Editorial

Playing games is an ubiquitous and fascinating activity all over the world being performed by young and old, rich and poor. Whereas playing games in general has a positive connotation regarding leisure, learning and development, this is not equally true for video games – unfortunately often associated with negative associations about violence, addiction, and sedentary life style.

Since the 1990ies a new label has entered the stage: Serious Games (SG). SG denote video/digital games that are played not only for fun, enjoyment, and entertainment, but also for other purposes like learning, education, prevention, and therapy. SG can be defined as digital games and game-based applications going beyond fun, including gaming concepts and/or technologies plus further technologies and (domain-specific) methodologies (see figure 1). Hence, SG have a great potential for many application areas – our bold hypothesis is that Serious Games are useful for all possible application domains and markets.

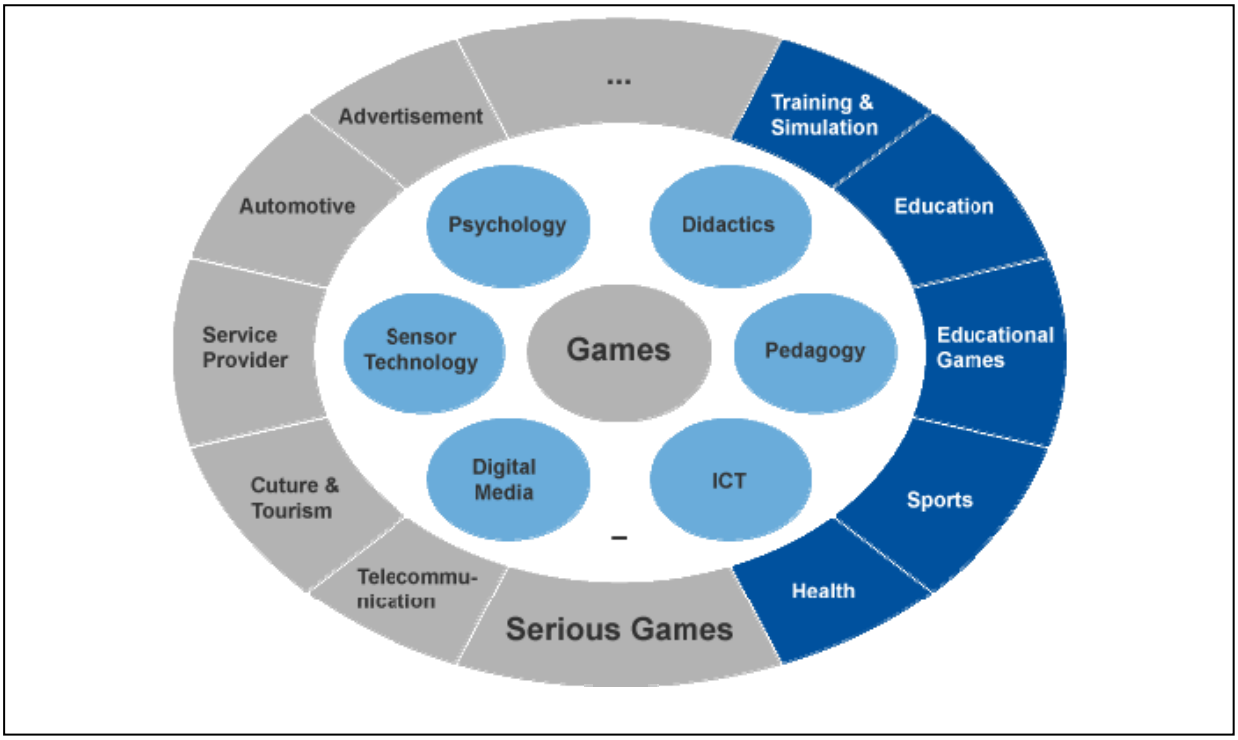


Figure 1. Understanding of Serious Games.

Applying SG to education, prevention, and therapy is on the one hand very promising because of the unique combination of motivation, simulation, and learning. On the other hand fig. 1 illustrates that reconciling true gaming experience and changing behaviour is not at all trivial. A dynamic balance has to be established between fun, enjoyment, flow etc. on the one hand and achieving the serious goals and purposes on the other hand.

In this special edition of the International Journal of Computer Science in Sport selected scientific papers presented at the GameDays 2011 are included. The papers underwent a two-stage review process to ensure quality of form and content.

The topics of the papers range from analysis and discussion of theory and trends (Felicia, Kickmeier-Rust, Nielsen, and Müller-Lietzkow) over the application fields of health (Mellecker, Knöll, Hardy, and Brach) and education (Kliem) to examples of good practice (Schönsee and Gouaïch) and work in progress (Martin and Weigelt).

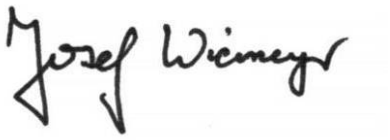
The papers address on the one hand fundamental issues of Serious Games like motivation, adaptation, personalization and on the other hand specific issues like space perception.

The editors would also like to thank all the institutions, associations and companies for supporting and sponsoring the GameDays 2011 conference: Hessen-IT, graduate school 'Topology of technology', motivotion60+, Serious Games Conference, BIU, Darmstadt Marketing, Seniorenrat Darmstadt and Vitaphone. Without this ideal and financial support the GameDays 2010 would not have been possible.

Finally, the editors would like to express their gratitude to all people 'on and behind' the stage who helped to make the conference a success: the speakers, the many students and other helpers including secretaries etc.

Website of the conference: http://www.gamedays2011.de/

We hope that the papers instigate constructive discussions, new insights and ideas for further research and technology transfer.



Prof. Dr. Josef Wiemeyer
Institute of Sport Science
Technische Universität Darmstadt

Dr. Stefan Göbel
Multimedia Communications Lab (KOM)
Technische Universität Darmstadt