

Governance of Online Worlds and Cultural Diversity

eDiversity Workshop

Friday, 12 September 2008 / University of Lucerne / Switzerland

The workshop unites scholars from various disciplines in the pursuit of a deeper and more fine-grained understanding of the governance of online worlds, such as games and virtual worlds. Governance in this context is understood broadly, ranging from actual regulation over social conventions to the constraints of the business models in online worlds. The underlying presumption is that at least some games constitute a new form of cultural expression. In that sense, cultural diversity motives may be put forward as an essential rationale for online worlds' regulation, as it traditionally is in the audiovisual media domain. It is precisely the objective of the workshop to look into and assess the continued role of the cultural diversity rationales in the digitally networked environment. For this purpose, it aims to address the following key questions:

Does cultural diversity in the context of online worlds rely on similar parameters as in the case of films or television? How can we deal with attempts to regulate online worlds, including games content and its implications for the diversity of cultural expressions? Can cultural issues, such as the promotion of linguistic diversity, the protection of cultural minorities, and the promotion of diversity in games content, game play scenarios and genres, justify initiatives in the governance of online worlds?

Participants are invited to present their contributions within 20 minutes. A discussion will follow up each thematic block. Discussions will be introduced and chaired by different discussants. The interventions will be subsequently professionally edited and published.

Programme

Block I: Understanding the Basics of Online Worlds

Schedule	Topic	Speakers	Discussants
9:30	Introduction to the Workshop	Prof. Christoph Beat Graber, University of Lucerne	
9:40	Game Design, Programming and the Constraints by Code	Mathieu Caramella, Ubisoft	
10:00	Online Worlds: Business, Political Economy and Culture	Dr. Aphra Kerr, National University of Ireland, Maynooth	

10:20	User Created Content Within Games and Cultural Diversity	Dr. Mira Burri-Nenova, Universities of Berne and Lucerne	
10:40	Discussion		Dr. Sacha Wunsch-Vincent, OECD
11:05	Coffee Break		
11:25	Diversity within Second Life – A Sociological Approach	Dr. Sabina Misoch, University of Lucerne	
11:45	Discussion		Prof. Vagias Karavas, University of Lucerne

12:10 – 13:45 Lunch Break

Block II: Exploring the Impact of Regulation

13:45	Securing the Public Interest (Part I): The Role of Public Service	Dr. Edzard Schade / Dr. Matthias Künzler, University of Zurich	
14:05	Securing the Public Interest (Part II): State Aid for Games in EU and WTO Law	Prof. Christoph Beat Graber, University of Lucerne	
14:25	Advertising in Online Games and EC Audiovisual Media Regulation	Thomas Steiner, University of Lucerne	
14:45	Discussion		Prof. Bertil Cottier, University of Lugano
15:10	Coffee Break		
15:30	Regulating Content in Online Worlds: Legal Protection of Minors	Dr. Miriam Sahlfeld, University of Lucerne	
15:50	PEGI as an Instrument of Industry Self-Regulation	Patrice Chazerand, ISFE	
16:10	Discussion		Prof. Bertil Cottier, University of Lugano
16:35	Workshop Closure		
16:45	Apéro		