

Working Group 2: Cultural Heritage of Games

Working Group 2 draws from humanistic and social science approaches to games to examine the intangible heritage of games. It is necessarily multidisciplinary, with researchers from archaeology, history, heritage studies, the museum sector, education, and private enterprises. Our core objective is to find ways to study and preserve tabletop games, drawing on all available textual, material, and ethnographic information. Our scope is global, covering all tabletop games from prehistory to the present day. Historically, games research has been largely focused on and performed by researchers in Western Europe and North America and we are particularly interested in broadening studies of games to regions beyond this.

Within the context of GameTable, we are exploring the intersections of the cultural heritage of games with respect to recent developments in AI techniques. We see several different ways that cultural and historical research can draw from and inform AI research. Some of these include:

1. Identifying research questions that can be answered using AI techniques. This includes the use of AI playout simulation of games, game evaluation, as well as other as yet unexplored applications.
2. Providing cultural and/or social data to AI researchers to inform more humanistic modeling and aid them in developing more 'human' styles of play by AI agents.

While the Memorandum of Understanding covers our approach in more detail, we propose to begin exploring new means of data management while at the same time expanding data collection to underrepresented parts of the world in games scholarship.

We are particularly interested in welcoming scholars whose focus of research includes East and Southeast Asia, post-antique West Asia, Africa, and the indigenous Americas and Oceania. Our current strength is largely in board games, but we strongly encourage scholars focused on card games to join. We are also especially keen to hear from colleagues who have experience or interest in working with Digital Humanities techniques.