
How to Use Games and Simulations to Help Our World Become More Resilient in Times of Crisis

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Marlies P. Schijven^{1,2,3} and Toshiko Kikkawa^{4,5}

Dear readers of Simulation and Gaming.

Games and simulations have served as mirrors of the real world. Since 2020, when we became Co-Editor-in-Chief, the trends of themes of submissions have changed.

Actually, 2020 marked the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, i.e., the crisis. The world faced a severe lockdown, and many medical and non-medical strategies were implemented to combat this new infectious disease. After the virus's genome was identified, new medicines and vaccines were developed. And this was a new type of challenge for us, including game researchers and developers. The number of casualties was, as the target persons are so huge, with a virus not respecting or considering any of our set boundaries. In this global crisis, which is affecting almost everyone, submissions exploring how to solve pandemic-related restrictions across various domains of our journal have increased. Submissions, using games and gamification strategies, both analogue and digital. It also sparked a new research trend in the aftermath. For instance, interest in the use and development of digital games has become hugely popular during COVID times, as people play them more often because they cannot often meet face-to-face for gameplay. Also, perhaps a renewed interest in playing analogue games in small groups, often with housemates, and with family or friends (in a small group), without the need to go outside. This trend did not stop. In our journal, it is

¹Department of Surgery, Amsterdam UMC, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

²Amsterdam Gastroenterology and Metabolism, Amsterdam UMC, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

³Amsterdam Public Health, Digital Health, Amsterdam UMC, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

⁴Faculty of Business and Commerce, Keio University, Tokyo, Japan

⁵Center for Decision Research, Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan

Corresponding Author:

Marlies P. Schijven, Department of Surgery, Amsterdam UMC, University of Amsterdam, De Boelelaan 117, Amsterdam 1081 HV, the Netherlands.

Email: m.p.schijven@amsterdamumc.nl

reflected by a continued increase in research on board game studies. Also, game researchers have shown interest in how to address believers in conspiracy theories about COVID and other diseases. This may be an aftermath of governments pressing anti-COVID-19 measures, sparking a counter-movement of people declaring themselves anti-vaccination or anti-mask-wearing, not understanding or willing to believe scientific explanations. Truth has become debatable, all the way to having cohorts of people believing in or supporting conspiracy theories denying the existence, origin, and treatment of COVID-19 using vaccinations altogether existence, origin, and treatment of COVID-19 using vaccinations altogether. Game designers and researchers have begun to address these issues, trying to help people deal with uncertainties and truth issues. Submissions on this relatively new field related to our public health have been increasing gradually.

Then, Ukraine and Russia started a war in Ukraine. The submissions of refugee-related games to raise awareness and improve the situation of those in conflict situations have increased. In addition, an increase in war-gaming submissions became apparent even before long-time festering, and now full-fledged conflicts have caught fire across the Middle East. This also raises issues and a new perspective on how to carefully assess and report on the ethical issues of war and political games in research.

And in 2025, the issue of global warming has received more attention than ever. Of course, articles about climate change have long been among the mainstream issues in S&G, though the number of submissions has increased drastically in recent years.

The above crises – so different in nature-shape our world and recent history. As their characteristics will inevitably change with each new event and crisis, we, the game researchers, must remain resilient, aware, and able to adapt to new problems and situations as they arise. This is because simulation, gaming, gamification, and nudging strategies are among the most powerful tools for preparing for and dealing with a crisis. Perhaps, even in preventing a new one. So be one of the researchers to join us on this journey and help shape history!

Therefore, we, the EIC, will have an appeal here to current game researchers and welcome newcomers to join us in making a better world through gaming!

Author Biographies

Marlies P. Schijven, MD PhD MHSc, is a professor of surgery with vast expertise in the simulation and gaming field for medical education. She is the former president of the Dutch Society for Simulation in Healthcare (DSSH), longtime member of SSH (Society for Simulation in Healthcare) and SESAM (European Society for Simulation) and president of the WATCH society (wearable technology in healthcare). She is the former Chief Medical Information Officer of the Dutch Government, and national lead on eHealth. Contact: m.p.schijven@amsterdamumc.nl.

Toshiko Kikkawa, PhD is a professor emeritus at Keio University, a social psychologist who specializes in S&G and risk communication. She has been in the

position of vice-chair of the Japanese Association of Simulation and Gaming (JASAG) from 2015 to 2020, and was an Executive Board member of the International Simulation and Gaming Association (ISAGA) from 2012 to 2016. Contact: toshiko.sg@gmail.com.