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CALL: FROG 2024
„Gaming the Apocalypse“
11. bis 13. Oktober 2024, in Wien
Deadline: 30. August 2024

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Heuer findet zum 18. Mal die englischsprachige, internationale Spielekonferenz FROG – Future and Reality of Gaming 2024 in Wien statt. Das diesjährige Thema lautet: „Apokalypse“. Globale Erwärmung, eskalierende Konflikte sowie Kriege, oder der mögliche Missbrauch von KIs stellen nur einige Beispiele für die Herausforderungen der kommenden Generationen dar. Könnten Games & Play einen Einfluss darauf haben, wie sich die Dinge am Ende entwickeln? Mehr erfahren Sie vor Ort, vom Freitag, den 11. bis Sonntag, den 13. Oktober 2024 im Wiener Rathaus.

This year the English-language, international gaming conference FROG – Future and Reality of Gaming 2024 is taking place in Vienna for the 18th time. This year's theme is "Apocalypse". Global warming, escalating conflicts and wars, or the possible misuse of AIs are just a few examples of the challenges of the coming generations. Could Games & Play have an influence on how things ultimately develop? You can find out more on site, from Friday 11th to Sunday 13th October 2024 in the Vienna City Hall.

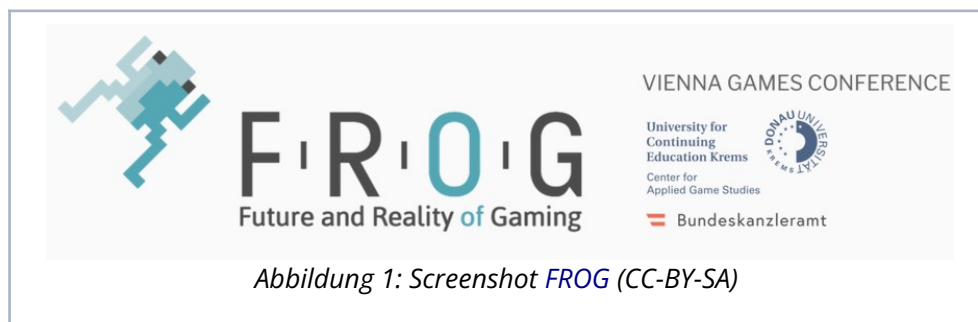


Abbildung 1: Screenshot *FROG* (CC-BY-SA)

The End is Nigh – and, as always, it seems closer than ever before.

What precisely we experience as the most immediate cause of this impending doom depends on our social, intellectual, and, sadly, geographical position:

Global warming, which had long been treated as a concern for future generations, has become a battle against time, in which the very future of these generations itself seems uncertain; war & conflict had never really reced. Obed, but they have recently begun to close in on us again, in ways which many of us (at least in some parts of the world) had already deemed shadows of the past; authoritarian tendencies are on the rise across the world, and the value of basic civilisatory accomplishments like human

rights and democratic values is questioned by some; and even technology – long seen as a beacon of hope and enabler of a brighter future – seems to work against us, as social media spread fake news and discord rather than tidings of peaceful cooperation, and artificial intelligence threatens to take control of our lives rather than making them more convenient. In short, wherever we look, the promises of the past have turned into threats for our future, hope gives way to fear, and dystopian nightmares seem less the stuff of science fiction, but scenarios we might be well advised to prepare for.

At least that's one possible outcome. But the game is not decided yet. Indeed, games & play might have a hand in how things turn out in the end, and the relations between games and the apocalypse are manifold:

- Players young and old use games not only to escape a seemingly gloomy reality for a while: through play, they confront the worst-case scenarios of doom head-on in order to achieve a sense of agency and empowerment. This does not simply mean that games just prepare us for disaster: by enabling us to address our fears as individuals and as societies, games might shield us from freezing up in panic before these fears, and help us preserve a certain amount of playfulness that keeps our minds open for new perspectives and opportunities.
- At the same time, games might be partly responsible for the fact that doom seems so pervasive and likely. After all, post-apocalyptic settings are ideal backdrops for many games, as they allow us to explore worlds that function very differently from ours, yet are similar enough for us to experience them as somewhat familiar – all with a sense of urgency that relates to the anxieties of our time. While the pervasiveness of post-apo-

calyptic game-worlds may at least be partly responsible for our tendency to see doom around every corner, understanding the fascination for the apocalypse in games might not only shed a light on the darker corners of our fantasy, but also on our inclination to fall for threats of doom time and again.

- But even if the world is not necessarily doomed, there is little doubt that it is in need of quite some saving. Having proved valuable tools for education, information and innovation, games can help us to develop strategies for ecological, economic, social and political sustainability. The systemic nature of games makes them ideal media not only for creating visions of the apocalypse, but also for letting us explore what factors might contribute to making this apocalypse more or less likely, or to avoid it altogether.
- A brighter future, however, will not only depend on developing the right strategies to get there, but also on our ability to work together to put these strategies into action. And what better way to practice our ability to interact with others than through play? After all, playing together means joining forces in the shared creation of fantasies, and no matter if we engage in cooperative or competitive gameplay, we rely on each other to make the most of our gameplay experiences.
- Most importantly, however, games are a powerful means to instill hope in a better future by letting us experience a sense of agency, never letting us give up on our ability to overcome obstacles, and they are able to create not only scenarios of doom, but also utopian visions that convince us that a better world may not only be achievable, but also worth achieving.

The 18th Vienna Games Conference – FROG 2024 – is dedicated to these and other connections between play & games, crisis and hope, and invites game scholars, creators, educators, students, activists and enthusiasts from around the globe to come together and reflect on the apocalypse through a lens of games & play.

It also will accept submissions of „vorwissenschaftliche Arbeiten“ (VWA/High School Theses) that deal with issues of game studies on a broader scale.

Furthermore, we welcome submissions to the planned anthology „Gaming the Apocalypse“ (working title).

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Games about the apocalypse: what fascinates us about doom, and how is the (post-)apocalypse “modeled” in games? What makes the end of the world such a fruitful premise for computer games and other media?
- Games for a sustainable future: in what ways can games help understand the problems we face today, and how can they assist us develop strategies to save it?
- Apocalyptic visions in games: how do games change the ways we think about our world and the threats to it? Is there something specific about the dystopian futures presented in computer games, and what can games help us see about the future (and what do they obscure?) that other media don't?
- Gamers against doom: what are the skills games teach us that can help us face the future together? Are gamers better equipped to face the challenges of a world in crisis? And can gamification help to bring humankind together across ideological divides to avoid its downfall?
- Games in education for crisis awareness: How can game-based education approaches help to inform and educate about current or imminent crises? What potential do games have to simulate crisis scenarios and develop critical thinking? And how can they foster resilience, not only during times of crisis, but also against the disconcerting effects of (fake) news and conspiracy narratives that herald impending doom?

- Games for hope: what are the visions for a better future that games can promote? Can games instill hope differently than other media, and in what way? And how can we avoid that such hopes end up in mere escapism, but foster real life action instead?

Submission and Deadlines

Please submit your paper using the following link: [open form](#)

Contributions to FROG 2024 can be submitted for the following formats:

- *Option 1:* on-site talk (20min presentation + Q&A)
- *Option 2:* video talk (20-30min video presentation + 3min teaser video – While it will be possible to take part in FROG2024 as a participant online via the livestream, this time we do not have the option of hosting a parallel online track. However, to provide a stage for speakers who cannot be on site, there is the option of submitting a talk as a video. The submission deadline for the finished videos is October 1st, 2024. The videos will be included in the FROG YouTube playlist. Together with the video, a 3-minute teaser of the video talk is to be submitted. This will be played in front of the audience at the conference. Further instructions will follow with the acceptance notification).

Important Dates:

- Submission deadline: 1 August 2024
- Notification of acceptance: end of August / early September 2024
- Conference Dates: 11–13 October 2024

Submission includes:

- title of your presentation
- short abstract (200 – 350 words)
- short bio (max 100 words) and photo of the author

Please indicate in the form if you are interested in writing a paper for the planned FROG 2024 anthology “Gaming the Apocalypse” (working title).

Please note that a participation fee of €29 will be charged. The fee is due upon registration (opens in July).

Conference language: English

Practical Information 2024

FROG – Future and Reality of Gaming 2024

Friday, 11 – Sunday, 13 October 2024

Conference Location

Vienna City Hall
Friedrich-Schmidt-Platz 1
1010 Wien
Austria

For further informationen click: <https://www.frogvienna.at/>.