GAMES & Learning Alliance Conference

8th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE DEDICATED TO THE SCIENCE AND THE APPLICATION OF SERIOUS GAMES

LAVAL

9th and 10th of December 2020

SUMMARY
The GAMES AND LEARNING ALLIANCE (GALA) CONFERENCE is an international conference dedicated to the science and application of Serious Games.

The 8th edition of the conference took place in the LAVAL VIRTUAL WORLD, from the 9th to the 10 of December 2020.

More than 500 people signed up for the conference, with up to 200 simultaneous connections. The attendees were mostly researchers in computer science and social sciences, teachers and other stakeholders of education and professional training.

The conference is organized by the Serious Games Society. This year, the local organization was managed by researchers of Laboratoire d’Informatique de l’Université du Mans, and more precisely by the members of the research lab who teach at IUT de Laval.

Special theme of this edition: SERIOUS GAMES in VIRTUAL REALITY
The fact that the 8th edition was free and set in an online immersive virtual environment resulted in 3 to 4 times more participants that in the preceding editions, despite the fact that these editions took place in prestigious locations such as Athens and Palermo.

It also increased the international impact of this historically European conference, the percentage of North American and Canadian participants rising to a record 24%.

The participants could either connect to the Laval Virtual Word, or watch the live broadcast on Youtube.
SCIENTIFIC PRESENTATIONS

During the two days of the conference, 35 international researchers presented their original research results.

These presentations were selected from among the 77 scientific articles submitted which were evaluated by a comity of 87 Serious Games researchers. Thus, only 45% of the submitted articles were selected to be presented during the conference.

These articles were then published by SPRINGER NATURE in Lecture Notes in Computer Science. The authors of the 5 best papers received an invitation to submit an extended version of their article to the International Journal of Serious Games, the journal published by the Serious Game Society.

This year, the researchers presented breakthroughs in several domains:
- Ludification theory
- Serious Game analytics
- Serious Games for learning
- Virtual and Mixed Reality for learning
- Serious Game design

We also welcomed two renowned researchers:
- Anna COX gave a keynote speech on how to use gamification to improve your professional academic life.
- Anne-Gwenn BOSSER presented several immersive games and Virtual Reality tools developed at the Centre Européen de Réalité Virtuelle in Brest.

17 COUNTRIES WERE REPRESENTED
CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Despite the physical distance, we managed to recreate social interactions through several events during the conference.

Treasure Hunt

On the evening of the 9th of December, 50 international researchers participated in a treasure hunt. In groups of 3 or 4, they had to roam the Laval Virtual World in search of the identity and the scientific breakthroughs of 8 female scientist, who had unfortunately been erased from our timeline! This game, designed with the help of ZOOM (local science museum), created strong social interactions between the players while also highlighting the importance of women in technological innovations.

The Award Ceremony

On the 10th of December afternoon, we organized an award ceremony in the Laval Virtual World concert hall. After an unbearable suspense, the GOLD sponsors gave out the awards for the best papers and best Serious Games of the year, in front of a crowd gone wild, dancing and pulling off impeccable back flips.
Interactive Exhibition

The participants then went to visit the exhibition hall of the Laval Virtual Word. 42 Serious Games and Virtual Reality tools were presented. In addition to being able to talk with the exhibitors, the visitors were also able to test some of the tools thanks to the interactive screens of the booths.

Twitter Challenges

In order to recreate a sense of community, despite the online nature of the event, we set up an intensive communication campaign on Twitter. It included challenges to win boxes of local French delicacies. This communication campaign allowed us to promote local products while creating interactions before, during and after the conference. The twitter account, that now has more than 230 followers, will be used for the subsequent editions of the conference.
The local organizers of the GAMES AND LEARNING ALLIANCE CONFERENCE were mostly researchers of Laboratoire d’Informatique de l’Université du Mans, who teach at the IUT technical school of Laval (France). The team was reinforced by local helpers (Laval Mayenne Technopole and ZOOM) and a few researchers from other French laboratories (IMT DOUAI in Lille and l’Université Champollion in Albi).
PARTICIPANTS’ FEEDBACK

Michelle Goodridge
@migoodridge

This has got to be the coolest looking virtual conference interface I’ve seen. Every virtual conference should be set up like this.
4:58 PM · Dec 10, 2020 · Twitter Web App

Miloż Babecki
@MeeowshE

Today I was attendie at galaconf2020. It was huge dose of inspiration during these strange days. Thank to LavalVirtualWorld, @IMarfisi, the Team of Organizers from iutlaval and seriousgamessociety I could watch great presentations... and I could even dance! #uwm #studia2020

Pablo Sotoca
@PabloSotoca

Congratulations to the @galaconf2020 for generating an interactive and playful space such as LavalVirtualWorld to generate more interaction 🤩. I am like a ‘SIM’ 🏡 in a world 🌍_of_learning 😊.
#seriousgames games learning education

dr vanissa wanick 🌟🌱🍃梴
@vanissa

oh my goodness this is super fun, @galaconf2020 on my way to the conf hall!!! I will try my best to be around today but I have baby duties - people, please follow Galaconf2020 for seriousgames research

aimomon.exe 👣
@aimomon_exe

“We apologize for the guy who is running around screaming” - @IMarfisi during the GalaConf2020

2020 really is a wild year, huh hahahaha
Definitely the best virtual conference experience that I've had this year. I would love to see @actfl, @CALICOnsortium, @AAAlinks do something similar. I especially like the private rooms/speaking areas in the Lava Virtual World.  
#GalaConf2020

Kudos to Sorelle Audrey for managing her scientific talk and a baby at the same time - things that are only possible in virtual conferences! #galaconf2020 @galaconf2020 #WomenInSTEM #WomenInScience

It was incredible! Thanks @galaconf2020 for the event!  
Congrats @IMarfisi for all the organization, you were present every moment with the better mood. Thanks also @ManuelNinaus for introducing me this world. I hope to stay with you all in person as soon as possible.  
#Galaconf2020

@galaconf2020 c’est fini! très chouette expérience, rencontres intéressantes depuis son bureau, #CommeSiOnYEtait #discuter #tester transmettre des liens  

Pour moi c'était le plus bel événement virtuel de l'année. Très belle organisation. On se serait cru sur place羽毛球。  
Translate Tweet
SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

We would like to thank all the sponsors and partners who supported this event.

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YOU WANT MORE?

The Serious Game Society and researchers of Genoa (Italy) are preparing the next edition of the conference.

The web site will soon be updated.
https://conf.seriousgamessociety.org/

We are currently looking for new sponsors and partners!

The information concerning the 2020 edition will be kept on the LIUM’s web site.
https://lium.univ-lemans.fr/gala2020/

On the Serious Game Society Youtube account, you can view:
• The introduction to the conference
• The opening and closing ceremonies
• The award ceremony
• Anna COX’s keynote speech
• The presentation of the best Serious Games nominated at the competition
• The conference «after movie»