

## M4C DTP Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) Marketing Template

<b>Project Title</b>				
The Lived Experience of Gaming: UK Gamers' Subjectivities within their Social, Cultural, Technological and Industrial Contexts, 1982-2017				
<b>LEAD INSTITUTION</b>				
Name of HEI institution		University of Nottingham		
Lead regional city		Birmingham <input type="checkbox"/>	Coventry <input type="checkbox"/>	Leicester <input type="checkbox"/>
				Nottingham <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>PARTNER ORGANISATION</b>				
Name of organisation		British Games Institute		
Website URL		<a href="https://thebgi.uk/">https://thebgi.uk/</a>		
<b>THE RESEARCH PROJECT</b>				
<i>(Max 750 words)</i>				
<p>The project will explore the emergence of UK gamers' subjectivities in the context of social, cultural, technological and industrial factors between the years 1982 and 2017. The project focuses on consoles (rather than computer, casual or mobile gaming) and begins with the rise of the third generation of videogame consoles in the 1980s (Nintendo, Sega, Atari, Commodore 64), the same period in which a gaming culture of shared language and practices emerged (Kirkpatrick, 2015; Reynolds, McAllister and Ruggill, 2014). The project ends with the eighth and current generation of consoles (Xbox One, Nintendo Switch, Playstation 4, Wii U) when console innovation ceased to be radical and when gaming culture and an increasingly disputed gamer subjectivity had permeated the wider society on a global scale (e.g. through the context of Gamergate and the challenge to female gaming subjectivities).</p> <p>Games studies is now a well-established academic discipline but as Swalwell, Stuckey and Ndalians (2017) state, game history has been relatively neglected. And whilst some attention has been paid to broader cultures of gaming (Kirkpatrick, 2015; Newman, 2008) and to particular gaming subjectivities (Thornham, 2011; Ruberg and Shaw, 2017), no scholar has so far addressed the lived experience of gaming and the production of gamers' subjectivities within a specific national and historical context. The project will constitute a significant contribution to videogames studies, which according to Thornham, 'continues to produce technologically-deterministic accounts of gaming' that ignore the socio-cultural context (1). The project will contribute to the work of the National Museum of Videogames; the dissertation's findings will be incorporated into an exhibit on the lived experience of gaming between 1982 and 2017. Both the dissertation and the exhibition will interrogate the still dominant stereotype of the isolated and immersed male gamer, thus potentially contributing to academic research and altering the popular imagination.</p> <p>The primary research question is 'How did social, cultural, technological and industrial factors structure the lived experience of gaming and gamers' subjectivities in the UK?' Asking this question requires addressing various aspects of lived experience implicated in the production of subjectivity: touch and haptics; sound and listening; ways of seeing; inter-sensoriality, affective atmospheres and the like. Depending upon the student's interests and the primary evidence, subsidiary questions might concern: specific social identities (gender identification, sexual orientation, class, age, ethnicity); the incorporation of gaming into everyday life; the formation of gamer communities and the significant role they played in gaming culture; the materiality of game play on different consoles across the time span covered; the ways in which the increasing ubiquity and legitimacy of games inflected the gaming experience; the research subjects' relationship to the construction of gaming subjectivities generated and circulated through popular discourses and in gamer specific texts.</p>				

Full coverage of the 1982-2017 period will not be possible during the funded four years; therefore, supervisors and student will select for exploration key transitional or significant moments in the identified timeframe in which critical changes occurred in one or more of the contextual factors – the social, the cultural, the technological and the industrial. For instance, a moment of particular interest may be the introduction of devices/sensors through which to respond to player movement (Nintendo Wii, Playstation Move, Xbox 360 Kinect) in the first decade of the new millennium.

The project will triangulate data from three sources:

- 1) objects and papers in the British Games Institute (BGI) archives
- 2) the gamer and popular press as well as remaining online data such as forums, blogs and the like
- 3) data collected through the Museum:
  - a) surveys (comprised of closed and open-ended questions)
  - b) semi-structured oral history interviews with questions arising from the survey data and archival research. Pictures of key archival objects (e.g. consoles, packaging) will be used to prompt memory.

Key to the triangulation will be comparison of the research subject data with the other two sources. The interviews and other texts will be subjected to thematic discourse analysis, whilst the quantitative survey data will be analysed through SPSS.

The collaboration amongst the student, supervisors and the BGI/Museum is key to the research which could not be conducted without access to the archives, the Museum's assistance in recruiting research subjects and the historical expertise of Museum staff.

### **Timetable**

Years one to three: training in curation/interpretation and outreach practices

Year one: BGI archives; methods training; literature review; identification of key moments

Year two: gamer/popular presses and online evidence; methods training; collection/analysis of survey and oral history data

Year three: assisting in preparation of exhibition; associated outreach activities

Year four: academic symposium

(748 words)



**HOW TO FIND OUT MORE**

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