

# GAMES AND LEARNING

October 2014

## No longer child's play: Hundreds to gather for games and learning conference

This year's event — which was the largest games and learning conference of its kind — ran from June 10-13 at the Memorial Union on the UW-Madison campus.



**GAMES +  
LEARNING +  
SOCIETY**

The GLS Conference featured events ranging from cozy chats with leading international scholars to keynote presentations by some of the biggest names in educational gaming.

The [Games+Learning+Society Center](#) on the UW-Madison campus is a base for industry-tested game designers and a mix of faculty, students and academic staff from the Digital Media program within the School of Education's top-ranked [Department of Curriculum & Instruction](#). The center is co-directed by School of Education faculty members Kurt Squire and Constance Steinkuehler.



Constance Steinkuehler

“Over the last decade we've seen tremendous growth of this sector,” says Steinkuehler. “We've moved from a small cottage industry of indie developers and heterodox academics to a thriving ecosystem for innovation. Games are no longer viewed as merely children's toys. With substantial investments from federal agencies, philanthropic foundations, and venture capital along with increased academic focus and a growing games for impact design scene, the public demand for top notch educational games has soared. We

are looking forward to seeing where this sector takes us over the next two years.”

The GLS Conference hosted a variety of presentations, ranging from “[Game Development Bootcamp for Educators](#)” to “[Start with the guts, go for the head: A well played paper on the Walking Dead](#).”

The conference began with the [Playful Learning Summit](#), a national gathering that celebrates and deepens educators' use of games and new media in various educational settings, while fostering collaboration among teachers, designers, researchers and others throughout elementary to higher education. According to Remi Holden, GLS Playful Learning Summit Co-Chair, “The Playful Learning movement has engaged over 1,300 educators, designers and game-based learning enthusiasts since our first national summit last summer. We are thrilled that GLS continues to play a leading role in advancing both Playful Learning nationally and 'playful learning' as a transformative vision for the future of education.”

This year, GLS also hosted the Cyberlearning Summit, sponsored and organized by the National Science Foundation, which fosters collaboration between researchers to advance technology-mediated learning environments, and learn how to use cyberlearning technologies to collect, analyze, and better manage data. This Summit took place June 9-10. In addition, GLS is adding a new pre-conference event, the [Games in Libraries Day](#), hosted Tuesday June 10th, at the Memorial Union and developed in collaboration with UW's [School of Library & Information Studies](#) to show participants how games in libraries can be used to foster learning and community building for library users.

Published June 2014

### INEI Affiliates Doing Similar Work:

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Andrew Brown, Professor of Media— Institute of Education, University of London

