

Extended deadline:
December 20

Call for Papers

International Conference

Culture at Play: Avatars, Players, and Others

University of Freiburg, Freiburg/Germany

March 10 - 11, 2023

(Online)



Keynote Speakers: Sarah Stang (Brock University), Richard Bartle (University of Essex)
Lena Falkenhagen (UE Hamburg)

Scholarly work on video games has often located a major part of the player experiences within the exploration of gameworlds. This was one of the main frameworks under which the last year's conference, *Culture at Play: Spaces - Colours - Stories*, offered a platform for an interdisciplinary discussion of video games.

In this follow-up, *Culture at Play: Avatars, Players, and Others*, we aim to focus on the characters as interlocutors of these much-investigated environments by shifting the debate on the relationships between players and the characters they take the roles of, as well as those they encounter during play.

Characters in video games, especially those controlled by players, are commonly the main ways of interacting with games, and therefore an essential part of gameplay. Additionally, they can also function as a key element in a game's story and help make a game more engaging, inclusive, and innovative. For this conference, we welcome contributions both as case studies analyzing characters and representations in individual games, and more theory-based works on character design, player-character interaction, and identification. The conference is open to students and researchers from various disciplines including cultural, literary, media, and game studies.

Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

- player characters, avatars
- character customisation and creation
- non-player characters (NPCs)
- identification with player and non-player characters
- player interaction (with other characters or environments)
- interaction between different player characters in multiplayer games
- representations of bodies, gender, ethnicity, and race in video games
- human vs. non-human characters in video games
- characterization and narrative patterns such as the hero's journey in video games
- character controls and embodiment (e.g. in VR games)

Please send a proposal (~ 300-words) and a brief biography to cultureatplay@anglistik.uni-freiburg.de by December 1st, 2022.

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Organizers:

Kübra Aksay, Janna Kaiser, Florian Schäfer (Department of English, University of Freiburg)