

Introduction: Why Game Production Matters?

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Abstract

In the introduction, the editors of this collection argue for the importance of game production studies at a point when the public awareness about the production context of video games has, arguably, never been higher. With so many accounts of video game development permeating player and developer communities, the task of game production studies is to uncover the economic, cultural, and political structures that influence the final form of games by applying rigorous research methods. While the field of game studies has developed quickly in the past two decades, the study of the video game industry and different modes of video game production have been mostly dismissed by game studies scholars and requires more attention.

Keywords: production studies, game industry, game production, platform studies, indie, sociology of work

In August 2018, *Kotaku*'s reporter Cecilia D'Anastasio (2018) broke a story about the culture of sexism in the video game studio Riot Games, best known for its multiplayer hit *League of Legends* (Riot Games 2009). While structural inequalities based on gender have been observed before in both academic (see Consalvo 2008; Harvey and Shepherd 2017; Huntemann 2013; Shaw and Homan 2013) and journalistic writing (e.g. Kelleher 2015; Parker 2017), this exposé focused on one particular company and, thanks to extensive investigative work, shared the experiences of Riot's disadvantaged, discriminated, and harassed female employees. It contributed to the wave of critical reporting about production practices in the video game industry (see also Schreier 2017) and deservedly won the Writers Guild of America Digital News award. D'Anastasio showed concrete evidence of problematic hiring