



# INSTANT REPLAY

*Championing Research Excellence*

FALL 2024



While fall term has brought uncertainty as to the future of the Games Institute (GI), we still want to take the time to celebrate all that our members have accomplished this term! As always, the fall term is incredibly busy; it always impresses us how much our members have done in the past 4 months, including attending international conferences, developing patents, and achieving major professional development milestones.

This Instant Replay features the ongoing work of Greg Mittler and Dr. Luke Potwarka, the founders of UW's Interdisciplinary Network for Esports (pg. 3); grants awarded to Drs. Igor Grossmann (pg. 10) and Shana MacDonald (pg. 11); First Person Scholar's latest Special Issue about paratexts (pg. 12); and our members' research showcased many times, including this year's Tech Horizons Executive Forum (pg. 16).

Catch up on all the latest news and more  
in this installment of Instant Replay!



## NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

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# A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear GI Members, UW Community, and all who have enjoyed Instant Replay,

This will most likely be the last Instant Replay the Games Institute (GI) produces for the foreseeable future due to the uncertain funding future of the GI, impacting the retention of its highly specialized, interdisciplinary staff to support such publications.

Instant Replay first began as a concept in 2017, when GI Executive Director Dr. Neil Randall and Associate Director Agata Antkiewicz were brainstorming on how to better showcase GI activities with the greater University of Waterloo community. As an interdisciplinary centre, the GI has always fiercely championed mixed methods research, all forms of methodology, alternative & non-academic publishing, and nuanced disciplinary quirks that are not easily encapsulated by quantitative, performance metrics common in annual reports are. After much deliberation, the two concluded that the best way to demonstrate the GI's impact, would be by harnessing the power of storytelling for a termly report catered toward GI members and other interested audiences.

In early 2021, this conceptual bundle of stories, research, and strategic vision came to Pamela Maria Schmidt's desk, who, at the time, was the GI's Research Project Facilitator. She had a hand in generating content for previous iterations of Instant Replays by writing News Bites and organizing content. Now, she was asked to take the "Instant Replay" as it was and turn it into an internal report for GI membership to see their accomplishments, while also collecting information that would help formal reports like the annual Impact Report, and the quinquennial Senate Renewal Report.

In Fall 2021, Sid Heeg joined the GI staff team to assist Schmidt in crafting more in-depth Research Spotlights, tracking GI member accomplishments (like publications and grants), and developing a consistent tone for Instant Replays. The publications



[Left to right: Dr. Neill Randall, Sid Heeg, Agata Antkiewicz, Pamela Maria Schmidt, Dr. Emma Vossen, and Altnayn Isakova: The GI staff team in Fall 2024.]

were made into print copies and are also [available digitally on the GI website](#) to ensure that all research is accessible.

Heeg and Schmidt's collaborative relationship created what the Instant Replay is today. They built comprehensive guidelines (both visual and written) which led to 11 Instant Replays in their current form. They have been shared with UWaterloo presidents, Faculty Deans, Associate Deans of Research, as well as the many guests that have visited the GI.

We hope that, one day, the Instant Replay can return to continue sharing the excellent talent of our members, the vibrancy of our community, and quality of research produced. But for now, we'd like to thank the many co-op students who have had a hand in the process, Agata Antkiewicz for her excellent editing skills and sharp eye, and Dr. Emma Vossen's assistance in developing a written style guide.

With warmth, hope, and kindness,

Pamela Maria Schmidt and Sid Heeg

The GI's Interdisciplinary Project & Communications Manager, and  
Research Communications Writer & Social Media Manager

# The Unlikely Collaboration that led to the Creation of the University of Waterloo Interdisciplinary Network for Esports

Esports is a burgeoning field working to establish itself as a legitimate sport, industry, and academic discipline, that is worthy of investment and investigation. Games Institute researchers have often found academia's slow pace at odds with the roaring highway of the rapidly advancing tech industry. Often, when researchers finally get their hands on a new piece of technology to tinker with, the next best thing has already been released. Esports is both rebellious and nebulous—on the surface it heavily relies on the latest gaming, streaming, and online training technology, while also contending with the booming “sports” side of the industry requiring logistics, operations, and staff support. More importantly, it's revved up a new research agenda of academics from all diverse disciplinary backgrounds.

The esports fever hit the University of Waterloo just before the COVID-19 pandemic closures in 2019 and early 2020—students running Super Smash Bros. tournaments and the establishment of varsity and competitive teams through Waterloo's Athletics and Recreation. Riding on the momentum, the undergraduate UW Esports Broadcasting Club was formed shortly after, the students streaming their coverage of various on-campus events via Twitch from the GI facility. It was once the Pandemic had finally caused a jam in “normal” day-to-day activities and replaced it with social distancing and online interactions, that long-time friends, colleagues, and GI members **Greg Mittler** (Athletics and Recreation) and **Dr. Luke Potwarka** (Recreation and Leisure Studies) began chatting about the potential for esports systems and supports on campus.



[Greg Mittler]



[Dr. Luke Potwarka]

As they were exploring possibilities, in 2021, growing interest into this new and revolutionary world drew attention from the Government of Canada for its potential business possibilities, and the University of Waterloo started to take a serious look at how esports could be supported on an institutional level. UW began developing a partnership agreement with the University of Warwick, UK. Warwick was—and still is—treating esports seriously and had already made substantial progress, developing an esports centre and building a shiny new facility called “Fusion” to support it. During these establishing discussions formalizing research streams between the two institutions, the words “gaming” and “esports” were thrown around, resulting in GI Executive Director, **Dr. Neil Randall**, and Associate Director, **Agata Antkiewicz**, being drawn into the fold. With this blossoming relationship in the works, the Associate Director of Research International, Dr. Ian Rowlands, began reaching out to interested researchers on campus—including Mittler, Potwarka, and Randall, who he knew would be interested in Warwick's esports successes.

As esports gained speed in the industry, in 2022 the Province of Ontario announced a funding opportunity



for students pursuing careers in the gaming and esports industries. The Games Institute, in collaboration with the Faculties of Arts, Engineering, Health, Math, and Science successfully secured \$50,000 of scholarship funding. The first round of funding released January 16, 2023, provided seven student scholarships valued at \$2,500 to \$5,000 while the second round, announced September 11, 2023, funded nine. Funds were awarded to high-achieving, equity-deserving graduate and undergraduate students. The successful students, pursuing careers in games and esports industries, came from a diverse range of programs on campus including Computing and Financial Management, Environmental Studies: Planning, Global Business and Digital Arts, Materials and Nanoscience, and Mechanical Engineering. Dr. Neil Randall, Executive Director of the Games Institute, has been working towards supporting esports at UW for over a decade and was delighted to see the Ontario government “supporting students who want to be part of this emerging profession.”



### **The Road Converges and UWIN**

Interdisciplinary research often challenges the status quo, creates novel approaches to existing problems, and often requires an unconventional approach to research itself. It takes a lot of work to bring like-minded individuals together, appreciating each other’s different disciplinary backgrounds, while also trying to find a common research language so that everyone’s expertise is respected. Interdisciplinary research within academia is almost always understood as collaboration between faculty researchers. An initiative co-directed by a university staff member and a professor is almost unheard of, and yet, that is exactly what Mittler and Potwarka have done.

Dr. Neil Randall has been working towards supporting esports at UW for over a decade and was delighted to see the Ontario government “supporting students who want to be part of this emerging profession.”



For Mittler, who works in student program development in athletics, the entry point into the world of esports came during the COVID-19 pandemic. “I supported competitive clubs like Quidditch,” Mittler said. “Who compete in off-campus leagues, so I felt comfortable supporting new esports teams in off campus leagues.” Using UW’s model for competitive clubs, he coordinated the intercollegiate esports.

Potwarka is Director of the Spectator Experience and Technology Laboratory (SEAT), where he examines the emotions of spectators as they engage with sports content, how it inspires them to participate in sports, and how they view their identities as spectators. Examining esports spectatorship was a natural expansion of his research agenda. Potwarka is especially interested in the high uptake of participation in esports; as he explains it, in traditional sports, few people spectating are actually participating in that sport themselves, in contrast “for something like League of Legends, its 80-90%.”



[Members of the Esports Broadcasting Club]

Having discovered mutual interest in esports, Mittler and Potwarka started exploring how other Universities develop their esports networking, training, teaching, and research initiatives. And so, Mittler—who had now secured a position as UW’s “Coordinator, Esports and Gaming”, the first of its kind at a Canadian university—visited Warwick along with seven students during the 2022 Commonwealth Games where esports were played alongside traditional sports for the first time. Here, the students had a chance to work with Warwick who had an exhibition during the Commonwealth Games, and this introduced many of them into what esports could be with the right support.



During this visit, Mittler realized Warwick’s approach to research and teaching is remarkably similar to their own, and even referred to Warwick as a sort of “bizarro Waterloo” because of these similarities. It was an inspiring visit for him which showed him that – although Warwick was ahead of Waterloo when it came to mobilizing esports on campus – he and Potwarka had the same challenge to tackle: interdisciplinary collaboration and how to bring together people from different disciplines.



[Members of the esports league playing in an esports tournament.]

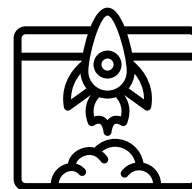
Inspired by their Warwick visit, Mittler and Potwarka began working with the Games Institute, **Dr. Lili Liu** (UW Dean of Health), **Dr. Sheila Ager** (former UW Dean of Arts), and UW Athletics to secure seed funding from UW’s Provost to launch an interdisciplinary network for esports on campus, a dedicated esports facility in the Physical Activities Complex (PAC), and other activities focused on esports and gaming.

Mittler began working with the University to build a space in PAC where students can participate in esports programming and a “living lab” for researchers to conduct studies and observe esports play: a core facility that would be inhabited, or used, at all times by different user groups from various disciplines. For instance, students interested in esports can use the technology to train and play, while also being participants that academics can readily access and observe for esports research. Meanwhile, Potwarka focused on mobilizing research finding over 100 researchers at UW, from every Faculty, who had already published in the field of esports. This became the beginning of a community of practice that would bring staff, researchers, industry

professionals, and students together to discuss their work in esports. Of the current 28 members, 10 are also GI members.

The University of Waterloo Interdisciplinary Network for Esports—known as UWIN Esports—with the mission to advance teaching, research, and student experience through esports was launched in August 2023. The network now employs thirty students in dynamic staff support roles such as communicators, storytellers, shout casters, broadcasters, event planners, graphic designers, typographers, marketers, operators, and coordinators—all positions integral to the esports industry. In fact, many of the students who received the Ontario-funded UW esports scholarship in 2023 became involved with the networking and varsity team.

UWIN is also developing an interdisciplinary cross-Faculty teaching course, which will position esports as a field of study with a tangible professional pipeline into the industry. The goal for the courses is to examine esports from a variety of pedagogical and theoretical lenses including critical disability studies, gender studies, among others.



### ***Driving UWIN Forward and Mobilizing a “Living Lab”***

Mittler and Potwarka are working hard to ensure the success of the network. Mittler is now managing multiple UW Varsity Esports Teams and is looking beyond campus for further expansion. As a current board member of Esports Canada and the newly established Waterloo Region Esports Commission, Mittler is working with the Region on how to develop esports programs on a Tri-City scale. The long-term goal is to ensure the sustainability of the network and create a core facility with equipment and space for everyone interested in esports to find community in the work that they do. The secured Provost seed funding will certainly help with the development of

this space in PAC, but more importantly, The secured Provost seed funding will certainly help with the development of this space in PAC, but more importantly, Mittler and Potwarka want this space to go beyond the bounds of the University to holistically serve the Region.

In Canada, most students, athletes, and young professionals interested in esports move to big cities like Montréal, Toronto, and Vancouver to launch their careers. In the true nature of Waterloo’s start-up culture, Mittler and Potwarka want to work with the Region to create an infrastructure of esports locally, bringing the benefits to Waterloo. They’ve already begun working with those [organizing esports infrastructure at Conestoga College](#) as well as local elementary and secondary schools.



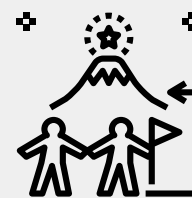
[Members of the production crew for the Esports Broadcasting Club.]

This decision was very intentional, as the reality for all sports is the initial cost of entry for both varsity and professional training is high—and for some, insurmountable. Training can be rigorous, and sometimes one parent will sacrifice parts, if not their entire career, to keep up with the laborious monotony of training schedules, matches, and transportation while the other works to invest money into equipment, coaching fees, and travel. Although esports may appear to be more affordable, as there is a misconception of all events being virtual, but the even pricing for super-powered gaming computers are in the thousands of dollars. Mittler and Potwarka hope that this physical space on campus will be open to the public, but they also want to make sure the lab and its equipment has a mobile component to engage with elementary and secondary schools, which often lack resources to give children these opportunities. The conceptual framework for this is

what Mittler and Potwarka call a “living lab.”

The word “lab” is understood and used variously by different disciplines. For some, it means a physical space where research is conducted, while for others, it is a group of like-minded researchers who periodically come together to collaborate, network, and support each other's work. For Mittler and Potwarka, a living lab combines these frameworks—it is not just the physical space, but the movable equipment, people who are using the equipment, and people who are doing the research. It provides student experience, while also advancing research and providing the tools necessary to speed it up.

While the Provost funding has helped purchase some equipment, Mittler and Potwarka have also secured funding from the Regional Tourism Organization 4 Inc (RTO4). This support has enabled them to purchase additional equipment for the living lab structure.



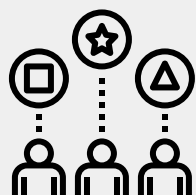
## ***Paving New Roads for Esports***

A particularly vital component of kick-starting any interdisciplinary project and engaging people from so many disciplines and professional backgrounds is ensuring that the network’s goals and values are in alignment. Mittler and Potwarka understand the power of engaging students, academics, staff, and industry professionals together to enable a holistic study of esports. More so, they both believe that the crucial component here is ensuring that the network is an accessible and safe space. There are many problematic parts of the gaming world, games themselves, and the climate of the industry that acts as a barrier to entry for equity-deserving groups. Racism, harassment, and other systemic issues in the industry are all issues that need to be addressed in all future education and training programs. The network works to address these issues, so they do not fester in the next generation of students coming

into the esports and games industry—regardless of whether they are an athlete, industry professional, or support staff. They also want to create guidelines for building equitable communities—uplifting research that offers both positive and negative findings about the impact of esports and to incorporate those findings into the network’s structures and programs.

Mittler describes these challenges as “myth busting” saying he has had to repeatedly explain that “our top-tier players don’t just sit in their mom’s basement with Cheeto dust fingers slamming Red Bull.” The goal is to bring the multiple UW esports teams together as they currently don’t have a space to collaborate.

Another aspect that is also currently overlooked when it comes to esports is that, like all other athletes, esports players must practice and train just like those in any other sport, and Mittler and Potwarka are reconceptualizing what training for esports athletes looks like. As they argue, a marathon runner would never run 24 hours a day, and therefore esports athletes should not be gaming all day either. Many criticisms of esports also call out its individualistic nature, the large amount of exposure to violent games, unhealthy lifestyle habits, and the behaviour of some players. Working with the UW competitive esports teams, Mittler and Potwarka monitor and ensure students take breaks from training, prioritize a good diet and exercise regiment, so that they can increase their performance in a more holistic manner. To tackle loneliness and physical isolation, the UW esports athletes train in the same space to promote bonding and positive psychological support once the living lab is online.



### **Advancing Unconventional Approaches to Research**

Esports presents opportunities for those interested in games, play, sport, and spectatorship, as well as interdisciplinary and intersectoral collaboration. The radical and boundary-pushing approach to esports

by Mittler and Potwarka has already made waves at UW and within the Region. Their deep-rooted focus on making UWIN truly interdisciplinary has paid off in successfully engaging students, young and seasoned professionals, supportive staff, and researchers who respect each other’s perspectives and see the enormous value in learning from one another.

If you are interested in becoming involved with UWIN, [check out their webpage](#) where they list how to become part of their community of practice and engage in collaboration with other members of the network. The community of practice is open to anyone, and members can expect presentations like that of Jack Fenton’s “Esports, Older Adults, Mental Health, and Social Isolation” and Dr. Shinyong (Shawn) Jung’s “The Role of In-Person Events in Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Esports.”

### **ESPORTS INTERDISCIPLINARY NETWORK**

The mission of the network is to strengthen student experiences, teaching/learning, and scholarship at the University of Waterloo through esports and video games, as it relates to the following interdisciplinary areas:



[A graphic displaying the core values of UWIN.]



## GI Members at Beyond Play 2024 Conference

On October 2nd, GI members **Pamela Maria Schmidt** (Interdisciplinary Research and Communications Manager) and **Sid Heeg** (Sustainability Management) presented at the Beyond Play 2024 Conference in Bremen, Germany. The conference was organized by the University of Bremen's Centre for Media, Communication, and Information Research (ZeMKI), and brought together a global audience of games scholars to discuss ongoing research interests that expand “beyond play” and the transformative power of digital gaming in a deeply mediatized society. Schmidt and Heeg presented “Horror as a Medium: An Examination

of Environmental Horror in Video Games” as part of the “Epistemic Games” panel. The presentation came together when fellow panelist *Dr. Mark Nunes*, brought together Schmidt, Heeg, as well as PhD Candidate *Alex Hurezeanu* and *Dr. Kyle Moody* to feature work from their upcoming chapters in *Epistemic Genres: New Formations in Digital Game Genres* which is edited by **Drs. Gerald Voorhees** (Communication Arts), *Joshua Call*, *Matthew Wsocki*, and **Betsy Brey** (A) along with a second volume titled *Emerging Genres: New Formations in Games*. Their presentation focused on their criticisms of the horror genre within gaming, and how our understanding of horror should pivot to viewing it more as a medium (a mode of communication) rather confining it to tropes and stereotypes. This involved a discussion around the horror elements on non-horror games through case studies of *Far Cry 6* and *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*.



[Left to Right: Sid Heeg, Dr. Mark Nunes, Alex Hurezeanu, and Pamela Maria Schmidt.]



## GI Members at the 10th Annual CHI PLAY Conference

From October 14th to 17th 2024, CHI GI members present at The Annual Symposium on Computer-Human Interaction in Play (CHI PLAY) which was hosted in Tampere, Finland. This year was exceptionally special, as it celebrated the conference's 10th anniversary.

The goal of CHI PLAY is to highlight and foster discussions around contemporary, high-quality research in human-computer interaction (HCI) which build a foundation for the future of digital play. To this end, the conference features streams that blend academic research papers, masterclasses, interactive play demos, student game design competition, poster session, and industry insights. For a full list of paper titles and publications, check out the GI Member Accomplishments on page 22.



[Left to Right: Dr. Katja Rogers, Dr. Sebastian Cmentowski, Dr. Lennart Nacke, Sabrina Sgandurra, Arden Song, Georgia Loewen, and Dr. Karen Cochrane.]

Congratulations to all our GI members who attended and presented papers, in-progress studies, and projects!

- Ali Haider Rizvi (Management Science and Engineering)
- Dr. Daniel Harley (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business)
- Dr. Daniel Johnson (Cheriton School of Computer Science)
- Derrick Wang (Systems Design Engineering)
- Georgia Loewen (Carleton University)
- Hilda Hadan (Systems Design Engineering)
- Dr. Karen Anne Cochrane (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business)
- Dr. Katja Rogers (A)
- Dr. Leah Zhang-Kennedy (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business)
- Dr. Lennart Nacke (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business)
- Lydia Choong (Systems Design Engineering)
- Dr. Mark Hancock (Management Science and Engineering)
- Dr. Maximilian Altmeyer (A)
- Dr. Oliver Schneider (Management Science and Engineering)
- Dr. Pejman Mirza-Babei (Ontario Tech University)
- Dr. Reza Hadi Mogavi (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business)
- Dr. Rina Wehbe (A)
- Sabrina Alicia Sgandurra (English Language and Literature)
- Dr. Sebastian Cmentowski (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business)
- Sukran Karaosmanoglu (A)

## GI Members Dr. Emma Vossen and Carly Turnbull Participate in the Community of Practice



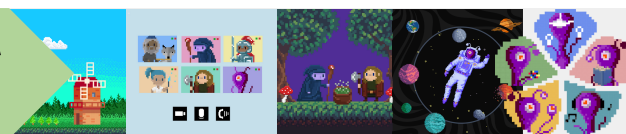
[Dr. Emma Vossen]



[Carly Turnbull]

On September 18th, **Dr. Emma Vossen** (Knowledge Mobilization and Research Impact Officer) and **Carly Turnbull** (Managing Director of the Centre for Biotechnology and Bioengineering) participated in the Waterloo Knowledge Mobilization Community of Practice discussion focusing on the knowledge mobilization practices among UW's research institutes and centres. Joining Dr. Vossen and Turnbull were *Nancy Goucher* (Knowledge Mobilization Specialist from the Water Institute), *Elanor Waslander* (Communications Officer at the Waterloo Climate Institute), and *Nadine Quehl* (Senior Manager of Knowledge Mobilization & Partnerships from the Office of Research). The Community of Practice events demonstrate a broader campus effort to mobilize the research coming out of UWaterloo researchers.

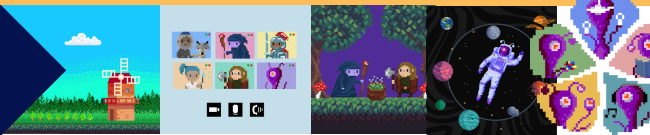
During the discussion, Dr. Vossen showcased the structures and practices the GI has put in place when mobilizing the knowledge produced by GI membership such as collaborative interdisciplinary research projects like *Illuminate*; and postdoctoral research like *DualPanto*. Part of Dr. Vossen's role is translating this knowledge into easily accessible formats to a non-expert audience at a grade 10 reading level. A popular method of this translation are the knowledge mobilization posters that are hung in the GI facility, which are available as digital copies on the GI's website. Turnbull likewise shared her perspective on



how to build community in a way that fosters network and productive discussions between members—especially if those members are from different backgrounds and disciplines. She explained the CBB’s “Lunch and Learn” event series brings CBB members together to discuss a topic—whether this was a student’s research topic, a guest lecture, or conference presentation. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the “Lunch and Learn” series has had to pivot to encourage more participation. In leading these types of events, Turnbull emphasized being responsive and constantly evaluating what’s going on to reassess and continually iterate on what the best practices of knowledge mobilization to engage members are. Highlights from this event can now be read [in a news bite written by CBB](#).

## GI NEWS

### GI Faculty Member Dr. Igor Grossmann Received a \$1.5 Million Grant



[Dr. Igor Grossmann]

Games Institute (GI) faculty member **Dr. Igor Grossmann** (Psychology), in collaboration with his team at [Wisdom and Culture Lab](#), successfully secured a \$1.5 million grant for their “Wisdom across cultures beyond traditional decision-making paradigms” project.

This funding was provided by the [Templeton World Charity Foundation](#) (TWCF), whose goal is to fund “innovative projects that push the boundaries of scientific knowledge and help people flourish.”

This interdisciplinary project aims to investigate how various factors, including cultural, ecological, and situational influences, shape individuals’ approaches to everyday problem-solving and decision-making; this can further be applied across diverse fields such as education and policy-making. The project involves efforts from fields such as psychology, computer science, and psychometrics. The researchers also plan to use anthropological and psychological surveys, to gather data on how people from different cultures approach complex situations. Natural language processing techniques will be used to help identify common strategies, and via computer modelling, scholars will test these strategies in different contexts.

As Dr. Grossmann shares, “studying wisdom is crucial as it offers insights into how people navigate complex and uncertain situations, especially when these are shaped by cultural, moral, and interpersonal dynamics.”

The GI congratulates Dr. Igor Grossmann on receiving the grant and wishes continued success in advancing the groundbreaking work!



[A screenshot from Dr. Grossmann’s project The Wise Judgment Consortium. “Redefining decision-making beyond Western-Centric models.”]



# GI Faculty Member Dr. John E. Muñoz Shares First Patent Design

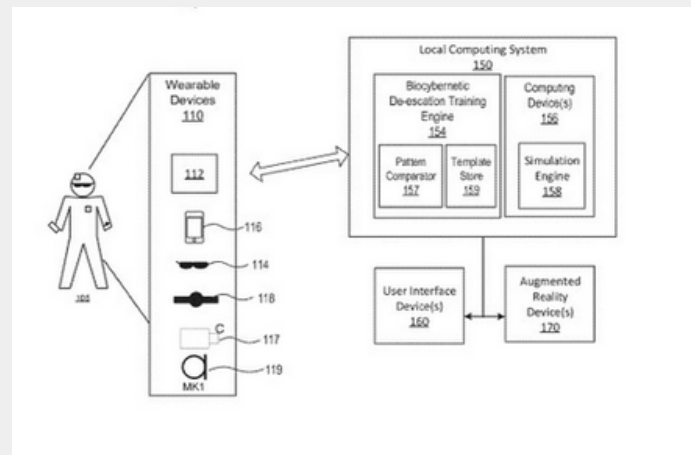
Congratulations to **Dr. John E. Muñoz** (Wilfrid Laurier University) who released his first patent on August 27th! The patent is for a wearable device that monitors a user's physiological signals like heart rate to then create a virtual reality (VR) training simulation based on their reactions to different situations that may be tense or distressing. The combination of wearable devices and VR is to create a personalized training experience to equip first responders with the knowledge of how to de-escalate dangerous situations.

Invented alongside his colleagues, *Chad Stephens*, *Dr. Alan Pope*, *Marsha Turner*, and *Ólafur Pálsson*, the patent focuses on enhancing public safety by providing police services with more information on how to de-escalate conflicts. Under the project title "[Biocybernetics De-escalation Systems and Methods](#)", Dr. Muñoz and the team worked on the patent in conjunction with the NASA Langley Research Centre. The project aims to use physiological sensors to detect stress levels and providing police services with real-time strategies on how to approach a situation.

This patent continues Dr. Muñoz's ongoing research and development of biofeedback sensors that can be seen in his company, [Body Interface Labs](#) as well as his work in using virtual reality technologies in new and novel ways, which can be seen on the collaborative research project [Seas the Day](#).



[Dr. John E. Muñoz]



[An image detailing the use of technology for the Biocybernetic De-escalation Systems and Methods patent.]

## GI Faculty Member Dr. Shana MacDonald Awarded Insight Development Grant



[Dr. Shana MacDonald]

GI faculty member **Dr. Shana MacDonald** (Communications Arts) successfully secured a \$74,232 grant for the "Exploring the visual culture of misogyny across material and digital archives" project. This funding was provided through Canada Foundation for Innovation and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

Congratulations to Dr. MacDonald on this achievement! We look forward to seeing the research generated by this project.



[Dr. Lennart Nacke]



[Dr. Marcel O'Gorman]

Congratulations to GI faculty members **Drs. Lennart Nacke** (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business) and **Marcel O'Gorman** (English Language and Literature) who have been appointed University Research Chairs at Waterloo! The appointments were effective July 1, 2024, and were officially named on September 23rd, 2024.

These appointments recognize the added value of research integrity that Drs. Nacke and O'Gorman conduct not only for the UWaterloo community, but also within their respective fields of research. Congratulations once again to both for this incredible achievement!

## First Person Scholar Publishes New Special Issue

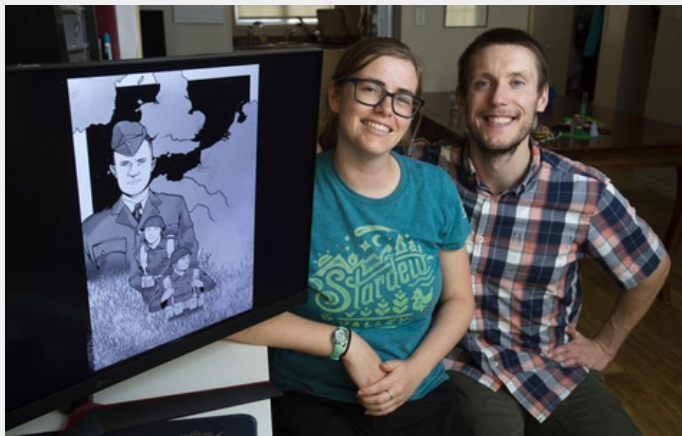
First Person Scholar (FPS), a middle-state publication supported and published by the Games Institute, has released its latest Special Issue titled "Gaming Paratexts." This issue examines how paratexts (interview materials, magazines, wikis, websites, videos, game walkthroughs, guides, etc.) are culturally important in co-creating meaning and impact around a game. The following articles highlighted explored this topic in various ways and can all be accessed through the FPS website. Happy reading!

- "Listening, Watching, Gaming: The Ambient Paratext" by Dr. Chris Hall (University of the Ozarks) examines the growing phenomenon of video game soundscapes on Youtube.
- "TRPG wiki writing: Creating a Paratext" by Joseph Arnaud (Canterbury College) looks at tabletop role playing game wikis as a form of paratext similar to game rulebooks.
- "Queer Games and Straight Play?: Queer Representation and Enacting Dominant Sexualities Through Game Playthroughs" by Luke Hernandez (University of Texas at Dallas) dives into Youtube playthroughs as paratext focusing on heteronormative playthroughs of queer games by straight Youtubers.
- "The Stanley Paratexts: Poaching, Nostalgia, and Malleability" by Miriam Scuderi (Johannes Gutenberg Universität of Mainz) showcases the many ways that the Ultra Deluxe edition of the Stanley Parable incorporates paratext (such as steam reviews of the original game) into the text itself.
- "Descending Deeper Still: Revisiting Spec Ops: The Line A Decade Later" by Chris Martin (University of Waterloo) looks at the paratext of title screens, loading screens, and cutscene transitions in Spec Ops: The Line.
- "Is It 'A Profound Waste of Time' to Like a Video Game Magazine?: A Conversation with Caspian Whistler" by Luis Aguasvivas (PopMatters) outlines the fluctuating paratextual role of game magazines in our culture focusing on A Profound Waste of Time, one of the few video game magazines publishing physically in a time when most games journalism is entirely online.





# PhD Candidate Toben Racicot and Artist Alaire Racicot Featured in The Record About New Graphic Novel Project



[Left to Right: Alaire Racicot and Toben Racicot. Source: Matthew McCarthy.]

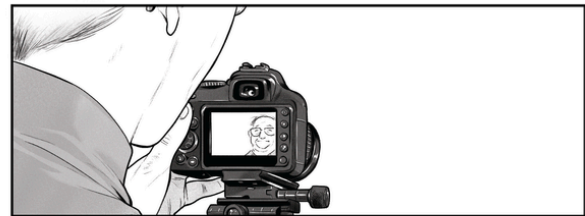
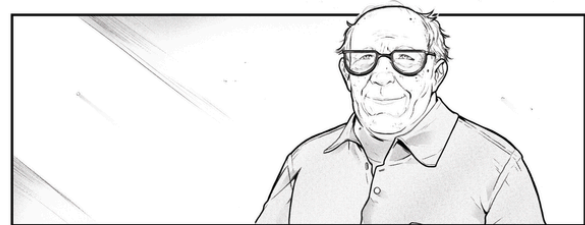
On November 9th, **Toben Racicot** (English Language and Literature) and **Alaire Racicot** were featured in The Record about their latest graphic memoir titled “The Night in Tilly’s Field.” This project focuses on the life of Lieutenant Ernie Phair, who was killed in action in 1944, and the family he left behind. The duo took on the project after being connected by GI member **Jonathan Baltrusaitis** (English Language and Literature) with Faculty of Arts professor **Dr. Jay Dolmage’s** extended family. This project is being funded by the Dolmage family with the intent of having this memoir be an educational piece that will be available to schools, museums, and the Royal Canadian Legion.

What drew Toben and Alaire into this project was that both their have family members who have served in the armed forces, including both of Toben’s grandfathers, his grandmother, as well as Alaire’s brother and brother-in-law. In approaching the graphic memoir from the subject of history, it challenged Toben and Alaire, whose bread and butter is the creation of fantasy and science fiction comics, to work with historical accuracy, representation, and preservation of memory.

The graphic memoir is now available for preorder and will be completed in early 2025.



[Cover image for the graphic memoir “The Night in Tilly’s Field.”]



[Preview for the graphic memoir “The Night in Tilly’s Field.”]



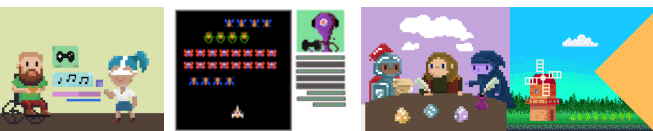
# GI Faculty Member Dr. Oliver Schneider Receives Graphics Interface Award



[Dr. Oliver Schneider.]

Congratulations to **Dr. Oliver Schneider** (Management Science and Engineering) for receiving **the 2024 Graphics Interface award** for Early Career Researcher! It was awarded by the Canadian Human-Computer Communications Society (CHCCS) and recognizes the work of early career faculty members in the areas of graphics, human-computer interaction, and visualization.

Dr. Schneider delivered the talk “Haptics with AI: are we ready?” as part of his award ceremony, discussing the risks and challenges haptics research faces with the increased integration of artificial intelligence (AI) within systems and technology.



## GI Faculty Member Dr. John E. Muñoz Finalizes Demo to Train Police Officers

**Dr. John Muñoz** (Wilfrid Laurier University) has recently completed a study developing virtual reality (VR) simulations to train police officers in both Canada and the United States. As part of his study design, Dr. Muñoz focused specifically on teaching officers’ critical skills in de-escalation and improved awareness when responding to mental health crises. The study uses state of the art VR equipment and physiological sensors to capture study participants’ heart rates. Understanding physiological data like heart rates can provide police departments with more in-depth data on how police officers respond to stressful situations. This can result in more effective training to adequately prepare officers when responding to emergencies.



[Dr. John E. Muñoz]

This study was run out of multiple labs at the GI including the Immersion Room, the Living Room Lab, and the Presentation Room. To learn more, [watch a segment of Dr. Muñoz’s interview with Rogers TV!](#)



[A study participant engaging in a VR training simulation.]



On September 12th, the GI welcomed representatives from AMD, a global leader in advanced computing technologies. The delegation toured the GI facility, exploring GI labs and learning about ongoing research that are currently taking place at the GI.

Visiting from AMD were *Suneet Joshi*, a Campus Recruitment Manager, and *Maria Abila*, Senior Program Management Analyst. Joshi and Abila were hosted by *Stephanie Osborne*, the Senior Development Office from the Faculty of Engineering. As part of AMD's broader visit to UWaterloo campus, Joshi and Abila had a chance to engage with GI researchers to learn more about the esports initiatives and interdisciplinary projects conducted by the HX lab.

The meeting sparked interest in potential collaborations and mutual interest on leveraging solutions to enhance research organized at GI. Thanks to all our members who showcased their work!



[Left to Right: Dr. Emma Vossen, Maria Abila, Suneet Joshi, and Agata Antkiewicz.]



[Greg Mittler (far right) telling Abila and Joshi about eSports initiatives on campus.]

## WatSPEED Arrives for Research Demo

On October 15th, *Jennifer Bentley* (Manager of Events and Engagement) and *Karina Graf* (Associate Director, Marketing and Digital Sales) from WatSPEED visited the GI for a demo of select research projects by GI members. Included in these demonstrations was the interactive knee joint model (colloquially called “the leg” by GI members); *Seas the Day*, a VR game developed to improve the mobility of people living with dementia; and *Illuminate*, a climate change simulation game.

The GI is committed to showing the UWaterloo community and industry partners the impact of interdisciplinary research projects generated by our community.



[Left to Right: Marco Moran Ledesma, Karina Graf, and Jennifer Bentley.]



# GI Faculty Members Present at the Panel “The Practical Side of Interdisciplinary Research”



[Left to Right: Drs. Ian Milligan, Neil Randall, Adam Molnar, and Lai-Tze Fan.]

On November 22, GI faculty members **Drs. Lai-Tze Fan** (Sociology and Legal Studies) and **Neil Randall** (English Language and Literature) participated on the panel “The Practical Side of Interdisciplinary Research” which focused on the “ins and outs of building teams across faculties.” Joining the panel was GI faculty member **Dr. Ian Milligan** (History) as moderator and *Dr. Adam Molnar*. The panel was aimed at researchers from across the university to provide insight and knowledge on what it’s like to build interdisciplinary research teams. Dr. Milligan opened the panel by expanding on what interdisciplinary work and research means at the intersections of technology, culture, and society. As these three areas become ever more intertwined, they require more cross-collaboration between different teams to address complex societal problems—often referred to as wicked problems—such as climate change, the rise of artificial intelligence, and the impacts of colonization and racial inequity within society.

Dr. Randall spoke about interdisciplinary work from practical experience and his publications with games and computer magazines in the 1980s and 90s—most notably *PC Magazine*. For him, interdisciplinary research started when he began writing about computer processors when he was not familiar with the subject. But in collaborating with two other writers, they decided that in an effort to help each other and learn from each other, they would write each other’s sections. So while Dr. Randall ended up writing about how processors worked, his two colleagues would write about how these processors had an impact on work culture, and another would write about its impact on work quality and outcome. This experience taught Dr. Randall an important lesson on interdisciplinary work and that it was never going to be comfortable, but in getting people to go outside their comfort zones, this is when interdisciplinary work begins. This is most notably exemplified by Dr. Randall’s involvement as the Executive Director of the Games Institute.

The topic of partnerships was picked up by Dr. Fan, who touched upon her work within the Trust in Research Undertaken in Science and Technology (TRuST) scholarly network as one of its members and the pressing issue of establishing trust with the public to improve trust in post-secondary academic institutions. For her, interdisciplinary research should also be focusing on how we prepare the next generation of students to address wicked problems. It’s important to Dr. Fan to not only bring her expertise as a non-scientist to a project full of scientists, but also to



mentor students who are more well equipped to navigate the complexities of interdisciplinary research with a skill-set that enables students to be much more adaptable.

Continuing on this intersection between these three areas, Dr. Molnar approached interdisciplinary research from a place of understanding how governance has been impacted by the influx of digital technologies. With his background in researching the impacts of security intelligence practices, such as police militarization, Dr. Molnar stressed the importance of partnering with civil society non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to help define wicked problems and see these partnerships not as an end result of a project but as a part of the process to create sustainable solutions.



## The Games Institute Showcases Research at the Tech Horizons Executive Forum

On November 26th, the GI showcased a selection of member research projects at the Tech Horizons Executive Forum event in Toronto, hosted by WatSPEED and CIBC. **Pamela Maria Schmidt** (Interdisciplinary Project and Communications Manager) and **Dr. Emma Vossen** (Knowledge Mobilization and Research Impact Officer) represented the GI and the multitude of interdisciplinary research projects that were created by GI members.

The Tech Horizons Executive Forum invited senior leaders from many industry sectors to learn about emerging technologies coming from UWaterloo research. Attendees had the chance to experience the VR game *Seas the Day*, developed by PhD Candidate **Samira Mehrabi** (School of Public Health Sciences) and **Dr. John Muñoz** (Wilfrid Laurier University), to learn about how VR technologies are used to address health concerns like improving the mobility of Dementia patients. There was also great interest in the knowledge mobilization games that focus on sustainability such as *Illuminate* and the *Canadian Cap and Trade Simulator*.

While there, Schmidt and Dr. Vossen had the chance to reconnect with with the Senior Manager of Scientific Outreach **Dr. John M. Donohue** from the Institute for Quantum Computing. During his time as a PhD student at UW, Donohue was one of many GI collaborators who worked on the game *Quantum Cats* which was on display for attendees as an example of how GI projects focus on making complex topics accessible to non-expert audiences.



[Left to Right: Pamela Maria Schmidt, Dr. Emma Vossen, and Dr. John M. Donohue.]



# THE GI GETS SOCIAL

## Halloween Social and Potluck

On October 31st, GI members participated in the annual Halloween Social and Potluck! Many came dressed to impress with many creative costumes inspired by popular media franchises such as **Dr. Emma Vossen** (Knowledge Mobilization and Research Impact Officer) dressing as fem!Gandalf from Lord of the Rings; **Kaushall Senthil Nathan** (Systems Design Engineering) coming dressed as Dionysus from the Greek mythology; and **Dr. Oliver Schneider** (Management Science and Engineering) dressing as the villainous Riddler from DC Comics.

Included in the event was a murder mystery game led by **Nadia Formisano** (English Language and Literature) who was the best actor at the Murder Mystery. We hope everyone enjoyed the spooky festivities!



[Left to right: Pamela Maria Schmidt, Dr. Emma Vossen, Nadia Formisano, and Sid Heeg.]

[Left to right: Dr. Eugene Kukshinov, Derrick Wang, Hilda Hadan, Dr. Reza Hadi Mogavi, and Sabrina Sguandurra.]



[Kaushall Senthil Nathan dressed as Dionysus.]

[Dr. Emma Vossen dressed as fem!Gandalf.]

[Dr. Oliver Schneider dressed as the Riddler.]

[Dr. Geneva Smith dressed as Kiki with the loyal Jiji.]

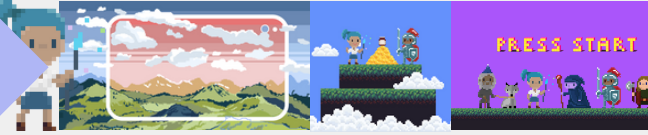


[GI members playing the Murder Mystery game.]

[Left to right: Arden Song, Marco Moran Ledesma, and Lakshmi Vinoj.]



# Holiday Social and Potluck



On December 5th, GI members were invited to partake in the last GI social event of the year. Many brought dishes from their cultural and ethnic backgrounds to share with others. GI administrative staff also set up many different activities for members to participate in including **Dr. Emma Vossen** (Knowledge Mobilization and Research Impact Officer) providing fortune readings as Holly Jolly; an ornament crafting station to decorate the tree; and a sightless drawing contest. Thank you to all our members who made it an extremely festive event, and especially to **Altnai Isakova** (Operations Coordinator) who planned and organized the entire event!



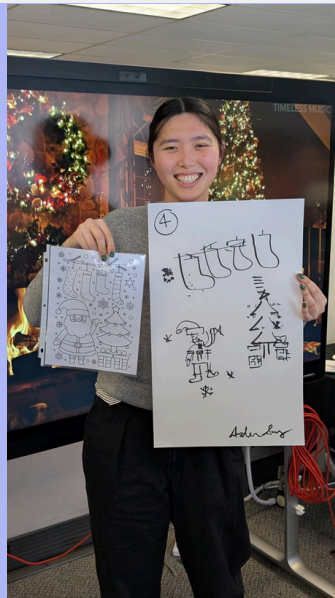
[GI members participating in the Holiday potluck.]



[Sid Heeg (left) and Arden Song (right) decorating ornaments for the tree.]



[GI members voting during the Sightless Drawing Contest.]



[Arden Song as the winner of the Sightless Drawing Contest.]



[Lakshmi Vinoj (left) and Dr. Geneva Smith (right) opening gifts during the "White Elephant" gift exchange. Lucky Lakshmi won a switch game!]



[Dr. Emma Vossen as Holly Jolly.]



[Pamela Maria Schmidt (left) having her fortune read by Holly Jolly (right).]





Thank you to everyone who made such wonderful ornaments for our community tree and left inspirational words to carry us through the New Year! Some of those special messages include:

1. May GI become better and full of creativity all the time.
2. I wish for GI in 2025 prosperity.
3. You're always at home here!
4. I wish the GI will dominate as THE research institute of UW.
5. Wish every GI members have a nice year!
6. Hope all our dreams come true this joyful & happy Christmas. Sending love to all





# GI STAFF UPDATES

## A Special farewell to the GI Staff....

Our incredible and dedicated GI administrative staff! We have been so lucky to employ many, wonderful people over the decade we have been in operation. The GI wouldn't be what it is today without the support, dedication, and passion of our highly specialized, interdisciplinary staff.

- **Altynai Isakova** (she/her) joined the GI as the Operations Coordinator in Spring 2024. She remained with the GI in Fall 2024, and now returns to her studies in psychology! (However, you can still say hi to Altynai and grab a coffee with her! She's remained as a GI member.)
- **Ehrinne Maducdoc** (she/her) joined the GI as the Operations Coordinator in Spring 2024. In Fall 2024, she continued to work for the GI at a part time capacity to put together the 2023 Impact Report (coming soon!) while juggling her responsibilities as a GBDA student.
- **Dr. Emma Vossen** (she/her) came to the University of Waterloo in 2012 as a PhD student when she heard Dr. Neil Randall would be starting something called the Games Institute. From there, she became highly involved in the GI's development, including the early Games Institute Reading Group, the formation of the GI Janes, and the progression and success of First Person Scholar. She finished her PhD in 2018, but in 2021, she returned to the GI as staff and stuck around as the Knowledge Mobilization and Research Impact Officer. The GI has been incredibly impactful to Vossen's career and development and she hopes to stay in touch with the larger GI community wherever she finds herself next.
- **Pamela Maria Schmidt** (she/her) joined the GI first as a student during her Master's in the English Language and Literature Department back in 2018. She worked on apocalyptic rhetoric in video games for her Master's thesis, supervised by Dr. Neil Randall, and after a very successful co-op term, was asked to remain at the GI full time. With a love of research and video games, her choice was obvious! With the given situation, she now is seeking work wherever the wind takes her and hopes to stay in touch with the GI community!
- **Sid Heeg** (they/them) joined the GI at the end of their Master's degree in early 2019. Since then, they have been a research assistant for GI faculty members Dr. Shana MacDonald and Dr. Aynur Kadir. They joined the GI officially as a part time staff member in late 2021 as a Research Communications Writer before eventually adding the role of Social Media Manager on top of the many things they do for the GI. That being said, they remain a PhD Candidate in Environment studying farming misinformation at the GI. Their pod remains the greenest at the GI and they will continue serving as Chief Gardener.



[Ehrinne Maducdoc (right) playing testing with AC Atienza (left) during Coffee and Games.]



[Dr. Emma Vossen as Holly Jolly at the Holiday Social.]



**Thank you! And we wish you good luck on your future endeavours!**



[Altynai Isakova testing VR equipment.]



[Sid Heeg with a plant.]



[Pamela Maria Schmidt in Bremen for the BeyondPlay Conference.]

## New Members

Welcome to all the following faculty, researchers, and other individuals who have joined us this term!

- **Auro Liu** (she/her) is a Ph.D. student pursuing a degree in Management Sciences at the University of Waterloo, under the supervision of Dr. Oliver Schneider.
- **An Bella Chen** (she/her) is a Master's student in the Cheriton School of Computer Science co-supervised by Drs. Leah Zhang-Kennedy and Jim Wallace. Her research explores the suitability of VR to better meet the needs of diverse audiences.
- **Chris McNab** (he/they) is a Master of Social Work student at the UW. His focus is towards equity and community engagement reflecting his passion for social justice through knowledge mobilization and community empowerment.
- **Dr. Clara Colombatto** (she/her) is an assistant professor in the department of psychology. Her research interests are in aspects of human perception and cognition.
- **Dr. Kami Vaniea** (she/her) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the UW. Dr. Vaniea's recent projects include developer-centered privacy, dynamic phishing advice, bystander privacy in smart speakers, understanding barriers to software update installations, and addressing misconceptions about Twitter's privacy settings.
- **Laura Wallace Jarvis** (she/her) is a student of the Bachelor of Social Work program, and research assistant for Wing Lam (Veen) Wong. Veen's research explores the use of HCI for violence prevention and is funded by NSERC.
- **Lakshmi Vinoj** (she/her) is a Master's student in system design engineering, researching human factors and ergonomics and research assistant supervised by Dr. Ville Mäkelä.
- **Liam McArthur** (he/him) works for Warriors Esports as the director of Production and Broadcast and is supervised by Greg Mittler.
- **Dr. Marina Gallagher** (she/her) is a professor in the department of Music. Her research interests include music, landscapes, and narrative in video games; ludomusicology; topic theory; and intersections between video game music and Classical Studies, especially ancient epic and pastoral poetry.
- **Maarifa Hayat** (she/her) is a high school student and research assistant under Dr. Randy Harris's supervision. Key areas of her interest include but are not limited to artificial intelligence, machine learning, and web development.
- **Dr. Omar Al-Buraiki** (he/him) is a post-doctoral fellow working with Dr. Oliver Schneider and senior instructor and a researcher in the Department of Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering at the UW.

## Farewell to...

It is always bittersweet to have members graduate and leave the GI. We are so proud of them and excited to see what they do next after their time at the GI!

- Congratulations **Dr. Sebastian Cmentowski** (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business) for successfully completing his postdoctoral position with HCI Games Group! Dr. Cmentowski joined the GI in 2023 as part of the Provost's Program for Interdisciplinary Postdoctoral Scholars and worked under the supervision of Dr. Lennart Nacke. He will be joining the Eindhoven University of Technology in the Netherlands as an Assistant Professor for game design.

No matter how long members have been with us, whether it's a few weeks to a few years, we always like to recognize their time with us. Thank you to all the co-ops, interns, and (U)RAs!

- **Aaron Jumarang** (he/him) was working under Dr. John Muñoz to develop a game that adaptively changes difficulty using physiological signals from various sensors such as EEG, HRV, and EDA. He is returning to his studies as a Biomedical Engineering student at the University of Waterloo.
- **Bruna Santana de Oliveria** (she/her) was a visiting PhD candidate, who worked under the supervision of Dr. Gerald Voorhees. She will be continuing her degree in Education at the Federal University of Sergipe.
- **Clément Salomon** (he/him) was a Mitacs Globalink Intern supervised by Dr. Ville Mäkelä. He is returning to Aix-Marseille IUT to continue his computer science undergraduate degree.
- **Cody Lee** (he/him) was a visiting Mitacs Globalink Intern from Hong Kong and was supervised by Dr. Will Zhao.
- **Drake Dong** (he/him) was working as a fullstack developer for the Rhetoricon Project with Dr. Randy Harris. He returns to his study in Bachelor of Applied Science in Electrical Engineering at the University of Waterloo.
- **Jackie Yi** (he/him) was a member of the UWaterloo Esports Broadcast Team and worked with Greg Mittler.
- **James Pilcher** (he/him) was a Mitacs Globalink Intern from the University of Exeter in the UK and was supervised by Drs. Cayley MacArthur and Mark Hancock.
- **Jordan Wang** (he/him) was a student research assistant for Dr. Oliver Schneider for his co-op term. He will be continuing his undergraduate studies in Mechatronics Engineering.
- **Julian Felipe Villada Castillo** (he/him) was a visiting PhD student supervised by Dr. John Muñoz. He is a professor and researcher at the Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira in Colombia and is developing health-related games for stroke patients' rehabilitation.
- **Khushi Savla** (she/her) was a student research assistant working with PhD candidate Bibhushan Raj Joshi and was supervised by Dr. Oliver Schneider. She has a background in Mechatronics Engineering.



- **Kwasha Shah** (she/her) was a Mitacs Globalink Intern supervised by Dr. Leah Zhang-Kennedy and worked for the “Children and Parents’ Mental Models of Security and Privacy in Humanoid Robots” project. She is returning to Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Science to continue her Bachelor of Technology in Computer Science and Business Systems.
- **Marlon Fabichacki Pereira** (he/him) was a Mitacs Globalink Intern supervised by Dr. Ville Mäkelä. His work focuses on developing real-world object detection in Virtual Reality to explore new interactions in virtual environments. He will be returning to the Western Paraná State University in Brazil to continue his studies.
- **Nathan D’Silva** (he/him) was a fullstack developer working with Dr. Randy Harris on the Rhetoricon Project. He is returning to his studying Combinatorics & Optimization and Computational Mathematics at the University of Waterloo.
- **Nicolás Enrique Rueda Rincón** (he/him) was a visiting international student, supervised by Dr. Ville Mäkelä. He will be returning to the University of the Andes to continue his master’s degree.
- **Rebecca Schuetze** (she/her) is an undergrad computer science student at the University of Waterloo working her co-op term at the GI. She was supervised by Dr. Randy Harris, working on the Rhetoricon project as a Web Designer and Content Researcher.
- **Shriya Kulkarni** (she/they) is an undergrad computer science student at the University of Waterloo and was supervised by Dr. Randy Harris. They were a full-stack developer for the Rhetoricon project for her co-op term.
- **Skylar Ji** (she/her) is an undergrad computer science student at the University of Waterloo. She worked as a developer and UX/UI designer for the Rhetoricon and GoFigure project at the GI, supervised by Dr. Randy Harris.
- **Wilfrid Lee** (he/him) was a visiting Mitacs Globalink Intern from Hong Kong and was supervised by Dr. Will Zhao. His project focused on designing a system that employs machine learning algorithms to detect AI-generated health-related misinformation on social media.
- **Ali Haider Rizvi** (Management Science and Engineering), **Dr. Oliver Schneider** (Management Science and Engineering), and **Dr. Mark Hancock** (Management Science and Engineering). (October 2024) [“Proteus Card Deck: Enabling Remote Play with A Physical Card Deck.”](#)
- **Bryce Arthur Moore**, **Ming Yau Chan**, **Isabella Patricia Mulles Ocampo**, and **Dr. Karen Anne Cochran** (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business). (October 2024) [“NEXT!”: An Interactive Exploration of Familial Duty and Personal Desires through Computer Vision-Powered Gameplay.”](#)
- **Donald Degraen**, **Elene Werny**, **Marc Schubhan**, **Dr. Maximilian Altmeyer** (A), and **Antonio Kruger**. (October 2024) [“EcoMeal: Gamified Eco-Feedback of Food Consumption using a Virtual Garden.”](#)
- **Georgia Loewen** (Carleton University), **Dr. Karen Anne Cochran** (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business), and **Audry Girouard**. (October 2024) [“From Imagination to Innovation: Using Participatory Design Fiction to Envision the Future of Accessible Gaming Wearables for Players with Upper Limb Motor Disabilities.”](#)
- **Hilda Hadan** (Systems Design Engineering), **Dr. Leah Zhang-Kennedy** (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business), and **Dr. Lennart Nacke** (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business). (October 2024) [“Computer-based Deceptive Game Design in Commercial Virtual Reality Games: A Preliminary Investigation.”](#)
- **Hilda Hadan** (Systems Design Engineering), **Sabrina Alicia Sgandurra** (English Language and Literature), **Dr. Leah Zhang-Kennedy** (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business), and **Dr. Lennart Nacke** (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business). (October 2024) [“From Motivating to Manipulative: The Use of Deceptive Design in a Game’s Free-to-Play Transition.”](#)
- **Hilda Hadan** (Systems Design Engineering), **Sabrina Alicia Sgandurra** (English Language and Literature), **Dr. Leah Zhang-Kennedy** (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business), and **Dr. Lennart Nacke** (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business). (October 2024) [“Culture Clash: When Deceptive Design Meets Diverse Player Expectations.”](#)
- **Kieran Hicks**, **Dr. Katja Rogers** (A), **Kathrin Gerling**, and **Dr. Lennart Nacke** (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business). (October 2024) [“Juicy Audio: Audio Designers’ Conceptualisation of the Term in Video Games.”](#)
- **Marc Schubhan**, **Dr. Maximilian Altmeyer** (A), **Dr. Katja Rogers** (A), **Donald Degraen**, **Pascal Lessel**, and **Antonio Kruger**. (October 2024) [“Auditory, Visual, or Both? Comparing Visual and Auditory Representations of Game Elements in a Gamified Image-Tagging Task.”](#)
- **Marc Schubhan**, **Srdhar Karra**, **Dr. Maximilian Altmeyer** (A), and **Antonio Kruger**. (October 2024) [“Like It or Not: Exploring the Impact of \(Dis\)liked Background Music on Player Behavior and Experience.”](#)

## Conference Presentations and Talks

### Annual Symposium on Computer-Human Interaction in Play (CHI PLAY 2024)

A special recognition goes to Dr. Reza Had Mogavi and his team, whose research paper “The Jade Gateway to Exergaming” received Honourable Mention Award. [Watch it on YouTube.](#)

- **Alena Denisova**, **Steve Bromley**, **Dr. Pejman Mirza-Babei** (Ontario Tech University), and **Elisa Mekler**. (October 2024) [“Towards Democratisation of Games User Research: Exploring Playtesting Challenges of Indie Video Game Developers.”](#)

- **Dr. Maximilian Altmeyer (A), Dr. Sebastian Cmentowski** (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business), and *Madison Klarkowski*. (October 2024) [“Works in Progress Track Intro.”](#)
- *Michel Wijkstra, Dr. Katja Rogers (A), Regan Mandryk, Remco Veltkamp, and Julian Frommel*. (October 2024) [“How To Tame a Toxic Player? A Systematic Literature Review on Intervention Systems for Toxic Behaviors in Online Video Games.”](#)
- *Oğuz 'Oz' Buruk, Guo Freeman, Juho Hamari, Erik Harpstead, Mitchell McEwans, Dr. Katja Rogers (A), Regan Mandryk, Juliam Frommel, Alena Denisova, Travis Faas, and Derrick Wang* (Systems Design Engineering). (October 2024) [“Welcoming Reception Keynote.”](#)
- *Regan Mandryk, Vero Vanden Abeele, Dr. Daniel Johnson* (Cheriton School of Computer Science), **Dr. Lennart Nacke** (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business), *Kathrin Gerling, Julian Frommel, and Guo Freeman*. (October 2024) [“Ten Years of CHI PLAY: A Panel on the Past, Present, and Future of the Conference.”](#)
- *Samira Soltani, and Dr. Daniel Harley* (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business). (October 2024) [“Paintings in the Age of VR Reproductions: Examining the Design of Virtual Reality Galleries.”](#)
- *Soraya Anvari, Jessica Hammer, and Dr. Rina Wehbe (A)*. (October 2024) [““More than just a game, it’s an app that builds awareness around Mental Health”: Mental Health Stigma Reduction Using Games for Change.”](#)
- **Sukran Karaosmanoglu (A), Mortiz Wegner, Dr. Sebastian Cmentowski** (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business), and *Frank Steinicke*. (October 2024) [“Move, React, Repeat! The Role of Continuous Cues in Immersive Exergames.”](#)
- *Susanne Poeller, Sabrina Alicia Sgandurra* (English Language and Literature), and *Simone Kriglstien*. (October 2024) [“Perspectives of Play – Panel Discussion.”](#)

## Standalone Member Presentations

- **Dr. John Muñoz** (Wilfrid Laurier University), *Alan Pope, and Chad Stephens*. (October 2024) [“Physiologically Adaptive Systems for Performance Enhancement and Conflict Resolution.”](#) NASA’s Biocybernetics Technologies Webinar.
- *Beth Sandore Namachchivaya, Brie McConneel, Kate Mercer, and Dr. Lai-Tze Fan* (Sociology and Legal Studies). (October 2024) [“Navigating Misinformation: Trust in Information in the Digital Age.”](#) University of Waterloo.
- **Dr. Pejman Mirza-Babei** (Ontario Tech University). (September 2024) [“Strategies and Tools in Playtesting with Limited Resources.”](#) IndieGameBusiness Conference.
- **Pamela Maria Schmidt** (Interdisciplinary Project and Communications Manager), and **Sid Heeg** (Sustainability Management). (October 2024) [“Horror as a Medium: An Examination of Environmental Horror in Video Games.”](#) Beyond Play.

## Publications

- *Antonio Miguel Cruz, Dr. Hector Perez (A), Micaela Jantzi, Dr. Lili Liu* (Faculty of Health), and *John P. Hirdes*. (September 2024) [“Pan-Canadian estimates of the prevalence and risks associated with critical wandering among home care clients.”](#) *Alzheimer’s & Dementia*.
- **Dr. Emma Vossen** (Knowledge Mobilization and Research Impact Officer) and *Sarah Stang*. (October 2024) [“Playing as the Princess: Nintendo, Gender Roles, and Echoes of Wisdom.”](#) *Just Tech*.
- **Hilda Hadan** (Systems Design Engineering), **Derrick M. Wang** (Systems Design Engineering), **Dr. Reza Hadi Mogavi** (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business), **Joseph Tu** (Systems Design Engineering), **Dr. Leah Zhang-Kennedy** (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business), **Dr. Lennart Nacke** (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business). (November 2024) [“The great AI witch hunt: Reviewers’ perception and \(Mis\)conception of generative AI in research writing.”](#) *Computers in Human Behavior: Artificial Humans*.
- **Dr. John Muñoz** (Wilfrid Laurier University), *Jennifer Lavoie, and Alan Pope*. (September 2024) [“Psychophysiological insights and user perspectives: enhancing police de-escalation skills through full-body VR training.”](#) *Frontiers in Psychology*.
- **Dr. Lai-Tze Fan** (Sociology and Legal Studies), *Ashley Mehlenbacher, and Mary Wells*. (October 2024) [“Opinion | It’s easier than ever for bad actors to steal women’s faces — and even their voices. We must do more to prevent it.”](#) *Toronto Star*.
- **Dr. Lili Liu** (Faculty of Health), **Adebusola Adekoya** (School of Public Health Sciences), and *Antonio Miguel Cruz*. (September 2024) [“Canada needs a national Silver Alert program for older adults.”](#) *The Globe and Mail*.

## Media and Interviews

- **Dr. Anita Layton** (Applied Mathematics) was featured on CTVNews for the segment [“That extra hour of sleep this weekend may not be as good for you as you think, UW professor says.”](#)
- **Dr. Emma Vossen** (Knowledge Mobilization and Research Impact Officer) was featured in the article [“Finally, the Legend of Zelda lives up to its name, as Echoes of Wisdom makes the princess the hero”](#) published by CBC Radio.
- **Dr. Ian Milligan** (History) was featured in the article [“The Internet Archive’s Fight to Save Itself”](#) published by WIRED.
- **Dr. Lennart Nacke** (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business) was featured in the article [“AI Authored Abstracts More Authentic than Human Written ones”](#) by the Times Higher Education.
- **Dr. Michael Barnett-Cowan** (Kinesiology and Health Sciences) was featured in the article [“I Tried Apple’s New ‘Vehicle Motion Cues’ Feature and Risked Puking So You Don’t Have To”](#) published by Self.

- **Dr. Shana MacDonald** (Communication Arts) was interviewed by the CBC for the segment [“Will a user exodus turn X into a hard-right platform?”](#)
- **Dr. Shana MacDonald** (Communication Arts) was featured in the article [“What 'cancelling' your dad's vote says about the U.S. election's gender divide”](#) published by CBC News.
- **Dr. Suzanne Kearns** (Geography and Aviation) was featured in the article [“Flying into the Future: The Case for Sustainable Aeronautics”](#) published by The Hill Times.
- **Toben Racicot** (English Language and Literature) was featured in the article [“Graphic novelists craft the true story of an Ontario soldier who never came home”](#) published by The Record.

## *New Jobs and Positions*

- **Dr. Kristina Llewellyn** (McMaster University) joined McMaster University as a professor in history with the Wilson College of Leadership and Civic Engagement.

## *Awards and Grants*

- **Dr. Igor Grossman** (Psychology) was awarded \$1.5 million in funding from the Templeton World Charity Foundation.
- **Dr. Karen Anne Cochrane** (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business) and **Dr. Daniel Harley** (Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business) won the [Google Academic Research Awards \(GARA\) in Society-Centered AI](#). The resulting \$150,000 award will support their project “Using GenAI to Develop Low-Cost Accessible Switches for Individuals with Complex Disabilities”
- **Dr. Oliver Schneider** (Management Science and Engineering) received the 2024 Graphics Interface Early Career Researcher Award from the Canadian Human-Computer Communications Society.
- **Dr. Shana MacDonald** (Communication Arts) was awarded \$74,232 for the SSHRC Insight Development Grant “Exploring the Visual Culture of Misogyny Across Material and Digital Archives.”

This term's unofficial, and final, Busy Bee Award to Hilda Hadan!





**Bolded names** in this document denote GI members while *italicized names* denote collaborators and guests. Names marked with "(A)" denote former GI members. (Stratford School) denotes affiliation to the Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business. (English) denotes affiliation to the English Language and Literature department.

All names are listed alphabetically by first name.

The Games Institute and its members acknowledge that the land on which our community works and lives today is the traditional land of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples. We recognize that the University of Waterloo, of which the Games Institute is part, is situated on the Haldimand Tract – the land taken without consent and subsequently promised to the Six Nations – that includes ten kilometers on either side of the Grand River.

We recognize the enduring presence and deep traditional knowledge, laws and philosophies of the Indigenous Peoples with whom we share this land today. As the Games Institute facilitates researchers of games, digital spaces, and interactive technologies, we undertake to make space for Indigenous scholars, designers, commentators and creators to uplift voices that are marginalized in the academic and gaming community.

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