



**GREETINGS FROM THE
DIRECTOR**

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RCGS was established approximately 15 years ago as a hub for digital game research in Japan. During this time, game research has evolved from being an "unprecedented endeavor" to becoming a field of "social research and education."

The center currently has more than 25 researchers and over 55 graduate students, actively engaging in game research from various perspectives.

Moving forward, we will continue to support both domestic and international researchers and creators, contributing to the advancement of game research as a platform for international exchange.

Shigeo Watanabe

DISCOVER THE RCGS DATABASE – YOUR GATEWAY TO GAME RESEARCH! 🌟

RCGS offers a free, open database with metadata on nearly all video games and related materials in its collection. This resource supports researchers, students, and creators by improving access to game-related data, aiding research and cultural preservation.

The database includes games, guides, packaging, and academic content. Its goals are to enhance accessibility and build a knowledge base for popular culture archives. Whether you're a beginner or expert, explore, learn, and stay updated with new resources.

 Explore research
 Access materials
 Stay updated!

database => 



CALL FOR PAPERS

FOR THE REPLAYING JAPAN JOURNAL VOL. 8!

The Replaying Japan journal, published by the Ritsumeikan Center for Game Studies (RCGS), invites original research on Japanese video games, game culture, and related media.

RCGS actively promotes international collaboration in game studies through symposia, publications, and archival research. Join us in shaping the future of Japanese game research.

Submission Deadline: September 17, 2025 (JST)

application => 

RCGS RITSUMEIKAN MONTHLY MEETINGS – EVERYONE WELCOME! 🌟

Every month, RCGS hosts a regular meeting (offline and online) where researchers, students, creators, and game enthusiasts come together to share ideas, updates, and explore the exciting world of game studies.

These meetings are open to everyone – whether you're part of Ritsumeikan or simply passionate about games and research. Join the conversation, get inspired, and connect with like-minded people!

Follow our page to stay updated and join the next meeting!

Let's build a vibrant community through games!

website => 

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RITSUMEIKAN CENTER FOR GAME STUDIES



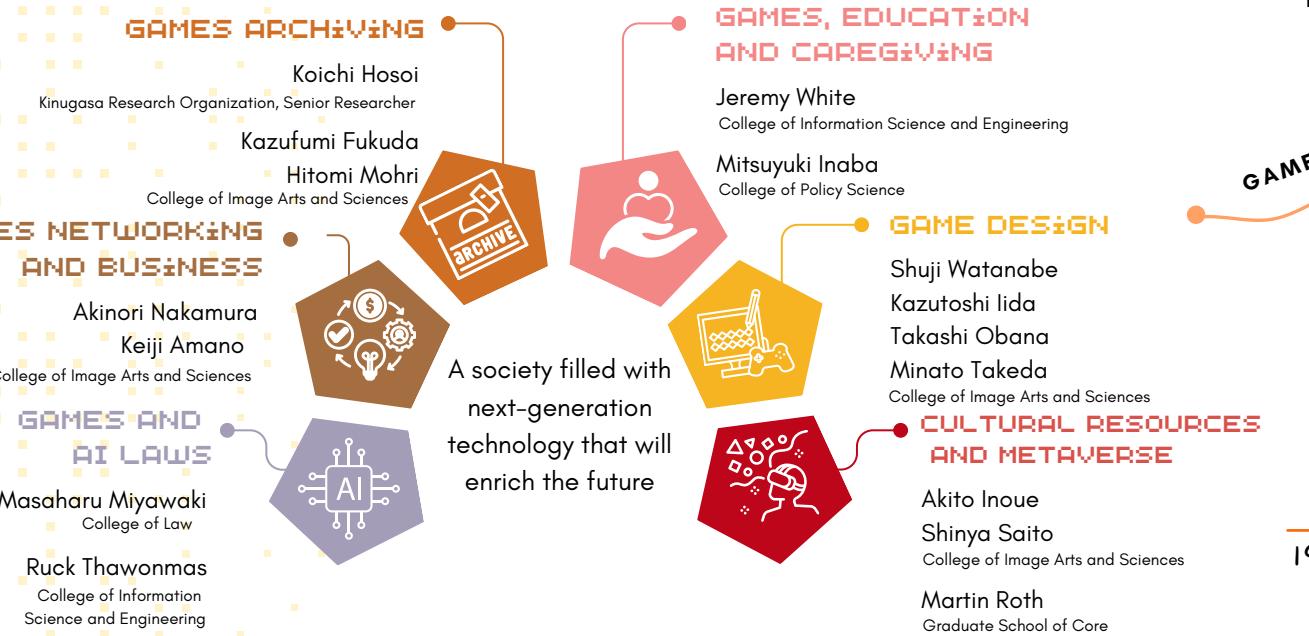
RCGS
立命館大学ゲーム研究センター
Ritsumeikan Center for Game Studies



THE ONLY ACADEMIC INSTITUTION AT ANY JAPANESE UNIVERSITY DEDICATED TO STUDYING GAMES, INCLUDING A DIGITAL GAME ARCHIVE

- The Ritsumeikan Center for Game Studies (RCGS) was established in April 2011 as the only Japanese academic institution in the field of games.
- The center is dedicated to a wide range of games and forms of play, from traditional toys and games to video games, using the latest technology.
- We carry out specialized, comprehensive research with the aim of building a network with other domestic and international game-research centers, leveraging the strengths of the university and its location in Kyoto, the birthplace of Japanese games.
- To further encourage collaboration between industry, academia, and government with the mission of playing a proactive role in bridging the gap between administrative bodies, public institutions, and game-related companies and groups, a wide range of researchers carry out projects in the humanities, social sciences, informatics, and related fields.

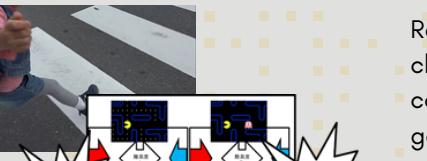
RCGS STRUCTURE



A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY TOWARD ESTABLISHING DIFFICULTY ENGINEERING

PI: Shuji Watanabe (Professor, College of Image Arts and Sciences)

This study explores "spontaneous difficulty" in solo play, like stepping only on white stripes at crosswalks. In games like Pac-Man, players create personal challenges - escaping enemies or eating dots - beyond game design. Failure becomes a cherished treasure. Game design thus supports the creation of such self-imposed challenges and their intensification.



A STUDY OF POTENTIAL SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL GAME APPLICATIONS

PI: Mitsuyuki Inaba (Professor, College of Policy Science)

This project uses a metaverse game space for collaborative learning. Users from diverse cultures explore Japanese traditions like tea ceremonies and shrine visits through interactive activities. By combining fun and education, it creates a global, engaging framework for cultural exchange.



PREVENTING THE OVER-PROTECTION OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS IN THE GAME INDUSTRY

PI: Masaharu Miyawaki (Professor, College of Law)

Recent lawsuits over game similarities highlight the challenge of protecting game mechanics. In one case, a court ruled no copyright infringement due to many similar games using the same "press the button on the bullseye" mechanic. Overprotection may hinder innovation. This project explores optimal IP protection to support diverse game creation.



A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF THE GAME INDUSTRY

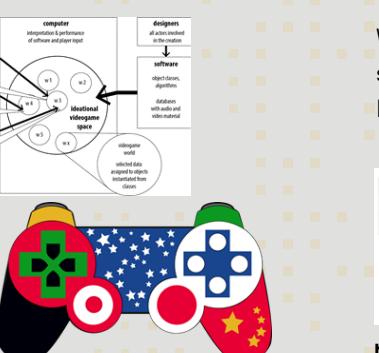
PI: Akinori Nakamura (Professor, College of Image Arts and Sciences)

Games are now the world's largest media industry, with a global market of JPY 20 trillion in 2021. This project, launched in 2003, analyzes the game business across Asia, the U.S., and Europe, focusing on strategies, ecosystems, and media integration. We study how games connect with anime, film, and manga across cultures.

A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF VIDEO GAMES AND PLAY

PI: Martin Roth (Professor, Graduate School of Core Ethics and Frontier Sciences)
Akito Inoue (Associate Professor, College of Image Arts and Sciences)

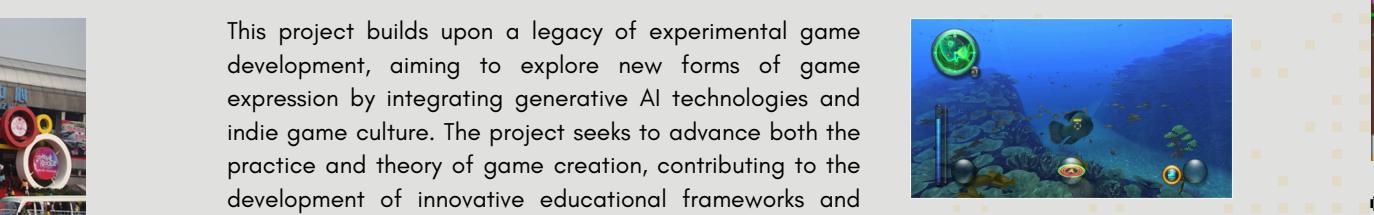
Video games are more than play - they're a dynamic digital culture shaped by technology and diverse users. Their meaning shifts across contexts, raising questions: Is war-themed gameplay okay during real conflict? Why do game tasks feel like work? Why watch others play? Games reflect evolving entertainment, prompting deep reflection on their role and impact.



GENERATIVE AI AND INDIE GAME CULTURE

PI: Kazutoshi Iida (Professor, College of Information Science and Engineering)

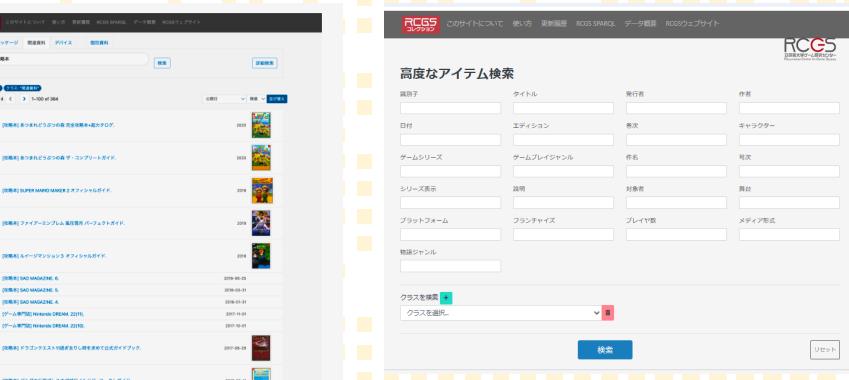
This project builds upon a legacy of experimental game development, aiming to explore new forms of game expression by integrating generative AI technologies and indie game culture. The project seeks to advance both the practice and theory of game creation, contributing to the development of innovative educational frameworks and deeper cultural understanding of games.



BUILDING A DIGITAL-GAME ARCHIVE

PI: Kazufumi Fukuda (Associate Professor, College of Image Arts and Sciences)
Hitomi Mohri (Lecturer, College of Image Arts and Sciences)

Since 1998, this project has archived digital game software, hardware, and media, building a public database in collaboration with the Media Arts Database, which is part of the Agency for Cultural Affairs Project for Promoting Media Arts Collaborative Infrastructure. As a "growing archive," it supports research and cultural preservation. The RCGS Collection offers open access to these materials for learning, discussion, and discovery.



AI FOR SERIOUS GAMES

PI: Ruck Thawonmas (Professor, College of Information Science and Engineering)

We focus on applied research in artificial intelligence, such as Monte Carlo tree search and deep learning, for serious games, live content, and digital humanities. Related basic research is also conducted on an as-needed basis.



MINECRAFT MOD FOR EARLY DETECTION OF ALZHEIMER

