

GOALS

There are as many aims and goals in organizing public video game events as there are in making video games. Likewise there are a variety of aims and goals proposed by this document. It would therefore be false to say there is a singular, monolithic, goal that this document aims to achieve. However, the variety of goals in providing more avenues for presenting video game art rarely contradict each other and often harmonize, if not overlap.

Video games and related participatory media are expressed through a very diverse set of practices yet are often presented in through narrow channels of distribution. There is a common perception that video games are commercially produced, played domestically, often alone, and are therefore an isolating experience. This represents only one kind of video game as well as only one way that video games meet their publics. Games are a ubiquitous and maturing form of creative media that are generating novel ways to inform audiences on how to experience contemporary culture and imagine futures. Many of these ideas don't fit into the digital download or retail distribution channels that support the aforementioned kind of video game. Instead, they are supported by a new global movement in video game curation.

Practitioners of this movement define the various goals mentioned above. Some aim for the recognition of games underrepresented by established cultural venues, or more importantly, of the people who are marginalized by them. Some seek to provide new context that explicates the meanings contained in games as dynamic systems. Some aim to celebrate video game subcultures in ways that would be impossible without establishing independent venues. Some want to expand sets of knowledge and skill to larger groups. The events and programs by these organizers include festivals, galleries, parties, meet-ups, jams, collectives, and more.

The collective authorship of this document represents the collaboration of practitioners directly involved in this movement. In comparing our experiences during the Game Art International Assembly symposia held in 2019 and 2021, we found that similar models of how to support video games within local and regional communities have organically appeared in different parts of the world. The events, organizations, and other support structures created by the individuals in this group can be conceived of as the beginning of an international game art network and infrastructure. This kind of infrastructure has been critical in the development and maturation of other creative media and it's thrilling to see that such a network exists for games, even if it is still in a nascent stage. This toolkit is an attempt to document at least a portion of the collective experience of this group in order to share it broadly with other video game curators and organizers, or those who may consider becoming video game curators and organizers. One particularly desirable goal, then, is to strengthen and broaden this international network of support and therefore also the depth and ability of the discipline. While one group has defined the initial goals of organizing games in public, the goals will shift after you, the reader, define your own.

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