

CONFERENCE
2021



Student Profiles

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Years 5+

COHORTS 4, 3, 2, 1



CARLOS GONZALEZ DIAZ

COHORT 3

ABOUT ME

Carlos is a IGGI PhD researcher focusing on the intersection of HCI, ML, VR and Games UX. His research explores how machine learning can be interactively used to support game developers in the creation of enjoyable VR motion control schemes. Prior to his PhD, Carlos studied a BSc in Software Engineering at the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos (Madrid, Spain), where he learned from the talented VR and Haptic Research group. He then obtained an MSc in Serious Games at the University of Skövde (Skövde, Sweden), working together with the Swedish game company IUS Innovation for his MSc Thesis. He started a second MSc in Digital Narration: Game and Cultural Heritage at the same institution and worked in a Swedish interregional transmedia AR game project. His current work within IGGI led to close collaboration with industry, having done research placements at SIE R&D West, a Google-funded research project at Goldsmiths University of London, and recently a placement at Microsoft Research over the summer.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[InteractML: Interactive Machine Learning Visual Scripting for Unity 3D](#)

PUBLICATIONS

[Movement interaction design for immersive media using interactive machine learning.](#)

[Interactive Machine Learning for More Expressive Game Interactions](#)

[Automatic Game Tuning for Strategic Diversity](#)

[The Effect of Control-Display Ratio in Handheld Motion Controllers on Player Immersion: A Pilot Study](#)

[ATTITUDE GAME: A study in the increase of bullying awareness in 9-12 years old children](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

machine learning,
immersive media (AR/VR),
player experience,
assisting game development

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

NO

CONTACT

 carlos.gonzalezdiaz@york.ac.uk

 [Website](#)

SOCIAL

 [@carlotes247](#)

 [carlosglesdiaz](#)



DANIEL HERNANDEZ

COHORT 4

ABOUT ME

Daniel Hernandez is an energetic researcher of Multiagent Reinforcement Learning, with a keen focus on the learning dynamics that emerge as a product of deciding which opponent to train against in competitive games. He pays special attention to implement every thing from scratch, so as to learn as much as possible about all of the potential magical interactions and tricks that appear in the wild world of Deep Reinforcement Learning.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[Regym: A Framework for Reinforcement Learning](#)

PUBLICATIONS

[A Comparison of Self-Play Algorithms Under a Generalized Framework](#)

[Metagame Autobalancing for Competitive Multiplayer Games](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

multiagent systems,
reinforcement learning,
game theory,
automated game balancing

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

NO

CONTACT



dh1135@york.ac.uk

SOCIAL



[dani-hernandez-perez-1106b2107](https://www.linkedin.com/in/dani-hernandez-perez-1106b2107)



[Danielhp95](https://github.com/Danielhp95)



JOSEPH HESKETH

COHORT 4

RESEARCH INTERESTS

game learning,
esports,
game design

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



joseph.hesketh@york.ac.uk

SOCIAL



[Joe Hesketh](#)



[inneedferrets](#)

ABOUT ME

Joe is a games researcher and aspiring designer and developer interested in tutorials and onboarding for multiplayer games as well as accessibility design. Joe's PhD is focusing on how newer players learn to play Dota 2 through watching others play.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

Zones of Proximal Development in Dota 2 (ongoing project)

PUBLICATIONS

[Learning Team-Versus-Team Esport Games: A Qualitative Inquiry.](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



CRISTIANA PACHECO

COHORT 4

ABOUT ME

Researcher with a passion for game development. Her research explores how to assess believability in video games and model/develop human-like behaviour. She finished her BSc in Computer Games in Essex, where she also worked as a research assistant for an autonomous car racing project. She then started her PhD at Queen Mary University of London focused on games believability. Since, she has completed her placement at Ninja Theory, where she collaborated with Microsoft Research in Project Paidia. This opportunity provided experience with both game development and research. As a PhD student in her last year, she is working on the modelling of players through gameplay data and how this can be used to develop more human-like AI. The goal is to combine her research concepts into agents that do not always play to win, but rather present a diverse set of behaviours.

PUBLICATIONS

[Studying Believability Assessment in Racing Games](#)

[Discrete versus Ordinal Time-Continuous Believability Assessment](#)

[Trace It Like You Believe It: Time-Continuous Believability Prediction](#)

[Rolling Horizon Co-evolution in Two-player General Video Game Playing](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

machine learning,
player modelling,
believable agents,
data analysis,
player experience

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



c_pacheco@qmul.ac.uk



[IGGI Profile](#)

SOCIAL



[@Pacheco_CrisP](#)



[cpache111](#)



[Cpache1](#)



CHARLES RINGER

COHORT 4

ABOUT ME

Charlie is a researcher interested in applied Machine Learning focusing on Deep Learning to model various facets of video games streams (e.g. stream highlights, emotional moments, in-game events, various streamer behaviours etc.). As such, his work spans many fields, such as Computer Vision, Affect Computing, and Natural Language Processing. His research has three motivating factors. Firstly, the challenge of how to fuse multi-view stream data (e.g. audio, web-cam footage, game footage, chat) into a single model. Secondly, the untapped and bountiful data source that livestreaming represents. Thirdly, non-supervised methods, which have the potential to utilise this abundant data. Charlie initially worked in the video games industry working mainly on the Magic: The Gathering - Duels of the Planeswalkers series before studying a BSc in Computer Science at Goldsmiths and then joining IGGI. He was recognised as a finalist for the Twitch Research Fellowship 2019.

PUBLICATIONS

[TwitchChat: A Dataset for Exploring Livestream Chat](#)

[Multimodal Joint Emotion and Game Context Recognition in League of Legends Livestreams](#)

[Streaming Behaviour: Livestreaming as a Paradigm for Analysis of Emotional and Social Signals](#)

[Deep Unsupervised Multi-View Detection of Video Game Stream Highlights](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

deep learning,
highlight detection,
live streaming,
computer vision,
natural language processing

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

NO

CONTACT



charles.ringer@york.ac.uk



charlieringer.com

SOCIAL



[@charlieringer](https://twitter.com/charlieringer)



[charlie-ringer](https://www.linkedin.com/in/charlie-ringer)



[charlieringer](https://github.com/charlieringer)



CRISTINA GUERRERO ROMERO

COHORT 3

ABOUT ME

Cris is a versatile Software Engineer with four years of experience in web development across different areas of the tech stack. She studied Software and Computer Engineering at Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain) and is currently completing her PhD at Queen Mary University of London (QMUL); during which she has done two internships at Google. Her research is focused on expanding the research on game-playing agents beyond the objective of winning at them. Her work covers 1) diversifying general agents goals and heuristics; 2) proposing a team of agents to assist game development; 3) eliciting a diverse automated gameplay by creating and providing said team, and 4) analysing the strengths of the agents from a Player Experience perspective instead of their performance. Games have had a big role in the improvement of AI and this work can return the favour by expanding the use of general agents by providing them distinct behaviours, related to different types of players, tasks and ways to interact with the game. The ultimate goal of the research is to provide methods to assist in the development and testing of games.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[Visualise Diverse Gameplays Based on Agent Behaviour and Player-types](#)

PUBLICATIONS

[MAP-Elites to Generate a Team of Agents that Elicits Diverse Automated Gameplay](#)

[Using a Team of General AI Algorithms to Assist Game Design and Testing](#)

[Beyond playing to win: Diversifying heuristics for GVGAI](#)

[Studying General Agents in Video Games from the Perspective of Player Experience](#)

[Ensemble Decision Systems for General Video Game Playing](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

game AI,
behaviour (player & AI),
heuristics,
automated gameplay,
assisting game development

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

NO

CONTACT

 c.guerroromero@qmul.ac.uk

 [Website](#)

SOCIAL

 [@kisenshi](#)

 [cguerroromero](#)

 [kisenshi](#)

 [Google Scholar](#)

Year 4

COHORT 5



MARTIN BALLA

COHORT 5

ABOUT ME

Martin is interested in intelligent agents that improve their performance from experience. His primary research is on Generalisation in Reinforcement Learning with focus on goal-conditioned RL, multi-task learning, task adaptation and Hierarchical RL. In his work he uses various frameworks to test his ideas from simple gridworlds to complex video games. He is also interested in applying Game AI to new problems, which lead to his involvement in the Tabletop Games framework (TAG). TAG is a framework that contains various tabletop games with a common interface for AI agents to play the games.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[Project Malmo QMUL repository](#)

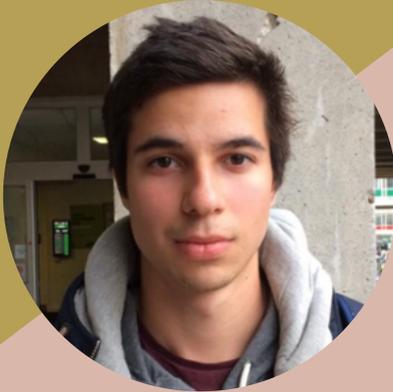
[TAG: A Tabletop Games Framework repository](#)

PUBLICATIONS

[Evaluating Generalization in General Video Game Playing](#)

[TAG: A Tabletop Games Framework](#)

[Illuminating game space using map-elites for assisting video game design](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

game AI,
reinforcement learning,
generalisation,
multi-task learning

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



m.balla@qmul.ac.uk



[Website](#)

SOCIAL



[@ballamist](#)



[martinballa](#)



ADRIÁN BARAHONA-RÍOS

COHORT 5

ABOUT ME

From 2018 and in collaboration with Sony Interactive Entertainment Europe, Adrián is researching strategies to increase the efficiency in the creation of procedural audio models for video games by using DSP and machine learning approaches. His main research interests, applied to the synthesis of sound effects, are generative deep learning (GANs, RNNs and VAEs) to synthesise raw audio and machine learning to find out the best parameters for a synthesiser to generate a target sound.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[Procedural audio models in Unity with Chunity \(ADC19\).](#)

PUBLICATIONS

[Synthesising Knocking Sound Effects Using Conditional WaveGAN](#)

[Perception of Emotions in Knocking Sounds: An Evaluation Study](#)

[Perceptual Evaluation of Modal Synthesis for Impact-Based Sounds](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

procedural audio,
sound synthesis,
game audio,
deep learning,
creative computing

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

NO

CONTACT



ajbr501@york.ac.uk

SOCIAL



[@adrianbhaudio](https://twitter.com/adrianbhaudio)



[adrianbarahonarios](https://www.linkedin.com/in/adrianbarahonarios)



[adrianbarahona](https://github.com/adrianbarahona)



TERENCE BROAD

COHORT 5

ABOUT ME

Terence Broad is a researcher working on developing new techniques for manipulating generative models, and achieving active divergence with generative deep learning. He is completing his PhD at Goldsmiths, University of London and is also a visiting researcher at the UAL Creative Computing Institute. His research has been published in international conferences, workshops and journals such as SIGGRAPH, NeurIPS, Leonardo and ICCV. He was acknowledged as an outstanding peer-reviewer by the journal Leonardo and in 2021 sat on the jury for SIGGRAPH. Terence is also a practising artist and often uses the techniques he has developed in his research in the creation of his artworks. His art has been exhibited and screened internationally at venues such as The Whitney Museum of American Art, Ars Electronica, The Barbican and The Whitechapel Gallery. In 2019 he won the Grand Prize in the ICCV Computer Vision Art Gallery.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[Network Bending: Expressive Manipulation of Deep Generative Models](#)

[Searching for an \(un\)stable equilibrium: experiments in training generative models without data](#)

PUBLICATIONS

[Active Divergence with Generative Deep Learning - A Survey and Taxonomy](#)

[Amplifying The Uncanny](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

artificial intelligence,
generative deep learning,
computational creativity,
computational art,
computer vision

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



t.broad@gold.ac.uk



<https://terencebroad.com/>

SOCIAL



[@Terrybroad](https://twitter.com/Terrybroad)



[terence-broad-81350668](https://in.linkedin.com/in/terence-broad-81350668)



[terrybroad](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCterrybroad)



KEVIN DENAMGANAI

COHORT 5

ABOUT ME

Kevin is interested in Unsupervised Representation Learning, Language Emergence and Grounding, and Deep (Multi-Agent) Reinforcement Learning. In his PhD, he is advised by Dr James Alfred Walker and Dr Sondess Missaoui. His research focuses on theory and applications of Language Emergence and Grounding to support cooperation abilities (in the case of player-NPC cooperations via language, for instance), aiming to understand how compositional communication emerges and whether it can be linked to generalisation abilities, and be levered towards alleviating the agent alignment problem.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[Symbolic Behaviour Benchmark](#)

PUBLICATIONS

[ReferentialGym](#)

[On \(Emergent\) Systematic Generalisation and Compositionality in Visual Referential Games with Straight-Through Gumbel-Softmax Estimator](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

deep (multi-agent)
reinforcement learning,
(natural) language emergence
and grounding, player-NPC
interactions via language

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



kyd500@york.ac.uk



[Website](#)

SOCIAL



[@KeviDenam](https://twitter.com/KeviDenam)



[kevin-denamganai-66131386](https://www.linkedin.com/in/kevin-denamganai-66131386)



[@Near32](https://github.com/Near32)



TIMEA FARKAS

COHORT 5

RESEARCH INTERESTS

player experience,
game design,
interactive audio,
narrative,
embodied interaction

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



tfark001@gold.ac.uk



timeafarkas.co.uk

SOCIAL



[@zen_barista](https://twitter.com/zen_barista)



[zenbarista](https://www.linkedin.com/in/zenbarista)

ABOUT ME

Timea is a researcher, aspiring game designer and composer interested in embodied interaction, narrative, emotional game design and player experience research. Her PhD centres around finding novel interaction in hybrid board games - board games with a digital component - including strengthening the sensory elements of tabletop games with interactive audio and digital storytelling, whilst exploring the possibilities of enhancing the interactive capabilities of physical game pieces.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[The Day I Missed My Walkies \(narrative game\)](#)

[Phantas-Matcha \(Ludum Dare 48, a game by Timea Farkas & Charline Foch\)](#)

[Escape The Forbidden Island \(text adventure game\)](#)

[Outsider: An Escape Room Experience About Organising a Funeral](#)

[Board Game Immersion Talk at ChiPlay 2020](#)

PUBLICATIONS

[A Grounded Analysis of Player-Described Board Game Immersion](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



DAN GOMME

COHORT 5

ABOUT ME

A programmer gone rogue into the ranks of human-computer interaction and game design, Dan is interested in practically anything under the sun, but his PhD is based around improving opponents — not with more advanced AI (though that's cool), but by exploring what makes opponents more enjoyable for players. Armed with grounded theory, he has waded into the jungles of forum comments, emerging with knowledge held aloft. In the name of exploring tension, he has pitted players against orcs, peering into the carnage to divine insight. With these observations, he hopes to provide guidelines for both game design and AI creation that make for truly fun opponents.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[Lone Signal](#)

[Cyberpunk 2020 for Foundry VTT](#)

PUBLICATIONS

[Strategy Games: The Components of a Worthy Opponent](#)

Examining the Concept of Tension in Strategy Games

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

game design,
player experience,
player expectations,
human-computer interaction

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



dsdgom@essex.ac.uk

SOCIAL



[Daniel Gomme](#)



[OctarineSourcerer](#)



NATHAN HUGHES

COHORT 5

ABOUT ME

Nathan is a player experience researcher, exploring how players make decisions in open world games. His focus is on assessing methods that can incorporate current psychological theories to explain complex decision-making behaviour. Doing so will benefit psychologists that wish to extend their theories into complex gaming environments, and game designers who want to understand how and why players choose certain actions.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[The A2URE Methodology: a Collaboration with the National Air Traffic Service \(NATS\).](#)

PUBLICATIONS

[Opening the World of Contextually-Specific Player Experiences](#)

[Growing Together: An Analysis of Transparency Across 15 Years of Player Motivation Questionnaires](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

player experience,
decision-making,
factor analysis,
questionnaire design,
open world games

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



nathan.hughes@york.ac.uk



<http://ngjhughes.com>

SOCIAL



[@ngjhughes](https://twitter.com/ngjhughes)



[Nathan Hughes](#)



ADAM KATONA

COHORT 5

ABOUT ME

Ádám did his MSc in mechatronics at Budapest University of Technology and Economics. After graduation, he spent two years working on automated driving at Robert Bosch GmbH, during which he got exposed to both the classical and the machine learning approach of creating intelligent agents. He is interested in developmental encoding for neuroevolution, and how to learn evolvable representations.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[Quality Evolvability ES \(repository code\)](#)

[Indirect Encoding \(repository code\)](#)

PUBLICATIONS

Quality Evolvability ES: Evolving Individuals With a Distribution of Well Performing and Diverse Offspring

Utilizing the Untapped Potential of Indirect Encoding for Neural Networks with MetaLearning



RESEARCH INTERESTS

evolutionary computation,
evolvability,
meta learning,
machine learning

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

NO

CONTACT



ak1774@york.ac.uk

SOCIAL



[@AdamKat0na](https://twitter.com/AdamKat0na)



[adam-katona](https://github.com/adam-katona)



NURIA PEÑA PEREZ

COHORT 5

ABOUT ME

Nuria is a researcher and biomedical engineer interested in applied games for motor rehabilitation. Her PhD work involves exploring how to develop better training systems for individuals that need to rehabilitate their motor function. In particular she looks at games that are compatible with low-cost interfaces and that can encourage players to practice functional hand motions. Her work is a collaboration between the Advanced Robotics group at Queen Mary University of London and the Human Robotics group at Imperial College London.

PUBLICATIONS

[Exploring user motor behaviour in bimanual interactive video games](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

applied games,
games for rehabilitation,
human-computer interaction,
motor control

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

NO

CONTACT



n_penaperez@qmul.ac.uk

SOCIAL



[nuria-pena-perez](https://www.linkedin.com/in/nuria-pena-perez)



OLIVER SCHOLTEN

COHORT 5

RESEARCH INTERESTS

gambling research,
player behaviour tracking,
transaction analytics

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

NO

CONTACT



ojs524@york.ac.uk

SOCIAL



[@ojscholten](https://twitter.com/ojscholten)



[ojscholten](https://www.linkedin.com/in/ojscholten)



[ojscholten](https://github.com/ojscholten)

ABOUT ME

Oliver specialises in cryptocurrency transaction analytics with a focus on decentralised gambling and gaming applications. His thesis explores behavioural similarities across a number of cryptocurrency applications, which involves applying player behaviour tracking techniques to large collections of transaction data, followed by statistical and computational analyses. He is also creator of the gamba transaction analytics library, an open source collection of methods for conducting player tracking research and replicating existing studies in the field.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[Gamba Transaction Analytics Library](#)

[Pysan Sequence Analysis Library](#)

PUBLICATIONS

[Inside the decentralised casino: A longitudinal study of actual cryptocurrency gambling transactions](#)

[Ethereum Crypto-Games: Mechanics, Prevalence, and Gambling Similarities](#)



RYAN SPICK

COHORT 5

RESEARCH INTERESTS

deep learning,
procedural content generation,
generative adversarial networks

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

NO

CONTACT



ryan.spick@york.ac.uk

SOCIAL



[@ryanspick](https://twitter.com/ryanspick)

ABOUT ME

An outgoing researcher who wishes to continue developing technical skills and new approaches while providing meaningful real-world applications. Extensive range of relevant technical ability developed throughout time in academia. Highly motivated and hardworking, consistently looking to better oneself and others. Driven by self-learning and the gripping desire for completion.

PUBLICATIONS

[Illuminating Game Space Using MAP-Elites for Assisting Video Game Design](#)

Human Point Cloud Generation using Deep Learning (under review)

[Procedural Generation using Spatial GANs for Region-Specific Learning of Elevation Data](#)

[Time to Die: Death Prediction in Dota 2 using Deep Learning](#)

[Naive Mesh-to-Mesh Coloured Model Generation using 3D GANs](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



EVELYN TAN

COHORT 5

ABOUT ME

Evelyn is an Industrial/Organisational psychologist using digital games to study team dynamics. Her research focuses on ad hoc virtual teams and the interactions that lead to cohesion. She works with esports titles like League of Legends, Dota 2, and Valorant, and uses both qualitative and quantitative methods in her work. Her research ambition is to develop systems that facilitate cohesion-building behaviours in newly formed virtual teams. Evelyn's work has been featured in media articles, talks, podcasts, and panels around the globe.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[Speaker @ Games Research and User Experience Conference 2020](#)

[Using Digital Games to Investigate Team Dynamics @ London Hopper Colloquium 2020](#)

[Panelist @ Cosmic Centaurs Future of Teams 2021](#)

PUBLICATIONS

[Trusted Teammates: Commercial Digital Games Can Be Effective Trust-Building Tools](#)

[Less Is More: Analysing Communication in Teams of Strangers](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

esports,
team dynamics,
player experience,
psychology

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

NO

CONTACT



ett506@york.ac.uk



<http://evelyn-tan.com/>

SOCIAL



[@evelyntisiantan](https://twitter.com/evelyntisiantan)



[@evelyntisiantan](https://www.linkedin.com/in/evelyntisiantan)



MATTHEW WHITBY

COHORT 5

ABOUT ME

Matthew Whitby is a games designer whose research focuses on experiences that challenge the way a player thinks or feels and empowering developers to include these experiences into their own games. When not researching, Matthew creates and publishes best-selling TTRPG content and hosts the Dungeon Master's Guild House podcast.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[TTRPG Portfolio](#)

PUBLICATIONS

["One of the baddies all along": Moments that Challenge a Player's Perspective](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

perspective challenges,
reflection,
game design,
player experience

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

NO

CONTACT



maw562@york.ac.uk



<http://www.matt-whitby.com/>

SOCIAL



[@WhitbyWrites](#)



[matthew-whitby-b324ab83](#)

Year 3

COHORT 6



NICK BALLOU

COHORT 6

ABOUT ME

Nick is a motivational psychologist and science reform advocate. His PhD research asks how different types of frustration players experience in video games affect their engagement with games and well-being. Beyond that, Nick is active in advancing open science practices, and trying to reduce known problems in the research literature like selective reporting, statistical negligence, and fraud. He is currently studying the relationship between gaming and well-being over time using objectively-measured (logged) game time, to improve upon two key limitations of previous work: 1) most studies have used self-report measures of playtime, which are not very accurate, and 2) most studies have been correlational, and unable to shed light on cause vs effect.

PUBLICATIONS

[Are You Open? A Content Analysis of Transparency and Openness Guidelines in HCI Journals](#)

[The relationship between mental well-being and dysregulated gaming: A specification curve analysis of five gaming disorder scales](#)

[The Hidden Intricacy of Loot Box Design: A Granular Description of Random Monetized Reward Features](#)

[A large-scale study of changes to the quantity, quality, and distribution of video game play during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

player motivation,
well-being,
science reform,
dysregulated gaming

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

NO

CONTACT



n.b.ballou@qmul.ac.uk



<https://nickballou.com>

SOCIAL



[@nballou](https://twitter.com/nballou)



[nballou](https://www.linkedin.com/in/nballou)



SEBASTIAN BERNS

COHORT 6

ABOUT ME

PhD researcher working on diversity and novelty in deep generative systems in a computational creativity setting.

PUBLICATIONS

[Automating Generative Deep Learning for Artistic Purposes: Challenges and Opportunities](#)

[Expressivity of Parameterized and Data-driven Representations in Quality Diversity Search](#)

[Bridging Generative Deep Learning and Computational Creativity](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

generative deep learning,
diversity,
novelty,
computational creativity

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



s.berns@qmul.ac.uk



sebastianberns.com

SOCIAL



[@sebastianberns](https://twitter.com/sebastianberns)



[sebastianberns](https://github.com/sebastianberns)



CHARLINE FOCH

COHORT 6

ABOUT ME

Charline has a background in humanities (English literature and film studies), and transitioned into video games after working in an independent video games studio in Berlin, before joining IGGI in 2019. She researches player experiences of failure, investigating how video games players, with their knowledge of the medium's conventions and literacy, conceptualise and understand failure. With this research, she hopes to work on offering game designers a better understanding of player expectations and understanding of games, and new avenues of reflection for the design and implementation of failure experiences in games.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[Phanta-smatcha \(Ludum Dare 48\) - game by Timea Farkas & Charline Foch](#)

PUBLICATIONS

["Slow down and look": Desirable aspects of failure in video games, from the perspective of players](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

player experience,
game design.

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



cjsf500@york.ac.uk

SOCIAL



[@ChaFoch](https://twitter.com/ChaFoch)



[charline-foch-97196663](https://www.linkedin.com/in/charline-foch-97196663)



GUILHERME MATOS DE FARIA

COHORT 6

ABOUT ME

Guilherme is a researcher and competitor with an interest in strategy and improvement. He wants to discover new ways to look at game data and extract information for human application. His PhD focuses on studying the decisions made in competitive games for this exact purpose, and then he aims to present the information to those who wish to better understand the game.

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

esports,
data analysis,
artificial intelligence

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



gmdf500@york.ac.uk

SOCIAL



[@GuilhermeMF19](https://twitter.com/GuilhermeMF19)



ELENA PETROVSKAYA

COHORT 6

RESEARCH INTERESTS

microtransactions,
game business,
consumer protection,
predatory monetisation,
player experience

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



elena.petrovskaya@york.ac.uk



<http://elenapetrovskaya.com>

SOCIAL



[@elepetrovs](https://twitter.com/elepetrovs)



[elena-petrovskaya-157680113](https://www.linkedin.com/in/elena-petrovskaya-157680113)

ABOUT ME

Elena's PhD focuses on forms of in-game monetisation and their consequences for players. She is interested in understanding how aspects of game design for revenue generation may affect players both within and outside of games. In her work so far, Elena has created a taxonomy of microtransactions that players perceive to be unfair, aggressive, or misleading, and carried out a prevalence assessment of these techniques across the most popular desktop and mobile games. She has also explored ethical frameworks and how they can be applied to microtransactions. Elena's priority is to contribute to the ongoing regulatory conversation around game monetisation to ensure a mutually beneficial and ethical situation for all stakeholders. As such, she has responded to government calls for evidence around game regulation, given talks at seminar series and conferences, and collaborated on a variety of related topics, such as loot box spending and esports betting.

PUBLICATIONS

[Predatory monetisation? A categorisation of unfair, misleading, and aggressive monetisation techniques in digital games from the perspective of players.](#)

Assessing the prevalence of player-perceived predatory microtransactions across the design of popular games.

[The Battle Pass: a mixed-methods investigation into a growing type of video game monetisation.](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)

Year 2

COHORT 7



ALAN PEDRASSOLI CHITAYAT

COHORT 7

ABOUT ME

Alan is a researcher that uses machine learning to try and make sense of player decision making. He focuses heavily on professional esports competitions, attempting to create in-depth analysis that are used in broadcast to cater to a large audience world-wide. His PhD aims to understand player decision making through game events, which is to say, his research links player decision making to things that happen in live matches to produce human understandable explanations that may not be expected or noticed by the audience. Alan's research works towards knowing what players want to do even before they do.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[WARDS - Measuring the worth of vision in MOBAS](#)

PUBLICATIONS

[WARDS: Modelling the Worth of Vision in MOBA's](#)

A meaningful way to represent game characters (under review)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

machine learning,
data science,
esports,
storytelling,
broadcast

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



alan.pchitayat@york.ac.uk

SOCIAL



[alan-pchitayat](#)



[Esport Academia](#)



MICHELANGELO CONSERVA

COHORT 7

ABOUT ME

Michelangelo is a second year PhD student working at the intersection of Bayesian modelling and Reinforcement Learning. His main goal is to provide a principled Bayesian modelling framework for hard-exploration non-tabular reinforcement learning.

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

bayesian reinforcement learning

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

NO

CONTACT



m.conserva@qmul.ac.uk

SOCIAL



[@Michelangelo755](https://twitter.com/Michelangelo755)



[MichelangeloConserva](https://github.com/MichelangeloConserva)



MAXIMILIAN CROISSANT

COHORT 7

ABOUT ME

Coming from a background in psychology and neuroscience, Maxi's interests lie at the intersection of emotion research, design, and human-computer interaction - specifically how we can build design-oriented solutions for adapting game content to affective data. His research includes the investigation of the emotional relationship between player and games and how it can be used to build an affective fear-focused VR horror game that adapts to emotional variables. The ultimate goal is to help fill knowledge gaps that currently hold us back on making commercially viable affective games and provide tools to design games for a deep emotional impact.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[Game Projects](#)

[Interactive Design Projects](#)

PUBLICATIONS

[My Research](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

player experience,
emotion research,
affective computing,
affective design,
human-computer interaction

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



mc2230@york.ac.uk

SOCIAL



[@maxicroissant](https://twitter.com/@maxicroissant)



[maximilian-croissant](https://www.linkedin.com/in/maximilian-croissant)



MADELEINE FRISTER

COHORT 7

ABOUT ME

Madeleine is a designer and researcher with a background in cognitive psychology and UI/UX design. Her main interest lies in creating appealing games and interfaces to increase engagement and provide pleasant and intuitive user experiences. In her PhD project, she is exploring how we can design enjoyable serious games to limit working memory decline in old age. More specifically, she aims to develop and integrate scientifically informed cognitive exercises into playful game environments to raise the potential of cognitive improvements in old age through positive player experiences and increased engagement.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[Smartphone Game Atmospheres](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

user interface design,
user experience,
game design,
serious games

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



mf1255@york.ac.uk



[Vanilla Noir](#)

SOCIAL



[madeleinefrister](#)



BOBBY KHALEQUE

COHORT 7

ABOUT ME

Bobby's research focuses on automated game design (AGD) for exploratory games, particularly for Exploratory Games. Exploratory Games are games of which the main mechanic is to reveal a or multiple narratives or themes through visual or aural observation where a key interaction is traversal through an environment. Bobby's PhD involves designing systems around whole game generation (involving the generation of rules, mechanics, assets and etc) of this genre of games.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[Grove Demo](#)

[48 Leagues Under the Sea](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

PCG,
AGD,
player experience

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



b.d.a.khaleque@qmul.ac.uk

SOCIAL



[@b_khaleque](#)



[BKhaleque](#)



MICHAEL SAIGER

COHORT 7

ABOUT ME

Michael is a designer and researcher who is investigating how video games can be used as treatments for fear-based disorders (e.g. phobias) with young people. Specifically, his PhD concerns guidance on how to design therapy games involving stakeholders. The main contributions of Michael's work are delivering how to incorporate therapy techniques with game design principles, guidance on stakeholder involvement and understanding stakeholder acceptance of games for therapy.

PUBLICATIONS

Investigating the opportunities and challenges of user involvement methods in designing game-based interventions for young people

[What Factors do Players Perceive as Methods of Retention in Battle Royale Games? \(Under Review\)](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

applied games,
games for health,
quality assurance,
user involvement methods,
game design

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



mjs638@york.ac.uk



[Website](#)

SOCIAL



[@mjsaiger](https://twitter.com/mjsaiger)



[Michael Saiger](#)



AMY SMITH

COHORT 7

ABOUT ME

Amy's research is focused on the intersection between 'imaginative play', computational creativity and generative deep learning. Her project explores whether the kind of novel text, image and video media produced by generative deep learning algorithms can be used to provoke and stimulate the imaginative, ideation and visualisation capabilities of a user of a system that integrates this output.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[CLIP-Guided GAN Image Generation: An Artistic Exploration](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

computational creativity,
creative ai

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



amy.smith@qmul.ac.uk



[Website](#)

SOCIAL



[@AmysImaginarium](https://twitter.com/AmysImaginarium)



[amy-smith-791784173](https://www.linkedin.com/in/amy-smith-791784173)



MARKO TOT

COHORT 7

ABOUT ME

As a part of the IGGI programme and Game AI research group, Marko is working on adapting Statistical Forward Planning methods for complex environments. Statistical Forward Planning methods have proven to be effective in some simpler domains and, without requiring any prior learning, they provide a good out of the box AI algorithm. However, while these algorithms shine in certain games, they struggle to perform well in cases where the reward received from the game is sparse. In games where it takes a series of optimal actions to reach the goal, without any significant feedback from the environment in between, their performance drops significantly. Marko's research is centred on solving this problem through automatic sub-goal generation and utilisation of local learned forward models. The creation of the sub-goals could be used to simulate the feedback from the environment and give regular rewards to the agent even in sparse and complex environments.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[What's with all of the buzzwords? — My project in non-AI terms.](#)

PUBLICATIONS

[What Are You Looking At? Team Fight Prediction Through Player Camera](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

game AI

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



m.tot@qmul.ac.uk

SOCIAL



[@Lightsider23](#)



[markotot](#)



[markotot](#)



[tot-marko](#)



KYLE WORRALL

COHORT 7

ABOUT ME

Kyle is a researcher, video game composer and audio programmer interested in game audio, ludomusicology, music psychology and interactive audio. His PhD centers around investigating and designing generative music systems that can be embedded inside of Unreal Engine in an attempt to reduce listener fatigue in players. As part of his research, Kyle is also investigating video game composers workflows, and studying how composers can leverage Music AI in order to support them in their roles.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[Talk: Remaking Music for Modern Sensibilities: A Case Study in the evolution of listener expectations from Final Fantasy VII to Final Fantasy VII Remake](#)

PUBLICATIONS

Procedural Music For Battle: An Investigation into the use of procedural music systems for battle in JRPGs.

Flick, C & Worrall, K. (2021) 'The Ethics of Creative AI' (chapter) in 'The Language of Creative AI' (book)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

interactive audio,
game music,
music generation,
expressive rendering,
procedural generation

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



kjw547@york.ac.uk

SOCIAL



[@Impetus_Music](https://twitter.com/Impetus_Music)



[Kyle Worrall](https://www.linkedin.com/in/Kyle_Worrall)



[@KJWAudio](https://github.com/KJWAudio)

Year 1

COHORT 8



MICHAEL AICHMÜLLER

COHORT 8

ABOUT ME

Michael researches ways of bringing smarter game-playing AI components to real-time strategy games. His PhD will focus on the study of hierarchical structure in algorithmic decision making and different means of choosing optimal paths despite a lack of information. An important question of this research also revolves around whether the goal of capable agents can be achieved through more accessible solutions with respect to computational requirements and complexity.

RESEARCH MOTIVATION

My motivation for this field of research comes from my admiration of seeing AI strategies for systems of such complexity that even humans are forced to fully commit if they want to develop a solid comprehension, let alone mastery. Games also provide noise-free, controlled environments, which we can explore with new approaches for decision-making and commonly with as much data as needed. Against this background, I believe, a better understanding of how to reliably choose optimal decisions can be gained, paving the way for the application of AI in areas truly beneficial to society. I hope my research can provide impactful progress on decision-making especially in the face of uncertainty for which humans often fail to properly account. At the end of the day, this research might just contribute to an AI that helps future students decide whether they, too, should pursue a PhD in their game of life.



RESEARCH INTERESTS

deep reinforcement learning,
hierarchical reinforcement learning,
game theory,
real-time strategy games

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT

 m.aichmueller@gmail.com

SOCIAL

 [michael-aichmueller](https://www.linkedin.com/in/michael-aichmueller)

 [maichmueller](https://github.com/maichmueller)



CALLUM DEERY

COHORT 8

ABOUT ME

Callum is a researcher and game developer investigating how real-time player experience measurement can be used to drive adaptive games. Aiming to embed player experience questionnaires into games in a way that doesn't break immersion and presence, his PhD is focussed on leveraging the wide range of existing player experience questionnaires to improve games ability to adapt to players. This will involve exploring the states of immersion and presence: What is necessary to maintain them? What experiences can players reflect on without breaking immersion? How do we embed a questionnaire into an in-development game without disrupting the player experience?

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[Lux Primora](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

adaptive games,
player experience,
questionnaires,
presence,
immersive spaces

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



cd1097@york.ac.uk

SOCIAL



[@CallumDeery2](https://twitter.com/CallumDeery2)



FRANCESCA FOFFANO

COHORT 8

ABOUT ME

Francesca is a researcher interested in player' behaviours, including player experience, perception, expectation and cognitive abilities. Her PhD will focus on defining effective interface feedbacks to provide in-game information of the game adaptation to players to improve the experience. The research will be considered both visual and narrative design elements to be applied in resources-management games. Previously, she explored the field of ethics and AI in Europe working at the AI4EU project.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[A European Survey on AI and Ethics. How to build trust and awareness in citizens to move forward AI in Europe.](#)

PUBLICATIONS

[European Strategy on AI: Are we truly fostering social good?](#)

[Changes of user experience in an adaptive game: a study of an AI manager](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

player experience,
adaptive/interactive videogames

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



francescafoffano66@gmail.com



[Website](#)

SOCIAL



[@FrancescaFoffa1](#)



[Francesca Foffano](#)



JAMES GARDNER

COHORT 8

ABOUT ME

James is a first-year PhD student studying deep inverse rendering for photorealistic augmented reality. He is particularly interested in generative models and self-supervised learning, specifically when used to infer illumination, reflectance properties and shape from a single, uncontrolled image of an arbitrary scene. More generally, his focus is on building AI systems that can glean a deeper, more nuanced understanding of reality beyond what is specified in training data sets. He holds an MEng in Electronic Engineering from The University of York, for which he was awarded the IET Prize for outstanding performance on an IET accredited degree and the Malden Owen Award for the best graduating student on an MEng programme.

PUBLICATIONS

[Development of Modular Bio-Inspired Autonomous Underwater Vehicle for Close Subsea Asset Inspection](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

computer vision,
neural networks,
machine learning,
robotics,
artificial intelligence

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT

 jadg502@york.ac.uk

SOCIAL

 [@JADGardner](https://twitter.com/JADGardner)

 [James Gardner](https://www.linkedin.com/in/JamesGardner)

 [JADGardner](https://github.com/JADGardner)



GEORGE LONG

COHORT 8

ABOUT ME

George is a researcher focusing on Game Design in Role-Playing Games. His PhD looks at Min-Maxing in Role-Playing Games, specifically how designers can introduce mechanics to reduce the effectiveness of it, and how AI can be used to validate the usefulness of these mechanics.

RESEARCH MOTIVATION

Role-Playing Games are a favorite genre of mine, not only for their gameplay, but for how they allow for players to act as a character in a narrative, and the self-expression that can result from this. Min-Maxing, however, can negatively affect this experience, as min-maxing players pick the choices which have the best perceived benefits in the game rather than what a character would pick. This can have an effect where a min-maxed character is significantly stronger than normal characters, either forcing the other players to min-max, or resulting in a state of imbalance where normal characters take a supporting role to the min-maxed character. By investigating how mechanics can be used to reduce min-maxing, I hope to identify mechanics which can be implemented to allow for more balanced and varied play styles, so that players can feel like they can role-play without worrying about their character being significantly underpowered.



RESEARCH INTERESTS

role-playing games,
game design,
game balance,
evolutionary algorithms

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



george@longhouse.dev

SOCIAL



[George Long](#)



DIMITRIS MENEXOPOULOS

COHORT 8

ABOUT ME

Dimitris Menexopoulos is a versatile composer, sound designer, audio technologist and multi-instrumentalist from Thessaloniki, Greece. He has two solo albums under his name (Phenomena - 2014, Perpetuum Mobile - 2017), an EP (40 EP - 2020), two published soundtracks (Iolas Wonderland - 2021, The Village - 2019) and various performances internationally. His collaborations include electronic musician Robert Rich (Vestiges - 2016), director Shekhar Kapur (Brides of the Well - 2018) and film composer George Kallis (Cliffs of Freedom - 2019, The Last Warrior: Root of Evil - 2021) among others. As a designer, he has presented work at sites including the Barbican Centre (Nesta FutureFest - 2019, with Akvile Terminaite), the Somerset House (24 Hours in Uchronia with Helga Schmid - 2020) and Apple Regent Street (Today at Apple - 2020, with Yiming Yang). His original Max/MSP devices have been displayed at venues in the UK (Iklectik - 2020), France (IRCAM - 2019, 2020) and in the USA (Mass MoCA - 2019).

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[Homo Informis](#)

[Conway Suite](#)

[The Village VR Game Soundtrack](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

graphics based procedural audio,
interactive audio,
procedural sound design,
generative music,
new techniques of sound synthesis

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT

 menexmusic@gmail.com

SOCIAL

 [@DimitrisMenex](https://twitter.com/DimitrisMenex)

 [@Dimitris Menexopoulos](https://www.linkedin.com/in/DimitrisMenexopoulos)

 <http://linktr.ee/menexmusic>



SAHAR MIRHADI

COHORT 8

ABOUT ME

Sahar is a researcher, positive psychology practitioner and coach interested in how gaming can support wellbeing in relation to difficult life experiences. Her PhD explores the role of healthy escapism as a framework for investigating complex emotional experiences in the context of digital play. She hopes to bring an interdisciplinary approach to her research by combining positive psychology, coaching and computer science in understanding the player experience during challenging life experiences.

PUBLICATIONS

[The Best Possible Self: Do Cultural Dimensions Effect Subjective Wellbeing?](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

wellbeing,
player experience,
positive psychology

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



sm2904@york.ac.uk

SOCIAL



[@saharmirhadi](https://twitter.com/saharmirhadi)



[saharmirhadi](https://www.linkedin.com/in/saharmirhadi)



FLORENCE SMITH NICHOLLS

COHORT 8

ABOUT ME

Florence is a games writer, designer, and archaeologist. Since 2016 they have conducted research in the emerging field of archaeogaming, which is the archaeological study of video games. Their PhD research explores whether a combination of hand-crafted and procedurally generated content can be designed to elicit the player to engage in archaeological interpretation and recording. They are particularly interested in how archaeology can inform environmental storytelling and games preservation as a creative practise.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[Picture Imperfect: Photography, Dark Tourism and Video Games](#)

[Who gets to write video game history?](#)

PUBLICATIONS

[Virtual Dark Tourism in The Town of Light](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

procedural content generation,
computational creativity,
game design,
narrative design,
archaeology

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT

 fsmithnicholls@gmail.com

 floresmithnicholls.com

SOCIAL

 [@florescsn](https://twitter.com/florescsn)

 [floresmithnicholls](https://www.youtube.com/floresmithnicholls)



ERIN ROBINSON

COHORT 8

RESEARCH INTERESTS

interactive installations,
open-ended play,
playful HCI,
play in adulthood,
computational creativity

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT

 er821@york.ac.uk

SOCIAL

 [@bluemonday_exe](https://twitter.com/bluemonday_exe)

 [erinrobinson](https://github.com/erinrobinson)

ABOUT ME

Erin is an experienced artist, interactive installation designer and music educator specialising in open-ended play in early years' foundation settings. Her PhD will focus on researching design patterns to support open-ended play experiences in adulthood with interactive installations, with the goal of supporting well-being, creativity, physicality and social interaction among players. She will be combining theory from different interrelated fields including play design, HCI, sandbox video-games and artistic applications of AI to guide creative practice research. In particular, she is interested in casual creators and looks to build on her previous experience of designing interactive installations to support exploratory art and music creation.

RESEARCH MOTIVATION

Erin's work in open-ended play design for early years has motivated her to understand and research how similar provisions can be designed for adulthood. This research will provide a framework for designing for open-ended play in interactive installations in adulthood which doesn't exist as of yet, and will provide valuable insight into interactivity design for open-ended play in video games, both for traditional in home gaming, and games in alternative settings. Additionally, Erin hopes that this research will aid digital installation creators in designing playful works for public, education or exhibition purposes, while also providing inspiration for designing open-ended play experiences for the purpose of well-being and mental health, both inside and outside of medical institutions.

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



PRASAD SANDBHOR

COHORT 8

ABOUT ME

Prasad is a play experience designer and design researcher interested in the area of applied games. He comes with seven years of professional experience of working in diverse domains such as ed-tech, healthcare, social safety, accessibility and sustainability. As a multidisciplinary design consultant, Prasad has been involved in designing apps, websites and games for Indian as well as international organisations. His experience of setting and leading design teams has helped him master strategic management skills. He has also been active as an independent game designer and has been designing games related to various ecological phenomena in collaboration with biodiversity experts. As a visiting faculty, he teaches applied game design and design thinking courses for Master's degree design students in India. Prasad has been able to maintain his secret identity as a freelance author too. He writes short stories and essays in his native language, Marathi for newspapers and magazines.

RESEARCH MOTIVATION

Prasad was introduced to the field of design research and research based game design while pursuing his Master's Degree in Toy and Game Design. His graduation project dealt with designing inclusive games that people with visual impairment could play along with sighted people. This project helped him realise that he truly enjoys research. Having garnered varied experiences in the industry as well as academia, Prasad believes that he has more to contribute to the community specifically in the area of purposeful games for behaviour change. He thinks that his PhD research topic has a unique potential of motivating players to treat everyday pro-environmental choices as not only important and urgent but also easy and normal. The possibility of his work causing such a powerful impact motivates him to pursue it as a valuable opportunity to utilise his game design and research skills in the most meaningful manner.

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

applied game design,
interactive narrative design,
games for behaviour change,
human play behaviour,
sustainable design

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

NO

CONTACT



prs522@york.ac.uk

SOCIAL



[prasad-sandbhor-0832375b](#)



REMO SASSO

COHORT 8

ABOUT ME

Remo is an incoming PhD student at the Queen Mary University of London, and he holds a BSc and MSc in Artificial Intelligence at the University of Groningen. As a PhD student, he will research efficient exploration approaches for reinforcement learning algorithms. In particular, he is interested in leveraging model-based reinforcement learning algorithms to improve the scalability and efficiency of exploration techniques.

PUBLICATIONS

[Fractional Transfer Learning for Deep Model-Based Reinforcement Learning](#)

[Simultaneous Multi-View Object Recognition and Grasping in Open-Ended Domains](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

reinforcement learning,
machine learning,
efficient model-based exploration

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

NO

CONTACT



r.sasso@student.rug.nl

SOCIAL



[Remo Sasso](#)



[remosasso](#)



LUIZA STEPANYAN

COHORT 8

ABOUT ME

Luiza is a multidisciplinary researcher, game designer and artist looking to translate real world concepts into engaging game mechanics. With a background in Psychology and Robotics, she is passionate about creating games that can help enhance understanding of ourselves and the world we live in and how this might be enabled through human-computer interaction. Her PhD project will be an investigation into how video games can be designed as a platform for prejudice reduction between conflicting groups. It will include an exploration of online multiplayer game environments and gameplay designs coupled with a dive into theories of intergroup and cultural psychology.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[Past \[gamejam\]_games](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

player experience,
games for social change,
applied games,
design & development

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT



luiza_step@yahoo.com



gossianblurs.com

SOCIAL



[@LuGossian](https://twitter.com/LuGossian)



[luiza-s](https://www.linkedin.com/in/luiza-s)



[@gossianblurs.art](https://www.instagram.com/gossianblurs.art)



SUNNY THAICHAROEN

COHORT 8

ABOUT ME

Sunny is an avid gamer turned game data tech entrepreneur, interested in trading card games (TCG), e-sports, game data and player research. His PhD research involves using game data analytics to deepen our understanding on e-sport metagames – the highest level of strategy in gameplay – with a focus on TCGs, including finding possible factors that affect gameplay at the highest level through player interaction and mass game data analysis, whilst exploring the cross-genre metagame factors and acceleration of the metagame discovery process.

RESEARCH MOTIVATION

Competitive esports and gaming have always been a significant part of Sunny's life. From organising card game tournaments, and through building his startup, YGOscope - the first data platform for physical trading card games, he realised that there is a lot more to uncover and that we don't know about this world of games and esports, and as someone who is deeply invested, he firmly believes that further pushing the boundaries of knowledge through research in this field is the way to give back to the community and field that's given him so much.

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

game data,
trading card games,
player research,
e-sports

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT

SOCIAL

 [@thaicharoens](#)

 [thaicharoens](#)

 [thaicharoens](#)



PILAR ZHANG QIU

COHORT 8

ABOUT ME

Pilar is a researcher with a background in Design Engineering. She has a keen interest in user experience and interaction, wearables and the use of cyber-physical systems in the medical field. Her PhD centres around the creation of play assessments for neuromotor conditions in children with cerebral palsy. This gravitates around the idea that better and more objective clinical data can be obtained through gamification of common assessments.

PROJECTS SHOWCASE

[Portable Device for the study and analysis of medical percussion. A machine learning approach.](#) (Presented to the RoPat20 Workshop, at the IROS 2020 conference).

[Pressure-sensitive, knitted e-textile sensors](#)

PUBLICATIONS

Unity-based, home assessment of spasticity in children with cerebral palsy (in progress)

[Biofeedback in computer-vision-based neuromotor assessments \(in progress, part of the EU ReHyb Project\).](#)

[Design And Implementation Of A Robotic Device For Medical Percussion \(paper presentation\).](#)

[Design And Implementation Of A Robotic Device For Medical Percussion \(poster\).](#)

[Acoustic Response Analysis of Medical Percussion using Wavelet Transform and Neural Networks](#)

BUZZ VIDEO

[Watch on YouTube](#)



RESEARCH INTERESTS

applied games for medicine,
cyber-physical systems,
adaptive gaming,
psychology of games

LOOKING FOR PLACEMENT?

YES

CONTACT

 p.zhangqiu@gmail.com

 pilarzhangqiu.com

SOCIAL

 [pilar-zhang-qiu](https://www.linkedin.com/in/pilar-zhang-qiu)

 [pili-zhangqiu](https://github.com/pili-zhangqiu)



2021

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[@IGGIPHD](https://twitter.com/IGGIPHD)