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**Preface: A Community of Players**

Judd Ethan Ruggill, Randall James Nichols, Ryan M. Moeller, Ken S. McAllister  
*Eludamos. Journal for Computer Game Culture. 2010; 4 (2), p. 133*

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## Preface: A Community of Players

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KEN S. MCALLISTER

The articles in this section were initially developed for and presented at the 2010 conference of the Southwest/Texas Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association (<http://swtxpca.org/>). The conference, which began as a small, regional meeting in the 1970s, has since become international in scope, with upwards of a thousand presentations delivered by participants from dozens of countries. Yet despite its size, the conference maintains a friendly, casual, and intellectually robust atmosphere.

The game studies portion of the conference has grown similarly over the last decade, from a handful of presentations in the Computer Culture Area to the inauguration of a game specific area: Game Studies, Culture, Play, and Practice. In the early days, the game presentations took just a few hours to give; today, there are four full days' worth of game-related panels, talks, and discussions. However, the hallmark of the participants—an abiding commitment to community and collaboration—has remained constant. Indeed, the game studies area has become famous for its openness, diversity, conviviality, and emphasis on post-conference publication, connection, and collaboration. It is precisely this professional carry-over from the vivacity of the conference to those successive months in which scholars prepare and revise their work for public airing that has produced a close-knit but ever-growing community of ingenious, energetic, and assiduous folks from around the world interested in the study, teaching, and building of games, game culture, and play.

The seven articles in this section were selected by means of a refereed competition designed to demonstrate the diversity and quality of the game studies presentations from this year's conference. The work ranges in style, method, and perspective, as well as in terms of the authors' professional positions, which run the gamut from graduate student to dean. And yet, the essays are also remarkably alike: they are all interesting, innovative, and well represent the conference where the ideas they contain were first shared with colleagues.

Please enjoy this collection, and we hope to see you at the next Southwest/Texas Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association conference.