

Welcome to

TAMPERE

Finland



Plan to hold the

DiGRA 2020 CONFERENCE

3-6 June 2020
in Tampere, Finland

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IN BRIEF

DiGRA 2020 will be organised in Tampere, Finland; the conference dates are 3-6 June 2020 (with a pre-conference day in 2nd June 2020). Co-hosted by the Centre of Excellence in Game Culture Studies (CoE-GameCult) and three universities, the theme of DiGRA 2020 is set as *Play Everywhere*. The booked venues are LINNA building of Tampere University, and Tampere Hall - the largest conference centre in the Nordic countries. Tampere has great international travel connections, conference venues, and accommodations from cheap to luxurious. The region has an interesting industrial history but most importantly it is a hub of game related activities that hosts e.g. internationally recognized game studios and the new Finnish Museum of Games. The conference will be the core of a plethora of interesting events, from PhD seminar to samplings of local ludic cultures. Ecology and sustainability are important values in planning the particularities of the conference.

In the past couple of decades, many Nordic scholars have played a key role in developing the field of game studies as it is nowadays perceived. At the same time, the DiGRA main event has never been organized in Nordic countries. Given that the Computer Games and Digital Cultures conference (2002), organized in Tampere, was a departure point for discussions that later led to the foundation of DiGRA, the organizing team feels that Tampere is a perfect venue for correcting this inconsistency. These days the University of Tampere Game Research Lab is an internationally recognized centre for the study of games and play. The research group carries out innovative research projects, organizes university degree education into game studies, and builds bridges from research to action in its various collaborations.

VENUE

The DiGRA 2020 conference will take place in Tampere, Finland. The conference will be hosted jointly by three universities, the University of Tampere, University of Jyväskylä, and University of Turku. The main conference venues will be LINNA building of Tampere University, and Tampere Hall, next to the university central campus, and very close to the city centre and e.g. main railway and bus stations, and city hotels. Tampere Hall is the largest culture and conference centre in the Nordic countries. In addition to hosting major conferences, it is also home for the Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra, á la carte restaurant Tuhto, and the world's only Moomin Museum (<https://tampere-talo.fi/en/>).

Tampere is a key region in games. Tampere is one of the leading cities of game development and game research in Europe. There are over 50 game companies in the area, three institutes of higher education that all offer game related education, and a host of game culture events from Game Jams to role-playing game conventions. Tampere is also home to the Finnish Museum of Games, opened in 2017. Digital Games Research Association DiGRA was founded in Tampere in 2003, and an annual international game research seminar has been held in Tampere since 2005.

The Tampere Region is one of Finland's fastest growing centres. Tampere was founded by Sweden's young monarch, Gustavus III, in 1779. The city has a monumental industrial history: the Finlayson cotton mill was the first large-scale industrial enterprise in Finland and it was in fact in fact in Finlayson's factory hall that the first electric light in the Nordic



countries was lit. Today Tampere can be described as a centre of leading-edge technology, research, education, culture, sports and business.

Tampere has a population of more than 220,000 while there are close to half a million people in the greater Tampere Region. It is Finland's third largest city as well as the largest inland city in the Nordic countries. Tampere is located on an isthmus between lakes Näsijärvi and Pyhäjärvi, in a beautiful ridge scenery. These clean and inviting lakes are located just a stone's throw away from the city centre. The Tammerkoski rapids are a nationally recognized landscape. The city is particularly known for its vibrant theatre scene. The city also has wonderful amusement park, Särkänniemi. Tampere is the perfect mixture of urban nature, interesting places, and abundance of cultural events.


We have made bookings to organise the conference at 3-6 June, 2020, securing conference rooms and hotel availability. LINNA building of Tampere University, Tampere Hall and the other nearby facilities provides lecture halls, seminar rooms, restaurants and other facilities that suit very well for the conference. As Tampere Hall is next to the university, the pre-conference workshops can be organised in university premises, as well as any extra program, as needed. Close by, the Torni Hotel Conference Centre, and Technopolis Yliopistonrinne that also provide similar, alternative or complementing facilities, if those are needed. A brandnew hotel, Courtyard by Marriott, is currently under construction between Tampere Hall and the university, providing further opportunities.

CONFERENCE

The conference committee for DiGRA 2020 Tampere is particularly interested in exploring the ludification of society. Games, play, and approaches related to these are expanding, pushing to new areas. Yet, while the domain of games and play expands, so grow the number of borderlands, peripheries, and margins. We want to explore the centres and peripheries, and the bridges that bind them together. The theme of DiGRA 2020 is "Play Everywhere", exploring the workings of play and games as wide-ranging cultural phenomena which have shaped many areas of society. The ludification of culture, including practices around games, play, and related phenomena have arguably broadened and diversified approaches in the field. Games pervade culture and society, play is everywhere.

We encourage reflection upon how the collapse of traditional divisions between work and leisure, and between seriousness and playfulness, affect both culture in general, and play and games in particular. On the one hand, the cultural importance of playful phenomena has increased, rendering games one of the defining expressive means of contemporary society. They come with the promise of enhanced agency and participation on an unprecedented scale. On the other hand, the dominance of games and play introduces new challenges, such as the question of videogame hegemony and its global impacts.

While game studies in the past has often underlined the hedonic, empowering aspects of games and play, the ludification of society also raises difficult questions around the socioeconomic and environmental cost of game culture. Who is entitled to design, play, and enjoy games and under what conditions?



The list of potential keynote speakers is composed in support of the proposed theme. The scholars listed here all would have interesting things to say to the DiGRA community, either due to their long history of working with games in academia, their perspective to game studies from a nearby field, or both.

- Pauliina Raento (Gambling studies)
- Gary Alan Fine (Non-digital game ethnography)
- Susanna Paasonen (Internet culture, playfulness, and porn studies)
- Jonas Linderöth (Games and education)
- Hanna Wirman (Non-human play)
- Torill Mortensen (Dark side of digital play)
- Deidre Hynes, David Rowe, or Jimmy Sanderson (Sports studies)
- Nick Yee or Dmitri Williams (Game research and industry themes).

In addition to the academic keynotes, the conference would feature an event designed to facilitate connections between the academia and the games industry. Possible speakers at such an event are:

- Karoliina Korppoo (Colossal Order/Veikkaus, lead designer of Cities: Skylines)
- Koopee Hiltunen (director of Neogames, a Finnish national non-profit game industry co-ordinator).

Special events

PhD Consortium: Organized on the pre-conference conference day, this event will allow PhD students to discuss key issues and seek feedback from more experienced academics from around the world. It will provide opportunities for further development of research skills that will be of help to emerging scholars in achieving their academic goals.

Game History Consortium: The consortium brings together game historians and stakeholders such as museum, library and archive professionals, as well as game company representatives to discuss on current topics on game historical research, uses of history, game, gameplay and game culture preservation and context such as local game histories and game industries beyond digital games. The venue is organized with collaboration of the Finnish Museum of Games (opened in January 2017) and Finnish Game Preservation Roundtable Network.

Nordic Larp: Theory and Practice: The Nordic countries, Finland included, have a strong local tradition of not only role-playing games, but para-academic attention to such games. In conjunction with the conference an afternoon/evening event offering both larps to play and presentations about larp (in the format of Nordic Larp Talks see: <https://nordiclarp.org/tag/nordic-larp-talks>) is planned.

Social events

The Finnish Museum of Games opened in the Vapriikki Museum Centre in Tampere in January 2017. The museum tells the story of how digital gaming in Finland started, how it developed over the years, and how it made it to where it is now (<http://vapriikki.fi/en/pelimuseo/>). Conference committee members collaborate actively with the museum and it provides a perfect venue for a social event exploring the historical aspects of games and game cultures.

Industrial aesthetics will be enjoyed over cocktails at the Steam Engine Museum housing the largest steam engine ever used in Finland in its original setting at the Finlayson factory area.

A gala dinner may be hosted at the Finlayson Palace (max 270 attendees) or at the Finlayson area factory halls. This may be combined with a walking tour of the Finlayson area, which is a historical site representing the time of industrialism in Finland.

It is also possible to organize an evening event with one or more local game studios.



Delegate packs and conference proceedings

The delegate packs will be designed with two key values in mind: usefulness and sustainability. Delegate bags, brochures, and proceedings on a USB stick will be optional (and opt in) and as recyclable as we can make them. Instead, the proceedings will be available as a downloadable package, and there will be maps of the city and other relevant material available for the delegates to pick up.

Implementing and offering a conference app is a strong possibility, although it is also possible that instead we will simply offer a clear, mobile web optimized website with the relevant information. Either way, the conference will offer a clear and easy way to navigate the website.

TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION

There is an international airport just outside of Tampere (<https://www.finavia.fi/en/tampere-pirkkala>). However, for most travellers the easiest way to get to Tampere is to arrive at the Helsinki airport, which is a two-hour train or bus ride away from the centre of Tampere. The Helsinki airport is an award-winning and very well-connected international airport with over 300 direct connections to Europe, North America, Asia, and Africa.

Flights from major cities to the Helsinki airport (one-way travel) from London costs circa 90 euros, from New York c. 200-300 euros, from San Francisco c. 300-400 euros, from Tokyo c. 400-500 euros, from Sydney c. 700-800 euros.

Travel from Helsinki to Tampere is easy either by train, bus, or car. Cost of the trip is between 10-30 euros, depending on mode of transport and time of travel.

As for traveling in Tampere, there are dozens of hotels in Tampere city centre, all within walking distance from the conference venue.

Accommodation

The accommodation options are diverse and suit all budgets and preferences. It is possible to negotiate early bird registration prices for DiGRA delegates with most of the accommodation providers. Key providers close to the conference venue, within walking distance, include but are not limited to:

Business Hotels

- Sokos Hotel Villa: A cosy, atmospheric boutique hotel in the heart of Tampere. The hotel is a stylish conversion of a former granary, and each of its rooms is unique.
- Sokos Hotel Torni: Opened in the autumn of 2014 and reaching a height of 88 meters, the modern hotel tower combined with the old locomotive depots pays homage to the eventful history of the city of Tampere.
- Lapland Hotel Tampere: Experience Lapland in the heart of a city. The 141 rooms of the centrally located hotel have been decorated with skill and style to suit the taste of even the most quality conscious guests.

- Courtyard by Marriott: currently under construction, this brand new hotel will open in 2019, situated right next to Tampere Hall and the university main campus.

For budget travelers

- Tampere Dream Hostel & Hotel: A neat, tastefully designed, and centrally located accommodation that has been awarded as Finland's best hostel five times in a row. It also has 20 modern ensuite rooms, combining the best features of hostels and hotels.
- Omena Hotel Tampere: This affordable self-service hotel is located on Hämeenkatu, the main street of Tampere. It provides comfortable and well-equipped rooms for individuals and groups.

Costs & Finance

The average participation costs are calculated at 500 euros (US\$ 562) level, consisting of (average) 200 euros conference fee, and an (average) accommodation fees à 100 euros per night (for average of three nights = 300 euros).

Conference registration: Full & Day rates, student rates, DiGRA member rates (Note: as a standard practice DiGRA membership will be included in the DiGRA conference registration fee, with those membership monies directed afterwards to the association by the organizer, thereby guaranteeing its basic funding and continuity; those conference delegates who are already DiGRA members will have a lower registration rate).

- Full conference fee (four conference days), regular, with 40 € DiGRA membership fee: 320 euros (280 euros for verified DiGRA members)
- Full conference fee (four conference days), student, with 20 € DiGRA membership fee: 140 euros (120 euros for verified DiGRA members)
- Single day fee (one day): regular, with 40 € DiGRA membership fee: 150 euros (110 euros for verified DiGRA members)
- Single day fee (one day): student, with 20 € DiGRA membership fee: 100 euros (80 euros for verified DiGRA members)

Lunch and coffee will be included in the conference tickets. The possible gala dinner will be charged separately. The planned dinner ticket price is 60 euros.


Registration to the conference will be handled by the University of Tampere Conference Support Services, with internet-based registration system. The system accepts all standard forms of payment, including credit cards, PayPal, etc. The same system has features that could even be used in handling the paper reviews and feedback, if so desired.

ORGANIZATION

The conference will be organised by the Centre of Excellence in Game Culture Studies (CoE-GameCult) consortium, headed by professor Frans Mäyrä (University of Tampere), professor Raine Koskimaa (University of Jyväskylä), professor Olli Sotamaa (University of Tampere) and professor Jaakko Suominen (University of Turku). In addition, there are altogether over 30 game researchers in the organizing team. There will be also close collaboration with other, leading Finnish researchers who are members of the Suomen Pelitutkimuksen Seura (The Finnish Society for Games Research). This will particularly strengthen the multidisciplinary expertise and perspectives that are needed for taking the wider disciplinary field into consideration. All key personnel are members and regular attendees of DiGRA, and roughly the same team organized a local conference, DiGRA Nordic in 2012. The four heads of the CoE-GameCult consortium will ensure regular updates concerning the conference will be communicated to the DiGRA board.

Short research biographies of key organizers

Frans Mäyrä, PhD, Professor of Information Studies and Interactive Media at University of Tampere. Professor Mäyrä is the founder and head of University of Tampere Game Research Lab. Frans Mäyrä has studied the relationship of culture



and technology from the early nineties and he has specialised in the cultural analysis of technology, particularly on the ambiguous, conflicting and heterogeneous elements in this relationship. He has published on topics that range from information technologies, science fiction and fantasy to the demonic tradition, the concept of identity and role-playing games. Frans Mäyrä is currently teaching, researching and heading numerous research projects in the study and development of games, interactive media and digital culture. He has also served as the founding President of Digital Games Research Association, DiGRA. He is recipient of grants and leader in 48 externally funded games research projects, with total external funding of c. 9.4 million euros. He is currently heading e.g. the Academy of Finland funded *Centre of Excellence in Game Culture Studies*. Author of *An Introduction to Game Studies* (2008), he has over 160 scientific publications, including the recent work published e.g. in *Journal of Communication*, *Video Game Policy*, *The Video Game Debate* and *The Dark Side of Game Play*.

Jaakko Suominen, PhD, Professor of Digital Culture at University of Turku. With a focus on cultural history of media and information technologies, Professor Suominen has studied computers and popular media, internet, social media, digital games, and theoretical-methodological issues of digital culture. Suominen's recent research work addresses digital games in the perspective of history culture and cultural heritage. He has lead several multi-disciplinary research projects, funded by Academy of Finland, Tekes - the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation, companies and municipal bodies and has over 100 scholarly publications. Currently he participates in the research projects *Ludification and the Emergence of Playful Culture*; *Citizen Mindscapes - Detecting Social, Emotional and National Dynamics in Social Media*; and *Hybrid Social Play*.

Raine Koskimaa, PhD, Professor of Contemporary Culture Studies, Department of Art and Culture Studies, University of Jyväskylä, conducts research in the fields of game studies, digital textuality and transmedia storytelling, with special emphasis on the temporality of digital media. Koskimaa has published widely around the issues of game studies, digital literature, and narratology. He is the co-founder and co-editor of the *Cybertext Yearbook* and a member of the Review Board for *Game Studies* and *Transmedia Literacy*. He is also the editor in chief of the *Finnish Yearbook of Game Studies*. Currently he participates in the research projects *Ludification and the Emergence of Playful Culture*; *Transmedia Literacy*; and *Hybrid Social Play*.

Task division in the core conference team

- Frans Mäyrä, general chair: main coordination
- Jaakko Suominen, keynotes, program planning, game history event
- Raine Koskimaa, keynotes, program planning
- Olli Sotamaa, doctoral consortium planning, social program
- Jonne Arjoranta, web communications
- Usva Friman, track and sessions planning, communications
- Marko Siitonen, track and sessions planning
- Tanja Välisalo, social program
- Jaakko Stenros, track and sessions planning, role-play events
- Maria Garda & Tero Kerttula, game history event

There will be also the conference secretary and student volunteer team that will be recruited for organisation. The Conference Support Services will provide the practical arrangements of the conference.

The DiGRA executive board is welcome to join in on key tasks as they see fit, and of course the review process is to be organized by the association.

Deadlines, draft milestones (2019-2020)

1. Autumn of 2018 - initial facility & accommodation reservations, applications for financial support within Finland, looking for industrial partners
2. Autumn 2018 - Spring 2019 - keynote speakers confirmed
3. August 2019 - early announcement of the conference, early version of the conference web site
4. May-June 2019 - conference call for papers goes online
5. August 2019 - the full conference site goes up, information about keynotes, travel and accommodation, early bird registration
6. November 2019 - deadline for call for papers
7. January 2020 - social programme schedule goes online
8. January 2020 - review results are in
9. February 2020 - deadline for panel and workshop proposals
10. March 2020 - preliminary conference programme goes online, early bird registration closes
11. June 2020 - Main conference takes place: camera ready papers and abstracts from presenters, final conference programme online

Institutional and additional support

University of Tampere Conference Support Services assists the university schools in carrying out international conferences. The University of Tampere Foundation grants assistance for international conferences and meetings arranged in Tampere in collaboration with a scientific unit of the University.

We are actively soliciting sponsorships from the Finnish and Nordic game industry, and are also open for industry co-located events, coordinated activities with major gaming events (such as the major Assembly event), and game jam events.

The Academy of Finland funded Centre of Excellence in Game Culture Studies provides a strong backing and expertise needed for the conference.

Dates

The conference will take place in June 2020. Other key dates are outlined above in Deadlines.

PUBLICITY & DISSEMINATION

The conference proceedings will be made available to all delegates via an online repository shortly before the conference. There will also be an option for receiving the proceedings on a USB stick at the registration desk.

A selection of high quality full papers will be selected by the scientific committee for a special issue of *ToDiGRA* journal. The other options for thematic special issues are explored closer to the conference date.

The University of Tampere Press and Information Office assists conference organizers in their communication and publicity activities.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Basic business plan (estimated for costs-income balance level, missing all external support at this point, September 2016) - note that the below figures do not include the DiGRA membership fees that will be separated from conference fees and directed to DiGRA.

Title of the conference: DiGRA 2020			
COSTS			74,598

Salaries	months/hours	euro	
persons responsible in UTA, JYU, UTU (no salary)			0
conference secretary salaries			6500
indirect employee costs on salaries 55 %			3575
Salaries total			10075
Fees	hours	euro	
international speakers			0
domestic speakers			0
group leaders			0
other			0
indirect employee costs on fees 23,5 %			0
Fees total			0
Indirect employee costs on salaries and fees			
indirect employee costs on salaries and fees		30%	3023
Travel expenses (incl. VAT)	number of units	euro	
airplane			3000
train			0
bus			0
taxi			0
hotel	4	660	2640
daily allowance			0
Travel expenses total			5,640
Costs for external services (incl. VAT)	number of units	euro	
rented facilities			0
lunch, coffee, catering package	300	100	30,000
dinner	250	60	15,000
transportation			0
add. activities (performers, guides etc.)			3,000
copying service			0
construction, technical work			0
translation, language checking services			0
External Services total			49,200
Other external costs	number of units	euro	
conference website			0
supplies (not ordered from UTA Central stocks)			0
posters, brochures, other printed material			0
poster exhibition, exhibition facilities			0
publication of abstracts			0
conference publication			0
presents for speakers	4	40	160
Other external costs total			160
Internal costs	number of units	euro	
lecture halls, meeting rooms at the University			6500
UTA Central stocks			0

Internal costs total			6500
Costs total			74,598
		Number of participants	
Expenditure per participant		300	249
INCOME			
Participation fees	200 €	300	60,000
Dinner	60 €	250	15,000
Funder			0
Funder			0
University of Tampere Foundation			0
Income total			75,000

Note that the basic materials (folders, notepads, pens, badges) for the conference participants will be provided by the Conference Support Services without any charge.

In case of more financial support, or more participation fees coming in, there will be profit, and there will be contract for DiGRA to receive 30 % share of such profits. Careful cost planning should secure that loss is not an option, but the financial risks are covered by the relevant research groups and organising universities, in accordance of the organising contract.



Welcome to **TAMPERE** Finland



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