Call for Proposals

We are happy to invite you again to the International Conference on Games and Narrative (ICGaN)! This conference explores the many ways in which games utilize, exploit, and develop narrative forms. Along the way, we add to long-held discussions and debates about the nature of narrative in games: how gameplay facilitates and challenges narrative construction, how growing digital media create space for novel narrative forms, how game designers and players enact and shape their identities in narrative expression.

Picking up from our interrupted 2022 conference – and considering the rethinking of personal and communal lives necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic – our 2023 conference will be themed around Isolation and Return. Through digital and in-person presentations, workshops, video essays, and livestream gameplay with commentary and discussion, the conference will examine the ways in which these themes are created and played with in digital and analog games, or within similar immersive digital media. We invite proposals for speaker panels devoted to a particular topic and individual papers. Proposals may address any question concerning the intersection between games and narrative, in line with our theme. Those who submitted to our 2022 conference will automatically be reconsidered.

To accommodate both those ready to return from isolation and those who are unable, this conference will be held in a hybrid format. Participants can join us in the Games Institute at the University of Waterloo, or come together in our online spaces on Discord and Gather.

Beyond the key notes and presentations, the conference will feature a narrative-focused Game Jam. This event will afford conference-goers the opportunity to learn the basics of narrative and game design tools such as Twine and Ink, and design their own games with the help of experienced designers over a two-day game creation working session.

CONFERENCE INFORMATION

Deadline for Proposals: December 30, 2022

Conference Dates: Wednesday May 17, 2023 to Monday, May 22, 2023

Submissions in Word or PDF format accepted at icgan.submissions@uwaterloo.ca

Decisions on papers, panels, and workshops will be communicated in mid-to-late March.

For more information, visit the conference website.
**General and key-topic areas for submissions may include:**

**Narrative Structure in Games:** Problems associated with the narrative analysis of games, including time, space, perspective, focalization, and character. Papers and panels may focus on the analysis of a particular game or on a general problem in narrative theory.

**Narrative Co-creation in Games:** Issues around the relationship between designer, text, and player in game studies. This could include discussions of agency, fandom, performativity, representation, or identity.

**Narratives and Social Difference:** Questions of how narrative forms reflect and shape social differences and divisions, including gender difference, forms of sexuality, racialized differences, ethnic and national identities, and class distinctions.

**Gameplay and Narrative:** Reflections on the interplay between the ludic and the narrative, including close readings of specific examples where mechanics and narrative collide.

**Game Worlds:** Analysis of the elements of worldbuilding, including environmental approaches to narrative or more general discussions of “place” in games.

**Technology, Presence, and Immersion:** Topics on the relationship between technology and narrative, including examinations of Augmented Reality/X-Reality/Virtual Reality and Video Game Narratives, but also including the general technological ecology of games and narrative.

**Proposals for Individual Paper and Video Essay Submissions:**

- Provide a 250-word abstract outlining your paper, specifying whether it will take the form of a paper/presentation or video essay. Papers and video essays will be 15-20 minutes in length.
- Do not include the author’s name anywhere on the abstract (but do give the paper a title).
- In a separate document, provide a short author’s statement of 100-150 words. Include your name, institutional affiliation (if any) and a description of your research, publications, and presentations.
- Submit the abstracts and the author’s statement in Microsoft Word or PDF format.

**Proposals for Panels:**

Panels will consist of 3-4 related papers. For panel submissions:

- Provide a 500-word description of the panel, setting out its goals and themes. Include titles and abstracts of 150-250 words for each panelist’s contribution.
- Do not include names of the organizer or contributors to the panel in the description and paper abstracts (but do make sure the panel and the individual papers have titles).
- Include, as a separate document, author statements of 100-150 words each for every participant (organizer and contributors) with name, institutional affiliation (if any) and a description of relevant research, publications, and presentations.
- Submit the abstracts and the author’s statement in Microsoft Word or PDF format.

**Proposals for Panel CfPs:**

- People wishing to put together a panel may issue a Call for Papers. CfPs should be no more than 500 words, and should include the name and email address of the organizer.
- Please send your CfP to icgan.submissions@uwaterloo.ca with the Subject Line: “CfP”.
- Submitted panel CfPs will be posted on the conference website.
Sessions will consist of a livestreamed demonstration of gameplay, followed by a roundtable discussion of the game in question. For proposal submissions:

- Provide a brief description of the game that will be played during the gameplay session. Games can be single or multiplayer, of any genre or form.
- Provide a 250-word outline of the proposed avenues of discussion for the post-play roundtable. This may include the academic perspectives that your participants will bring to the discussion, the aspects of gameplay and/or narrative that you will explore, or an explanation of the proposed game’s potential as an object of study.
- Do not include names of the organizer or roundtable participants in the proposal.
- Include, as a separate document, participant statements of 100-150 words each for every roundtable participant (organizer, player(s), and discussants) with their name, institutional affiliation (if any) and a description of relevant research, publications, presentations, or industry experience.

**Narrative (Game Design) Jam:**

On the evening of Friday, May 19th to Sunday, May 21st we will be hosting a Narrative Game Design Jam. The first evening will be a tutorial session demonstrating the basic format and function of one or two popular tools for game-focused narrative design. Over the following Saturday and Sunday morning, participants will create games of their own, ending with a conference showcase of the work Sunday afternoon. Participants can create teams or work individually; the conference organizers will facilitate the formation of teams if needed. If you wish to participate, there is no separate registration.

We will update the [ICGaN website](http://icgan.org) with details as the format is further developed.

*If you are a narrative designer, or are strongly familiar with Twine or Ink, and would like to help run a workshop or tutorial in either format, please indicate so as part of your registration.*

*Keep an eye on our website for information on conference activities, including updates on our Game Jam and calls for papers.*