This talk is drawn from several studies of videogame players I have done over the past decade, as well as media attention to the idea of what games are and who is or should be playing them. It interrogates past work about online games and what counts as achievement as well as interest or advancement within them. It also argues for understanding gameplay over a broad period of time, both in terms of player and game contexts, and in relation to a multitude of other factors. Finally it makes the case for studying at the margins of play and how edge cases can help us better theorize and understand a wider variety of gameplay activities.

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Mia runs the mLab, a space dedicated to developing innovative methods for studying games and game players. She’s presented her work at professional as well as academic conferences including regular presentations at the Game Developers Conference. She is the President of the Digital Games Research Association, and has held positions at MIT, Ohio University, Chubu University in Japan and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.