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Games and Learning Alliance

7th International Conference, GALA 2018
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Proceedings

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Preface

The 7th Games and Learning Alliance (GALA) Conference, organized by the Serious Games Society (SGS) and the Institute for Educational Technology - National Research Council of Italy (ITD-CNR), was held in the all culturally unique, future-oriented, and inspiring ambience of the Sicilian city of Palermo, Italy, during December 5–7, 2018.

The GALA series of conferences provide an excellent opportunity to foster the discussion of relevant topics in the growing field of serious games. The conference is a venue for academic researchers, industrial developers, teachers, and corporate decision-makers to meet and exchange experiences and knowledge in this multidisciplinary and challenging area. GALA 2018 received 68 submissions. While the majority of authors are based in Europe, North and South America, Africa and Asia were also represented in the submissions. Each paper was reviewed by at least three Program Committee members. The Program Committee selected 37 of these papers for presentation at the conference and nine for presentation at a poster session of the conference. A total of 18 countries were represented at the conference.

The conference featured a tutorial session, a session for demos of serious games, and a serious game competition. It was an honor to have Dirk Ifenthaler, from the University of Mannheim, Germany, and Georgios Yannakakis from the University of Malta, Malta, as keynote speakers at GALA 2018. Dirk Ifenthaler vividly presented the basics, challenges, and chances of learning analytics in serious games. Giannis Yannakakis gave an inspiring overview of the possibilities of artificial intelligence in serious games. The momentum of both keynotes is likely to have a lasting influence on the work of the conference attendees. The conference featured nine paper presentation sessions. A number of paper presentation sessions focussed on the relation between serious games and a wide range of particular domains, such as computational thinking, energy conservation, musical perception, doorstep scams, meta-skills, health, nutrition, mobility habits, physics, and maths. Other sessions discussed gamification, game development, the assessment of games, game analytics, game design, the relation between games and learning and innovative game technologies, such as artificial intelligence, robotics, mixed reality, and haptics.

As in previous years, selected best papers of the GALA conference will be published in a dedicated special issue of the *International Journal of Serious Games*, the scientific journal managed by the Serious Games Society, which is a great reference point for academics and practitioners to publish original research work on serious games and be informed about the latest developments in the field. We thank the authors for submitting many interesting, field-advancing papers, the Program Committee for reviewing these papers, and the SGS and ITD-CNR for organizing the conference.

December 2018

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