

Game design and Digital Cultural heritage- Results of an applied approach within a university community.

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The game industry is a massive and influential sector, generating billions of dollars/euros in revenue annually and reaching a global audience across various platforms and demographics. It plays a significant role in entertainment, technology innovation, and cultural impact, making it a crucial part of the digital landscape and economy (Liang, 2022). For that reason, the MSc in Digital Culture of the University of Piraeus, Greece since 2019 included a Gaming course in the curriculum in order to equip the postgraduate students with useful tools that respond to the contemporary conditions of the creative industry.

The Gaming course offers an introductory exploration of game development, providing students with a broad understanding of the principles and practices of creating engaging and immersive digital experiences. It covers various aspects of game development, including storytelling, game design, production, and the integration of gamified elements (Triantafyllou & Georgiadis, 2022).

Students delve into game production principles, such as scope and planning, prototyping and iteration, mechanics, and aesthetics, while examining the narrative's significant impact on player experiences. With an emphasis on practical application, students will gain hands-on experience in planning, designing games, crafting narratives, and implementing gamification techniques.

Structured to facilitate a step-by-step progression, the course covers critical game production, design, narration, and gamification topics. Students explore the importance of player engagement and motivation by starting with the fundamental theories and frameworks underpinning successful game production.

The course further examines how game elements and mechanics can be effectively applied to non-game contexts (Luo, 2022), enhancing user experiences and driving desired behaviors. Throughout the course, students analyze case studies, participate in critical discussions, and partake in practical exercises to deepen their understanding and develop their skills as game producers, designers, and storytellers. The course culminates when students present a complete game design document showcasing their visions.

This paper will present the results of this three-year effort, the obstacles and challenges of integrating game teaching into university education (e.g., the use of generative AI (Fig.1 & Fig 2) or how a cultural heritage manager/ professional perceives gamification when he himself is not a gamer), as well as good and bad practices. Statistics will also be presented both from the questionnaires and from the data that have emerged from the works of the participating students.

References

- Liang, Y. (2022, July). Analysis of the Video Gaming Industry. In *2022 2nd International Conference on Enterprise Management and Economic Development (ICEMED 2022)* (pp. 1146-1150). Atlantis Press.
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Luo, Z. (2022). Gamification for educational purposes: What are the factors contributing to varied effectiveness? *Education and Information Technologies*, 27(1), 891-915.