

Preface

The 6th Games and Learning Alliance (GALA) Conference, organized by the Serious Games Society (SGS) and the Instituto de Engenharia de Sistemas e Computadores, Investigação e Desenvolvimento em Lisboa (INESC-ID), was held in Lisbon, Portugal, December 5–7, 2017.

The GALA series of conferences provides an excellent opportunity to foster the discussion of important themes and topics in the growing field of serious games. The conference is a venue for academic researchers, industrial developers, teachers, and corporate decision makers to meet and exchange experiences and knowledge in this multidisciplinary and challenging area.

GALA 2017 received 45 submissions. Each paper was reviewed by at least three Program Committee members. The Program Committee selected 24 of these papers for presentation at the conference, and 9 for presentation at a poster session of the conference. A total of 17 countries were represented at the conference. While the majority of authors are based in Europe, North and South America and Asia were also represented at the conference.

The conference started with a day of tutorials, focusing on two main areas and their application in the context of serious games: the development of socio-affective characters for interacting with users, and data analytics and machine learning techniques. The European project RAGE contributed significantly to these tutorials.

It was an honor to have Ana Paiva, from the Instituto Superior Técnico, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal, as keynote speaker at GALA 2017. Ana Paiva discussed the use and role of social robots in the creation of novel and interesting serious games.

The conference featured six paper presentation sessions. A number of paper presentation sessions discussed the relation between serious games and particular domains, namely, children with disabilities, management, persuasive games, augmented reality, game analytics, game design, health, maths, MOOCs, gamification, and virtual reality. Other sessions discussed game development and the assessment of games, and the relation between games and learning.

As in previous years, selected best papers of the GALA conference will be published in a dedicated special issue of the International Journal of Serious Games, the scientific journal managed by the Serious Games Society, which is a great reference point for academicians and practitioners to publish original research work on serious games and be informed about the latest developments in the field.

We thank the authors for submitting many interesting papers, the Program Committee for reviewing these papers, and the SGS and INESC-ID for organizing the conference.

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