

UKRI Newcastle University PhD Studentship Opportunity

Title of Award

Exploring Media Design for Young People's Wellbeing through an Internet of Sensations

Project Overview

The wellbeing of children and young people (CYP) is increasingly shaped by their production and consumption of online media. Recent evidence shows how online media use has a significant impact on CYP's psychological functioning related to body image, self-representation, and social behaviour.

This 'great rewiring of childhood' (Jonathan Haidt, 2024) reflects the potential addictive nature of online media and time spent online by CYP, impacting their development of healthy, balanced lifestyles and skills, and rendering them vulnerable to technology abuse.

Innovations in Internet of Things, tangible, phatic and pervasive media open up new embodied experiences online. Technologies like 8D Audio, and phenomena like Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR), prompt questions for how CYP may navigate a newly distributed 'internet of sensations', with implications for their wellbeing and development.

Are you interested in the opportunity to research and design interactive tools for positively shaping CYP wellbeing through embodied interactions with online media?

Newcastle University is recruiting a Full-Time PhD student to explore this topic through applied Design Research practice in the interdisciplinary field of Human Computer Interaction (HCI), based in Open Lab, School of Computing: <https://openlab.ncl.ac.uk/>. We invite applicants interested in areas like Tangible Media, Soma Design, Digital Media, Sound Design, Embodied Interaction; Digital Health, Wellbeing and Care. We encourage a collaborative, creative and critical approach, and enthusiasm to work at the intersection of the social sciences, cultural studies, and computing.

Uniquely, this studentship provides the opportunity to partner with Coram Life Education (CLE), a charitable organisation with national stakeholder networks, supporting CYP through life skills, including health and wellbeing education: <https://www.coramlifeeducation.org.uk/>. CLE can provide: advice on national priorities and needs of CYP and their parents, carers and teachers; access to research populations; and valuable dissemination platforms and forums. Such resources will enable the PhD student to respond to real-world matters whilst utilising resources within Open Lab – including a Maker Space and a diverse and interdisciplinary academic community.



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Award summary

100% fees covered and a minimum tax-free annual living allowance £18,622 (2023-24 UKRI <https://www.ukri.org/> rate).

Number of awards: 1

Start date: September 2024

Award duration: 3 years

Application closing date: July 31st 2024

Sponsor: School of Computing: <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/computing/>

Name of Principal Supervisor: [Abigail Durrant](#), Open Lab, Newcastle University

Supervision Team: [Nick Taylor](#), Open Lab; [Jan Forshaw](#), Coram Life Education

Eligibility Criteria

You must have, or expect to gain, a minimum 2:1 Honours degree or international equivalent in a relevant discipline, and a background in: media studies or human / social sciences – interested to develop design skills; design with interest in the human / social sciences. Excellent analytical and communication skills are essential.

Home and international applicants (incl. EU) are welcome to apply and if successful will receive a full studentship. Applicants whose first language is not English require an IELTS score of 6.5 overall with a minimum of 5.5 in all sub-skills. International applicants may require an ATAS (Academic Technology Approval Scheme) clearance certificate prior to obtaining their visa and to study on this programme.

How to apply

Use [Apply to Newcastle Portal](#). Once registered select '**Create a Postgraduate Application**'.

Use 'Course Search' to identify your programme of study:

- Search for the 'Course Title' using programme code: **8050F**
- Research Area: **Computing Science**
- Select **PhD Computer Science** as programme of study

You need to provide the following in 'Further Details' section:

- 'Personal Statement' - upload a document/written statement directly into application form.
- When prompted - select 'Write Proposal'. Type the title of the research project from this advert. You don't need to upload a research proposal.
- Degree transcripts and certificates and, if English is not your first language, a copy of your English language qualification if already completed.
- Studentship code **COMP2165** in the 'Studentship/Partnership Reference' field.

In the 'Supporting Documentation' section upload your CV. You must submit one application per studentship, you cannot apply for multiple studentships on one application.

Please contact Abigail Durrant with informal queries: abigail.durrant@newcastle.ac.uk.