Project Information Sheet
(Plain Language Statement)

School of Computing and Information Technology,
Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology

Project: Hybrid Technologies for Tabletop Games – Critical Play Reference Group

Project Supervisor:

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Additional Researchers:

N/A

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research project. The following few pages will provide you with further information about the project and the Critical Play Reference Group, so that you can decide if you would like to take part in this research.

Please take the time to read this information carefully. You may ask questions about anything you don't understand or want to know more about.

Your participation is voluntary. If you don't wish to take part, you don't have to. If you begin participating, you can also stop at any time.

What is this research about?

Boardgames are a crucial but under-explored site of technological innovation. Modern boardgames increasingly explore the potential that electronic and digital technologies ("technologies") offer for tabletop play through the development of hybrid boardgames that combine these technologies with physical components. Yet research overwhelmingly focuses on fully-digital games and interactions.

This project will examine and document how digital and electronic tools and technologies can be implemented to deliver meaningful, novel and exciting playful experiences in tabletop games and how understanding these innovations can inspire and shape the future of hybrid interactions.

What will I be asked to do?

Should you agree to participate, you will be invited to join the Critical Play Reference Group (CPRG). The group will meet to play games at The University of Melbourne in Carlton, Victoria, approximately monthly until the end of 2026. There is no expectation that you will attend every session and you can leave the group at any time. You are welcome to tell your friends about the CPRG and invite them to join as well.

At each CPRG game session, around 12 participants will form small groups to play hybrid boardgames. You can choose to play with a group of people you already know, or with strangers. Games will generally be commercially available games, but we will sometimes invite participants to try games that we are adapting or developing ourselves. We will supply a library of games to choose from, but you are welcome to contact us if you wish to bring your own game/s to a session. Each session will last around 3 hours.

While you play the games, or after you play a game, you will be asked about what the digital component of the game was used for, and what you thought was going on in the game. You might also be asked specific questions about what you found interesting in the game, and whether you enjoyed it. These conversations will be audio recorded for later reference and analysis. You will also be asked to complete a short survey about the game.

You will also be invited to join a Slack discussion workspace to arrange CPRG meetings and games.

What are the possible benefits?
These sessions will help the researchers to understand the experience of playing these games, and to get a broad overview of the different types of interactions included in hybrid games and the experience of playing them.

We will give you a gift card for $40 for each session that you attend, to thank you for attending and to off-set travel costs.

What are the possible risks?
We don't believe that there are significant risks in participating in the CPRG. You are free to leave the group or a session at any time. If you become frustrated or annoyed with other players, or with a game, please speak to one of the researchers.

Do I have to take part?
No. Participation is completely voluntary. You are able to withdraw at any time. We cannot remove aggregated data that has already been processed, but will remove any data that can be traced to you, if you request it.

Will I hear about the results of this project?
Results of the project will be published on the project website at
https://hybridgameresearch.net/projects/hybrid-technologies-for-tabletop-games/
and at academic conferences. We will share publications with the CPRG during game sessions.

What will happen to information about me?

We will collect some general demographic information about you, however this project is more focused on the games that are played during CPRG sessions than on the people who are playing them. All data will be stored on password-protected drives on University of Melbourne servers or in password-protected accounts on software used by the University of Melbourne to collect questionnaire data. Data will only be accessible to the named researchers. Data will be deleted after five years from the date of last publication of insights from this research.

Is there any potential conflict of interest?

Dr Melissa Rogerson has previously completed work for several game publishers including Lookout Games, University Games, and Spielewiese. She has had two projects funded through Game-in-Lab, and is a member of their Scientific Committee. Game-in-Lab is funded by Asmodée Research. This specific project is not funded by any game industry sources.

It is possible that current or prospective students or staff at The University of Melbourne may join the CPRG. There will be no benefit in employment or in grades for participation in this group.

Who is funding this project?

This project, which the CPRG is a small part of, is funded through a $455,000 Discovery Early Career Researcher Grant to Dr Melissa Rogerson from the Australian Research Council, supplemented by salary costs and a $50,000 start-up grant from The University of Melbourne. Payments to participants are funded through The University of Melbourne in 2024 and through the Australian Research Council in 2025 and 2026.

Where can I get further information?

If you would like more information about the project, please contact the researchers: Dr Melissa Rogerson, melissa.rogerson@unimelb.edu.au .

Who can I contact if I have any concerns about the project?

This project has human research ethics approval from The University of Melbourne [Project ID 29208]. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, you should contact the Research Integrity Administrator, Office of Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 1376 or Email: research-integrity@unimelb.edu.au. All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence please provide the name of the research team and/or the name or ethics ID number of the research project.