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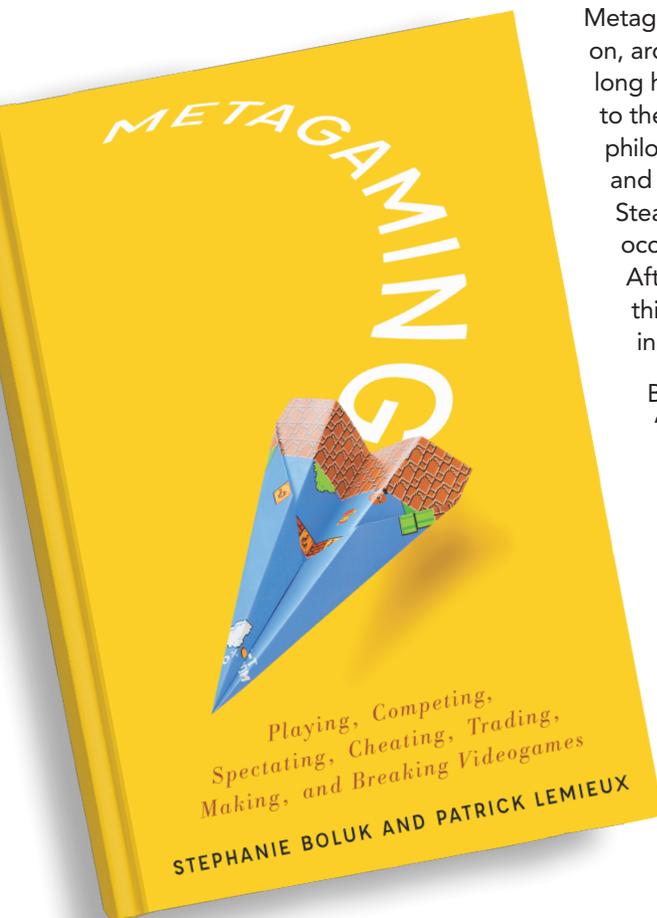
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From Metagames to Moneygames

STEPHANIE BOLUK, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS

Thursday, October 12, 2017, 1:45 p.m.

GRUCCI ROOM • 102 BURROWES BUILDING



Metagames, simply put, are games about games. They are the games we play in, on, around, and through videogames. And although the word “metagame” has a long history—from Nigel Howard’s game theory in which he proposed a solution to the Prisoner’s Dilemma during the Cold War to Richard Garfield’s game design philosophy for *Magic: The Gathering* in the 1990s—since the turn of the millennium and especially with the emergence of social media and streaming services like Steam and Twitch, the term has become a common label for diverse forms of play occurring not only around videogames but around all forms of digital technology. After reviewing what “metagaming” means within various player communities, this talk will focus specifically on the movement from metagame to moneygame in the emerging economic ecology surrounding e-sports and livestreaming.

Boluk will analyze the ways in which players have not “gamified” but “gamblified” their livestreams in order to produce a complex network of betting games that suture together Steam and Twitch. From thousands of dollars being gambled in virtual blackjack using live video feedback of Panamanian dealers to online poker games streaming from private yachts in the Pacific to subscriber chat lotteries giving away *Counter-Strike* skins obtained through grey market economies, this talk examines the flows of affective, informatic, and racialized labour of moneygames that do not evade surveillance technologies but flourish precisely as a result of the presence of ubiquitous real-time cameras and networked spectatorship. As players wager that their activity will result in a wage, money is not simply the outcome but the main game mechanic driving this massive multiplayer game.



STEPHANIE BOLUK is an associate professor at the University of California, Davis. She recently published *Metagaming: Playing, Competing, Spectating, Trading, Making, and Breaking Videogames* (2017) with Patrick LeMieux and co-edited *The Electronic Literature Collection Vol. 3* (2016) with Leonardo Flores, Jacob Garbe, and Anastasia Salter. For more information see <http://stephanieboluk.com>

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