

**Welcome, everybody, to the first edition of our monthly newsletter!**

We will be posting every first Wednesday of the month, so be on the lookout for info on #NextGen in serious gaming, how to use inclusivity to bring games alive, and advice for those looking to get a foot in the industry.

This month, we'll be giving a run down on the newest Connections family's first ever conference - ours!

As ever, we are grateful to our sponsor, Tom Fisher (Imaginetic), for helping us bring the conference to life. Thank you to those who donated to and participated in the conference.

**Pre-Session on Inclusivity**

Saturday's sessions kicked off with a pre-session on inclusivity by Major Tom Mouat and Jim Wallman, Director at Stone Paper Scissor. They gave insightful advice on the benefits of diversity, and the importance of understanding how diversity done right can be hard work. After a few pointers on inclusion in each of the four fields of serious gaming – design, facilitation, adjudication and reporting, they encouraged the group to think on some practical examples of common inclusion issues encountered in the gaming world (but not before a throwback quote to Yes! Minister!).

**Barriers in the Industry**

We moved on to an important discussion on barriers faced in the industry, where Madeline Johnson, Sebastian Bae and our hosts (Stefanie, Abi, Will and Charlie) opened up about barriers encountered both directly and indirectly, and how those barriers can make us feel. Although tears were not shed, it did provoke many interesting discussions in the breakout rooms on how we can all do better.

**Complicity in Gaming**

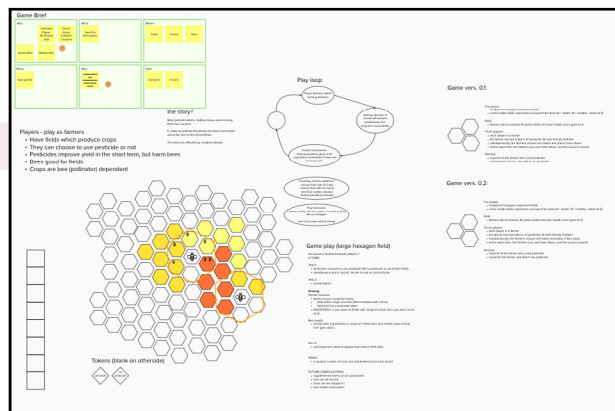
Day 1 wrapped up with a session from Sally Davis, DSTL, on complicity in gaming. Sally explained how participants are an active part of any serious gaming. For people to understand the meaning of your game and create an emotional bond with it - you need them to be complicit. And that often means giving them the freedom of choice. If you do so, you can be rewarded with player investment, both with their time and their emotions.

**Story Telling**

We brought Sally back in to start day 2 with a session on storytelling. Again, storytelling is about emotional investment. How do I do that, you might ask. Well, you need a protagonist with a purpose, conflict, and something to drive the story with every action, building up to a resolution. If a player has put a little bit of themselves into the story, it will make it much more memorable in the end.

**Design 101**

The next part of the day was what a lot of the next generation of serious gamers had eagerly anticipated: How to design a game. Tom Fisher, Imaginetic, and Rex Brynen, McGill University, teamed up to describe the design process. A quick way of designing a game (as learned by co-chair Stefanie in her own Game Design 101), is to establish the "who, what, when, where, why, how". Once you have all those, you need to test, test, test, just 15 minutes in! Participants were then split into teams to create their own games, leading to some pretty interesting discussions!



**Updates**

- Transcripts and recordings are now available via our [website!](#)
- Connections: NextGen 2023: confirmed! Stay tuned for dates.
- Stay tuned for updates on practical wargaming this summer!

**Pictured Above...**

Team 2's contribution to the Game Design Challenge! This game was about saving the bees!