



**<http://www.eludamos.org>**

---

**Introduction**

Randall James Nichols

*Eludamos. Journal for Computer Game Culture. 2008, 2 (1), p.1-2*

---

# Introduction

RANDALL JAMES NICHOLS

In their introduction to *The Video Game Theory Reader* (2003), Mark J.P. Wolf and Bernard Perron note that digital game studies represent a particularly volatile area of study. And while one might quibble with their metaphor, particularly as the field has developed in the years since that volume was published, it is still apparent that digital game studies is a field where the landscape is constantly changing. We see this change not just in how games have evolved or how we use them, but in also in how we think about them. We draw theories and perspectives from across the spectrum to help make sense of digital games, and those who make them - through work and through play. And we can't be afraid to offer new ones or to ask bold questions, we can be afraid to not only challenge misconceptions but to overthrow them.

Any emerging technology, it has been said, represents a moment of social potential that we can use to change the world around us or to reinforce how it already operates (Mosco, 1988). This is certainly true for digital games, which as with all cultural products, begin as technologies that represent a social relation. How games are designed to allow us to play, how they portray and include different groups both in game play and in production, and how we have come to talk about them serve to demonstrate just how complex digital games truly are. It would be tempting to think about video games simply toys, and to focus solely on how we use them. But to do so misses all of the ways in which video games serve as a fun house mirror, reflecting parts of our world and ourselves back to us. Sometimes what we see is a distortion, but sometimes it's much more accurate than we might like to believe. It is this interaction between representation and ourselves, between practice and ourselves, between production and ourselves that provide some of the most fascinating new directions in our field of study.

That the field of digital game studies is constantly changing is a good thing. That we are challenged in how we think about digital games from one moment to the next allows us to not only make use of what we have done in a diverse number of fields. Perhaps more importantly, however, the changing nature of digital games and their study requires us to rethink what has come before and to use those tools in new and different ways. This issue of ELUDAMOS represents a continuation of our attempts to tackle these challenges. This issue marks the launch of two new sections in ELUDAMOS. The first, PERSPECTIVES, is designed to take an in-depth look at some of the key issues in the study of digital games. In this issue, it looks at gender and games. The second new section, POSITIONS, offers critical views on key gaming issues, asking those bold questions and turning a light on misconceptions.

While the landscape we're navigating may change, it doesn't mean there is no way to offer some useful sign posts.

## References

Mosco, V. (1988) In *The Political Economy of Information* (Eds, Mosco, V. and Wasko, J.) University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, WI, pp. 3-26.

Wolf, M. J. P. and Perron, B. (Eds.) (2003) *The Video Game Theory Reader*, Routledge, New York.