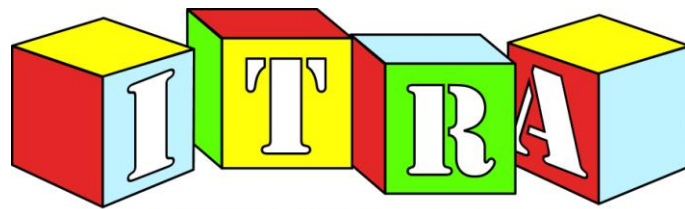


ITRA NEWSLETTER

International Toy Research Association

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**INTERNATIONAL TOY
RESEARCH ASSOCIATION**

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PROLOGUE

The International Toy Research Association Newsletter is designed to keep members up to date with research in the fields of toys and play. In this issue, readers will find a note from our President, a Member's Profile, the Members' Forum, various publications, conference and exhibition previews and reviews. The newsletter has been formatted to allow the document to be read in either printed form or as a soft copy, which can be found on the ITRA website.



The ITRA website (<http://www.itratoyresearch.org>.) covers the following: a description of ITRA, a brief history of the association, how to become a member, and a catalogue of downloadable newsletters.

Those of you who promised material that never arrived... send it again. For those who made contributions, without which there would be many more blank spaces, a massive thank you.

Enjoy the Newsletter.

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GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT OF ITRA

Dear ITRA colleagues and friends,



Thank you for assigning to me the role of ITRA President and for contributing to a most successful conference this past July in Paris. The feedback so far has been more than positive from the ninety, or so, participants who seemed to thoroughly enjoy both the scientific and the social program put together by Gilles Brougère and the hardworking members of the scientific and organizing committees. I would like to extend my sincerest appreciation to all of the committee members and especially to Gilles. All their efforts, time, scholarly resourcefulness and cheer played a significant role in such an important event for ITRA.

For those unable to attend: Thibaud Clément and Mark Steinberg delivered informative keynote addresses regarding their recent research, respectively, *Narrative placemaking, material culture and play at the Happiest Place on Earth* and *Delivering Toys: The Convenience Store as Media Mix Hub*. We had a handful of excellent Symposia covering toys within design, education, culture and gender identity. Many top quality papers were presented to an interested and expectant audience eager to discuss the many aspects of the relationship between toys and material culture, which constituted the main conference theme. Presentation topics included toy hybridisation, FabLabs, education, history, design and technology, and questions exploring issues of ethnicity, gender, globalization, and changing toy cultures. Some of these issues were also raised during the special session organized in tribute to Brian Sutton-Smith, ITRA co-founder and prominent toy and play researcher. I was honoured to chair this session, which included comments from Cleo Gougoulis, Rémi Leclerc and Greta Pennell who each spoke about the impact Brian had on their lives, both personally and more generally in terms of toy and play research. In addition, ITRA Prizes for Outstanding Toy Research (sponsored by The British Toy and Hobby Association) were awarded to Suzy Seriff (prize for senior researcher) for her paper *Holocaust War Games: Playing with Genocide* and Anna Borzenkova (student prize) for her ongoing PhD research *Designing play equipment for children with cerebral palsy*. You may be pleased to know that Gilles Brougère is currently organizing the publication process of various conference papers. Finally, though not least, a fun evening event and dinner was held at the French Playing Card Museum, in the Issy-les-Moulineaux district of Paris.

Once again, our Association emerged from the conference with a renewed momentum and sense of enthusiasm. Old collaborations by toy scholars and practitioners, with common interests, were yet again revived and new networks formed, paving the way to fruitful alliances and innovative future toy research projects. A number of young and enthusiastic researchers joined ITRA and expressed their keen interest in keeping the toy research community alive by contributing to the dissemination of information on toy research. The ITRA Board was elected with six members of the old Board (Mark Allen, SFRL, UK, Jeffrey Goldstein, University of Utrecht, The Netherlands, Lieselotte van Leeuwen, University of Gothenburg, Sweden, Koumudi Patil, IIT Kanpur, India, Greta Pennell, University of Indianapolis, USA, and Suzanne Seriff, University of Texas at Austin, USA), a re-elected member (Cleo Gougoulis, University of Patras, Greece), and two new members (Gilles Brougère, University Paris Nord, and Rémi Leclerc, PolyPlay, Hong Kong). Gilles, who was the first ITRA president, is a returning member and Rémi is serving for the first time on the Board. Cleo Gougoulis will remain treasurer until the ITRA account is transferred to France, whereupon Gilles will take over the role of Treasurer.

As President, I would like to welcome to the ITRA Board, first timers, returning, and re-elected Board members (Gilles Brougère, Jeffrey Goldstein, Cleo Gougoulis, Treasurer, Rémi Leclerc, Lieselotte van Leeuwen, Koumudi Patil, Greta Pennell, ITRA Vice-President, and Suzy Seriff, ITRA Secretary) and a special thank you to the two outgoing members (Luisa Magalhães, Catholic University of Portugal, Braga, Portugal, and Kati Heljakka, University of Turku, Finland) for their hard work and dedication during their years of service.

The ITRA Board is currently considering options for both the location and date for the 9th ITRA Conference. Potential host sites include Amsterdam, London, Cambridge, Gandhinagar, Oslo, Indianapolis, and Rochester. Other topics under discussion include; membership criteria, use of social media, editorial matters, and means to improve promotion of ITRA within the wider scientific community. The ITRA membership will be informed, via e-mail and the ITRA website (www.ITRAtoyresearch.org) when the information becomes available.

In the meantime, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a productive and fun 2019.

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MEMBER PROFILE – Koumudi Patil



Koumudi Patil is an Assistant Professor in the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, India. She works jointly in the Design Programme and the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences. She is currently the Coordinator of the Subject Expert Group on Crafts and livelihoods under the UBA (Unnat Bharat Abhiyan - *All India Council for Technical Education*) scheme of the Ministry of Human Resource Development. She also runs the YuKTI lab at IIT Kanpur. She works closely with the government, industry and CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) units in the areas of craft, design, livelihood and education. In 2014, her doctoral thesis was awarded the student research award by ITRA and she currently serves on the ITRA Board.

Koumudi describes her introduction to toymakers and toy-based research as having “stumbled upon” her PhD research question. In her case, this occurred when she was introduced to children with special needs through one of her post graduate students. Koumudi observes, as many ITRA members have before her, that in her experience toys were not necessarily considered a valuable or credible focus of research in academic environments. The objects that she was interested in studying were considered “just toys, inconsequential and frivolous, and surely of little research value. “

Koumudi’s research has two main areas of interest – the first focused on understanding and describing the thought processes of traditional toy designers and crafts-persons, in particular toymakers from Banaras, a holy city on the banks of the Ganges River in India. Her research, over the past eight years, found that the design methodologies in the production of these wooden toys were not simply processes of problem solving and manufacture, but more importantly provided an insight into the worldview of those toy creators, the wider community and about play. In her own words, Koumudi describes the toys produced as, “...cognitive probes which elucidate a mental model.” She noted that modern innovation in production techniques, marketing etc may either enrich the traditional approach or have a disruptive effect. The community of toymakers in Banaras has exposed Koumudi, who describes herself as secularly ‘mainstream’, to a richer worldview of perceptions and perspectives – play ranges from a divine form of interaction between the deities to fleeting interactions with cheap disposable street toys. Koumudi continues to work with this toymaker community and is currently working towards building a ‘maker space,’ which will include a complete toy-defined ecosystem dedicated to thinking, making, marketing, using, and disposing of toys. Koumudi is concerned that globalisation may wipe out the tiny informal group of Baranasi toymakers; however, until such time, she feels the value in supporting the community.

Her second focus of research involves her work with children with special needs. Through her clinical introduction of traditional toys to groups of special needs children, Koumudi became aware of the crucial role toys play in the cognitive development of these children. The lack of availability of suitable toys in special needs schools, in and around her neighbourhood, clearly highlights, to quote Koumudi, “both the social and cognitive apartheid of a system resisting the inclusion of these children in mainstream society, but also the assimilative power of these objects to intellectually stimulate and socially incorporate them into the community.” Additionally, Koumudi continues her engagement with several STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) educational projects, through which she is exploring the possibilities of toyfication of a STEM concept, with the intention of meeting the curriculum demands of resource-starved municipality schools in India.

In recent years, Koumudi has become increasingly interested in the science and technology behind even the seemingly simplest of toys which, in the modern capitalist world, are often treated as merely disposable or transient objects. For instance, the *whirligig* toy (a disc spun by varying the tension of a string loop) may rotate at speeds up to 125,000 rpm (revolutions per minute); the *oscillating woodpecker* moves down a metal or wooden column using a combination of gravitational, momentum and frictional forces, appearing to continue pecking as it slides down the column; the *dragonfly* craft (a handmade helicopter type toy), which if built well, possesses the potential to fly higher than a house or trees in a garden; and there are numerous other examples of moveable toys dependent on scientific principles. What interests Koumudi about these toys is not that the toys could be utilised to teach science, but that there is inherent scientific basis behind the making of the toys – which may not be attributed to the original toymaker. Arvind Gupta, an Indian toy inventor and expert in science, is an ongoing inspiration to Koumudi. Gupta has dedicated much of his life making toys and teaching science through recycled materials, which often take the form of toys (see <http://www.arvindguptatoys.com/toys.html>).

More broadly, Koumudi has found toys to be a useful tool in her creative visualisation and design thinking classes. Rather than taking a user-centred approach, Koumudi introduces the notion that play could be a significant alternative driver in the design process – to mould thought processes and solving design problems.

She postulates that play may, in certain circumstances, reveal novel and perhaps unintended solutions to design conundrums. For example, *fidget spinners* (a spinning toy held between the thumb and index finger) may on one level seem to simply evoke visual joy, however, Koumudi demonstrates to her students how they may also be useful in mitigating anxiety or neurological disorders like ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and autism. The relevance and/or desire for fun to motivate, engage, sustain and promote the interest of users is exemplified by the current trend in the gamification of learning, everyday objects, experiences and services.

Much like Koumudi's introduction to toy research, her involvement with ITRA was initiated by a fellow doctoral research student, who suggested she submit a paper for the 2011 ITRA conference held in Bursa, Turkey. She has fond memories of the conference, being particularly aware of the synergy within the association's membership. Koumudi described herself as overjoyed on learning that her doctoral dissertation had been awarded the Student 2014 ITRA Prize for Outstanding Research – she received her prize during the 7th ITRA Conference, held in Braga, Portugal.

Since her first experience of ITRA in 2011, Koumudi has observed the Association expanding both geographically – consequentially greater cultural diversity – and in the areas covered under the umbrella of toy research. She cites the book generated from the 2014 ITRA Conference in Braga, edited by Luísa Magalhães and Jeffrey Goldstein, *Toys and Communication*, as a good example of the range of subjects covered and a welcome addition to the body of toy research. Koumudi is sure the online publication of papers from the 8th ITRA Conference, hosted by Prof. Gilles Brougère, will also be a compelling compendium of the research presented and discussed during the Paris meeting.

Koumudi was elected onto the ITRA Board at the 2014 Braga ITRA conference. Initially, and perhaps understandably, she reports finding the new role to be a little daunting, but having discovered her niche, she now feels she is able to contribute meaningfully to the discussions, especially during the last Board meeting in 2018, having been re-elected at the ITRA Conference in Paris. Koumudi is currently involved in discussions involving the following issues related to ITRA's future: the date and location of the 9th ITRA Conference as well as the potential for establishing a database of ITRA researchers, academic institutions, funding agencies, industrial partners, and the like. Koumudi has been toying with the possibility of ITRA running satellite conferences which could bridge the long gaps between the current series of ITRA conferences, held approximately every three years, with the potential to increase the Association's exposure and broaden the range of research topics covered. Satellite meetings may be a means to harness specialised and localised knowledge by holding conferences with narrower themes able to draw in serious domain specialists into conversations, thereby building on the depth rather than the breadth of research. Holding satellite meetings in Asia and Africa may encourage context specific dialogue which could uncover lesser known dimensions of toys and toy research.

As the globe continues to change culturally, economically, politically, and socially, so do the roles of toys in our ever-developing and changeable modern world. For Koumudi, it is important and necessary that toy research should both reflect and record these changes and she feels confident that ITRA has a vital role to play in this process. Koumudi envisions ITRA broadening the areas covered by toy research, including both its current ludic nature as well as the economic and environmental issues that undergird this study. At the same time, she recognizes the need to both respect and chronicle the journey ITRA has taken since its formation in 1993. Having both an academic and industrial perspective, Koumudi recognizes the valuable relationship between toy research and the toy industry, and hopes that ITRA's rigorous toy research will continue to filter back into the toy industry, and vice versa. Yet for Koumudi, ITRA's highest priority currently is to raise the academic rigour of the studies presented and disseminated.

Reflecting on the innovative and exciting potential that could result from broadening our theoretical and research scope at future conferences, Koumudi recounted an episode during the 2011 ITRA Conference in Bursa, Turkey. She was enjoying "a cup of delicious Turkish tea" while discussing user, age and context with Jeffrey Goldstein, when he suggested that toys may not only be designed for this world alone, but could be used in interplanetary and interstellar travel too. At that time Jeffrey was engaged in a piece of research with ESA (European Space Agency), which was exploring means of gathering data from astronauts on long tedious space flights to/from Mars. The biometric and psychometric tests could be carried out as a set of tasks, or perhaps, as part of a game, which potentially could produce more accurate results as a gaming approach might mitigate stress from test conditions. Of course, these toys would be different; this 'fun' would defy gravity. Koumudi described herself as "astonished" and invigorated to consider the almost limitless possibilities and potential uses for toy design that such research dreams could envision for our future worlds.

In conclusion, while Koumudi may have stumbled into the field of toy research in general, and the International Toy Research Association, in particular, we are both pleased and enriched by her sunny presence and brilliant contributions. We trust that she will be able to passionately contribute for many more years to come, perhaps with some ideas which are out of this world.

MEMBERS' FORUM

Please remember when you do send items for inclusion in the Newsletter to send them in a downloadable form.

FINLAND

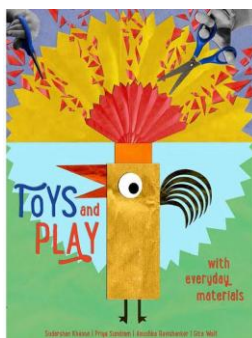
Katriina Heljakka starts 2019 with a new position as Research manager and Chief of Play at the Pori Laboratory of Play (PLoP) at the University of Turku in Turku, Finland. Kati had a very busy and productive year with 28 articles, reviews and book chapters published in English, Finnish and Russian. In November she was interviewed about her Internet of Toys research during the Future Technologies Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia Canada (<https://youtu.be/byhRmp5pjRI>). Her article "Designing a Pervasive Adventure Gamescape: Avoiding the Pitfalls in Creating Augmented LBGs for Playful Learning," co-authored with Pirita Ihmaki, is available through the online portal for the *Journal of Digital Media & Interaction* at: <http://revistas.ua.pt/index.php/jdmi/article/view/11732?fbclid=IwAR3sshmykTOUFUum80P98fko193opgKEu2m59BljfQ9ueYOUPu4zkTTcZs>

GERMANY

Surabhi Khanna, Greta Eleen Pennell and Volker Mehringer will be participating in the 18th International Creativity Workshop on "Toy Design and Inclusive Play" hosted by Fördern durch Spielmittel e.V in Berlin, Germany from the 14th - 18th January 2019.

INDIA

Surabhi Khanna and Sudarshan Khanna conducted a toy making workshop in Chennai India in conjunction with the release of Surabhi's new book *Toys and Play with Everyday Materials*. They were interviewed by two leading newspapers in South India (see: <https://www.thehindu.com/society/history-and-culture/the-art-of-toy-making/article25059141.ece> and <https://www.deccanherald.com/sunday-herald/sunday-herald-melange/toymaker-s-dreams-703472.html>).



Surabhi and Sudarshan ended the year by bringing traditional toys to children ages 10-14 years during Bookaroo, a festival celebrating a decade of Children's Literature in New Delhi, India. Surabhi also presented "Play Memories and Design of Toys and Tales" at INSIGHT 2018-Design and Research symposium organized by India's National Institute of Design (NID).

USA

Greta Pennell wrote to share her recent experience at The Strong National Museum of Play: My recent research fellowship at The Strong National Museum of Play happened to coincide with the opening of their new *Women in Games* exhibit (15 Nov. 2018 through Spring, 2019). Located in Rochester, New York, USA, The Strong is home to the International Center for the History of Electronic Games, with more than 60,000 video game-related artifacts and 900 linear feet of archival records (as well as other notable collections like the Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play). *Women in Games* is an artifact-rich interpretive and interactive exhibit that highlights the array of roles, skills and tasks that go into creating a successful electronic game, from programming and design, to visual art, script/story writing, sound design and production, to corporate leadership, and of course the iconic heroines and other female video game characters themselves. The opening weekend was preceded by two days of inspiring panel and roundtable discussions with pioneering women who have and continue to impact electronic game design and play. The celebration also included behind the scenes tours of the The Strong's collection storage and tour of the MAGIC Game Design Center at the Rochester Institute of Technology. The Strong's president, Steve Dubnik, indicated that the commitment to the *Women in Games* exhibit and *Inspire!* opening celebration stemmed from a realization that with an entire generation poised to take its cultural cues from games it is critically important "that women and girls feel safe

and inspired to actively influence the industry.” With that as the guiding framework, The Strong brought aspiring and current game designers and educators from the region together with the following game design trailblazers: Dona Bailey, co-designer of *Centipede*; Megan Gaiser, Former CEO of *Her Interactive*; Amy Hennig, Writer and Creative Director of *Uncharted*; Susan Jaekel, Artist for *Atari 2600*; Brenda Laurel, Founder of *Purple Moon*; Jen MacLean, Executive Director, *IGDA*; Sheri Graner Ray, Designer and Producer for *Electronic Arts* and *Her Interactive*; Bonnie Ross, Founder and Head of *343 Industries*, and Victoria Van Voorhis, CEO *Second Avenue Learning*. The following review presents highlights from the opening panel discussion and roundtable focused on the portrayal of women in games.

Each panelist provided a bit of their own personal back-stories, including how they came into gaming and the challenges they faced. Amy Hennig and Sherry Graner Ray both cited *Dungeons and Dragons* as an early inspiration that began in their teens, while Dona Bailey’s interest in *Space Invaders* took her to Atari when she discovered they were using the same 6502 Motorola processors that she was working with in her job at General Motors. For others, technology and gaming connected to the world of art (Susan Jaekel, Bonnie Ross). Several panelists cautioned against the recent over-emphasis on STEM and cited it as an obstacle for women seeking a career in video-gaming. This is not only because girls are “leaving STEM in droves starting in middle school” according to VanVoorhis, and that this attrition continues with each educational step such that the percentage of women pursuing engineering majors in college has dropped from 30% to just 15% according to Ross, but also because the emphasis on STEM obscures the other possible roles one can pursue in the gaming industry. The panelists agreed that more role models, more male allies, and an increase in venture capital for women owned businesses could lower the hurdles women are facing.

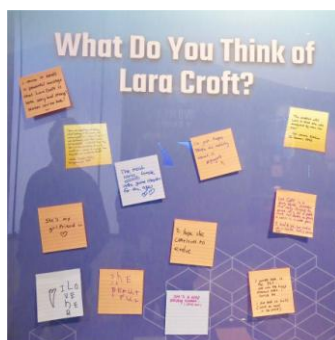
A common thread throughout the discussions was the need for more choices within and across games. According to Sheri Graner Ray, “When you take away [player] choice, that’s bad game design” especially when the lack of choice precludes girls from being able to see themselves in the game as heroes. Citing Aristotle’s claim that “Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all,” Megan Gaiser urged the audience to critically examine the culture we have unwittingly accepted in order to “move from what is comfortable to what is possible” and imagine a game industry where people “can be their whole selves” regardless of their gender identity and/or expression. Similarly, Bonnie Ross reminded the audience that “We are world makers” and Jean MacLean challenged them to “create the world that could/should be in our games.” MacLean expanded on this point by asking, “Where are the Latina, Black, LGBTQ, non-binary and disabled heroines?” While there are more games that let players choose an identity, the choices are still too limited. Citing her own daughters as her inspiration, MacLean thinks the key to a good game is one that allows the player to be the hero. So, we need more diverse and inclusive games that show YOU can be the hero no matter who you love, where you were born, or what your ability status is. For Victoria Van Voorhis another key factor in building inclusive games, especially educational games, is to take away time pressures in the game, build in collaborative elements, and make failure part of the fun.

When asked “How do we re-shape the industry when we are saddled with a ‘Gamer’ audience?” the panelists noted that toxic fandom is a problem. However, they also agreed that the expansion of the gaming world and the need for content, along with changes in the means for game distribution, will open things up.



The problem of toxic fandom re-emerged during the roundtable discussion focused on the portrayal of women in games. Gaiser & Ray recounted several challenges *Her Interactive* encountered in developing the *Nancy Drew* game series. They weren’t fully prepared for the hostility and sexism that they found hidden under the surface of decision-making processes. At the same time, Ray noted that the representation of the protagonists in video games as young, virile/fertile, and strong isn’t the problem in and of itself. Both male and female characters features associated with these qualities (e.g., broad shoulders, big chests, long hair) are exaggerated. Critiques of how women are represented in games aren’t advocating making female characters less physically attractive. It is not the exaggeration of these features or what they may be wearing (barely) that is the problem, but rather that the features associated with being sexually ready (e.g., red flush plump lips, raised nipples) are also exaggerated for female but rarely for male characters (e.g., recall the brouhaha over Batman’s and Robin’s costumes in the 1997 film directed by Joel Schumacher). It is this selective hypersexualization that is of concern. Raiser added

that her research showed that girls didn't appreciate being portrayed as victims and that, in fact, they didn't mind shooting games – they just wanted a story as to why they should shoot and the opportunity to be the hero. The *Women in Games* opening also included opportunities to preview and interact with exhibits in the gallery. It was interesting to see how themes and ideas from the discussion and roundtable sessions were also apparent in visitors' responses to some of the exhibits. For example, at a display of the evolution of the Lara Croft *Tomb Raider* character (see Figure 1), almost all of the posted comments in response to the question "What do you think of Lara Croft?" were quite positive. For example, one visitor wrote "I love her in the 90's – she was the only female hero I could be." Another visitor credits Croft with shifting views of gaming writing "Lara Croft is a strong female character that really changed the opinions of a lot of people that had doubts on playing a woman in a video game. I loved to see her evolve into a realistic looking person too!" While another wrote, "I think it sends a powerful message that Lara Croft is both sexy and strong! Women can be both!"



In closing, a recurring piece of advice I heard offered to young designers over the course of the Women in Games: Inspire! sessions was to find allies and mentors. It was especially notable that this advice also often came with an offer of a business card and a genuine expression of concern and support from these groundbreaking and glass ceiling smashing gaming professionals.

For more information about The Strong's *Women in Games* initiative see:

<http://www.museumofplay.org/about/icheg/women-games-initiative>

This review was made possible through the generous support of toy research by The Strong Museum through their research fellowship program. A special thanks to Steve M. Dubnik, The Strong President & CEO and Christopher Bench, Vice-President for Collections for the invitation to participate in this historic event, as well as for their assistance and support during my research fellowship at The Strong. And, a very special thanks to the women I met over these two days who have and will shape the future of gaming as creators and players. It was my honor to learn from you.

CONFERENCES & EXHIBITIONS

This section covers current, up-coming and past conferences and exhibitions. Hopefully mentioning past events will not induce depression as to what you may have missed, while we trust previews of future events will whet your appetite to attend. Previews and reviews of conferences are sought for the next edition of the ITRA Newsletter.

FUTURE CONFERENCES

January 2019

Kids@Play will be held at Venetian, Las Vegas, USA, on the 10th January 2019.

The Kids@Play Summit re-imagines the next generation's reality from toy box to backpack with AR/VR, robotics and IoT toys and games. FamilyTech helps parents and kids find balance by redefining their relationships with the tech they use to keep connected, safe and engaged in the smart home and elsewhere. Top Three Topics: The changing business of play and learning; Future-ready kids; Mobile Natives: Entertaining and parenting; Taking back your time with tech.

For more information visit:

<https://www.ces.tech/Conference/ConferenceProgram/Conference-Tracks/Kids@Play-Summit-FamilyTech-Summit.aspx>



Gamification, 52nd Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences HICSS, will be held at Grand Waile, Maui, Hawaii, USA, 8th – 11th January 2019.

During the last decade, games have become an established vein of entertainment, consumer culture, and essentially, a common part of people's daily lives. In the United States alone 59% of the population plays computer games while revenues of the computer games industry exceed US \$15 billion. However, in addition to the increased penetration of games, the ways in which people play and employ games have also become more varied. There are more different kinds of games available for a multitude of different platforms, mediated through different technologies that cater for differing gaming needs for widening audiences and which use a wide variety of business models. Relevant topics include (but are not limited to): users, education, media, commerce, work, technology, and toys & playfulness (toys, playfulness, Internet of Toys).

For more information visit:

<https://www.tut.fi/Gamification/2018/03/14/call-for-papers-52nd-annual-hawaii-international-conference-on-system-sciences-hicss-2019/>

April 2019

GamiFIN, 3rd Annual International conference will be held at the Sokos Hotel Levi, Levi, Finland, 8th – 10th April 2019.

GamiFIN is a leading international conference for gamification research, which is chaired by the professor of Gamification, Juho Hamari and gamification scholar Jonna Koivisto. GamiFIN 2019 will feature two keynotes from leading scholars in the field of gamification and game studies, Professor Lennart Nacke and Professor Frans Mäyrä.

For more info:

<http://gamifinconference.com/>

September 2019

Toy & Game Design Conference 2019 will be held at Stamford Bridge, London, United Kingdom, 9th September 2019.

The Toy and Game Design Conference 2019, taking place within the Play Creators Festival, is a day set to inspire, enlighten and wow the industry's creative backbone. With a line-up of exciting speakers from across toys, games, tech and the wider worlds of design, our conference will unite the global toy and game inventor community and leave your creative juices flowing.

For more info:

<https://toyandgamedesignconference.com/>



PAST CONFERENCES

September 2018

Toy & game design conference 2018, was held at Emirates Stadium, London, UK, 10th September 2018.

The Toy and Game Design Conference 2018, took place within the inaugural Play Creators Festival, inspired and enlightened toy designers.

For more information visit:

<https://toyandgamedesignconference.com/>



CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

From June 2018

Artful Play! Games & Toys, i.d.e.a. Museum, Mesa, Arizona, USA, from 19th June 2018 onwards.

During play, children interact socially, build vocabulary, problem solve, exercise imagination and creativity and learn strategy. That learning continues into adulthood, too. The Artful Play! Games & Toys exhibition features paintings, sculptures, photographs, and other artworks. Art and hands-on activities will provide visitors a chance to develop ideas, learn about play in other cultures, go back in time to experience vintage games and explore the process of designing toys and inventing games.

For more information visit:

<http://www.ideamuseum.org/artful-play.html>



From September 2018

Kaiju vs Heroes: Mark Nagata's Journey through the World of Japanese Toys, Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles, USA, 15th September 2018 – 24th March 2019.

A journey was taken through the world of Japanese soft vinyl *kaiju* (monster) and hero toys, courtesy of toy designer Mark Nagata's unrivalled collection of vintage figurines. Born out of the cultural ashes of World War II, these distinctive toys became both a means for Japanese Americans to reconnect with their culture and an apt metaphor for post-war relations between the United States and Japan.

For more information visit:

<http://www.janm.org/exhibits/kaiju-vs-heroes/>



From November 2018

Playing for Keeps: The VFW Marble Tournaments, 1947-1962, The National Museum of Toys/Miniatures, Kansas City, USA, from 11th November 2018 – 6th January 2019.

Marble playing ruled playgrounds for much of the twentieth century. Requiring only a handful of marbles and a patch of dirt, the game crossed all economic and social barriers. In 1947, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) created a national marble tournament to positively influence young boys and re-engage WWII and Korean War veterans in civilian life. The tournament, an annual event for 14 years, was a life-changing experience for the thousands of kids who participated. *Playing for Keeps* tells firsthand stories of the players alongside their souvenirs, trophies, and marble memorabilia.

For more information visit:

<http://www.toyandminiaturemuseum.org/current/>



In Nuremberg, Play's the Thing is being held at the Nuremberg Toy Museum in Nuremberg, Germany, from 16th November 2018 – 2nd June 2019.

This exhibition asks the questions: why do you enjoy playing? Where and when do you enjoy playing? And with whom, or do you even like playing at all? You can find answers at nine thematic "islands" that look at typical reasons why we play and invite you to play along. Each island centres on a historic toy from Nuremberg, and compares it with a related digital game. Over 100 residents of Nuremberg and its environs collaborated on the exhibition. They're portrayed with their favourite toys and tell about their own very personal relationship to the whole idea of play.

For more info:

<https://museums.nuernberg.de/toy-museum/events/stuff-to-play/>

FUTURE EXHIBITIONS

From February 2019

Doc McStuffins: The Exhibit Opening will be held at The Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, New York, USA, and opens 9th February 2019 and runs until Summer 2019.

Experience the imaginative, bi-lingual *Doc McStuffins: The Exhibit* based on Disney Junior's Peabody Award-winning television series. Be magically transported to the backyard of six-year-old Dottie "Doc" McStuffins, where she cares for broken toys and stuffed animals. Enter the backyard clinic, assume the role of a doctor-in-training, and learn lessons about healthy habits, empathy, and nurturing in unique hospital environments.

For more information visit:

<http://www.museumofplay.org/exhibits/doc-mcstuffins-the-exhibit>

Paw Patrol: Adventure Play Exhibit will be held at the Children's Museum in Indianapolis, Indiana USA, from 23rd February – 28th July 2019.

The heroic PAW Patrol pups need your help in Adventure Bay! You and your family will join Marshall, Rubble, Chase, Rocky, Zuma, Skye, Everest and Tracker as you explore your unique abilities, overcome challenges and help friends. There's no job too big and no pup too small!

For more information visit:

<https://www.childrensmuseum.org/exhibits/paw-patrol-adventure-play-exhibit>



PAST EXHIBITIONS

July - September 2018

May The Toys Be With You, New Walk Museum & Art Gallery, Leicester, UK, took place 21st July 2018 – 28th October 2018.

An exhibition for big kids and little kids alike, celebrated the iconic toys and artwork of the Star Wars films. The success of Star Wars, which broke box office records in 1977, was only surpassed by the sale of its merchandise. The toys, from light sabers to X-Wing fighters, defined playtime for a generation of children. An estimated 300 million action figures were sold globally between 1977 and 1985, but rather than beginning in a galaxy far far away, they were originally made by Palitoy in Coalville. This exhibition celebrated the Leicestershire company's role in the global phenomenon and brought together a wealth of highly collectable vintage toys and original film posters, many of them rarely displayed in public.

For more information visit:

<https://www.artfund.org/whats-on/exhibitions/2018/07/21/may-the-toys-be-with-you>

September 2018

Videogames: Design/Play/Disrupt, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK, from 8th September 2018.

The exhibition explored the medium since the mid-2000s, when major technological advancements, such as increased access to broadband, social media, smart phones and newly available means of making, profoundly changed the way videogames are designed, discussed and played. This change has opened the door to new voices and ideas, allowing the medium to break beyond its perceived boundaries and aspire to new horizons.

For more information visit:

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/about-videogames-exhibition>

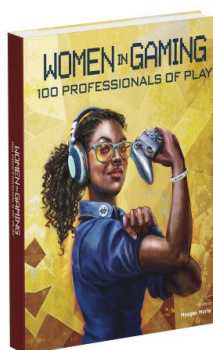
PUBLICATIONS & BOOKS

Book reviews, or book recommendations, are sought for the next edition of the ITRA Newsletter. Please submit these to the Editorial Team at itraneWSltr@gmail.com. This edition also includes calls for papers on upcoming publications.

Megan, M. (2018). *Women in Gaming: 100 Professionals of Play*, Prima Games.

By *Greta Eleen Pennell*

The lack of role models has been cited as one of the biggest barriers to women entering the videogame industry, which Takahashi from Venture Beat reported as a \$134.9 billion industry (2018). As Victoria Voorhis, founder and CEO of Second Avenue Software, Inc suggests, “If you can’t see it, you won’t be it.” This newly published 352 page compilation features stories of women working and playing across the spectrum of gaming.



The book is organized chronologically by decade beginning in the 1970’s with “Laying the Foundations and Establishing an Industry” and extending to the 2010s “Controversy, Community & Competition.” A short timeline is provided at the start of each section. Within each section the stories come in the form of interviews, essays, profiles, or slices of life narratives focused on particular roles within the industry. The global reach of the women featured in the book combined with their insights and advice is just one of its many strengths. Its merits also rest on the extent to which it captures the all too often ignored or erased “herstory” of gaming. Just as *Hidden Figures*, helped unveil the essential contributions of black women to the success of NASA’s U.S. space program, *Women in Gaming* presents a vivid and powerful collage that clearly demonstrates that the gaming world is not just for adolescent boys and men. In addition to celebrating the women who established, disrupted, and diversified the industry, there are “Character Spotlights” highlighting favourite women game characters, such as Lara Croft and Samus and their significance to popular culture. Marie’s book is more than biography and description, it also serves as a reference and primer with its opening industry tutorial that introduces terminology, jargon and provides a snapshot of the industry as of 2018. It concludes with a strategy guide of career resources. While *Women in Gaming* is a comprehensive review, author Megan Marie stresses it is neither a complete history nor a chronicling of the gender issues the women faced. Rather its intent is to celebrate what has been accomplished with an eye toward inspiring the next generation of women in gaming.

For more on Marie’s thoughts on her book, see:

<https://news.xbox.com/en-us/2018/12/06/author-meagan-marie-on-women-in-gaming-100-professionals-of-play/>

The International Journal of Play

The journal welcomes: reports on research projects; papers concerned with theory-practice links; policy critiques and expositions; reviews and analysis of contemporary and historical publications; essays, memoirs, and other forms of reflective writing; writing that builds on the experience and voices of children and young people; and, theoretical position papers.

The International Journal of Play will appear three times a year and the contents of the first issue can be found at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rijp20/current>



MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

- 1) A theme park in Japan built a life-size cherry blossom tree entirely out of LEGO blocks
<https://scroll.in/video/876860/watch-a-theme-park-in-japan-built-a-life-size-cherry-blossom-tree-entirely-out-of-lego-blocks>
- 2) Toy Industry to induct three new members into Esteemed Hall of Fame
<https://www.toyassociation.org/PressRoom2/News/2018-news/toy-industry-to-induct-three-new-members-into-esteemed-hall-of-fame.aspx>
- 3) Adults want children to play with ‘traditional’ toys such as board games and science kits.
<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/toys-children-traditional-board-games-science-kit-microscopes-parents-christmas-a8635401.html>
- 4) Brazilian artist creates diverse range of custom Barbie dolls.
<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/custom-barbie-dolls-diverse-brazil-instagram-we-love-the-royal-dolls-a8041466.html>
- 5) Toys and televisions litter island beaches after cargo ship loses containers.
<https://www.dutchnews.nl/news/2019/01/toys-and-televisions-litter-island-beaches-after-cargo-ship-loses-containers/>
- 6) Can old Christmas toys make you rich?
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-46522388>
- 7) Toys are a stimulus to kids’ creativity
<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/dec/17/toys-are-a-stimulus-to-kids-creativity>
- 8) The worst toys this Christmas for plastic packaging
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/christmas/2018/12/17/worst-toys-christmas-plastic-packaging/>
- 10) Recycling Mystery: Children’s Toys
<https://earth911.com/home-garden/recycling-mystery-childrens-toys/>
- 11) Six slime and putty toys sold in UK fail to meet safety standards
<https://www.theguardian.com/money/2018/dec/13/slime-toys-tested-fail-meet-eu-safety-standards-hamleys-christmas>
- 12) Instead of buying toys your kids will soon outgrow — how about borrowing them?
<https://www.marketplace.org/2018/12/27/business/instead-buying-toys-your-kids-will-soon-outgrow-how-about-borrowing-them>
- 13) 7-year-old Ryan named you-tube highest earner 2018 for this toy reviews.
<https://www.designweek.co.uk/issues/17-23-december-2018/sara-jones-why-are-we-still-designing-pink-toys-for-girls-barbie-kitchen-gender-neutral-design/>
- 14) How Melissa & Doug captured the toy market, one wooden block at a time.
<https://www.vox.com/the-goods/2018/12/7/18130781/melissa-and-doug-wooden-toys-holiday-toys>
- 15) Still have your childhood teddy? The psychological power of the toys we keep.
<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/dec/12/still-have-childhood-teddy-psychological-power-toys-we-keep>
- 16) Get any smart toys or smart home devices as gifts? Here's what you need to know about your privacy.
<https://www.wcpc.com/lifestyle/smart-toys-smart-home-devices-privacy>
- 17) You have to squeeze, drop, and tap these handmade paper toys for fun surprises.
<https://mymodernmet.com/haruki-nakamura-paper-toys/>
- 18) New York sues Target, Wal-Mart over lead-contaminated toys
<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-new-york-lawsuit-toys/new-york-sues-target-walmart-over-lead-contaminated-toys-idUKKBN1OC2PN>



ITRA 2019 Fees Notice

Please note that, according to the ITRA Board's decision in Alicante, 8th August 2005, conference fees cover ITRA membership fees until the following conference. This means that conference participants who paid full registration fees for the 8th ITRA conference in Paris, France, 2018 have been exempted from paying ITRA dues for the years 2018 through 2021.

If you were not able to attend the conference in Paris, you must submit your annual membership fee for 2018 to remain an ITRA member in good standing.

Annual membership: €50
Retiree// Student membership: €25

Payments may be made

a) through bank transfer to the following account number

International Toy Research Association,
National Bank of Greece, Pal. Phaliro branch 175
Account number: 175/480074.53
IBAN Number: GR16 0110 1750 0000 1754 8007 453
SWIFT: ETHNGRAA

b) by sending an International Money Order, payable to ITRA, to the Treasurer at the following address:

Cleo Gougoulis
73 Terpsihoris St.
P.Phaleron
17562 Athens
Greece

Please notify the ITRA Treasurer, Cleo Gougoulis, by sending an e-mail to: cleogougoulis@yahoo.gr, when you send your fees to the bank. It is important to mention what amount and in which currency you paid.

EPILOGUE

If you attended a conference this year - toy related, preferably - have anything to say, whether about yourself, publications you have read or would like to recommend to the ITRA membership, events, research or just anything, or would like to propose an ITRA member we could profile, do not hesitate to contact either Suzy or Mark, via itranwsltr@gmail.com. We intend to publish a spring edition in May 2019. In the meantime, the editors of the newsletter would like to thank everyone who contributed to this issue of the ITRA newsletter.

We would encourage you to feel free to send the editors articles, which we can share with the rest of the ITRA members. If English is not your first language, please do not let this be a hindrance to contacting the Editorial Team; we are more than happy to assist in editing items from contributors.

The Editorial Team would like to wish all ITRA members a festive holiday season and a peaceful new year.

Regards
Suzy & Mark

We do not stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing.
Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)