Thesis Defense

Computer Science Master's Program

"The Impact of Accessibility Features on Player Experience in Video Games"

By **Christine Widden**

Abstract:

While video game accessibility is a growing research topic, few studies investigate how players perceive the presence versus the absence of accessibility features, or how non-disabled players react to the option of accessibility features. This study explores these research gaps, investigating how access to accessibility features affects the experience of both disabled and non-disabled players. For the purposes of this study, a small platformer game was developed with as many accessibility features as feasible for the scope of the project. An A vs. B study was conducted in the game, with anonymous participants randomly assigned to the version of the game with all accessibility features enabled (version A) or to version B, which had most features disabled. Overall reception to the features was primarily positive in both groups. A small portion of non-disabled players made use of the accessibility features. Most disabled players assigned to version A used the accessibility features. Non-disabled players were primarily indifferent to the accessibility features, but some found them helpful or liked them even if they did not need them. Though strong conclusions are difficult to draw without more data, overall accessibility features are significantly desired by disabled players, and found to be useful and received positively by some non-disabled players. Further research is needed, but results show potential that including accessibility features can positively influence audience reception.

Date: Thursday, June 5th, 2025
Time: 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM
Location: 14-232b
Zoom: https://calpoly.zoom.us/my/amgrow
Committee: Dr. Grow, Dr. Beard, and Dr. Huangs