[ANNOUNCEMENTS]: Minimal staff support; Pod renewals!

[EVENTS]: GI Holiday Party this Friday!

[ANNOUNCEMENTS]:

1. **MINIMAL STAFF SUPPORT FROM DECEMBER 18 TO JANUARY 4TH.** If you consider your request urgent, additionally DM us however there is no guarantee that we’ll get to it quickly.

2. **Pod Renewals are in effect** - please fill out the form by December 18th to continue having access to GI infrastructure.

3. **The Inaugural Games and Narrative Conference, 2021**

   Next Year (we know, we know) The GI is launching a new conference series! The Inaugural Games and Narrative Conference, asks: Is gameplay fundamentally distinct from narrative? Do we always subtly try to narrativize our game experience? Does game narrative rely on the techniques of filmic and literary narrative? Does its creation of story worlds make its narrative form distinctive and original? How do the narratives employed in videogames reflect and shape our sense of gender, race, sexuality and national identity?

   Please find the CfP attached and a link to the webpage here. **Deadline for proposal submissions is January 15th!**

[EVENTS]:

| Games Institute Events | Join us for fun, games, and social decompression on Friday, December 18th from 2-4pm EST in The Save Point 🏛️ on Discord! **Be sure to RSVP to the calendar invite so you don’t miss it!** We’ll show off the fruits of our labours (see the festive activities you can take part in listed below for more details), share in each others’ company around a digital fireplace, and bring some much needed cheer into the final days of 2020. |
*more information below in Slacking at the Discord*

**UW Events**

**UPCOMING GSA EVENTS:**

**December 14-18: Community Stroll**
Join in on our community stroll at your own pace. You will be given two trail map options to choose from, a playlist of local artists, and an information pack on Canadian wildlife during winter. You will also have the opportunity to be connected to a strolling pal. [Registration details](#).

**December 16: Building Your (Remotely) Part 2: Centre for Career Action Tips and Resources @10:00am**
Our BYC(R) series continues with a webinar presented by [Centre for Career Action](#)’s (CCA) Career Advisor, Kira Bruschke. This session is open to all grad students and provides specific emphasis on supports for international grad students. Learn about how to job search, network, and find employment and professional events in a remote environment and how the CCA can be a resource. Ask questions at the session or submit them in advance to [gsa-international@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:gsa-international@uwaterloo.ca). [Registration Details](#)

**December 18: Movie Night @7:00pm**
Grab a snack, find a comfy place to sit, and join us at our virtual movie night! We will be watching “Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse.” [Registration details](#)

**Other Virtual Events**

**Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Infectious Art - An Online Conversation**
*Thursday, December 17 @4PM EST - registration required; free!*

- Why do Tolstoy and Dostoevsky so often use imagery related to viral infection and inoculation in their works? Why do they connect this imagery to art itself? And what can we gain by reading their works today, precisely in our own time of global pandemic?
- For this event, Irina Erman, Elizabeth Geballe, and Laurel Schmuck come together to discuss these questions.
- Their conversation will be organized around the close reading of selected quotes from Dostoevsky’s and Tolstoy’s works, and will also touch on 19th-century science of inoculation, the issue of “brain fever” as a physical and metaphorical infection, and the difference between good and bad infections.

**Research Updates**

Research during COVID-19: VR Exergames for Older Adults Living with Dementia, ft. John Muñoz
John Muñoz is a Postdoctoral fellow with the Intelligent Technologies for Wellness and Independent Living (ITWIL) Lab. His research involves developing virtual reality (VR) exercise games (Exergames) for people living with dementia.

_Sneak preview into the interview..._

**Marisa Benjamin:** The circumstances surrounding COVID-19 introduced many obstacles for researchers. What are some of the challenges you faced that are unique to your research?

**John Muñoz:** Our end-users are people in long-term care facilities, which is likely the most vulnerable population in the pandemic. Before COVID-19, we managed to do a few playtests, but when the lockdowns started, accessing people became very challenging since there are a lot of risk factors associated with going into facilities and working directly with participants. We are also collaborating with an independent VR development company, VR Vision, that was suddenly facing a lot of uncertainty. They did not know how they would be able to adapt to COVID, so there was also the fear that they would not be able to stay with the project. When you need to find a way to survive, research isn’t your top priority. We had to find strategies for both progressing the research with participants and maintaining the collaboration with the company.

[Read the full interview at this link.]

*From our International research network:*

**Fempower.tech** publish "A call for respect, inclusion, fairness, and transparency in SIGCHI" for the _Feminisms in Design_ special issue of ACM's _Interactions_ magazine.

**Fempower.tech** are a group of intersectional feminists who aim to raise awareness of feminist issues in HCI and technology, generally. The article advocates for structural change in SIGCHI that recognizes the interlocking nature of marginalizations. As many GI members are actively involved in the international SIGCHI community, we benefit from and support Fempower.tech's work to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion in research spaces.

![Slacking at the Disco(RD) banner](image1)

Not yet a member? Join our Discord [here](discord_link) and start your social adventure with us today!

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**| PRE-Celebration Activities 🎉 |**

To get ready for next Friday, we’re starting things a little early with a few initiatives:

- **| The Great Holiday Heist 🎁**
  
  We’re going to tell a story together, to be revealed during next week’s party. [click this link to get started with some simple instructions!](heist_link)
No one knows where the story will end up, so take 5 minutes, or 50 minutes, and add your flair to the mysterious holiday tale. One person telling a story can be exciting... But what happens when 140 people tell bits and pieces of a story at random, without knowing what came before? Hilarity. Insanity. Nonsense. And more! We would like everyone to have a chance to participate before the story is revealed on December 18th, so if you can, please take action as soon as possible. The absurdity that is surely to come out of this story game is entirely dependent on the honor system of not revealing to yourself any of the previously written text. Your patience and curiosity will be greatly rewarded! 😊

• | The GI-dian BAKE OFF!cookies | Let’s be real, no one wants to really do any work any more, and you know what’s a perfect procrastination tool to get you through that last round of marking? Baking.🎂

Get out and share your favourite holiday baked goods (or you know, your favourite recipes) and share them on both Slack and Discord for your peers to see (and possibly make them themselves!)

Be sure to bring your baked goods to the party so we can live vicariously through each other’s sweet skills. No time to make anything? Want to just get store-bought? Whatever the result, we encourage you to BYOBaked goods (or recipes) in time for the party. Tag us on Instagram or Twitter with any scrumptious shots too.

• | Swapping Smiles🌟- It’s like secret Santa, but free! |
At the party, we’ll be matching up members in a draw secret Santa style to send some joy to their fellow GI member--be it in meme, music playlist, cat fail gif collection--whatever you think might make their day a little brighter. If you know you will not be able to attend the party, but still want to participate in this draw, send an email to jrickert@uwaterloo.ca or reply to this email by the 18th!