



## Reply to responses

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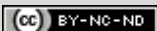
### Abstract

Responses to commentary, "Toward a gerontoludic manifesto," by Bob De Schutter and Vero Vanden Abeele in *Anthropology & Aging* Vol36, no.2, the special issue on "Aging the Technoscape," followed by a reply by the commentary authors.

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We thoroughly enjoyed reading the critical and thoughtful responses to our manifesto. We are humbled by the authors' kind words, and appreciate their valuable insights. Their comments elevate the manuscript by introducing it to broader application domain and igniting an interesting debate.

We find ourselves mostly in agreement with Caitrin Lynch and Maruta Z. Vitols's erudite exposition. Although our previous work has addressed both key issues (i.e., gaming as self-expression and gaming as community<sup>1</sup>), nonetheless, we had not considered including these in the manifesto. Perhaps we were so eager to argue against ageist game design, that we neglected other, more positive design considerations (such as the divergent aesthetic outcomes of games for older adults). The combative voice of the manifesto is a response to the ageism that we perceive in the field of games and ageing, and as such this is also present in the dichotomous character of the adages. We argue that presenting the adages as contradictions is a necessity to make the manifesto's statement bolder. Admittedly, it also strips it from its sensitivity. As the field of gerontoludology develops, more nuanced approaches will surely arise, in particular in relation to the inherent usefulness of play.

Rubinstein and Brazda's comments provide an interesting expansion as well. One of us is currently running an "Adult Gamers Club" which can best be depicted as a biweekly LAN party for retirees. While our research has confirmed that the majority of older players play their games in a solitary setting (e.g., De Schutter 2011), the Adult Gamers Club demonstrates that games with a strong social component can be very successful. For example, *Diablo III* – a dungeon crawler in which a party of 4 fantasy heroes levels up, defeats monsters and collects loot – was a huge hit with the club thanks to the multiplayer possibilities. The potential of Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games for older adults is a vastly interesting yet underexplored terrain for game researchers, and not just because of interface complexities that they may be present – *Diablo III* actually has a simpler interface compared to a typical MMORPG, which also contributes to its appeal with the club.

In conclusion, it is delightful to see that the manifesto has already been the topic of discussion in the very issue in which it has been published. We look forward to further discussion and extensions, as the manifesto is a living document that can and should grow. We hope that it may contribute towards a new age for the older players of digital games.

Bob De Schutter

Vero Vanden Abeele

## Notes

1. For example, De Schutter & Vanden Abeele (2008, 2010) addresses 'connectedness' and "contribution" as themes for digital games aimed at older players.

## References

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