

Editorial

Samuel Poirier-Poulin and Sarah Stang

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Press Start 2022 Editorial Board

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A new season is slowly approaching, and it is already time for us to publish a new issue of *Press Start*. This editorial is a bit different from our previous ones as Sarah Stang, our former Editor-in-Chief, wanted to write her farewells, and Samuel Poirier-Poulin, our new Editor-in-Chief, wanted to introduce himself. We thus decided to write a “twin editorial,” an editorial in two parts.

Sarah: Writing a farewell editorial is never easy. Leaving *Press Start* is a bittersweet experience—I will miss being a part of the team behind this exceptional journal and I will miss the intimate and rewarding work of editing, reviewing, and publishing cutting edge graduate student game studies research. Yet, I am extremely proud of what *Press Start* has become and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to lead and shape it together with my kind, gracious, and dedicated colleagues. This journal provides the opportunity for graduate students to make their research visible, to learn how to be constructive reviewers, and to become part of a welcoming and supportive academic community. More than that, it is a home for excellent game studies scholarship, and I absolutely consider it one of the best journals in our field (if I do say so myself). Although I am stepping down as Editor-in-Chief, having finished my PhD and started a new position as Assistant Professor of Game Studies at Brock University, I am by no means leaving *Press Start* behind. I will be recommending it as a venue for my own students’

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research and encouraging them to get involved as reviewers and editors, and I will continue to promote and cite the important work published here. I want to deeply and humbly thank everyone who has been involved in *Press Start*—all the authors, reviewers, and editors since the journal’s beginnings. I especially want to thank our stalwart founder Matt Barr, who made all this possible; our previous Editor-in-Chief and one of the kindest people I know, Mahli-Ann Butt, who is the reason I joined the board in the first place; and our Senior Vice Editor Erin Maclean, who has been an invaluable teammate and commiserator. Finally, I want to thank Samuel Poirier-Poulin, who has taken up the mantle of Editor-in-Chief. With this fantastic current editorial board, I feel confident giving my farewell—*Press Start* is in good hands.

Samuel: It is with great pleasure and a bit of nervousness that I took up the torch of Editor-in-Chief in February 2022. I have been involved in *Press Start* since 2019, starting as a reviewer, then becoming a board member, and finally volunteering as co-Vice Editor. When I discovered *Press Start* at the time, I was immediately attracted by its friendly double-open peer review process and by its profound desire to make academia more supportive. Volunteering at *Press Start* convinced me that publishing does not need to be stressful: It can be an enjoyable process built around kindness and care. Since the foundation of the journal in 2014, disseminating the work of students and recent graduates has been our mission, and I am happy to say that more than eight years later, our journal is still striving to accomplish this mission. Of course, I am not alone to work on making *Press Start* as best as it can be: Erin Maclean stayed as Senior Vice Editor, Lauren Watson and Andrew Bailey took on the role of co-Vice Editors, and our board members continue to devote their time and love to help students publish their game studies research. Since the publication of our last regular issue in June 2021, our board has been rather active: We have released an updated version of our [multilingual call for papers](#), which now includes translations into 16 languages; we have finalized our [guidebook](#) and made it publicly available to encourage transparency and best practices; and we have published a special issue on digital heroisms. Over the last few months, we have also been working closely with our contributors to publish more book reviews, and we are happy to include some of them as part of this issue. Who would have known that 2021–2022 would be such a prolific year!?

We have taken some extra time to prepare this issue with pride and care, and we are happy to finally share it with you!

The issue begins with Morgan Himes’s article, “Visual Novel Based Education in English Literature: A Study on Student Engagement,” which explores the benefits of incorporating visual novels into the English curriculum. By creating a visual novel based on S. E. Hinton’s classic novel *The Outsiders* (1967) and having students play it, Himes was able

to investigate the student perspective on the topic. Her descriptive data suggests that many students see value in the usage of games in the classroom and desire a greater level of integration.

Kas van der Molen's article, "*Valorant* and the Platformization of Free-to-Play Games: Framing the Work of Content Creators as a Cultural Commodity," explores the connections between platforms, players, and games as service. Using Twitch as a case study, Van der Molen identifies different mechanisms within this socio-technical platform to build stronger relationships between the community of gamers both watching and playing a game. The author argues that these relationships end up being participatory modes of production that ensure the longevity of the games being played and discussed in different platforms.

In "Understanding Extended Testing Feedback: Positioning Platforms as a Key Factor in Independent Game Development," Xinge Tong uses qualitative content analysis to codify player comments and feedback in the social media platforms Steam and YouTube. By applying this analysis to two indie titles, *Manifold Gardens* (William Chyr Studio, 2019) and *No Man's Sky* (Hello Games, 2016), she demonstrates how indie developers could use a content analysis model to parse through feedback on social media more effectively. Tong also highlights that each platform seems to have different kinds of feedback, making it worthwhile for game developers to perform the analysis on multiple social media platforms.

Michael John Saiger and Bobby Dewan Akram Khaleque's article, "What Factors Do Players Perceive as Methods of Retention in Battle Royale Games?," investigates player motivations for continuing to play games in the massively popular battle royale genre of online shooters, even years after the games were initially released. They utilize data gathered from qualitative interviews with players of games such as *Apex Legends* (Respawn Entertainment, 2019) and *Fortnite* (Epic Games, 2017) to explore in detail how players think of their own experiences in these games, articulating the features that make them compulsively playable and continuously enjoyable. In the process, Saiger and Khaleque identify aspects of user experience that are relevant to game developers and players alike.

Danny Steur's article, entitled "Cinesthetic Play, or Gaming in the Flesh: Grasping *Celeste* by Adapting the Cinesthetic Subject Into a Phenomenology of Videogaming," develops Vivan Sobchack's (2004) concept of the "cinesthetic subject" with her notion of the "film body" to craft a theory of embodied play uniting the perceptual modalities involved in ludic experience. Through an analysis of the phenomenology of play in the indie platformer *Celeste* (Extremely OK Games, 2018), Steur reveals how our sensory responses to gameplay elements are synthesized to meld our real bodily comportments with virtual game worlds.

Finally, we are very happy to include four book reviews as part of this issue: David Kocik's review of *The Queer Games Avant-Garde: How LGBTQ Game Makers Are Reimagining the Medium of Video Games* (Ruberg, 2020), Hibby Thach's review of *Intersectional Tech: Black Users in Digital Gaming* (Gray, 2020), Benjamin Hanussek's review of *Cooperative Gaming: Diversity in the Games Industry and How to Cultivate Inclusion* (Cole & Zammit, 2020), and Joe Todd's review of *How to Be a Game User Researcher* (Bromley, 2021). We believe that these four books are important contributions to game studies and are pleased to include such thorough and thoughtful reviews in this issue.

We want to express our deepest thanks to our authors and reviewers for all their hard work and dedication. We strongly believe in academic kindness and are always happy to see that more and more people are joining our community and consider *Press Start* as a venue for their amazing work. We are also grateful to all our readers and to everyone who supports us. Thank you for helping us give more visibility to new voices in game studies!

The year 2022–2023 will surely be full of surprises, but we can already say that more articles and book reviews are upcoming. We might even start working on a new special issue, so please keep an eye out! As a Pokémon fan, it is hard for me (Samuel) not to conclude with a famous quote from the narrator: "The future looks bright for our heroes now, but up ahead, Viridian Forest is deeper and darker than they know... And a dangerous new challenge is waiting!" (Tomioka et al., 1997). We do not see ourselves as heroes—that would be a bit much *laugh*—but this quote nicely captures the excitement, the fervour, and the sense of adventure that our board feels when we think about the future of our journal. Take care everyone!

Best wishes from the *Press Start* editorial board!

Reference

Tomioka, A. (Writer), Asada, Y. (Writer/Director), & Tamagawa, A. (Director). (1997, April 15). Ash catches a Pokémon (Season 1, Episode 3) [TV series episode]. In M. Hidaka (Director), *Pokémon: Indigo league*. Oriental Light and Magic; TV Tokyo.