

Title: Gender and Gaming Portal Connects Researchers and Video Game Developers

InvestiGaming.com is a gateway to academic and industry research that can help game designers design games to appeal to female players. Carrie Heeter, Project Leader and Editor-in-Chief of investiGaming, and professor at Michigan State University has been studying the relationship between gender and game design for years and realized that while there were many research articles related to this topic, they appeared in so many different journals and conferences it would be difficult for game designers to find and use them to create more female-friendly games.

Carrie met with game designers and academics and asked them what they would like to see in a gender and game design research portal. Building upon their suggestions, investiGaming.com was born. Currently there are 310 articles on investiGaming.com in areas like Play Styles, Competition, Spatial Cognition, Avatars and Character Representation, and Brain Research. Carrie and her team keep up with gaming conferences and events, as well as academic research journals in an ongoing search for new articles. Researchers are also encouraged to submit articles through a form on the website.

Since its launch earlier this year, investiGaming.com has been well received by the game development community and by academics. Since women make up 50% of their potential player demographic, game development companies are increasingly aware of a need to design games that appeal to girls and women. The research collected on investiGaming can help inform that design.

Some of the articles in the gateway are not directly about women and gaming, but instead address fundamental gender differences or similarities, such as the article, "Brain Imaging Reveals Gender Differences in how Individuals Cope Under Stress." Since researchers found that females physiologically experienced longer lasting stress when faced with time pressure to complete a task, game developers may want to consider other means than time pressure to make a game challenging.

In addition to the investiGaming.com portal, Carrie has also been working on Brain Games for Mature Women. Studies have shown that the majority of casual gamers are mature women, and Carrie and colleagues at the Games 4 Entertainment and Learning (GEL) Lab are producing games that are fun and help players maintain and improve cognitive functioning.

Find out more at investiGaming.com