

Digital Games in Japanese Studies – Current Perspectives

International Conference | September 25-26, 2026

Friday, September 25

From 09:00 Reception

09:30–09:45 Opening Remarks

09:45–11:00 Opening Keynote: Rachael Hutchinson
Intersections and Directions: Digital Games within Japanese Studies

11:00–11:20 Coffee Break

SESSION 1 – HISTORICAL AND MYTHICAL JAPAN
Chair: Van Thien Pham

11:20–11:50 Julia Dolkovski & Dunja Sharbat Dar
Worlds and Times Colliding: Constructing a Mythical Japan through Religious Places in Ōkami (大神)

11:55–12:25 Alessio D'Andrea
Sekiro – Ideological Reiterations of Historical "Japan" Images within the Video Game?

12:30-13:00 Sara Morini
Replaying Empire: Memory Strategies and the Negotiation of Japanese Colonial Legacies in Digital Games

13:00–14:00 Lunch

SESSION 2 – POKÉMON
Chair: Ronald Saladin

14:00–14:30 Julián Gutiérrez Carrera
Kaijū Plots and the Colonisation of Hokkaido in Pokémon Legends: Arceus

14:35-15:05 Van Thien Pham
Presentations of Age(ing) and Elderly People in Digital Games: The Pokémon Game Series

15:10-15:40 Alisa Freedman
"Three Decades of Trainers": Evolving Gender Representation in Thirty Years of Pokémon, 1996-2026

15:45-16:15 Yuya Kano
Will Pokémon GO create a new kind of "third place"?

16:15–16:35 Coffee Break

SESSION 3 – GAME DISCOURSE AND INTERPRETATION
Chair: Van Thien Pham

16:35–17:05 Zdeněk Záhora
Genre Construction: A Thematic Analysis of Discourse on "JRPG" in Czech Gaming Magazines (1994–2012)

17:10–17:40 Marek Mikeš
Players' game classification vocabularies in Japanese Steam reviews

19:00 Conference Dinner

Saturday, September 26

SESSION 5: SPACE
Chair: Ronald Saladin

10:00–10:30 Philippe De Villemor Chauveau & Jonathan Adams
Experiencing Japan through Video Games: Sense of Place in Persona 5

10:35–11:05 Jakob Schelling
Serving 'the usual': Depictions of cafés as socially engaged public spaces

11:05–11:25 Coffee Break

SESSION 6 – GAME DESIGN AND STORYTELLING
Chair: Van Thien Pham

11:25–11:55 Joleen Blom
Gacha games in media mixes

12:00–12:30 Luca Paolo Bruno
Predictable Instability: Parafiction, Game-like Realism, and the Reader-as-Operator in Game-like Media

12:35-13:05 András Bach
Japanese video game auteurs' approach to storytelling – an examination of non-linear narratives in Japanese game design philosophy

13:05–14:15 Lunch

SESSION 7 – SOCIAL ISSUES IN VIDEO GAMES
Chair: Ronald Saladin

14:15–14:45 Rose Malzahn
Gendered Survival Strategies in Japanese Esports – The Case of Tanukana

14:50–15:20 Domenik Löllmann
Social Isolation as a Game Mechanic? Interactive hikikomori in the Video Games Yume Nikki (2004) und Omori (2020)

15:20–15:45 Coffee Break

15:45–17:00 Closing Keynote: Martin Roth
Unboxing Japanese Videogames

17:00–17:45 Conference Closing (Wrap-up & Publication Discussion)

Scan for more!

Campus I, Building C, Room HS6

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