Association news & notes
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Association news & notes

ABSEL news & notes

Annette L. Halpin
Arcadia University, USA

ABSEL 2008 Conference

March is a significant month for ABSELers as this is the time of year we gather for our annual meeting. The selection of South Carolina, USA, for ABSEL’s 2008 Conference provided an opportunity for many to showcase their research efforts and, for some of us, experience a short hiatus from colder temperatures.

ABSEL thrives on the commitment of a membership dedicated to improving the teaching of business administration. Our conferences follow a format of “tracks” in three areas—experiential exercises, simulations, and online education. The development, application, and research associated with these techniques are the goals of ABSEL members.

Those in attendance in South Carolina receive an automatic renewal of their ABSEL membership. For those who were unable to join us, it is time to renew. Contact us via our Web site (www.absel.org) and complete a membership registration form. Your payment entitles you to a CD-ROM consisting of the Bernie Keys Library, a word-searchable archive of ABSEL proceedings of over thirty years, the Journal of Experiential Learning and Simulation, and J. Gentry’s book, Guide to Business Gaming and Experiential Learning. For an additional payment, members enjoy a 1-year subscription to Simulation & Gaming.

ISAGA news & notes

Thomas Eberle
Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, Germany

ISAGA Summer School 2008

The 5th International Summer School in Gaming Simulation will take place in New Delhi, India, at the IILM (Institute for Integrated Learning in Management).

The Summer School is held jointly by the International Simulation and Gaming Association, Swiss Austrian German Simulation and Gaming Association, and India Simulation and Gaming Association.

For further information have a look at www.isaga-summerschool.org.

ISAGA Conference 2008

The local team is preparing the 39th ISAGA Conference at Kaunas University of Technology, July 7-11, 2008. The theme is “GAMES: Virtual worlds and reality.” For further information have a look at http://www.isaga2008.lt. The conference might be an opportunity for a summer visit to Lithuania.

In the “Dutch Mountains”: ISAGA 2007 Conference Report
by Willy C. Kriz, University of Applied Sciences Vorarlberg, Austria

Ten years ago in 1997, the 28th annual conference of ISAGA was held in Tilburg, organized by Jac Geurts and Cisca Joldersma (Cisca Joldersma, now playing even more “serious games” as a member of the Dutch parliament, joined us at the 2007 conference for exchanging memories with old ISAGA friends; Jac Geurts, in the USA at the time, was greatly missed). The 1997 ISAGA conference was the first one that I attended, and it was then that my own love story with ISAGA began. This is one of many reasons that I liked the idea of having the conference held in the Netherlands again in 2007, as it is a country whose gaming and simulation community is known for its deep interest and expertise in the field.

I also looked forward to going back to the Netherlands in 2007 for the 38th annual conference because of remembering their outstanding organization of 1997, and because I knew that the 2007 conference would be supported by SAGANET, a powerful and respectable professional association of our Dutch gaming and simulation colleagues. Another compelling reason was that I personally know Vincent Peters and Marleen van de Westelaken, who would be organizing the conference, as reliable and dynamic colleagues from their contributions at many ISAGA conferences, summer schools and ISAGA steering committee work.

In 2007, the conference was held for the first time not in a university building but in a hotel located in Berg en Dal (translation: Mountain and Valley), a small village near Nijmegen in the “Dutch mountains” (in this mostly flat country, about 50 m above sea level). Nijmegen is the oldest town in the Netherlands, formerly home to the Romans and Emperor Charlemagne, whose castle was located in this imperial town by the river Waal. There was also a historic moment for ISAGA at the same hotel 30 years ago, in 1977. An informal ISAGA conference was held then at Hotel Val Monte. A photo was shown of the 1977 participants; four of them—Dick and Marie Duke, Jan
Klabbers, and Pieter van der Hijden—were also present in 2007. Noviomagus, the Latin name for Nijmegen, reminds us of its Roman past and means “new market.”

Under these promising conditions (and with one of my favorite catchy songs titled “In the Dutch Mountains” by a Dutch pop group—The Nits—in my mind), the conference started. All of my high expectations were exceeded: It was not only organized very well (with a conference book and CD containing all presentations), the conference itself ran smoothly, a team of friendly and competent support team members was formed, gamers from “first life” met “second life,” etc. Thus, Vincent Peters and Marleen van de Westelaken successfully turned the conference of 2007 into a real gaming and simulation noviomagus—new market—for fruitful exchanges, clear communication, and a networking of people and ideas in the field.

The conference’s main theme, “Organizing and learning through gaming and simulation,” was not only a theoretical question but was put into real action. For the first time, the entire conference was organized with a completely new structure. This new conference design enabled the participants to learn through gaming and simulation in a more effective way than ever before. The leading principle for the conference was “Learning by Doing.” Most conferences before had been organized in the manner of traditional meetings where a relatively small number of people only talked about the benefits of interaction, of learning by doing and learning by playing, while most of the audience had to play a rather passive role.

But this time, the conference’s new design gave plenty of opportunities for all participants to actively share knowledge and experience (www.isaga2007.nl). In total, 224 participants from more than 25 countries held presentations and discussions of 85 papers (as single papers and within 13 thematic sessions). In addition, there was time (about 2 hours) and (physical) space allotted each day for so-called self-organized “open space” sessions, where participants could share their experiences, present and play games, and discuss current topics. At first this idea seemed to be rather risky, but it turned out to be a great noviomagus marketplace of interaction, with elaborating of specific issues and learning. A few of the open-space topics were brought up before the conference began, but most were offered spontaneously by participants during the actual conference.

For the first time, another new invention, called “The Game Building Session,” was successfully integrated into the conference procedures. Under mainly the facilitation of Hanneke Mastik, attendees designed a new game during the 5-day conference. All participants were invited to join, support, or simply observe the game-building sessions in which a game was designed as a concrete and playable artifact—a simulation game with a charitable cause for the humanitarian organization War Child (www.warchild.org). This session included not only doing simulation gaming in action, but it also provided an ideal environment for learning about the art of game design in a hands-on practical way.

The entire conference structure truly reflected gaming in action. There was a briefing and debriefing session, of each single conference day as well as the conference as a whole, where attendees could reflect briefly on the results, procedures of the sessions, and the open space times. The last day and closing sessions especially gave us an opportunity for interactive debriefing of the results, a summarizing of the conference, as well as the setting of new goals for the future. In this creative and stimulating environment, the ISAGA steering committee was able to make some major decisions regarding organizational reform and future strategies (to be reported and put into action soon).

We thank Vincent, Marleen, & team for being such nice hosts and facilitators of the conference game and for an inspiring and productive conference week. “Hartelijk bedankt!”

For further information please refer to the ISAGA Web page, www.isaga.info, or contact Thomas Eberle, office@thomas-eberle.de.
JASAG news & notes

Toshiko Kikkawa
Keio University, Japan

The annual autumn JASAG conference was held from October 27-28, 2007, at Akita University in northern Japan. The theme was “How Do We Evaluate Experience and Learning in Gaming and Simulation.” Akita University is a desirable conference location for two reasons: Its Department of Education has a long tradition of producing high-quality schoolteachers, and it was selected as a “Good Practice” program by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, entitling it to government funding for “the construction of teaching through gaming and simulation.” Yokohama National University has also received Good Practice funding for “the development and implementation of e-learning in business science using gaming methods,” and these results were also presented at the conference. These two case studies appear to indicate that the Japanese government is interested in implementing gaming and simulation methods in schools. Approximately 150 participants, including schoolteachers, attended the conference. Both the experiential sessions and theoretical presentations attracted participant interest, especially among JASAG members.

The next annual spring JASAG conference will be held from May 31–June 1, 2008. Participants from abroad are welcome! For information, contact <secretary@jasag.org>.

NASAGA news & notes

Richard L. Dukes
University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, USA

NASAGA Conference

The 2008 annual conference will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana, in late October. Sivasailam Thiagarajan will be the organizer. The conference will feature face-to-face interaction, hi-tech online activities, and innovative combinations of different approaches. The Indianapolis conference will be the first one in which members of NASAGA will vote electronically for one of ten suggested conference themes. Early in the voting, two themes were in the lead with 19% of the vote each. Both of these themes capitalized on the connection between auto racing and Indianapolis. The themes were Pit Stop for GAS (Games, Activities, and Simulations) and Revving-up for Learning.

The 2007 annual conference, “Part Magic, Part Science, All Learning,” was held October 10-13, 2007, in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Organized by Deborah Thomas, the conference was well received. In fact, it was “awe-inspiring,” according to one participant. Thanks, Deborah.
Resources

The NASAGA Web site currently lists 19 books and 27 additional Web sites. Go to http://www.nasaga.org. In addition, SIMAGES is the official online newsletter of NASAGA. Look for the fall issue containing main articles, interviews, reviews, and interactive exercises.

NASAGA discussion forum

The NASAGA Discussion Forum has been active during the last several months. Interesting discussions have focused on STARPOWER, a gamed simulation about power and class stratification, and my all-time favorite learning exercise. For further information, go to http://www.stsintl.com/schools-charities/star_power.html/.

Another discussion featured Ron Stadsklev, a Charter Member of NASAGA, and BALDICER, a classic exercise on team building with world hunger as the focus. For more information, go to http://pcchina.worldpress.com/2006/06/09/baldicer-a-simulation-activity-about-world-hunger/.

Perhaps the most successful aspect of the forum is the section in which new members introduce themselves. Over the last 3 months, 20 new members from around the world have participated. Besides the United States and Canada, new members live as far away as Spain, India, Malaysia, and Australia.

Contact

As NASAGA reporter to *Simulation & Gaming*, I am interested in news that concerns the organization. I am always open to including pertinent news. You may reach me by phone +1-719-598-6277, or write c/o Department of Sociology, Box 7150, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, CO 80918, USA; e-mail: rdukes@uccs.edu.

SAGSAGA news & notes

Thomas Eberle

*Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, Germany*

SAGSAGA networking meeting

The SAGSAGA networking meeting took place in Munich, Germany on December 7-8, 2007. Herbert Schmidt had organized the meeting. Eric Treske presented the development of a simulation game in the field of production, Ralf Klotzbuecher presented simulations for insurance companies. Jan Klabbers guided a workshop about simulation and gaming, intellectual property, and copyright with an exchange of ideas about the problem of hiding ideas or sharing them with other SAGSAGA
members. Several proposals were made that could help SAGSAGA continue to be a fruitful space for the development of simulation and gaming—which means sharing ideas under reduced risk of being copied by others without citation and/or contract about the use in other fields and companies. The respect of other’s ideas and developments could help future presenters to share them.

SAGSAGA members from Austria, Germany, and Poland presented simulation games during a marketplace and discussed their experiences and further ideas.

During a members assembly, the SAGAGA board was elected. The elected board members decided about the official functions. Willy Kriz, who has led SAGSAGA since its foundation, preferred to continue as an ordinary board member. New board members are: Mario Gust, Berlin (1st chairman), Hanja Hansen, Zurich (2nd chairman), Matthias Puschert, Muenster (treasurer). Thomas Eberle, Munich, Klaus Masch, Miesbach, Erik Treske, Munich, Willy Kriz (Dornbirn).

The upcoming networking meeting will be in March in the region of Munich. The members decided to make the further promotion of S&G and the goals and future development of SAGSAGA a main topic. Persons who would like to have a closer look at SAGSAGA are invited to attend the meeting.

The European Simulation and Gaming Forum during the Learntec trade fair (www.learntec.de) will be an important event for all interested in simulation/gaming. Willy Kriz, University of Applied Sciences Vorarlberg, and Eckart Liesegang, University of Applied Sciences Pforzheim, will organize the forum.

For further information please refer to the SAGSAGA Web page, www.sagsaga.org, or contact Thomas Eberle, office@thomas-eberle.de.

**SIETAR-USA news & notes**

Margaret D. Pusch  
*Intercultural Communication Institute; SIETAR-USA*

The 8th annual SIETAR-USA conference took place in Kansas City, a place renowned for its fountains, barbeque, and jazz. There were many interactive sessions; a new simulation from Japan was presented, and other experiential activities took place. The theme was “Conflict and Culture: Courageous Conversations for Caring Communities,” and there were challenging conversations throughout our time together.

As part of the conference process, we initiated our new blog: http://sietarusa.com. Take a look and see reports on some of the action at the conference. There was a session on blogging and its potential for marketing, for keeping people informed, for allowing informal interaction to occur electronically, for staying in touch with your constituency without having to be perfect. (Web sites really do call for a level of perfection.) You can find blogging advice on our blog as reported from the session.
There were several new simulations introduced. Close ConTACT is a cross-cultural communication styles simulation. It uses “style cards” to guide the communication that occurs around contentious messages. The activity is intended to develop cognitive awareness of different communication styles and provides a safe environment in which to develop behavioral strategies to adjust to different situations and styles of communicating.

From Japan came a new simulation for team building called “Wakajary.” It is designed for people who live and work where the population is diverse, where conflict is bound to occur, and where negative emotion can take over in the midst of the conflict. Wakajary is intended to help people deal with uncertainty and chaos, to learn to work effectively in an environment of diversity, and to build competence and confidence in working with people of different cultures.

The next SIETAR conference is a Global Congress developed by the network of SIETAR organizations around the world. It will take place in Granada, Spain, October 22-26, 2008. Put this on your calendar (http://www.sietar.org/granada2008/).

SSAGSg news & notes

Yeo Gee Kin
National University of Singapore

From December 1-2, 2007, SSAGSg organized the 3rd Asian Conference on Computer Aided Surgery at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. The conference gave the Asian 2007 CAS Achievement Award to Professor Takeyoshi Dohi, the Asian 2007 CAS Young Investigator Award to Dr. Jumpei Arata, and the ACCAS 2007 Best Paper Award to “Image-Guided Otologic Surgery Based on Patient Motion Compensation and Intraoperative Virtual CT” by Jaesung Hong, Nozomu Matsumoto, Richi Ouchida, Shizuo Komune, and Makoto Hashizume.

The SSAGSG Web site is at http://www.ssagsg.org/.