

PRESS RELEASE

gamescom congress 2026 concludes with record attendance and the Federal President's first-ever visit



gamescom congress 2026 welcomed more than 1,100 visitors, setting a new attendance record +++ Opening speech by Federal President Steinmeier: “Digital games, taken as a whole, are culturally significant — and therefore, I believe this is crucial, they are also significant for our democracy” +++ 165 international experts provided insights into the potential of games for education, culture, the economy, science, and society

With the first-ever visit by Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, an even wider variety of topics, and numerous renowned speakers, gamescom congress

2026 impressively demonstrated its relevance as the world's leading conference on the potential of games. The congress took place on August 27 across a total of eight stages, featuring 85 program items and 165 speakers, as part of gamescom in Cologne. With over 1,100 attendees from business, education, science, politics, media, and society, the event set a new record. The congress was officially opened by Federal President Steinmeier himself. "Digital games, taken as a whole, are culturally significant — and therefore, I believe this is crucial, they are also significant for our democracy". In his speech, he discussed, among other things, the profound impact games have on various industries and how they can contribute to the promotion of democracy as a cultural medium.

"With the Federal President's first-ever visit and a new attendance record, this year's gamescom congress concluded more successfully than ever before. This highlights once again how the future-oriented medium of games positively shapes the important issues of our time in business, culture, education, and science, and provides important impulses," said Felix Falk, Managing Director of game – the Association of the German Games Industry and co-organizer of gamescom congress.

"The gamescom congress 2026 once again demonstrates the enormous potential of games for society. The visit by Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, high-profile panels featuring international organizations, and strong initiatives to promote democratic values have impressively proven this. Topics were addressed that extend far beyond the games industry. Together with the game Association, we are creating an important platform for this exchange here in Cologne," said Gerald Böse, CEO of Koelnmesse GmbH and co-organizer of gamescom congress.

In terms of content, this year's congress was shaped by key themes such as "Democracy as a Playing Field" and "The Games Effect." Participants included representatives from international organizations such as Europol, the Red Cross, and the United Nations, as well as numerous experts from the games industry.

Among those represented were the technology company Razer and game studios such as Paintbucket Games, remote control productions, and ROTxBLAU.

Representatives from academia also provided insights into current research and findings, including from the University of Education in Freiburg, the Institute for Democracy and Civil Society (IDZ) in Jena, and the Paderborn Education Center for Information Technology Professions.

In talks, panels, workshops, and roundtables, the speakers discussed a wide range of topics: How can games create spaces for democratic experiences and support people who have fled their home countries? How can AI be used to foster creativity, and how is it simultaneously changing career entry into the games industry? Other topics included the use of games to prevent cybercrime in schools, new approaches to digital remembrance culture, the competitiveness of the European games market, and the requirements for inclusive games.

gamescom congress would like to thank this year's partners: The State Government of North Rhine-Westphalia, the City of Cologne, the German Society for Game Studies, the German Cultural Council, the esports player foundation, Games Syndicate Cologne, NetCologne, Playing for the Planet, the Foundation for Digital Games Culture, UNICEF, USK, and Video Games Europe, as well as Curatomic, Nerdstar, OMG FUSE, and Sunday Studio. We would also like to thank the media partners of gamescom congress: ARD, brand eins, n-tv, and Wikimedia.

A recording (VOD) of this year's gamescom congress can be found [here](#) (German only).

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About gamescom congress

The gamescom congress is the world's leading conference on the potential of games in a digitalized world and offers opportunities for collaboration far beyond the digital and media industries. Speakers from Germany and abroad present their topics in lectures, seminars, and panel discussions. The gamescom congress takes place annually as part of gamescom in Cologne and is organized by Koelnmesse GmbH and game – the Association of the German Games Industry. The gamescom congress is sponsored by the state of North Rhine-Westphalia.

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