



Arts and entertainment games research

[Interviewer] You say you've tried to get your games to academics to test, how has that worked out? Has it actually happened?

[Developer] No, it has not. [...] Maybe it's a money issue, maybe it's the time, [...]. I think the resources are probably pretty limited for people' – Quote from an interview with a developer. [LSD28828](#).

Keywords: [Art](#), [Entertainment](#), [institutional funding](#), [serious games](#)

Who will find this scenario particularly interesting? [Developers](#), [Policy makers](#), [Researchers](#)

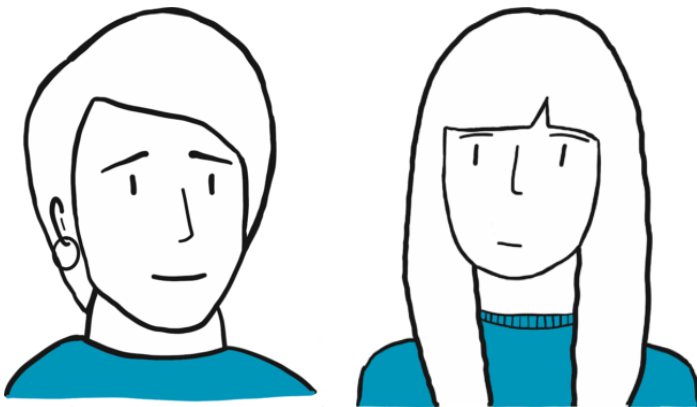
Description

During Gaming Horizons' research, it emerged that opportunities for applied and fundamental research into serious/applied games differed sharply from those for arts/entertainment games. Games research was most commonly situated in instrumentalist contexts, focusing mostly on direct and measurable impact on learning or antisocial behaviour, and rarely in the context of their creative, expressive, or artistic possibilities. From an industrial perspective, there was no sense of established collaboration with researchers, nor any sense that a change

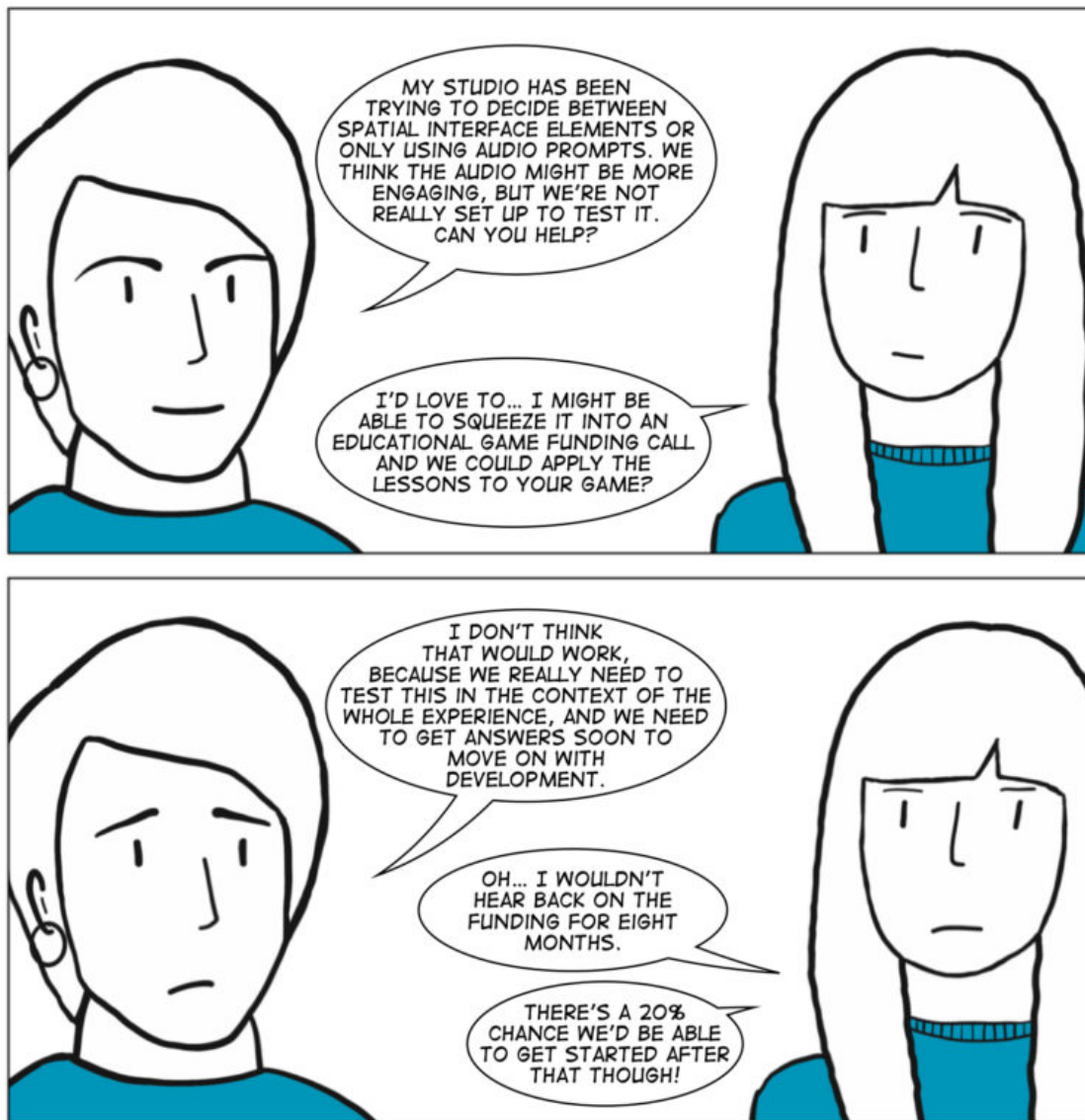


was impending in this relationship. The work of academic researchers appears to be entirely out of touch with the arts and entertainment games sector. The analysis of EU funding policies showed a strong emphasis on viewing the video game industry as an engineering sector, with research entirely focused on tools development and generally directed towards the serious/applied sector. Interviewees strongly criticised both the relevance and effectiveness of this research funding strategy to support the political, economic, and cultural needs of the EU. Researchers (and any developers that wish to work with them) are currently heavily restricted to working in the framing of the serious/applied sector, despite the widespread doubts about this sector's effectiveness shown by the Gaming Horizons interviewees.

Meet Silvia, a game developer, and Juana, a researcher



Silvia's studio has some immediate questions they need to examine in the context of the whole experience that they are trying to create. Trying out the systems in another game might give them a clue, but an educational game is aiming for a different player experience so the results wouldn't be easy to apply to Silvia's work. The length of time for results would be a big problem for them too: Silvia's studio wants to get results in a matter of months, not years. If Juana could be funded to work directly with the studio and on their immediate problems then she would be able to help, but at the moment nothing can be done.



Unfortunately, after this disappointment, Silvia is unlikely to bother asking again and she is left feeling like researchers have nothing to offer her industry.

In a nutshell

Current funding for research into the arts and entertainment video game industry is entirely inadequate to the needs of the artists and developers.

- Removing arbitrary delineations between serious/applied games funding and arts/entertainment funding would allow more interchange of knowledge and creative approaches to the use of gaming technologies.
- Showing recognition in research funding calls for the cultural impact of games (beyond only technological and economic impacts) will open avenues of both applied and fundamental research into video game development.
- Fundamental aspects of video game development beyond 'tech' (i.e. visual arts, animation, audio, production, storytelling methods and technologies, etc.) need to be explicitly supported to enhance the creative range and strength of the industry. This is a necessary long-term investment to

supporting the future competitiveness of European games development when compared with other global regions.

- Applied collaborations of research with industry partners need to be done on game-production timescales, not academic/administrative ones, and so funding calls must reflect the fast-changing and unpredictable nature of creative industry requirements – year long application and review processes are entirely inadequate for the needs of the video game industry.
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Partners



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