



SERIOUS GAMES NETWORK

## Hello,

In this edition of the Serious Game Network Newsletter we would like to gather your attention to two future events endorsed by SEGAN: the **ECGBL Call for Games**, for developers to promote their work on serious games, and the **Tallin Summer School**. Read further for the details.

Additionally we selected two community articles by Sandra Baldassarri and Pedro Latorre, presenting two of the R&D topics implemented by the [GIGA AffectiveLab at the University of Zaragoza](#), a research group enshrined in the Human Computer Interaction area.

### ECGBL Call For Games

The Call for Games is a new feature of ECGBL. It will be run as a competition and has the following objectives:

- To provide an opportunity for educational game designers and creators to participate in the conference and demonstrate their game design and development skills in an international competition.
- To provide an opportunity for GBL creators to peer-assess and peer-evaluate their games
- To provide ECGBL 2013 attendees with engaging and best-practice games that showcase exemplary applications of GBL

Games submitted for the competition are expected to accomplish an educational goal. Authors should be prepared to explain their design and evaluation process, why it is innovative (the game itself or its educational setting) and how they achieved (will achieve) the impact they seek. The game should be in a development state that

### Tallinn Summer School

The objective of the course is to go through all activities needed for the development of the serious games from selecting the idea and binding it with learning goals to the development of the game prototype in the environment that does not require programming skills.

General overview of the course:

- Monday – Introductory lectures for game based learning and serious games
- Tuesday – Thursday – Workshop of designing and developing serious games. Participants in small groups design and develop serious games from idea to prototype.
- Friday – International conference (open to wider audience) where European experts present novel topics from the field of serious games.

engages the player for at least 10 minutes.



**Submission deadline: 15 June 2013**

**Notification: 11 July 2013**

[More info at ECGBL 2013](#)

The language of the course is English.

The course is mainly aimed for teachers who are interested in designing serious games, but also to all who are interested in fundamentals of game development.

**Course fee:**

150 EUR (SEGAN will cover 50 EUR, final fee 100 EUR)

For students 100 EUR (SEGAN will cover 50 EUR, final fee 50 EUR)

**NB! SEGAN project will cover the accommodation cost for one place in a double room in hotel City Portus for the 10 first international participants who have registered and paid the course fee.**

[More info at TLU](#)

## Hybrid videogames: physical and digital board-games

Young children traditionally play manipulating toys on the floor or a table surface. In nurseries and school classrooms, small groups of children gather around a table, actively manipulating toys and educative materials. This way of playing is known that brings benefits to their psychomotor development, but also fosters their social skills.

On the other side, computer educative videogames are also being introduced in nurseries and classrooms, but in a very different way. Computer games are attractive to children, provided by the inclusion of funny animations and sounds in response to their interactions. From a pedagogic perspective, videogames are a very flexible educative tool, as children are conscious of their learning progress, and the pedagogical content can be easily adapted to each children necessity. However, teachers are still little proactive of using videogames in their classrooms, especially with very young children, as computers lack of the benefits of traditional playing: physical manipulation and collocated learning.

In the GIGA AffectiveLab, we believe that both styles of playing can be combined, getting benefits from both physical and digital ways of playing. For that purpose, we have created NIKVision, a horizontal computer augmented surface (tabletop), especially designed for very young children. NIKVision hardware and software is able to track multiple manipulations of objects on its surface, providing with digital audio and visual feedback both in the table surface and in a frontal computer screen.

We have developed several ludic and educative games for NIKVision, which are always

looking for fostering collocated learning and collaborative behaviors in children. These games have been tested in educative environments: nurseries, schools and especial education classrooms, in which our system has shown equally useful and attractive for children and teachers.

NIKVision has also had notable diffusion in public and academic events and publications, so its design and games are being replicated by other research groups around the world. This has recently emerged a new problem in which we are currently working on: developing hybrid (physical and digital) videogames is not an easy task, involving very technical skills in coding, visual computing, and electronics. To lower the threshold of creating games for NIKVision, we have created the ToyVision toolkit: a set of software tools that eases the prototyping of hybrid videogames by providing designers and developers of computer games with guidance to adapt conventional toys to the NIKVision system, and with high abstract data straight related with children manipulations with the toys.

Both systems, NIKVision and ToyVision, are pioneering in new concepts for innovative and natural ways to bring computer interaction to young children and educative environments.







NIKVision at the GIGA Affective Lab: <http://giga.cps.unizar.es/affectivelab/index1.html>

ToyVision toolkit: <http://www.toyvision.org/>

## Game or need?



AraBoard is a set of tools designed for augmentative and alternative communication, which aims to facilitate functional communication to persons with any type of difficulty in this area, through the use of pictures and pictograms. AraBoard lets you create, edit and use communication boards for different devices (computer, smartphone or tablet), and for various operating systems (available for Windows and Android).

AraBoard is characterized by its ease of use in all aspects as it has a graphical interface

designed for anyone to create and edit boards intuitively and in a few minutes. AraBoard can create panels with from one to thirty-two boxes, using different combinations: 1 row and 2 columns, 2 rows x 2 columns 3 rows x 4 columns, ..., 4 rows x 8 columns. This feature also makes the tool a possible alternative for people with mobility disabilities and very basic communication needs.

Although AraBoard has been initially developed for improving communication, it can also be used to create boards describing simple routines and boards that anticipate conducting any scheduled task. Moreover, people have become to generate simple games with it! One of the key features of AraBoard is direct communication via the Internet, using an API developed for this purpose, with the server [Aragonese Portal of Augmentative and Alternative Communication ARASAAC](#). This communication allows any pictogram search the content database and instant download together with the corresponding locution.

AraBoard has been developed in its technical issues by the GIGA AffectiveLab. For more information: <http://giga.cps.unizar.es/affectivelab/araboard.html>

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