



## Games conferences and new media as academic publishing

*"I feel like we can move faster at conferences than you can with writing and reading papers and books." – quote from an interview with a developer. [LSD28824](#).*

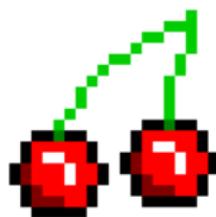
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**Keywords:** [institutional funding](#), [knowledge sharing](#)

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

### Description

Instead of using traditional academic resources, games industry conferences were framed as 'nexus points' of knowledge sharing within the game development community. However, industry conferences are not always amenable to academic contributions because of perceived/actual problems of accessibility of academic language, data presentation, timeliness, or the lack of immediate practical implications from the research.

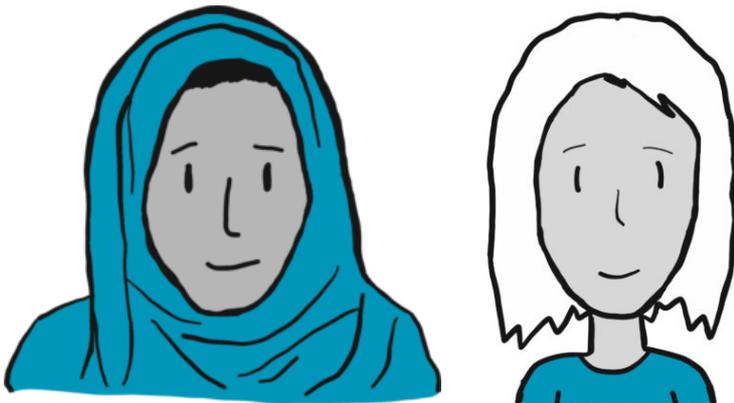


In addition to industry conferences for knowledge sharing, developers have responded positively to webinars, online videos, and blog-posts on industry websites such as [Gamastura.com](#) or [GamesIndustry.biz](#). In the Gaming Horizons project, the ten webinars on a variety of research topics (such as cultural sensitivity, educational

contexts for game usage, and the importance of realism in video games) have been seen by over 6000 viewers on the Facebook Live system. This demonstrates a reach significantly larger than most academic research activities and traditional dissemination methods. These views came through actively involving professional game developers and publishing directly to developer communities rather than to academia.

While researchers need to be more adaptive in how they distribute their work, governments and universities need to acknowledge that their systems and standards of measurement may be outdated. Researchers are typically judged on the impact of their work, and conference presentations and new media are typically rated as being of lower impact than a journal publication, regardless of the readership. Developers have a highly practical mindset, they desire knowledge that will assist them in improving the games that they are making, and so changes in researcher assessment, and publication style, content, and dissemination methods are necessary to bring the academic publishing closer to the needs of the industry.

Meet Yana, a games conference organiser and Ebba, a video game researcher.



Ebba has been working hard to find new ways of signifying potential interactions in video games, but she hasn't had backing from her university to fully demonstrate this working in a game, only journal publications. Yana is interested in getting speakers for her conference with proven, applicable results – academic theory isn't enough to impress her practically-minded attendees.

There are many challenges regarding making academic research appealing to industry professionals. Academic research needs to remember that interests of practical applicability and approachability are foremost for many professionals. If the mode of expression and the content can be framed correctly, many of the Gaming Horizons developer stakeholders were positive about the prospect of getting researchers involved in their work but didn't currently feel that there was communication in a way that was meaningful to them.



Governments and their academic bodies will also need to give adequate recognition and status to applied research. While the split in 'fundamental' versus 'applied' research is also seen as a split between 'real' and 'low quality' research, academics who are desiring a strong career will be pushed away from creating research with the practical implications that professionals demand.

Likewise, national and EU funding bodies will need to support researchers working towards practical outcomes for games developers, and recognise in funding calls that industry conferences and new media outputs (for example YouTube demonstrations and tutorials) are much more desirable and potentially impactful than journal publications. Conference attendance for delivering research results and other new media dissemination methods must be supported financially.

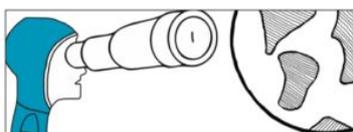
## In a nutshell

**If academic research is to enter a discourse with professional contexts, it will need to adopt the methods and media that the industry uses.**

This approach must also be supported by governmental and academic institutions understanding that industry conferences and other media are more impactful than traditional models (such as journal publications) in this domain.

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## Resources



- [“Why academics and game industry don’t collaborate on AI, and how we could improve the situation”](#)

Togelius, J. (2014, October 10). Retrieved December 12, 2017.

- [“How academia is holding back video game criticism”](#)

Cunningham, Z. (2012, December 26). Retrieved December 12, 2017, from



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## Partners



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