

The beginnings of an Archaeogaming Manifesto

Recap of the Interactive Pasts workshop: 'Learning a Common Language - How to Speak *Archaeogaming*'.

One of the workshops of the Interactive Pasts conference was a brainstorm and discussion session on the topic of Archaeogaming. The aim of this workshop was to create a framework for a common language so that video game developers and archaeologists can understand each other better, thus allowing for more fruitful future collaborations.

The presentations held during the conference reaffirmed our belief that archaeologists and video game developers have a lot to offer each other. We continued to observe, however, a disparity in the language developers and archaeologists used to describe or tackle similar issues, which can result in communication difficulties or misunderstandings between the two groups.

This communication gap can take different forms: archaeologists can not fully comprehend game development processes/limitations/mechanics; game developers may fail to conduct 'proper' academic research for their games; differences in expectations and aims; different perception on the authenticity vs. accuracy debate and many more.

If we want to talk about integrating archaeology in video games (and vice versa) properly and establish *archaeogaming* (we'll return to this one) as a field, it is important to solve this communicational challenge in a creative way. As such, we thought that a discussion workshop between archaeologists and developers at the conference would be a good starting point.

During this three-hour-long brainstorm, the participants (listed below) decided that one of the core things currently lacking in the new field of *archaeogaming* is a framework or manifesto. Therefore, after about two hours of discussion, we decided to put everything we had discussed during the rest of the conference and the workshop itself into a working document, which can act as the start of an Archaeogaming Manifesto.

The manifesto currently has four major aims.

- 1) **To preserve:** gaming culture & gaming history
- 2) **To inform:** archaeologists about game development; the public about archaeogaming topics; and connecting with game developers
- 3) **To be informed:** ethics; public opinion; new developments in the fields of gaming and archaeology
- 4) **To inspire:** the need for archaeogamers; academic outreach; public outreach

One of the things still missing from the first draft of the manifesto was a definition of *archaeogaming*. A working definition is presented by [Andrew Reinhard](#): “archaeogaming is the intersection between video games and archaeology”. Similarly the [VALUE project](#) is using the term intersection between archaeology and video games to describe the nature of the project. Tara Copplestone has written a lengthy piece on her [blog](#) about the challenges of archaeogaming.

All participants agreed that one of the core aspects of Archaeogaming is **Open Access**. The creation of an archaeogaming definition and manifesto therefore should also be an open discussion. As such, we present here merely a first draft of the manifesto as an outcome of our conference workshop. At the end of this post you can find the link to an open document where you can comment on, give feedback of and suggest ideas for the Manifesto. We will be regularly updating the document with all the results of this open discussion.

Archaeogaming Manifesto

By: the participants of the TIP-C workshop and contributors to this living Archaeogaming Manifesto

To preserve

- Games, game culture and game history
 - Changes through time in how games are made, themes that games contain, how these relate to socio-political changes
- Public perception of games & game culture
 - Conventions, cosplays, fanart and things related to gaming culture
- Game developers’ culture & their history
 - Corporate culture (e.g. indie gaming companies vs major gaming companies)
 - Corporate history, successes and failures

To collaborate

- Create a common language
 - Learn game mechanics
 - Understand game development and coding
 - Help developers conduct academic research
 - Help developers understand archaeological spaces and narratives
- Being up to date with changes in the gaming industry
 - New technologies
 - New releases
 - New ways of doing gaming (i.e. mobile gaming/VR)
- Inform developers
 - **by directly contacting them or by having the information available for them**
 - Create open and accessible datasets
 - Create modes of communication
 - The debate on authenticity vs accuracy
- Inform the public
 - The debate on authenticity vs accuracy

To be inclusive

- Ethics policies
 - Work with communities
 - Respect cultures (alive or dead)
 - Consider the effects of your choices
 - **Open Access**
- Public opinion
 - Perform public surveys to understand perceptions and impact
 - Forums and social media

To inspire

- Grow the field of archaeogaming
- Publish
- Centralize through
 - Subreddit/forum
 - Hubs of contact
 - Conferences
- Sustain both the academic platform as well as the “public sphere”
 - Sessions in large conferences
 - Public outreach in non-academic forums
- Share knowledge and know-how

We need more archaeogamers!

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