Virtual Gaming - What Happens When Two Worlds Collide?

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Last chance to register for Research 2007

Research 2007, the next 50 years is the MRS 50th Annual Conference and will be held on 21 â€“ 23 March 2007 at the Hilton Brighton Metropole. The programme focuses on the most challenging issues facing business and society today. With impressive keynote speakers including global head of TNS, David Lowden and controversial and inspiring environmental writer and activist Jonathan Porritt, the conference promises to be the most rewarding yet. Speakers, representing key client-side companies such as Microsoft, Egg, Saatchi and Saatchi, and the BBC, will discuss some of societyâ€™s most pressing issues, from immigration and displaced Islamic communities to sustainability and the environmental issues facing business.

But it is the psychological impact of online gaming on its players which stands out as a paper with a real difference. Of vital importance as both social and business research, Nick Gadsby, Senior Researcher at Wardle McLean Strategic Research Agency, and an expert in the social anthropology of virtual societies, will discuss how the millions of worldwide online gamers are changing their attitudes towards real society, influenced by their experiences in virtual worlds. This will touch on issues as far reaching as cultural identity and attitudes towards sex and violence, to brand awareness and the power of virtual economies.

Kevin McLean, Co-chair of the conference Programme Team, says "For the anniversary conference we were very keen that the event was relevant and reflected the needs of business and contemporary society. Papers, such as the psychology of online gaming and the effect it is having on wider society, are exciting, new, modern developments that are going to make delegates sit up and take notice. They will highlight the relevance of social and market research in todayâ€™s fast moving, digital world. Jonathan Porritt, one of the worldâ€™s leading authorities on sustainability, will be discussing the most dangerous threat to civilisation that mankind currently faces - climate change. Whilst Rezina Chowdhury and Darren Yaxley, of GfK NOP, will be speaking on another hard hitting, uncompromising issue - the integration of Islamic communities in modern Britain. From online gaming to social disintegration, Research 2007 is challenging the toughest issues."

Co-chair, Neil Swan, adds, "The MRS has really turned a corner with Research 2007. Market and social research has always been relevant to business and broader society, however, this year we have put together a programme that draws on issues that are at the top of the business and media agenda. This conference really is bringing research closer to business and closer to society."

Day one of the conference, Thursday 22 March, will start with a session discussing the relationship between agency and client, highlighting how business can relate to research and take advantage of this powerful partnership. Sue Stent, Head of Customer Insights and Programmes at HboS, will offer the client perspective, whilst Dave Philips, Client Development Director at Research International, will discuss some of the challenging issues facing agencies. Day one will also feature a fascinating discussion on the infinite possibilities of Web 2.0, with Caroline Vogt of Microsoft .

Day two will discuss some of the most troubling issues facing business, and wider society at large. Sam Smith of the BBC will discuss the problems facing broadcasters in the digital age, as different mobile and internet technology has made broadcasters of us all. Whilst Sheila Keegan, co-founder of Campbell Keegan, will unveil her fascinating social research into why she thinks Britain may not be as happy as it could be and what we can learn from the happiness capital of the world, Bhutan. The conference will conclude with a keynote presentation by Jonathan Porritt, discussing the inevitable impact that climate change is having on the way business operates.

Sophie Russell-Ross, MRS Conference Manager, explains: "The conference is a marvellous networking and learning opportunity, but you only have two weeks left to register. With attendance already high, Research 2007, the next 50 years, promises to be the biggest and best MRS conference to date - not one to be missed!"

You have just two weeks left to register for Research 2007, the next 50 years. To book a place, or for more information, contact James Coyle on 020 7566 1852 or email James.Coyle@mrs.org.uk.

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