Call for Participants: DiGRA 2025 Workshop

CultureCraft Model (CCM): A Game Designer's Guide to Authentic Cultural Adaptation

(Or, How NOT to Be Racist While Making a Game Inspired by a Culture!)

Workshop Overview

Cultural adaptation in game design presents both an opportunity and a challenge. While representation can enhance storytelling and engagement, missteps often lead to appropriation, stereotyping, or misinterpretation. This workshop introduces the **CultureCraft Model (CCM)**—a structured approach designed to help game creators responsibly integrate cultural elements into their designs.

This workshop focuses on **authenticity, creativity, and efficiency**, ensuring that participants gain practical tools for adapting cultural elements into their game designs while maintaining creative, ethical and professional standards (while also enjoying the process!)

Through an **interactive design sprint**, participants will explore how to research, conceptualise, and refine culturally inspired game concepts using CCM's **step-by-step framework**.

Why This Matters

The video game industry is undergoing a crucial shift—no longer just about technical advancements but also about the cultural and ideological narratives games convey. Video games are recognised as powerful cultural artefacts that shape social and moral norms, often serving as the primary exposure to certain cultures for many players. Meanwhile, culturally inspired games thrive commercially, making it an industry priority.

While AAA studios can afford cultural consultants, independent developers often lack such resources. CCM aims to bridge this gap by providing an **open-source** framework, ensuring ethical and culturally informed game design is accessible to all. By democratising these resources, we contribute to fairer power distribution in the industry.

This workshop is a key step in that mission. With CCM already recognised at **DiGRA 2025**, participation in this session will empower game creators to tell authentic stories, amplify underrepresented voices, and ensure video games become a force for **cultural understanding rather than misrepresentation.**

Who Should Attend?

- **Game Designers & Developers** – Looking to enhance cultural authenticity in their projects.
- **Narrative Designers & Writers** – Working with culturally rich storytelling.

- **Researchers & Academics** – Focused on game studies and adaptation.
- **Cultural Consultants & Artists** – Contributing to worldbuilding and representation in games.
- **Students & Game Project Leaders** – Enthusiastic about cultural adaptation and representation in games.
- **Anyone Enthusiastic on the Matter** – Interested in exploring cultural authenticity in game design.

Workshop Structure

This **three-hour interactive session** includes:

- **Introduction & Case Studies** – Examining cultural adaptation challenges and successes.
- **Concept Foundation** – Defining game ideas, cultural themes, biases, and blind spots.
- **Research & Analysis** – Exploring cultural elements and ethical considerations, as well as sourcing reference materials and archiving methods.
- **Conceptualisation & Design** – Translating research into game mechanics, aesthetics, and narratives.
- **Iteration & Feedback** –Refining concepts through group discussions.
- **Industry & Market Positioning** – Preparing pitches and addressing audience expectations.

Additional Information

- **Participation:** Both **on-site** and **remote** involvement are possible. However, priority will be given to on-site participants.
- **Location:** DiGRA 2025 Conference- University of Malta
- **Date & Time:** 30 June - 4 July 2025
- **Workshop Capacity:** 10–20 participants

Submission Guidelines

We invite participants to submit a short **statement of interest** (max. 300 words) explaining their background, experience, and why they wish to attend. Please include any relevant work in game design, narrative development, or cultural studies.

Send submissions to: yekta.kalantarhormozi.2023@mumail.ie
Point of contact: Yekta Kalantar Hormozi- Maynooth University

Join us—**let's craft culture into the game.**