

## Editorial

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While preparing this issue of Press Start for publication, I finally conceded that the word “Gamergate” probably belonged in my spellchecker’s dictionary. Certainly, one could view the proliferation of this term – and its legitimatisation, implicit in my decision to stop having my word processor complain about its use – as a grim indictment of contemporary gaming culture. However, that a student journal of game studies can begin to address the issues surrounding Gamergate – however indirectly, in this case – demonstrates a laudable maturity in our discipline’s approach to the phenomenon.

To ignore Gamergate, and the voices that congregate behind the associated hashtag, is to bury our heads in the sand: accepting that this movement exists, and that the opinions of those involved are at least worthy of attention (however vehemently we may disagree with them), is an important step towards engagement and reconciliation. What is somewhat disheartening, however, is the likelihood that we may be required to shoulder accusations that Press Start is another vestige of the ‘evil feminist cabal’ that controls and contorts the study of video games. This ill-informed and unconstructive mantra does nothing to further whatever argument those who support the Gamergate cause seek to make. And, while churlish and guileless remarks are hardly the worst of what has occurred under the banner of Gamergate – threats of any sort against anyone are clearly unacceptable – it is this aspect of the movement that makes it all but impossible for academia to engage with and understand those involved.

It is important that those occupied by the study of games maintain an inclusive and outward-looking stance, but there is much cause for optimism if we direct our gaze inward for a moment, to take stock of the current state of our discipline. Having been lucky enough to attend a vibrant and inspiring DiGRA conference earlier this year, I am pleased to

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note that Press Start also continues to demonstrate the strength and diversity of the game studies field.

This issue opens with a pair of related papers, looking at different aspects of player avatars. Maxwell Pringle describes original research carried out into the effects of self-presentation and self-esteem on avatar creation, using *The Elder Scrolls Online* to facilitate the work, and finding that body self-esteem predicts perceived avatar similarity. Loyer, on the other hand, uses the new Banks-Bowman social categorization system to frame the relationship between player and avatar, focussing on the avatar-as-social-other relationship in Mike Bithell's *Thomas Was Alone*. Garvin examines video game controls from a phenomenological perspective, describing a form of 'antisimulation' control scheme – exemplified by titles such as *QWOP* and *Octodad: Dadliest Catch* – that demonstrates an "excessive correspondence" between a game and the phenomena that it purports to simulate. Changing tack completely, but looking at the important and rather contentious area of video game copyright, Stein argues that video games are best represented in legal terms as a collection of multiple original and derivative works, rather than a single multimedia entity. Finally, Walker presents video games as a means of exploring complex legal, ethical and moral issues for educational purposes, by examining legal liability for the killing of Big Daddies in *Bioshock*.

The second issue of Press Start also marks the end of the journal's first year and, as such, the end of our inaugural Editorial Board's tenure. I'd like to take this opportunity to again express my gratitude to those who have contributed to the success of our fledgling publication. I hope that you, our readers, will find much to enjoy and inspire in the work our Board has helped bring to press.