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Foreword from the Association for Research in Digital Interactive Narratives Graduate Research Committee

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Abstract

The inaugural Future Directions in Interactive Digital Narratives (FIDN) Student Research Symposium, convened virtually on June 7, 2025 by the Association for Research in Digital Interactive Narratives (ARDIN) Graduate Research Committee, provided a dedicated venue for emerging scholars to articulate near-term trajectories for interactive digital narratives (IDNs). Eight Master's and doctoral students and early-career researchers presented work and received feedback from established scholars, fostering a collaborative exchange across the global community. Following the event, presenters developed extended abstracts, collected here as a record of the symposium and signals of anticipated directions for the field; these abstracts were not peer-reviewed.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage, Social Engagement, Educational Technology, Graduate Research, Interdisciplinary Scholarship

It is our pleasure to present the proceedings of the inaugural Future Directions in Interactive Digital Narratives (FIDN) Student Research Symposium, held virtually on June 7, 2025. The Association for Research in Digital Interactive Narratives (ARDIN) Graduate Research Committee is committed to supporting emerging scholars, and this symposium was created to give early-stage researchers a space to share innovative ideas that will shape the future of our field.

The interdisciplinary domain of Interactive Digital Narratives (IDNs) brings together immersive technologies and the enduring art of storytelling. IDNs offer powerful new ways to engage audiences, preserve cultural heritage, and address social and educational challenges. From branching video game narratives to virtual reality experiences and interactive installations, IDNs continue to expand the possibilities of how stories can be created and experienced. This first edition of the symposium invited Master's and PhD students, early career researchers, and practitioners to share their visions for the future of IDN research. Presenters submitted short abstracts, which were reviewed by the ARDIN Graduate Research Committee for relevance to the symposium's theme.

A total of eight students and early career researchers presented their work during the virtual event. Established scholars in the field were invited to offer feedback and facilitate discussion. The symposium reflected the close-knit and collaborative nature of our research community, bringing together the creativity of emerging researchers and the insight of experienced mentors from around the world. Presentations addressed topics ranging from the use of IDNs to foster cultural dialogue and social and environmental engagement, to efforts to formalize IDN research practices. Notably, one presentation inspired the creation of a workshop on IDN methodologies at this year's International Conference on Interactive Digital Narratives (ICIDS) in Malta. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all presenters and mentors for making this first edition such a success.

Following the event, presenters were invited to submit extended abstracts that reflected the discussions and feedback they received. These abstracts were not peer-reviewed; instead, they serve as a record of the symposium and capture the ideas that these early-career researchers see as important future directions for the field. We are grateful to ARDIN for its sponsorship and support, and to the Journal of Interactive Narrative for publishing these proceedings and preserving the contributions of this event.

The ARDIN Graduate Research Committee looks forward to future symposiums and remains dedicated to fostering dialogue, growth, and collaboration between emerging and established researchers in our community. We thank our presenters for their participation and for sharing their visions for the future of interactive digital narrative research.

Sincerely,

Members of the ARDIN Graduate Research Committee:

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