

# Expediting the Document Formatting Process

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This presentation is available at:

<https://github.com/JeremyHallSpence/PICO>

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## Discipline Report – Games Studies

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Games studies consists of the study of all types of games throughout history and the culture around them. The discipline covers a wide range of activities, from board games to sports, but it most prominently video games. This essay will argue that games studies can roughly be divided into four main eras, each with its own debates, defining characteristics, and modes of inquiry, and that the new developments of each era can be tied to the state of video games at that time. It is worth clarifying first however, that the introduction of a new era in games studies does not mean the cessation of the last, and that the practices of all of the eras continue to the modern day. Due to this, as well as the relatively young nature of the discipline, games studies covers many different fields and incorporates research methods from many different disciplines.

### The Birth of Games Studies

The earliest era of games studies arose from the field of anthropology around the 1930s. This early version of the discipline was marked primarily by its disinterest in the games of the time, such as the birth of Monopoly in 1935, and by its focus on the games and sports of ancient civilisations, particularly the cultural and sociological role that they played. However, while this field is wholly different from the discipline of games studies that exists today, there were key theorists in this early period who laid the foundations of the discipline.

Key among these was Johan Huizinga's influential work *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (1938), which asserts that play is important to human culture, being "one of the main bases of civilisation." (p.5) In his work, he outlines how many aspects of ancient societies, as well as our current society, can be seen as a type of play, from law, which resembles a contest of wits in an arena outside of ordinary life (pp.76-77), to war, though only if those engaged in it limit themselves to the rules of human rights. (p. 89-90) Even society itself, Huizinga acknowledged, could be seen as a form of play, saying that "We might, in a purely formal sense, call all society a game, if we bear in mind that this game is the living principle of all civilisation." (pp.100-101)

One of the most important contributions to the discipline of games studies, however, was Huizinga's creation of the five characteristics of play: That play is free, that play is separate from the 'real', that play is limited by its time and place, that play demands order, and that play contains no material interest, or that nothing can be gained from it. (pp.8-13) These five characteristics can be considered the earliest academic definition of what play is, and a fundamental building block in the discipline of games studies. By creating a definition for play, Huizinga enabled other theorists to further discuss and debate the idea of play, leading to a more vibrant discussion among theorists, that formed much of the basis for later game studies, particularly in the third era.

The defining characteristic to note about these most early and influential theorists, at least in regards to the history of games studies, is that their work was not interested in the games themselves. Their interest lay in the cultural and sociological contexts of play, and while their ideas would assist with the analysis of games in the future, the content of particular games were not a primary aspect of their interest. As emphasis of this, Huizinga notes in the forward of his book that the correct title should be 'A Study of the Play-Element of Culture' not 'in Culture', saying that "It was not my objective to define

the place of play among all other manifestations of culture, but rather to ascertain how far culture itself bears the character of play." (p.ix)

### The Rise of Video Games

The second main era of games studies came much later, with the rise of video games as the catalyst. As arcades and home gaming consoles gained popularity in the 1970s and 1980s, there was a backlash against them, particularly in the United States, where it was feared that they caused violent and antisocial behaviour in children. Society became concerned with the possible adverse effects of the new medium, with some communities passing ordinances to ban or restrict access to video games, and the United States Surgeon General at the time, C. Everett Koop, saying that video games might be hazardous to the health of young people, who were becoming addicted "body and soul". (The New York Times, 1982) This would spark the most prominent and persistent debate in games studies, the question of whether video games cause violence.

Because of questions such as these, this second era of games studies is marked by an increase of interest from other social science fields, most notably psychology, in order to determine the effects that games had on players. Compared to the previous games studies being done, which were focused on examining cultural contexts of play through archaeological evidence and records, this was an entirely different area of study, and brought in modes of inquiry from psychology in order to gather data through experimentation. An example of this is a study performed by Steven B. Silvern and Peter A. Williamson, and published in the *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* in 1987, in which they state that although there is a backlash against video games, and claims that they affect the behaviour of young children, there exists little data to identify any effects. (p.435) As the effects of violent behaviour caused by television had already been studied and could provide a baseline, the researchers observed twenty-eight child subjects after they had watched a violent cartoon, and after they had played Space Invaders, and found that levels of aggression were increased, but the increase was similar for both violent video games and violent cartoons. (p.437)

Games studies of this era can be defined by research of this sort, which is focused not on the cultural effect of ancient games, but on the current effect that games were having on players, using scientific modes of inquiry to gather data. However, while many studies were about the effects of violent games, there were also those that studied more positive effects of games, such as *What Makes Things Fun to Learn?* (Malone, 1980), which examined why computer games are captivating, and how they can be used to improve the learning of young children. This new type of games study opened the door to further scientific analysis, but also started to legitimise the idea of studying games in academia.

### Computer Game Studies

As games technology continued to advance, it allowed games themselves became more complex. Early video games were very limited in what they could do in terms of graphics, but in the 1990s these limitations began to be challenged with the release of games such as *Violestein 3D*. The first ever 3D first person shooter, and later *Duke*, which helped popularise the inclusion of more advanced physics engines into games. As the medium of gaming became more complex, so too did the analysis surrounding it. In Jasper Juul's 2002 article *The Open and Closed*, he discusses ideas of emergent gameplay, where the player creates their own ways of playing the game that were unintended by the

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## INTRODUCTION

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## BIRTH OF GAMES STUDIES

The earliest era of games studies arose from the field of anthropology around the 1930s. This early version of the discipline was marked primarily by its disinterest in the games of the time, such as the birth of Monopoly in 1935, and by its focus on the games and sports of ancient civilisations, particularly the cultural and sociological role that they played. However, while this field is wholly different from the discipline of games studies that exists today, there were key theorists in this early period who laid the foundations of the discipline.

Key among these was Johan Huizinga's influential work *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* [1], which asserts that play is important to human culture, being a *Umwelt* of the main basis of civilisation. [2-5] In his work, he outlines how many aspects of ancient societies, as well as our current society, can be seen as a type of play, from law, which resembles a contract of war in an arena outside of ordinary life [2p.76-77], to war, though only if those engaged in it limit themselves to the rules of human rights [2p. 80-81] from society itself. Huizinga acknowledged, could be seen as a form of play, saying that *all life might, in a purely formal sense, call all society a game, if we bear in mind that this game is the living principle of all civilisation*. [2p.106-107]

One of the most important contributions to the discipline of games studies, however, was Huizinga's creation of the five characteristics of play: That play is free, that play is separate from the 'real', that play is limited by its time and place, that play demands rules, and that play contains no material interest, or that nothing can be gained from it. [2p.8-13] These five characteristics can be considered the earliest academic definition of what play is, and a fundamental building block in the discipline of games studies. By creating a definition for play, Huizinga enabled other theorists to further discuss and debate the idea of play, leading to more vibrant discussion among theorists, that formed much of the basis for later games studies, particularly in the third era.

The defining characteristic to note about these most early and influential theorists, at least in regards to the history of games studies, is that their work was not rooted in the games themselves. Their interest lay in the cultural and sociological contexts of play, and while their ideas would assist with the analysis of games in the future, the content of particular games were not a primary aspect of their interests or analysis of this. Huizinga notes in the forward of his book that the correct title should be 'A Study of the Play-Element in Culture', not 'in Games', saying that *all life was not any objective to define the place of play among all other manifestations of culture, but rather to ascertain how far culture itself bears the character of play*. [2p. vi]

## THE RISE OF VIDEO GAMES

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## Discipline Report - Games Studies

Jeremy Hall Spencer - G4101038

26/11/2023

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While I was undecided about what my research would entail in the second year of my degree, the one one certainty would be the amount of writing involved.

Therefore, I decided that my project would be the creation of a tool chain to simplify my thesis writing. This tool chain would be designed to produce professional looking documents and automatically handle referencing, while also speeding up the writing process. As a test of this tool chain, my proof-of-concept would be to format a document to meet Macquarie University's thesis requirements.

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To meet the goal of my proof-of-concept, I first found the style requirements for a Macquarie University thesis, available [here](#). These requirements are:

- Double or one and a half sized spacing
- A 3.5cm margin on the binding edge
- A 1.5cm margin on all other edges
- Numbered pages
- A title page, table of contents, and 200 word summary

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I would also need to choose the typesetting software and bibliography management software that I would incorporate into my tool chain. LaTeX, ConTeXt and Adobe InDesign™, were the most widely used typesetting programs, and all could handle the requirements. I chose LaTeX due to InDesign's price, and ConTeXt's difficulty to install on Windows.

For bibliography management software, I chose Mendeley because it can export .bib files, which LaTeX can use to automatically create a bibliography and in-text citations.

# Tool Chain

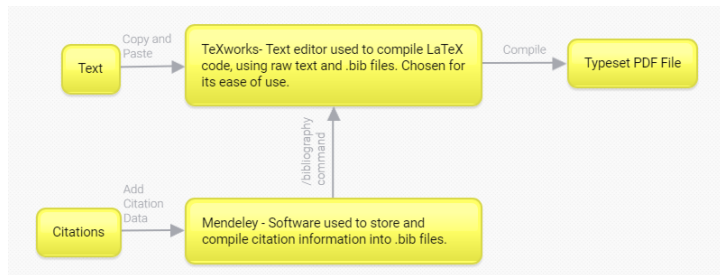


Figure: The Proof-of-Concept Tool Chain

Text is copied straight from a Word document to intergrate with the LaTeX code in TeXworks. Citation data is exported from Mendeley into a .bib file, which is them be called upon in the LaTeX code in TeXworks. The .pdf document can then be compiled.

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# Learning LaTeX

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While the initial learning curve for LaTeX was somewhat difficult, once I had established a basic understanding of the core principles it became quite easy to understand. In addition, LaTeX offers tutorials for beginners, and the online community is large and supportive.

Once I understood the basics, I was able to quickly change documents from one format to another by altering only a few lines of code. What was more difficult was making small adjustments, usually do do with layout, such as creating buttons in presentations.



# Problems

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The primary problem for my project was time management. I would have to learn and integrate two entirely new programs in only a few weeks. I attempted to minimize the time required by identifying what was essential for my project, and focusing my attention on learning that.

One other major problem was that for a few weeks I was unable to integrate the .bib files from Mendeley into LaTeX, which was a crucial step in my proposed workflow process. This problem was a result of my poor understanding of LaTeX, and was fixed with practice and further learning.

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Despite these problems, my proof-of-concept was completed in time, and the repository containing my project can be found here:

<https://github.com/JeremyHallSpence/Proof-of-Concept>

I successfully used the tool chain I had created to format an essay written earlier in the semester. References were gathered and exported from Mendeley in the form of .bib files, and text was copied into a template I had created using LaTeX. From there, I was able to export a .pdf file with formatting that met the requirements of Macquarie University, with references that were automatically generated.

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`%Abstract`

`\begin{abstract}`

`\normalize`

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aliquam interdum ultricies vestibulum. Cras non felis eros. Curabitur pretium erat dapibus necque posuere. Aliquam enim neque, fermentum eget auctor at, blandit sit amet velit. Fusce scelerisque dolor in ex mollis vulputate. Donec consequat facilisis lorem euismod tristique. Quisque et ex ut tellus gravida sagittis vitae suscipit nulla. Curabitur ornare ante vitae ipsum pretium, in posuere elit ullamcorper. Donec non risus ligula.

Duis porta dui leo, nec faucibus ex tincidunt vel. Nullam sit amet egestas magna, vel maximus ex. Curabitur enim leo, rhoncus vel est sit amet, convallis faucibus ex. Nullam diam nisi, rhoncus scelerisque urna quis, vehicula finibus nulla. Donec in fermentum arcu. Curabitur fermentum felis purus, id sagittis lorem viverra in. Maecenas hendrerit orci id pretium eleifend. Pellentesque faucibus, dui vitae cursus malesuada, dui nibh congue orci, hendrerit efficitur nunc massa a elit. Maecenas ultricies eros enim, sit amet fermentum nunc molestie ut. Cras maximus tellus tellus. Morbi velit ante, molestie imperdiet fringilla vel, pulvinar ut orci. Phasellus viverra diam sed nulla lobortis interdum.

Vestibulum et urna et erat tristique sagittis. Ut eget pulvinar nibh. Vivamus rutrum arcu sed fringilla suscipit. Fusce euismod, est quis tristique bibendum, erat diam luctus.

`\end{abstract}`

`%Start of body text`

`\pagenumbering{arabic}`

`\section*{Introduction}`  
`\addcontentline{toc}{section}{Introduction}`

Gerry Mackie's [\textit{Ending Footbinding and Infibulation}](#), [\cite{Mackie1996}](#) concerns the similar practices of footbinding in China and infibulation, or female genital mutilation, in north-east Africa. In it, he argues that the practice of footbinding in China lasted for 1,000 years but ended in a single generation, and analyses the causes of the end of the tradition. He then recommends that by employing the same practices in north-east Africa, the practice of infibulation would be ended in the same manner. However, this essay is largely unconcerned with this argument, and is instead an analysis of the three main paradigms employed by the author in his argument, modernisation theory, rational choice theory, and structural functionalism.

`\section*{Modernisation Theory}`  
`\addcontentline{toc}{section}{Modernisation Theory}`

The basic idea of modernisation theory is that societies develop through a number of stages, the final stage of which is democratisation. [\cite\[p.158\]{Przeworski1997}](#) Developing countries are considered to be at a 'pre-modern' stage, but as they go through the stages of modernisation, they become more like the western world in regards to culture, economy and politics. The modernisation process often targets cultural traditions which are incompatible with the cultural tenants of the modernised west.

**Figure:** A section of the typeset document, and the code used to create that section.

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## References

[Mackie, 1996] Mackie, G. (1996). Ending Footbinding and Infibulation: A Convention Account. *American Sociological Review*, 61(6):999 – 1017.

[Przeworski and Limongi, 1997] Przeworski, A. and Limongi, F. (1997). Modernization: Theories and Facts. *World Politics*, 49(02):155–183.

[Scott, 1999] Scott, J. (1999). Rational choice theory. In Browning, G., Halcli, A., and Webster, F., editors, *Understanding Contemporary Societies: Theories of the Present*, chapter 9, pages 126–138. Sage Publications, London.

```
%References  
\addcontentsline{toc}{section}{References}  
\bibliographystyle{apalike}  
\bibliography{proofofconcept}
```

```
\end{document}
```

**Figure:** Using the two highlighted commands, LaTeX accesses the file in which bibliographic information is compiled, and automatically creates a list of references in the style specified.