Guidelines for Authors

March 2019 version

Journal papers

(including papers based on essays and dissertations, and papers for special editions)

Book reviews

Written by the editors-in-chief

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Contents

Introduction
Pages 2 - 3

What we publish
Page 4

The Editorial Manager™ submission process
Pages 5 - 7

Files, formatting and content
Pages 8, 9

Writing style and quality
Pages 10, 11

Due diligence
(copyright, plagiarism, privacy and censorship)
Pages 12, 13
Introduction

Background

The Computer Games Journal is an online academic computing publication that was launched at the beginning of 2012 by Dr. Tony Maude and Drs John and Malcolm Sutherland. During these past seven years, its focus, style and contents, as well as many previously published papers, have been groundbreaking. This journal started as an independent website run by the editors in their spare time, and within 3 years it caught the imagination of publishers. In July 2014, this journal was purchased by Springer Science & Business Media LLC and Apress.

Springer is one of the leading academic journal publishers in the world with advanced electronic submission, publishing and distribution tools, and with an audience of over 10 million viewers and subscribers.

The journal has growing followings on Facebook and LinkedIn.

From its inception, The Computer Games Journal has been supported by an editorial board consisting of both leading academics and experienced industry professionals.
Introduction

Our vision - ‘Good, Interesting, Novel’

The Computer Games Journal is not the first games journal, and is but one of hundreds of computing titles among academic journals. Consequently, this journal was purposefully designed to be a groundbreaking publication, a rich source of meaningful information with practical applications and insights that can benefit games researchers and the games industry.

Papers must be good

They must be scientifically sound, and their findings should be supported by substantial evidence. The writing must be excellent and clear, and references must be academically sound. Papers which are poorly written shall be rejected.

Papers must be interesting

They should be relevant and beneficial to games players and developers, and not merely of interest to academics.

Papers must be novel

We firmly oppose the ‘publish or perish’ mentality. We aim to reject papers that are recycled from previous journal and conference papers. Every paper in The Computer Games Journal must be unique, or must build upon previous research by discussing and testing new ideas and discoveries.

The Computer Games Journal is a multidisciplinary publication embracing a wide range of subjects:

• Games programming and technology
• Graphics, audio and storyboarding
• Entrepreneurship and business models
• Game genres, and gamers’ preferences and purchasing habits
• IP and ownership issues
• Moral and legal implications of game designs, development and distribution processes.
What we publish

Ever since founding the journal back in 2012, we have strived to make *The Computer Games Journal* stand out from its competitors. We welcome research and review papers in the normal academic journal layout. However, we have also published papers based on university essays and dissertations. We also publish book reviews, and we have now developed a separate submissions system for special editions. **Unless otherwise stated, the guidelines apply to all kinds of manuscript.**

*Research Papers*

Like most other academic journals under the Springer banner, *The Computer Games Journal* mainly consists of research papers, including review papers, and papers reporting on surveys and lab testing.

*Special editions*

In 2018, we successfully brought back special editions, including one based on a games conference in Europe. For each special edition, we shall appoint one or more guest editors (ideally from the editorial board) to help relay and review papers. **Separate guidelines for preparing, and submitting papers to, a special edition are now available on the journal’s Springer webpage.**

*Papers based on student essays or dissertations*

Back in the years 2012 to 2014, three ‘student editions’ were published in *The Computer Games Journal*. In 2017, we decided to re-engage with students and their supervisors by calling for papers based on university dissertations and essays. **We do not republish dissertations, and papers are limited to 5000 words. Copyright transfer guidelines apply.**

*Book reviews*

We also welcome short reviews on the latest and most significant computer games-related textbooks.
The Editorial Manager™ submission process

All prospective authors (unless otherwise stated for a special edition) must use Springer’s Editorial Manager portal (viz) for submitting abstracts and draft papers. The portal can be accessed at: https://www.editorialmanager.com/TCGJ/default.aspx

If you have not registered before, you need to sign up, for which you shall be assigned an ORCID username and password. Once you have logged in, you will be directed to the home page, which provides analytics on your submissions. To make a submission:

- Choose article type (Editorial, research, case study) (NB abstracts no longer accepted)
- Enter your name and title
- Confirm your name, and enter names of all other authors
- You are then asked to submit funding information – this is optional. If your project is not funded, then tick ‘Funding Information is not available’
- Submit your abstract
- Enter comments for editorial office (this too is optional)
- You are then asked to enter names of recommended reviewers – please skip this page
- Finally, you are requested to attach your file (blinded manuscript or title page only).
The Editorial Manager™ submission process

1. Initial review

Please note that Springer’s Editorial Manager portal converts all documents into pdf files.

We aim to send an acknowledgment within 48 hours. Please note that Editorial Manager no longer accepts abstracts; please email your abstract directly to <thecomputergamesjournal@gmail.com>

Draft manuscripts/abstracts will be reviewed for the following:

a. Relevance
b. Quality of writing
c. Plagiarism or repetition of previous research (using iThenticate).

Manuscripts/abstracts that are considered to be poorly written, irrelevant, or which contain recycled or plagiarised material, will be rejected at this stage. For papers, an automated message will be sent from the Editorial Manager portal.

2. Peer review (all papers except student papers and special editions)

If a submission is initially approved by the editors-in-chief, the work shall be passed onto two appointed members of the editorial board for double-blind peer review.

Authors will not be told the identity of the persons undertaking peer review of their papers under any circumstances. Likewise, the names of authors shall not be disclosed to the reviewers.

Authors shall not be allowed to choose their peer reviewers. However, authors should inform the editors-in-chief of The Computer Games Journal if particular individuals on the editorial board are known to them, or could pose a conflict of interest.

The peer review process is expected to last 4 weeks, although it may be completed in a shorter time. If a paper has not been examined by both reviewers after 6 weeks, the editors-in-chief will approach and enlist other editorial board members, and the author(s) will be kept informed. The peer review process should not last longer than 2 months.

Once the reviewers have submitted their reports, the editors-in-chief will pass these reviews anonymously back to the authors via the Editorial Manager portal. At this stage, the editors-in-chief may also decide to reject a submission.

If the manuscript has not been rejected, the authors must address the concerns raised by the editorial board reviewers and make the necessary corrections before re-submitting the final version.
The Editorial Manager™ submission process

3. Final processing

Once a corrected manuscript is re-submitted through Springer’s portal, the editors-in-chief will also re-run the final version through the iThenticate screening tool, and check that the necessary corrections have been applied.

Once the final version of the manuscript has been approved, the manuscript is then submitted to the editing teams employed by Springer, and will be subject to further changes in content, style and layout.

Authors shall be contacted by Springer, and shall be asked to sign a Copyright Transfer Licence agreement, agreeing that their published paper shall be copyright of Springer, and that it must not exist or be published in any paper or electronic form elsewhere. Authors may also receive other requests from Springer in relation to the paper being processed.

The decision by the editors-in-chief, Apress or Springer Science & Business Media LLC to accept or reject a submission, even for a special edition, to The Computer Games Journal shall be final. Re-submitted manuscripts may also be rejected.
Files, formatting and content

**File upload (all papers)**

This is an online journal, and, unless stated otherwise for a special edition, papers must be submitted through Springer’s Editorial Manager™ system. Handwritten and printed copies of submissions will not be accepted; CDs, pen drives, tablets, laptops or other physical disks containing files will not be accepted either.

We no longer receive papers via editor@computergamesjournal.com, or ed-board@computergamesjournal.com.

Please do not upload your paper (or contents thereof) onto the internet or the Cloud, as this may breach Springer’s copyright regulations. All submissions are converted into .pdf files. Authors are advised to submit .rtf, .doc or .docx files.

**Length**

**Journal Papers**

Authors shall not submit papers that are longer than 15 pages in length or more than 5000 words (main text). Please do not send text-only files that are approaching 15 pages in length, along with a long list of accompanying tables and figures, which altogether result in a document being substantially more than 15 pages – we will reject such submissions. Please do not “dump” reams of text into appendices. Abstracts should not exceed 200 words.

**Book reviews**

Reviews should not exceed 1500 words, and should not contain any imagery, tables or other figures. NB. When uploading a book review, please select ‘Editorial’.

**Contents (all papers)**

The abstract must be brief, and must contain short statements on the following:

• Aims and objectives of the paper
• Why the study was chosen
• Brief statements on results and patterns found
• Recommendations for further research or for the games industry and gamers.

The main paper must start with an introductory section, which identifies the aims and the objectives of the work. Such an introduction must precede the background, literature review and/or arguments relating to the subject.

Images should not exceed 1 MB in size, and should be easy to insert into a document. If authors want readers to view large image files, programs or animations, these must be stored on a website, and a link should be provided.
Files, formatting and content

**Standard journal papers**

The main paper must start with an introductory section, which identifies the aims and the objectives of the work. Such an introduction must precede the history, literature review and/or arguments relating to the subject.

Authors of papers concerning laboratory/product testing, surveys and questionnaires must apply the scientific method, demonstrating the following:
- Observations (background research)
- Hypothesis and predictions, and design of work to prove this
- Experimentation (testing, surveys)
- Results and discussion, and also a discursive review on the validity of the data collected
- Conclusion: reject or accept hypothesis, and specify limitations of the study.

Experiments or investigations involving a small group of people (especially if there are <20 participants) should be regarded as case studies. Results derived from partial experiments or from a small number of participants or observations might not be published in *The Computer Games Journal*.

*(All submissions)*

The Harvard referencing style is used in this journal. Guidelines on Harvard referencing are available on the internet.

Authors must **not** insert footnotes or side-notes.

Authors must **not** use double columns, and should avoid using inconsistent spacing and indentation.

Authors should use reliable and accurate references, and should avoid referencing their work to the following sources:
- Individual web pages on Wikipedia or other online encyclopedia
- Twitter / MSM / other online chat sites, online fora or other informal online commentaries
- People who use a fictional or silly alias.

All URL links must be correct and active at the time of submission.

Authors should limit quotations to **fewer than 100 words**. Longer quotations should be summarised, and accompanied by proper references.

Full website addresses should not be inserted into the main text unless absolutely necessary. A short URL may be acceptable if it is central to the subject of the submission, e.g. www.microsoft.com.

When mentioning games/media titles, authors should indicate the developer and the year of release, e.g. *Angry Birds* (Rovio, 2009).
Writing style and quality

**Text (all submissions)**

The language of *The Computer Games Journal* is English. Authors are permitted to use (1) British English, or (2) American English, or (3) International English spelling. A mixture of forms of spelling is not permitted.

The font must be Arial, and must range between size 11 and 14.

*(standard journal papers)*

The paper must be divided into sections (which are numbered, e.g. section 2), which in turn may be divided into numbered sub-sections (e.g. 2.1). Sub-sub-sections should not be numbered.

The main text, figures and figures must not include reams of programming code. If readers need to view source code, authors should provide a link within their submission, to a web page, where the source code is held. A small essential section of programming code should be treated as a figure.

Names of people, organisations, public events, games titles, other commercial products or major events (e.g. Second World War) must be capitalised. Names of games, magazines and the like should be italicised. This rule does not strictly apply to names of computer / machine models.

**Numbering systems (all submissions)**

Authors must use S.I. units whenever appropriate. If a new or rare type of unit is being used, this must be stated clearly.

Authors should spell out centuries and millennia, e.g. 'the twentieth century', the 'first millennium BC'.

A hyphen should not be used in the main text for indicating ranges. For example, instead of writing '500 - 1000 users/month', authors should write '500 to 1000 users per month'.

Dates should be presented as: day (number, but no 'st', 'rd' or 'th'), month (capitalised), and year (number). e.g. ‘this game was released onto the Amazon Store on 3 March 2010’.

Numbers and ordinals need not be used for reference to repeat events or releases, e.g. write 'seventeenth version' instead of '17th'.

**Figures and Tables (standard journal papers)**

Each figure and table should be captioned, and relevant descriptions **must precede** each figure and table. Please do not use decimal systems (simply write Figure 1, 2,... or Table 1, 2, ...).
Writing style and quality

(This applies to all submissions)

Important notice:

Grammar and writing style – what we expect

It has always been our aim to make this journal accessible and of interest to people both inside and outside academia. We try to ensure that the writing in the papers in The Computer Games Journal is grammatically correct and can be understood.

We take a zero-tolerance approach to poor writing and grammar, gibberish and unnecessary jargon. We want authors to share interesting ideas and discoveries, and to convey them properly using plain English whenever appropriate. We have rejected several papers without even passing them to the editorial board for peer review simply because the writing was too ambiguous or incomprehensible.

Neither we nor the editorial board members are duty-bound to proofread or rewrite a badly written paper on behalf of any author who submits it to this journal.

ESL (English as a Second Language) authors are particularly advised to have their papers or book reviews proofread by a recognised academic proofreading/editing service or company. There are many such organisations, e.g. Cactus Global, Crimson Enago, Editage, Scribendi. We may demand evidence of this.
Due diligence (all submissions)
Copyright, privacy, plagiarism and censorship

Copyright

By submitting a manuscript to The Computer Games Journal, authors agree that it shall be processed using software and procedures under Springer Science & Business Media LLC. Authors agree not to submit their work to another publisher, or to publish it on a website or in physical form.

Authors whose papers are considered for publication shall be asked to sign a copyright transfer licence agreement. Authors accept that the copyright of their published papers shall belong to Springer Science & Business Media LLC, and that they are not allowed to copy, distribute or sell copies of their published papers.

Authors who make a successful submission to The Computer Games Journal agree that the contents and appearance of their submissions may be altered and edited prior to publication.

Authorship

Submissions by anyone who is not a listed author in the work shall be rejected. The author making the submission must ensure that this has been approved by all the co-authors, and approved by the institution where the work has been conducted (e.g. university).

All listed authors must have made significant contributions to the content in the submission, including surveying, laboratory and product testing, data analysis, and/or drafting the submission.

Plagiarism

The editors-in-chief and the editorial board of The Computer Games Journal aim to publish work, which does not violate intellectual property or publishing rights.

An act of plagiarism has been defined by the ACM (2011)* as one '...in which one misrepresents ideas, words, computer codes or other creative expression as one’s own...(and) can also represent a violation of copyright law...'.

The ACM defined three forms of plagiarism:

• 'verbatim copying, near verbatim copying, or purposely paraphrasing portions of another author’s paper'

• 'copying elements of another author’s paper’, e.g. illustrations or equations ‘that are not common knowledge’; or 'paraphrasing sentences without citing the source’

• 'verbatim copying...without clearly differentiating what...has been copied...not citing the source properly'.

*Extracted from the guidelines for the ACM Computers in Entertainment journal, December 2011
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Due diligence *(all submissions)*

*Copyright, privacy, plagiarism and censorship*

Neither the editors-in-chief nor the editorial board of *The Computer Games Journal*, nor Apress, nor Springer Science & Business Media LLC, will accept responsibility for authors who commit an act of plagiarism.

If a third party launches a claim of plagiarism against an author of a publication in *The Computer Games Journal*, the editors-in-chief and the editorial board (as well as Apress and Springer Science & Business Media LLC) may cooperate fully with that third party, and the publication may be removed from *The Computer Games Journal*. Authors shall be liable for any monies owed to a third party, in the event of plagiarism or breach of copyright.

Authors are also expected to respect the ownership of material by other individuals and organisations. Papers must not contain any imagery, data, quotations (e.g. from manuals or books), statements or linked media, which is copyright of other people or organisations, without written permission from the owners. Likewise, authors must not submit material that infringes any trademarks or patents owned by any person or organisation.

If a submission contains any material which is copyright of people or an organisation, the authors must attribute it to the relevant people or organisation.

**Ethical standards**

Authors should not attempt to publish any work, which was conducted using stolen software, hardware, or inside an unauthorised room, lab or other space.

It is generally acknowledged that some aspects of computer games development and some commercial games products may be morally or ethically controversial. Some published material in the journal may be controversial. The editors-in-chief and the editorial board, as well as Apress and Springer Science & Business Media LLC, reserve the right to reject submissions which contain the following:

- Pornographic material (including real or virtual images)
- Expletives and blasphemous terms
- Portrayal of gratuitous violence or criminal behaviour
- Text, slogans and images which promote discrimination (e.g. racism, political hatred, gender discrimination).

All private and commercially sensitive material should be omitted from any files being submitted to *The Computer Games Journal*. Authors must seek permission from the relevant people and organisations before attempting to distribute and publish any information, which is commercially sensitive or personally private.
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