

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



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HeriCraft: Digital block-building games as models for sustainable heritage management

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The protection and maintenance of built heritage has been sustained by a process of values integration in communities' cognition. European frameworks for heritage policies such as Faro Convention (2005) and Historic Urban Landscape (2011) defended the indispensable need for people-centred approaches in heritage sustainability. Emerging social phenomena of the last two decades such as videogames can take a fundamental role in the processes of cognitive integration of values, especially for younger generations. Serious games as social models can be harnessed to (re)order heritage management plans, in which players use resources of/in a specific context to engage in actions shaped by goals, rules, behaviors, and representations. Block-building games have been gaining momentum as tools for youth engagement in architectural and urban (re)design through symbolic (re)constructions and demolitions. Games such as Minecraft and Roblox, have been applied in youth participation processes due to its popularity, user-friendliness, and easy pixelated 3D visualisation, accompanied with a variety of materials, plugins and modifications.

They have been increasingly applied alongside traditional methods to support young people to share their needs, values and visions in a ludic educational way. Initiatives such as "Block by Block" developed a process that empowers citizens to build their own gaming (re)designs in the Global South, while GeocraftNL fostered a youth digital citizenship in the 3D reconstruction of the Netherlands. However, the implementation stumbles across difficulties, such as measuring learning and awareness raising, and accessibility of technological infrastructures. This paper provides a systematic literature and case studies review focused on how block-building games have been implemented for youth engagement. Findings and gaps are discussed around these factors: 1) Purpose of implementation; 2) Types and groups of stakeholders; and 3) Epistemology and methodology. Results reveal the potential of such games as new mediums of participatory democracy, and as extra-curricular tools for architecture schools.