For over a decade, online games have impacted how we engage in play, commerce and work. Organizations are using online games to create new business models; and companies are training their employees with game-like systems. Furthermore, digital video games increasingly blur the line between online and offline content, while “gamification: blurs the line between games and information systems.

This minitrack will provide a forum for researchers to discuss the design, use and impact of online games in various contexts. We are specifically interested in research on the information systems concepts of online games (e.g. a study that identifies the information system designs of successful “free-to-play” online games). In general, topics of interest for this minitrack include: gamification, game design, psychology of online games, online game business models and virtual digital economies.

This minitrack will focus on research that investigates the use of information system concepts, theories, methods, tools and practices in digital games for play, commerce, and work.

In play, many studies have been conducted on how people socialise using features in online games and how game design affects interactive play. For instance, Bartle (2004) has conducted work on player types in multi-user dungeons and shows how an online multiplayer game satisfies the needs of different types of players. For this area, we are interested in work that shows how information system design and the game design affect player interaction in these new environments.

In commerce, some research has investigated how games create virtual economies and new business models. For instance, work by Castranova (2001) has shown that players in virtual game worlds will create their own economies within the games and many game companies have hired economists to create more efficient economies within their games. Also, new business models in gaming such as “free-to-play” are changing the games industry (Lin and Sun 2011). For this area, we are interested in how the mix of game design and information technology creates virtual economies and impacts “real” economies.

In work, businesses increasingly use game to increase employee engagement and embed games in customer facing business processes. While businesses have long used games to train employees (Keys and Wolfe 1990, Michael and Chen 2005), information systems development is increasingly adapting techniques and concepts from digital games to engage customers and employees (Zichermann and Cunningham 2011, Deterding et al. 2011). For this area, we are interested in meaningful games in work settings and the gamification of business processes using online games.

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