

## **Levels of Complexity: Cultural Diversity, Politics and Digital Games**

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In Europe in the recent past public interest and cultural arguments have been used to achieve exceptions for cultural products from free trade agreements and have led to the development of funding programmes at national and European level to support the production and distribution of certain types of media products. This has been given added impetus by a shift in cultural policy towards 'cultural diversity', epitomised by UNESCO's Declaration of Cultural Diversity. Under pressure from the growth of the Canadian, South Korean and Chinese game development industries policy makers and industry associations in many European countries are starting to consider the cultural role of digital games and funding game production. This trend is epitomized by the French tax credit system for games production and the establishment of funding schemes in France, the UK, Germany and Scandinavia.

This paper explores the issue of cultural diversity and digital games and assesses the degree to which you can take a concept, which has a strong legacy in traditional media and national policy regimes, and use it in the context of digital games. The paper starts by assessing the methodological, conceptual and historical issues raised for scholars and policy makers who wish to examine cultural diversity and digital media in the context of global production networks, transnational audiences and user generated content. This is followed by an analysis of secondary data (etc. reports, statistics) in relation to the flow and cultural diversity of digital game production, content and players. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of the analysis for cultural policies which tend to focus and operate at the national level.

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