

# Gamer's Memory Vault Project: A Database for the research of videogames form the human perspective.

Luis Graciano Velazquez.

Michigan State University.

May 2019.

DH865.

## Table of Contents:

	Page
Participants	2
Enhancing the humanities	3
Environmental Scan	4
History of the project	4
Work plan	5
Final Product and Dissemination	6
End note	7
References	8
Biography	9
Budget	9
Appendices	10

Participants:

Luis Graciano Velazquez: PhD. Student, Michigan State University, College of Communications Arts and Sciences, department of Information and Media. Director.

## Gamer's Memory Vault Project: A Database for the research of videogame's form the human perspective.

~Enhancing the Humanities.

A quick search online about games can give us an idea of how widespread the recreational use of videogames is. It is an activity that spans across the globe, reaches several demographic circles and engages people of all ages. It is undeniable that they are a product of innovation in several fields, from the technological advances needed for the hardware we use to play to the creative minds to apply novel and engaging mechanics. Nowadays we have several options for gaming, but one that has taken central stage in the public discourse it's eSports (Bányai, Griffiths, Király & Demetrovics, 2018)<sup>1</sup>. And of course, with an activity that climbs in popularity we need to understand the actors behind it, we need to find a way to reach these users. However, besides the organized tournaments and gathering that players might attend to, the bulk of users of eSports are scattered across the globe, making them a target population that is not easily reachable by conventional means (Engerman & Hein, 2017). However, it is our firm believe that we can make use of specialized tools to have access to these users while giving them a space to express their stories and experiences. These first hand experiences would prove invaluable for researchers, giving them the access of a participant observant while maintaining the nature of the activity itself. eSports players tend to be open and willing to share their stories in casual settings, so having a friendly interface with some guidance will help us connect with them and do it in a way that is beneficial for all parts involved (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017) . These stories will include Texts, videos, audios and even art, while giving a solid platform for discussion. But besides the environment for the users to express their thoughts we will also provide researchers with a way to collect and analyze data, With the capacity to recruit participants for future endeavors. All, of course, while protecting their personal information and making sure to follow ethics regulations.

~Environmental Scan.

A project of this nature might not be unheard of, but one with this approach, focused on players of eSports is new across academia. Memory Databases have been made for Online experiences (<http://mozillamemory.org/>), community collaboration to archive the past (<http://seekingmichigan.org/>) even in function of science and technology (<http://echo.gmu.edu/>). However when it comes to games few archives can really come to mind, some can focus on articles and opinion pieces in function of cultural heritage (<http://www.playthepast.org/>) while some are deeply rooted in memorabilia and nostalgia about the classics (<http://www.ourdigitalheritage.org/archive/playitagain/>), but in these cases the focus is mostly on a limited group making personal posts without an integration for research. eSports however require a certain approach, this is an activity after all that not only involve professional athletes, but also casual players. A spectator can be player and observer, and get involved with the activity even if their range and skill in the game does not go beyond playing it for fun (Seo, & Jung, 2016). As for the aspect for this to have the capacity to recruit participants this is a feature that sites like Mechanical Turk ( <https://www.mturk.com/> ) and Sona ( <https://www.sona-systems.com/default.aspx> ) have, but the caveat that this will be a specific population with a specific interest.

~History of the project.

The idea for this project comes from a paper that the director worked on for their Qualitative methods class, a paper that will be presented at the Games + Communication Ante-Conference on May 2019. This paper titled "Video Game Communities in Latin America: The Case of League of Legends in Mexico" focuses on the motivations behind players of League of Legends (A popular

eSports game) showed some very clear challenges. For one, the available literature of eSports is focused mostly in Asia and the USA, while some work is extremely important, accentuating the reach and scope of eSports and their viewership along with the human impact of a team activity (Jux, 2014) (Lee & Schoenstedt, 2011). On the other hand, the geographical location of the study subjects was distant, and this needed to be done over a short period of time. However, thanks to some of the existing literature we concluded that eSports players have a strong network of actors surrounding them; from community leaders to online groups where they meet (Freeman & Wohn, 2017). The paper that served as inspiration for this project succeeded in creating a snowball effect by contacting a few key gate keepers of the League of Legends community in Mexico and attaining responses for our open question survey well over 100. As qualitative studies go this was a decent response and that led to idea to create a medium to get this motivated people to freely cooperate with research.

~Work Plan.

This website will be developed from scratch. We will need to code the user Interface to meet our expectations, not only for the general user but for the researchers. We must employ proper security to ensure their information is secure. As for the researcher's we need to ensure the functionality we want to integrate works correctly. Voyant tools integration (<https://voyant-tools.org/>) will be a cornerstone to ensure initial analysis of our work, along with tools to analyze metadata for non-text based memories. This first phase of development should take no more than six months, counting that this time will be spent brainstorming ideas, designing the layout and looks of the site and getting the first working prototype out for testing. Testing should not take more than two months, during this time pilot and initial participants will be recruited in a similar fashion as we did for the paper that served as inspiration: with the support from the community.

All these expenses need to come from the grant expenses. Then a run of four months to collect memories can be our trial phase, during these four months we can acquire and analyze data to make a proper paper and see firsthand how our idea works.

One of the biggest risks for this project would be apathy from both users and researchers. If we create this tool and no one uses it, the objective of our efforts are lost. We need to ensure to include the participation of interested scholars and to begin a campaign with eSports community gate keepers to ensure our project is successful.

Of course, the quality of the data acquired will be evaluated by volunteer scholars well versed in fields that can make use of this information (ethnographers, communications, history, humanities, sociology, etc.) we can also request reviews from users and industry experts to evaluate the functionality and appearance of the site.

~Final Product and dissemination.

This project has the potential to be a go-to source for scholars interested in doing research in eSport's players. We can foresee using the data to write a book in the participation of eSports players in the site and their relationships with one another. It will be interesting to document how a global community relates to one another and how they comment on other's memories.

Especially since this platform will be ideal for collecting information of those either unable to be part of studies because of distance or disabilities or those not comfortable being in crowds or social gatherings. This data can also give us enough material for several conference papers on digital communities and games for good. Finally, all the content created will be shared with the users, so they know if their information was part of the data used for a particular paper or book.

All this content will also be made publicly available in open access.

End Note:

1: Focusing our efforts on eSports is a decision made on functionality and narrowing down the scope of the project to something more manageable. eSports are a growing trend, with more and more developers taking the jump to different modes of game to compete in this growing market. eSports share the core mechanics and characteristics of regular games, with the caveat that they have a competitive element to them, one that is either taken in teams or solo bouts. It is important to underline that this is as much an audience game (as in spectators just watch and follow) as it is a participative event (Many spectators also play, in fact the vast majority do). We also know that this same platform can be used for more than eSports, and actually using them would be just a matter of expanding the list of Games we would consider part of the options to upload memories of. However this would be a very big list and as a pilot prototype we believe smaller would be wiser, but the success on this first effort, can open up possibilities for more inclusive themes.

## References:

- Bányai, F., Griffiths, M. D., Király, O., & Demetrovics, Z. (2018). The psychology of esports: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Gambling Studies (Online)*, , 1-15.
- Engerman, J. A., & Hein, R. J. (2017). eSports gaming and you. *Educational Technology*, 57(2), 62-64.
- Freeman, G., & Wohn, D. Y. (2017). Understanding esports team formation and coordination. *Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW)*.
- Hamari, J., & Sjöblom, M. (2017). What is eSports and why do people watch it? *Internet Research*, 27(2), 211-232.
- Jux, B.A.A. (2014) Análisis de la expansión transmedia y la figura del prosumidor en los juegos MMO: El caso de League of Legends (Master's Thesis) Universidad de Alicante, Alicante, Spain.
- Lee, D., & Schoenstedt, L. J. (2011). Comparison of eSports and traditional sports consumption motives. *The ICHPER-SD Journal of Research in Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sport & Dance*, 6(2), 39-44.
- Seo, Y., & Jung, S. (2016). Beyond solitary play in computer games: The social practices of eSports. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 16(3), 635-655.

**Biography:**

Luis Graciano Velazquez is a scholar from Mexico studying a PhD in Information and media with the support of the Fulbright foundation. His interests are in Videogames and identity. His expertise resides in qualitative methods with some analytic quantitative analysis for triangulation.

Project Budget: TBD.

## ~\*~Appendices-~\*~

### Website Mockup:

For the website, the layout that is envisioned is slick and elegant, trying to keep it uncluttered. The content that the users upload however will have full htm and CSS support, in case they want to add personalization. In addition to these mock screens the register screen will request the user's name (To be kept private), nickname, e-mail, geographical location down to the state/region, age group (We will provide age ranges (this is to help anonymize), gender identity, maximum level of education, occupation (Dropdown list with general occupation like general employee, administrative, independent, student, professional student, etc) and ethnicity. An option to make this information public will be provided individually (A user could display their ethnicity but not their gender) but the metadata will be available to researchers. In this page we will also include our Privacy statement which are also available on the statement of Purpose page of the site.

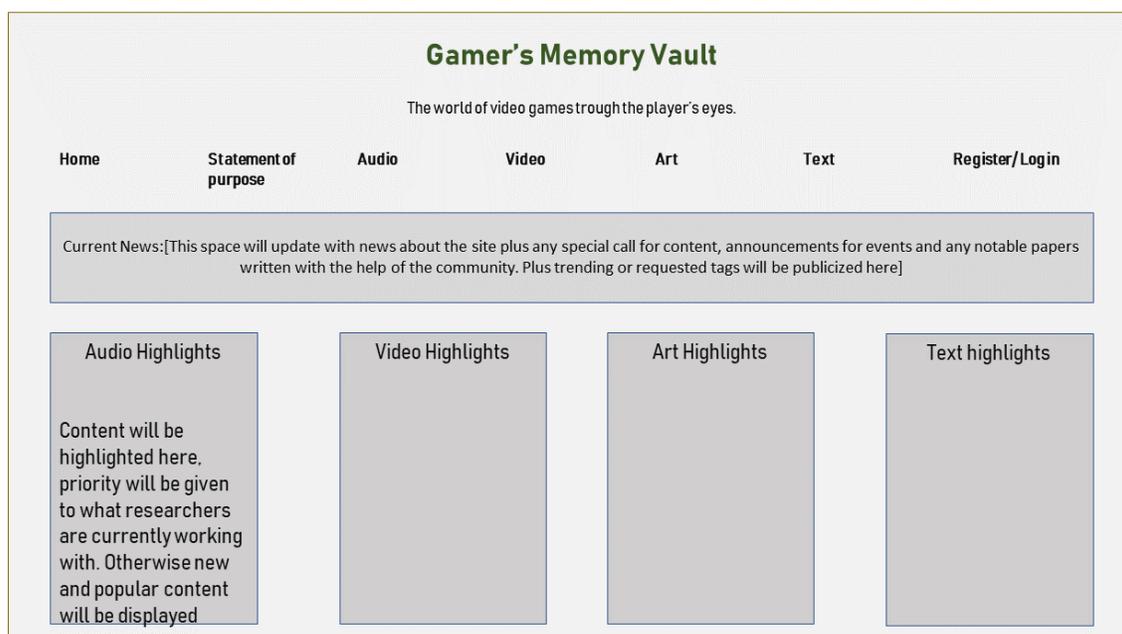


Figure 1: A mockup of the site's front page, in the beginning a lot will be run by algorithm, but as participation increases and researchers work with the platform the feed will be improved.

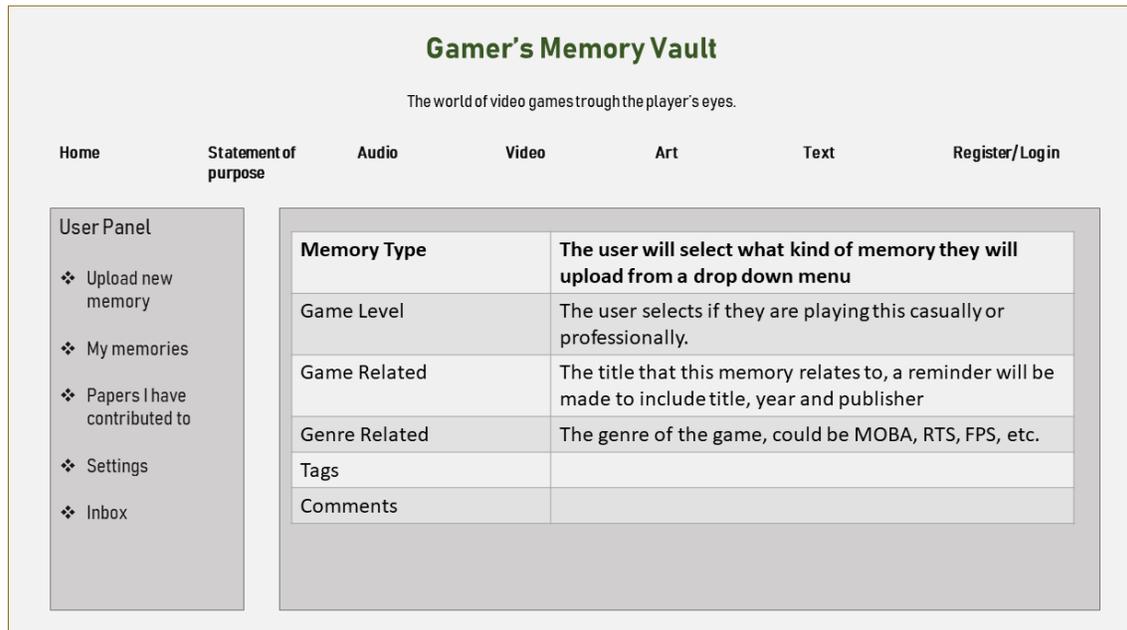


Figure 2: A mockup of the user page, where memories are uploaded and metadata is entered.

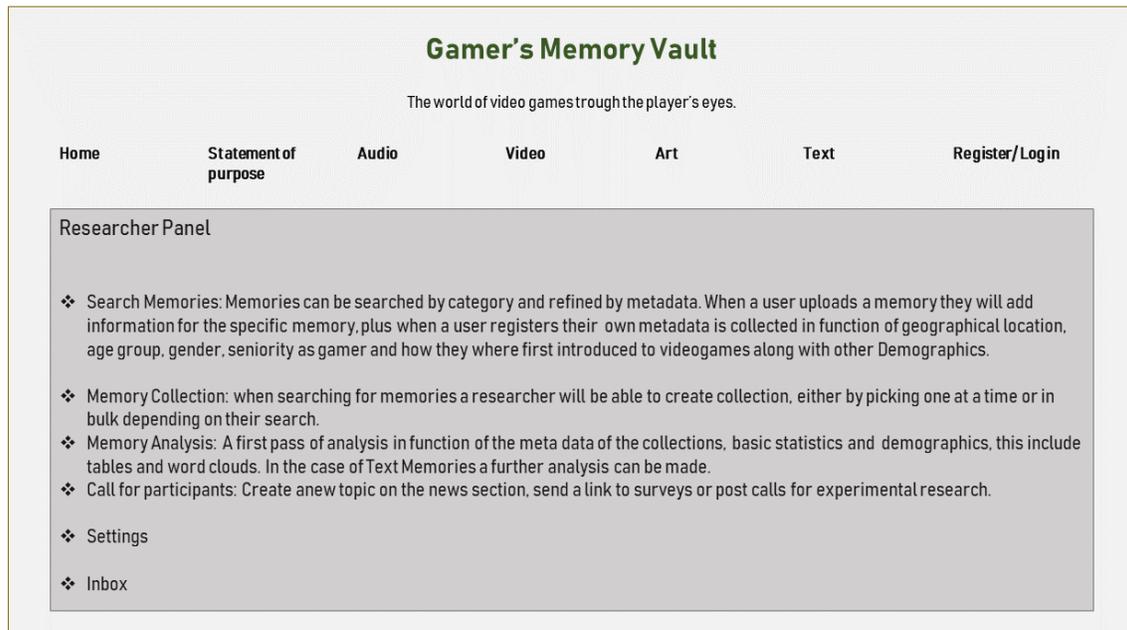


Figure 3: Researcher's interface mockup, here we will have access to the onboard tools of the website, options to export data are included.