, and c) anticipated outcomes of the demonstration. Demonstrators should be prepared to bring, set up, and monitor their own game(s) and device(s).

These submissions do not need to be blinded for review.

Submission details:

To submit, please e-mail a PDF of your submission as an attachment to Jaime Banks at jabanks@mail.wvu.edu.

All submissions must be received by 11:59pm Eastern U.S. time (GMT-5:00) on December 1, 2014. The abstracts/posters will be subject to a double blind peer review process, therefore all identifying author information should be removed from the submission content and properties. When submitting an abstract or poster proposal, please also include a separate cover page including your name(s), department/organization(s), and e-mail address(es). The translation questions and game demo proposals will be chosen by the pre-conference committee and do not require removal of identifying information. Notification of acceptance will be sent by February 1, 2015.

The extended abstracts and posters submitted for the pre-conference should not have been submitted to any other competitions in the ICA’s main conference or any other venue, nor should they be materially similar to any paper under consideration by any such venue. The pre-conference submissions will be refereed and programmed separately from ICA’s main conference.

All those who are accepted to present their extended abstract should register for the ICA pre-conference by March 13, 2015. The registration fee will be $50.

A note about location and transportation:

Please be aware that this preconference will be held outside of the conference hotels, at a local university campus. In order to address possible concerns about safety of traveling among various locations in San Juan, we have arranged for a shuttle bus to transport attendees from the two conference hotels to the preconference location at a local university. This
transportation will be provided for free to registered attendees. Because of this you will need to be at each hotel’s meeting point promptly to catch the shuttle (exact time and location to be announced to registrants). Unfortunately, if you miss the shuttle you will have to arrange for your own cab ride to the campus.

Questions?

Please direct any questions or concerns to:
Jaime Banks, West Virginia University - jabanks@mail.wvu.edu - @amperjay

About ICA and the Game Studies Interest Group

ICA is an academic association for scholars interested in the study, teaching, and application of all aspects of human and mediated communication. ICA began more than 50 years ago as a small association of U.S. researchers and is now a truly international association with more than 4,500 members in 80 countries. Since 2003, ICA has been officially associated with the United Nations as a non-governmental association (NGO). More information on ICA can be found at www.icahdq.org/.

The Game Studies special interest group has been a platform for scholars worldwide specializing in rigorous research on digital games and gaming as a new form of media since 2006. More information on the ICA Game Studies Special Interest Group can be found at http://icagames.org