



Playing at the End of the World - Ropecon 2020 Academic Seminar

July 24, 2020, Helsinki, Finland

<https://2020.ropecon.fi/programme/academic-seminar/>

Important dates:

Abstract deadline: May 03, 2020

Notification of acceptance: May 17, 2020

Full Paper deadline: July 19, 2020

In games, the world is often ending. Gehenna is nigh in *Vampire: The Masquerade*, collapse of civilization threatens in *Pandemic* and *Arkham Horror*, and almost every superhero game is about saving the world. Or maybe the world has already ended and we are trying to deal with that in the Wasteland of the *Fallout* series, or in the annual *Old Town* larp and convention. With the current environmental crisis, the end of the world is also more real than ever. We must prepare for unprecedented changes in our lifestyle if we want to minimize the catastrophic effects of climate change. How is the current situation dealt with in games? Does the environmental change affect the game industry? Can games be used to educate people about this dire situation? How has the end of the world been depicted in these games? The theme of Ropecon 2020 and its Academic Seminar is "The End of the World".

There are also other kinds of ends of the world. What happens when the role-playing game campaign is over, or the servers of a MMORPG are closed down? When a game studio is shut down, what impact does this have on the employees and what happens with the work-in-progress titles? Some genres or types of games disappear with the passing of time.

On a more personal level, losing a game or the death of a beloved character can feel like the end of the world. What about the lapsed players who have left the world of gaming

behind? The end of the world also heralds change. Some worlds must end for new ones to emerge. What kind of worlds have existed inside game cultures, and what has happened when these worlds have ended?

We invite you to present on topics related to the end of the world. The list of possible topics includes but is not limited to:

- Apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic themes in games
- Losing in games
- Character death in role-playing games
- Post-play activities in board games / role-playing games / larp
- Disappearing genres / games / gaming cultures
- What happens when a campaign ends / server goes down?
- Game heritage
- Lapsed players
- The effects of climate crisis on game culture / development
- Climate crisis as a theme / mechanic

Playing at the End of the World is the 3rd annual Academic Seminar of Ropecon, organised as collaboration between Ropecon ry and the Centre of Excellence in Game Culture Studies (2018–2025). The emphasis of the event is on multiplayer games that players engage in while being physically co-located, as that is also the focus of Ropecon. Ropecon is a large, independent convention devoted to role-playing games, larps, board games, miniature wargames, collectible card games, cosplay, and the like. The convention has been running annually since 1994.

The focus of the seminar is on working papers and the presentations should encourage discussion, instead of repeating the information presented in the papers. We want to encourage peer-to-peer discussion to refine and develop the papers further. Every paper will be presented for 10 minutes and discussed for 20 minutes. The sessions will be open for all Ropecon 2020 Academic Seminar ticket holders, but the presentations should be drafted with an academic audience in mind. We welcome submissions from younger scholars and PhD candidates as well as from more established researchers. The seminar is in discussion with a journal for the best papers to be invited to be further developed for publication in a special journal issue.

Submission guidelines

The papers to be presented will be chosen based on extended abstract review. The abstracts should be 500–1000 words (plus references). Abstracts should be delivered in PDF format. Full papers are distributed to all participants prior to the event in order to facilitate discussion.

Our aim is that all participants can familiarise themselves with the papers in advance. Therefore, the maximum length for a full paper is 5000 words (plus references).

Submissions should be sent to: academic.program@ropecon.fi

Organisers:

General Chair: Mr. Ville Kankainen, Tampere University Game Research Lab, Aalto University, Ropecon 2020 Programme Team

Programme Chair: Dr. Jonne Arjoranta, Center of Excellence in Game Culture Studies

Further information and inquiries: academic.program@ropecon.fi