

# Sercan Şengün

25 Brooks Park  
Apt 6 Medford  
02155 MA

sercansengun@gmail.com  
Primary: (781) 5186229  
Intl.: +974 50911049

## Appointments

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- 2016-Present** Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, member of MIT Imagination, Computation, and Expression Laboratory (ICE Lab) and MIT CSAIL (Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory)
- Led projects of qualitative data gathering and analysis such as interviews, qualitative codings of media content, close textual readings, and lab experiments (e.g. telemetric data gathering on avatar creation processes, identity clustering)
  - Led projects of quantitative data gathering and analysis such as survey design, implementation, and analysis (practices of creative industries in Turkey, Middle East, and North Africa, user studies), crowdsourced experiments, and statistical analysis
  - Facilitated new data sources for research such as negotiating the release of MENA regional data from prominent online videogame companies (e.g. Riot Games, Netmarble MENA)
  - Postdoctoral teaching assistance & graduate student mentoring for ICE Lab student members and CMS.628/828 courses
  - Advisor: D. Fox Harrell (MIT CSAIL & CMS)
- 2016-2017** Visiting Postdoc at QCRI (Qatar Computing Research Institute) of Hamad Bin Khalifa University in Doha, Qatar, December 2016 – June 2017
- Collaborated with interdisciplinary scientists to gather and analyze data about social media, videogames, and other information and communication technology usage in Middle East and North Africa
  - Conducted deep interviews with local media and app developers as well as users from the region to gain insight about cultural values and challenges that affect communication and information technology use
  - Developed cases of best practices and design principles for regionally specific and culturally-grounded information and communication technologies
  - Advisors: Haewoon Kwak (HBKU), D. Fox Harrell (MIT CSAIL & CMS)
- 2017-2018** Visiting Postdoc at QCRI (Qatar Computing Research Institute) of Hamad Bin Khalifa University in Doha, Qatar, December 2017 – June 2018
- Advisors: Haewoon Kwak (HBKU), D. Fox Harrell (MIT CSAIL & CMS)

## Education

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- Ph.D.** **Communication**, İstanbul Bilgi University, 2016 (*Faculty Scholarship & The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey Doctoral Fellowship*)  
Thesis: Narra Ludens: Explaining Video Game Narrative Engagement Through Player Types and Motivation
- M.A.** **Film and Television**, İstanbul Bilgi University, 2013 (*Full Faculty Scholarship & The Dean's Graduate Fellowship*)  
Thesis: Six Degrees of Video Game Narrative: A Classification for Narrative in Video Games
- B.A.** **Communication Design**, İstanbul Bilgi University, 2004 (*Full OSYM Scholarship*)  
Graduation Project: Best Practices in Culturally-Grounded Ways of Visual Storytelling  
Published as a part of the book "Bize Kusdili Ogretildi" in 2010 by Can Press, İstanbul. ISBN: 9789750712371.

## Teaching

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- 2016-2017 Postdoctoral Teaching Assistance & Graduate Student Mentoring at Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
**Courses:** Advanced Identity Representation CMS.628/828
- Led student groups in research, data gathering, and data analysis for class projects that resulted in media products and/or academic publications
- 2015-2016 Instructor at Istanbul Bilgi University  
**Courses:** Introduction to Design and Creative Thinking GAME103
- Developed and taught lectures, lecture materials, creativity activities, and facilitated design workshops.
- 2014-2017 Instructor at Istanbul Bahçeşehir University  
**Courses:** Games & Culture GAD5101  
Game Art & Aesthetics GAD5103  
Thesis I GAD5888-1  
Thesis II GAD5888-2
- Developed and taught lectures, lecture materials, student facilitations, group projects, prototyping activities, and organized industry workshops.

## Graduate Student Advising

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### *Thesis Advisor and Committee Chair*

Doruk Kıcıkoğlu, (Istanbul Bahcesehir University, Game Design Graduate Program), 2017 (now: Research Officer at Queen Mary University of London)

Ali Han Şimşek, (Istanbul Bahcesehir University, Game Design Graduate Program), current.

Selim Özkil, (Istanbul Bahcesehir University, Game Design Graduate Program), current.

Sezin Engür, (Istanbul Bahcesehir University, Game Design Graduate Program), current.

## Publications

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### *Peer-Reviewed Articles*

- 2017** Ludic voyeurism and passive spectatorship in Gone Home and other “walking simulators.””*Video Game Art Reader*, 1(1), accepted, in print.
- 2015** If I am not an Orc, Why do I Fall for the Elf? The Implications of Virtual Avatars in Digital Communication. *Journal of Communication and Society*, 27, pp.181-193, doi: [http://dx.doi.org/10.17231/comsoc.27\(2015\).2096](http://dx.doi.org/10.17231/comsoc.27(2015).2096)
- 2015** A Semiotic Reading of Digital Avatars and Their Role of Uncertainty Reduction in Digital Communication, *Journal of Media Critiques [JMC] Digital Communication Impact Special Issue*, (issue doi: 10.17349/jmc114300) article doi: 10.17349/jmc114311
- 2014** Sanal Hikaye Anlatıcılığı Çağında Yaşayan Bilimkurgu ve Fantastik Dünyalar Olarak Video Oyunları (*Turkish, title trans.: Videogames as Living Science Fiction and Fantasy Worlds in the Age of Virtual Storytelling*), *Varlık*, #1278, pp. 16-21, Varlık Yayınları, İstanbul
- 2013** Silent Hill 2 and the Curious Case of Invisible Agency, *Lecture Notes on Computer Science*, 8230, pp. 180-185, Springer International Publishing, Switzerland

### *Book Chapters*

- 2017** A Survey of Marketing Management for Videogames Industry in Turkey, *Marketing Management in Turkey* (Eds. Selcen Ozturkcan, Elif Yolbulan Okan), Emerald Publishing, accepted, in print.
- 2016** Pleasure in Pain: How Accumulation in Gaming Systems Produce Grief, Selcen Öztürkcan & Sercan Şengün, *Gamer Psychology and Behaviour* (Eds. Barbaros Bostan, Courtney Clark), Springer International Publishing, 2016, 10.1007/978-3-319-29904-4

## Publications (Cont.)

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### Book Chapters (Cont.)

- 2016** Video Oyunlarının Toplumsal ve Politik Değişim Potansiyellerini Okumak Amacı ile Farklı Bir Sınıflandırma Önerisi (*Turkish, title trans.: A Classification Proposal to Understanding the Potential of Videogames in Social and Political Change*), *Yeni Medya Çalışmaları II. Ulusal Kongresi – Kongre Kitabı*, ISBN: 978-605-62169-5-4 pp. 459-471, 2015
- 2015** Gaining Reward vs Avoiding Loss: When Does Gamification Stop Being Fun? Selcen Öztürkcan & Sercan Şengün, *Handbook of Research on Trends in Gamification*, Eds: Donna Davis ve Harsha Gangadharbatla, pp.48-72, IGI-Global, ISBN: 978-1-4666-8651-9, 2015
- 2015** Gaze of the Local vs the Other: Images of Istanbul in Video Games, *IMAGES (IV) – Images of the Other*, Veronika Bernard (eds), pp. 95-104, Lit Verlag: Zürich.
- 2015** Sanal Hikaye Anlatıcılığı Çağında Yaşayan Bilimkurgu ve Fantastik Dünyalar Olarak Video Oyunları (*Turkish, title trans.: Videogames as Living Science Fiction and Fantasy Worlds in the Age of Virtual Storytelling*), *Edebiyatın İzinde: Fantastik ve Bilimkurgu*, Eds. Seval Şahin, Banu Öztürk ve Didem Ardalı Büyükkarmak, pp. 211-220, Bağlam Yayınları, İstanbul.
- 2014** Dijital Avatarlar için Semiyotik Bir Okuma ve Avatarların Dijital İletişimde Belirsizlik Azaltma Rollerini (*Turkish with English abstract, title trans.: A Semiotic Reading of Digital Avatars and Their Role of Uncertainty Reduction in Digital Communication*), *Dijital İletişim Etkisi*, pp.33-44, İskenderiye Kitap, İstanbul.

### Conference Papers & Other Publications

- 2017** Salminen, Joni, Sercan Şengün, Haewoon Kwak, Bernard Jansen, Jisun An, Soon-Gyo Jung, Sarah Vieweg, and D. Fox Harrell. Generating cultural personas from social data: A perspective of Middle Eastern users. *IEEE International Conference on Future Internet of Things and Cloud (FiCloud-2017)*, August 21-23, 2017, Prague, Czech Republic.
- 2017** Harrell, D. Fox, Sarah Vieweg, Haewoon Kwak, Chong-U Lim, Sercan Sengun, Ali Jahanian, and Pablo Ortiz (2017) Culturally-grounded analysis of everyday creativity in social media: A case study in Qatari context. *ACM Creativity and Cognition*, June 27-30, 2017, Singapore.
- 2013** Cybertexts, Hypertexts and Interactive Fiction: Why Shan't the Prodigal Children Overthrow Their Forefathers, *Innovation, Difference, Irregularity, LIT FICTION '13*, pp. 58-66, Mimar Sinan University Press, Istanbul
- 2012** Engagement Model As the Basis For Video Game Design, *Proceedings of ECREA 2012 Pre-Conference: Experiencing Digital Games: Use, Effects & Culture of Gaming*.

### Op-Eds and Commentary

- 2016** Tokyo 2020'yi oyun dünyası da bekliyor (*trans.: Videogame industry is also waiting for Tokyo 2020, Oyunder.org*, August 22)
- 2015** Video oyunlarında İstanbul imgeleri (*trans.: Images of Istanbul in Videogames, Oyunder.org*, November 17)
- 2015** Geleceğe karşı savaş vermek (*trans. Fighting against the future, Oyunder.org*, February 10)
- 2014** Holistik bölüm akışı (*trans. Holistic level design, Oyunder.org*, December 30)
- 2014** Barbie'den Mortal Kombat'a Oyunlar ve Cinsiyet Tartışmaları (*trans. Gender representations in videogames from Barbie to Mortal Kombat, Oyunder.org*, September 1)

### Works Submitted or in Progress

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- D. Fox Harrell, Sercan Şengün, and Danielle Olson, (2018), Africa and the Avatar Dream: Mapping the Impacts of Videogame Representations of Africa, *The Digital Black Atlantic* (eds. Matthew K. Gold and Lauren F. Klein), Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Sercan Şengün and Selcen Öztürkcan, (2018), How Mobile Disruption Shaped a National Market: The Case of Turkish Videogame Industry, *Business Innovation and Disruption in the Videogame Industry: Global Perspectives* (eds. John Banks, Robert DeFillippi, and Patrick Wikström).
- Joni Salminen, Sercan Şengün, Haewoon Kwak, Jisun An, Bernard J. Jansen, Soon-Gyo Jung, D. Fox Harrell, and Sarah Vieweg, (2018), *Creating Culturally Adapted and Approachable Personas from Online Analytics Data: A Mixed-Method Study of Middle Eastern Social Media Audience*.

## Works Submitted or in Progress (Cont.)

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- Sercan Şengün, (2018), Video Game Engagement: Psychological Frameworks, *Encyclopedia of Computer Graphics and Games* (eds. Newton Lee), Living Reference Work, Springer.
- Sercan Şengün and Şevket Tüfekçi, (2018), How Turkish Literature Permeated to Hypertext and E-publishing: The Intertwined Cases of *altZine* and *altkitap*, *Early Digital Cultures in Turkey (1999-2004)* (eds. Erkan Saka and Ivo Furman).
- Sercan Şengün, D. Fox Harrell, and Aristoteles G. Sakellariou, (2018), *Playing the World Exhibition: Physical World Representations in Videogames as Curated Ludic Exhibitions*.
- Aristoteles G. Sakellariou and Sercan Şengün, (2018), *Only Authorised Personnel Beyond This Point (Unless You are Playing): Behind the Scenes of Museums in Videogames*.
- Peter Mawhorter, Sercan Şengün, Haewoon Kwak, and D. Fox Harrell, (2018), *Exploring Avatars Using Deep Learning: Realistic, Idealistic, and Creative Self-Expression*
- Sercan Şengün and Laurel Carney, (2018), *Toward a Power Relational Approach in Analyzing Serious Videogames*
- Sercan Şengün, James Bowie-Wilson, Yusef Audeh, Haewoon Kwak, and D. Fox Harrell (2018), *Enfreakment: Skewed Representations of Race, Ethnicity, and Gender in Fighting Videogames*.

## Services

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### Academic

- 2017** Reviewer, Eurasia Graphics 2017 Conference on Virtual and Interactive Worlds
- 2016** Reviewer, ACM CHI 2016 Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems
- 2014** Organizing Committee Member, The Philosophy of Computer Games Conference 2014

### Conference Presentations

- 2017** Design 4 Diversity: An IMLS National Forum Project, Northeastern University, Boston
- 2017** ACM Creativity & Cognition 2017 Conference, Singapore National Gallery, Singapore
- 2016** New Media II. National Congress, Kadir Has University, Istanbul
- 2015** IMAGES (IV) – Images of the Other, Austrian Embassy, Istanbul
- 2015** Edebiyatın İzinde 2015 Fantastik ve Bilimkurgu Konferansı, Yıldız University, Istanbul
- 2014** Digital Communication Impact 2014 Conference, Istanbul Ticaret University, Istanbul
- 2013** LIT FICTION '13, Mimar Sinan University, Istanbul
- 2012** ECREA 2012 Pre-Conference: Experiencing Digital Games, Istanbul

### Industry

- 2011-2014** kreatiFabrika Communication Agency, Director for Digital and SM Projects
- 2005-2011** Nortec Eurasia, Nintendo of Europe Local Franchise Office, Director for Regional Marketing
- 2003-2005** Avaturk Gaming Services, Director of Content
- 1999-2003** Arti Interaktif New Media Agency, Managing Partner

### Institutions

- 2016** Selection Committee, Startup Bootcamp Istanbul, Gamegarage Accelerator Program
- 2015** Turkish Ministry of Education “Videogames and Kids,” Seminar Organizing Committee
- 2014** Selection Committee, Turkcell “Coding Future Mobile Games Atelier,” Series #1 and #2
- 2013-2014** Volunteer Media Consultancy to TransXTurkey: A Multiplatform about Transgender in Turkey
- 2012-2014** Volunteer Digital Consultancy to SPoD LGBT and Istanbul LBGT Associations

## Current Memberships

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ACM (Association for Computing Machinery)

DIGRA (Digital Games Research Association), *Administrator in Digra-TR Chapter*

ECREA (European Communication Research and Education Association)

IGDA (International Game Developers Association)

MIT Alumni Association

NPA (National Postdoctoral Association)

OYUNDER (Turkish Game Developers, Designers, and Publishers Association), *Board Member*

## Panels and Workshops

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- 2016** Startup Bootcamp Istanbul, "Creativity in Game Design," Workshop Instructor
- 2015** Amberfest, "Games for Change," Panelist
- 2015** Mobile Day 2015, "Videogame Industry in MENA," Panelist
- 2015** Oyunder @GameX 2015, "Games and Narrative," Workshop Instructor
- 2015** Oyunder /G Industry Talks, "Unity in Istanbul," Panel Chair
- 2015** Oyunder /G Industry Talks, "Disney Interactive, Blizzard Entertainment and Riot Games in Istanbul," Panel Chair
- 2014** II. Istanbul Design Biennial, "The Future of Fashion, Ads, and Game Design," Panelist
- 2014** Istanbul Aydin University, "Digital Game Production in Turkey," Panelist
- 2014** Istanbul Ticaret University, "Highlights of Mobile Gaming Industry in the World and a Focus on Turkey," Panelist
- 2014** Oyunder @GameX 2014, "Digital Game Industry in Turkey," Panel Chair
- 2014** Oyunder /G Industry Talks, "Game Audio Day," Panel Chair
- 2014** GILT Academy '14, "Mobile Gaming Industry in Turkey Lecture Series," Panelist

## Other Professional Endeavors

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### 2013-current Digital Game Design:

*Inspector Turing* (iOS, Android), Educational

*Painting Gallery with Niru Niru & Friends* (iOS), Educational

*Save Christmas with Niru Niru & Friends* (iOS), Kids Entertainment

*Pathika* (iOS, Android), Puzzle

*Quiz Apps: World Football* (iOS, Android), Puzzle

*Quiz Apps: Hollywood* (iOS, Android), Puzzle

### Analog Game Design:

A Murder Most Fowl <https://www.thegamecrafter.com/games/a-murder-most-fowl>

**1996-2008** Altzine.net, Webmaster/Editor, *The longest running online Turkish hypertext magazine for literature, arts, and culture* <http://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/AltZine>

**2004-2012** Altkitap.com, Art Director, *The first online Turkish e-publishing house. Published more than 50 free digital Turkish books up to today.* <http://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Altkitap>

**2009-2011** Nintendocu Magazine, Editor-in-Chief, *Official seasonal (tri-monthly) magazine about Nintendo products, reviews, previews, and other content. ISSN: 1309-0062 (Discontinued)*

**2003** Dungeons & Dragons Player's Handbook, commissioned by Arka Bahce Press, *Turkish Translation, ISBN: 9789758518241*

**2003** Magic: The Gathering Portal 2-Player Starter Set, commissioned by Wizards of the Coast, *Turkish Translation, ISBN: 1575302594*