

Call for Abstracts

Playing in Tune with the World – Resonance Theory and Digital Games

The theory of resonance, as developed by the sociologist Hartmut Rosa (2019), presents an innovative perspective on world-relationships in modern societies and their prevalent crises (Susen 2023, 1). Modern societies have brought more world within reach than ever before, and it has never been easier to obtain desired goods or travel the globe. However, modern societies can only stabilise themselves dynamically. They have to grow and accelerate continuously to maintain their standards (Rosa 2016, 44). The strain imposed upon individuals results in ‘crises of resonance’ whereby the relationships we have with the world and ourselves turn cold and objectifying (Rosa 2016, 176). These world relationships preclude the distribution of resources, fundamentally influencing whether we perceive the world as a plethora of opportunities, feel carried and protected, or whether the world appears cold and hostile.

Since its initial publication, the theory of resonance has been widely discussed and applied in various domains, e.g., in education, psychology and environmental studies. Susen (2020) considers the theory of resonance to be “one of the most promising developments in twenty-first-century critical theory.” (309) Van Boxtel et al. (2023) developed an understanding of pluralism that builds upon the idea of resonance. In the strand of *new materialism*, resonance has also been discussed to develop a new understanding of the relationship between people and things (Cheng 2023). Most notably, Vorderer & Halfmann (2019) presented an application of resonance theory to entertainment media by contrasting eudaimonic and hedonic experiences.

How the theory of resonance might apply to digital games has not been researched to date. Generally, Rosa appears apprehensive of screen media since they ‘flatten’ our world-relationships, deprive them of physicality, and further objectification (Rosa 2016, 156–157). However, Rosa also emphasises the virtue of stories, films, music, and—at least in one brief remark—the potential of a resonant connection between a player and a digital game (Rosa 2016, 429). This leaves important questions unanswered: Do digital games contribute to what Rosa calls ‘the resonance catastrophe of modernity’ (Rosa 2016, 517)? Do they provide important simulations of resonance that may even point towards a solution? And how do digital games engage with the subject of resonance in their narratives, aesthetics, and gameplay? This anthology engages with these questions and presents an application of the theory of resonance to the domain of digital games.

We are looking for papers that apply the theory of resonance or aspects thereof to digital games. An introduction to the basics of resonance theory and its applications to digital games will be provided so that your paper can fully focus on particular aspects of the theory and the digital games analysis. Possible topic areas could be but are not limited to:

1. Alienation vs. Availability:

- How do digital games engage with the crises of modern societies, for example, resource accumulation, perpetual acceleration, and increasing alienation?
- How do digital games hinder or foster resonant relationships with abstract concepts such as nature, art, or history?

2. Community vs. Isolation:

- How do characters in digital games establish resonant world relationships with one another?
- How do different digital game cultures/markets engage with resonance?
- How do players form relationships and communities with games as things, for example, with peripherals, collectibles, merchandise, etc.?
- What hinders community building (gate keeping, closed- and toxic-communities, self-isolation)?

3. Engagement vs. Disconnection:

- How does resonance relate to other prevalent concepts in game studies such as agency, self-efficacy, or the player-avatar relationship?
- Which elements such as game mechanics, storytelling, game design in and of digital games are particularly associated with resonance?
- Which role does resonance play in formats such as streaming, let's plays, etc.?

Form

Abstracts should be written in Times New Roman, 12 pt., justified, with a line spacing of 1.5.

The maximum length is 2,000 characters including spaces. Please follow the Chicago Manual of Style for references.

Submission & further procedure

- Submission deadline for abstracts: 21 November 2024
- Notification of acceptance: 15 January 2025
- Submission of full papers: 1 April 2025
- Expected publication date: Q4 2025

Please upload your submission [here](#) as one single PDF file. Name the PDF file **exactly** like the title of your paper, excluding subtitles.

Since we conduct an anonymised review process, please **do not include** any of your personal information in the abstract or the file name. The personal data you fill in the submission form is treated separately from the abstract.

Additionally, please disseminate this call to appropriate networks.

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Works cited

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