

## The Leisure of Serious Games: A Dialogue

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### Abstract:

This dialogue was performed by Dr. Geoffrey Rockwell and Dr. Kevin Kee as a plenary presentation to the Interacting with Immersive Worlds Conference at Brock University in St. Catharines, Canada. Kevin and Geoffrey as a keynote speaker prepared to present on serious games. Instead of following convention, they invited Kevin to engage in a dialogue testing the claim that "games can be educational". Animated by Socratic play, they examined serious gaming in the light of the insights of ancient philosophers Socrates, Plato and Aesop, twentieth-century theorists such as Ludwig Wittgenstein, Bernard Suurloo, Huizinga, and Roger Callois, and contemporaries such as Espen Aarseth, Bernard Suits and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Their dialogue touched on topics ranging from definitions of play and games, to examples of "serious games", to divisions between games and simulations, and the historical trajectory of comparable media. Their goal was to provide an introduction to these topics, and provoke discussion among their listeners during the conference that followed. In the end, they agreed that the lines of separation between "games" and "learning" may not be as clear as sometimes assumed, and that in game design we may find the seeds of serious play.

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