

TIKTOK AS GAMESPACE AND PLAYGROUND

To understand contemporary popular culture, you need to understand TikTok. This workshop will introduce TikTok as a way to engage with game culture and -audiences, and guides workshop participants in playful exploration and experimentation of the highly popular shot video platform.

Living in a ludic society means that games and game cultures are enacted in spaces and with technologies that are not dedicated to games – like TikTok. On TikTok games find new audiences, for example how the Norwegian indie mobile game “My child Lebensborn” multiplied their sales after clips from the game trended on the platform. Game streams are cut up and edited as short videos, spreading game discourse across platforms also outside platforms like Twitch and YouTube through algorithmic mediation. Not least, there are fandoms remaking games on TikTok, like how women and queer fans of *Call of Duty* have remediated the classic war game into romantic and sexualized stories and imageries (Ask & Sihvonen, 2023).

In this 4 hour workshop we will introduce TikTok as a platform for the remediation of games (both by fans and by game designers) and a space for game related communities. The main activity for the workshop is translating a game experience (a key game mechanic, story element, glitch or other event) into a TikTok. The instruction will focus on how to find content with emotional impact so it resonates with the affective focus of the platform, how to format ideas when dealing with the short-video format by layering information in different modalities, as well as how to create content that connects to ongoing trends and memetic discourse so it will find an audience.

The workshop is of interest to scholars who want to understand new arenas for game culture and game designers who want to understand a key arena for promoting the game.

Organizers:

The organizers are all game scholars with a strong user focus and ongoing research projects related to TikTok and game fandom. Coming from different disciplinary backgrounds, the organizers have a shared interest in unruly players and their communities.

Tanja Sihvonen. Professor, Vaasa University. Games and media scholar with experience running hands on TikTok workshops as part of her “Short videos as news sources for young people” research project.

Ashley M.L. Guajardo. Associate Professor, The University of Utah. Games scholar and user researcher and experienced content creator with 5 years of streaming game analysis on Twitch.

Jess Tompkins, User Experience Researcher, Electronic Arts. Games scholar working on User Experience Research with BioWare, bringing in a perspective that combines academic analysis and industry concerns.

Kristine Ask, Associate Professor, Norwegian University of Science and Technology. Games and STS researcher and Excellent Teaching Practitioner with extensive experience facilitating group work.

References:

Ask, K & Sihvonen, T (2023, 19-23. June) *Horny for Ghost: The sexual remediation of Call of Duty* [paper presentation]. Digital Games Research Association (DiGRA). Sevilla, Spain.

Batalden, T. M. (2021, July 13th) *Spillutviklere med TikTok-suksess: Mangedoblet salget* (eng. Game developers with TikTok success: Multiplied sales). NRK.no. https://www.nrk.no/kultur/norske-spillutviklere-med-tiktok-suksess_-mangedoblet-salget-1.15573649