For most of its long and colorful history, the coin-op industry has been an easily ignored part of America's retail and amusement markets despite its ubiquity. However, in the wake of PONG in 1972, coin-op found itself in the spotlight as video games cropped up in laundromats and bowling alleys, student unions and bars, and even in dedicated arcades. The "Pac-Man Fever" of the late 1970s and early 1980s captured the public imagination, alarmed moral guardians, and helped set the course for video game history. In this talk drawn from her recent book Coin-Operated Americans, Carly A. Kocurek discusses the rise and legacy of coin-op video gaming, arguing that these early games profoundly affected our understanding of today's gaming culture.

Carly A. Kocurek is Assistant Professor of Digital Humanities and Media Studies at the Illinois Institute of Technology. She is the author of Coin-Operated Americans: Rebooting Boyhood at the Video Game Arcade (University of Minnesota Press, 2015) and of the forthcoming book, Brenda Laurel: Pioneering Games for Girls (Bloomsbury). She is co-editor, with Jennifer deWinter, of the Influential Game Designers book series, published by Bloomsbury, and she also develops serious and educational games, including Choice: Texas, which Paste called one of the best games of 2014.