

Nick Ballou

PHD RESEARCHER - PSYCHOLOGY OF VIDEO GAMES AND META-SCIENCE

☎ (+44) 07367 525567 | ✉ nick@nickballou.com | 🏠 nickballou.com | 📺 [nballou](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnballou) | 🐦 [@nballou](https://twitter.com/nballou)

'Games are an identity management tool. Gamers gravitate toward gameplay that aligns with their core personality traits. Rather than enabling people to pretend to be something we're not, games help us to become more of who we really are.' — Nick Yee

Education

PhD in Video Game Psychology

2019–present

QUEEN MARY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

CDT IN INTELLIGENT GAMES AND GAME INTELLIGENCE (IGGI)

- **Topic:** When do games motivate and support well-being, and when not?
- **Themes:** self-determination theory, digital trace data, player experience
- **Supervisors:** Prof Sebastian Deterding (Imperial College London), Dr Laurissa Tokarchuk (Queen Mary), and Dr David Zendle (University of York)

MPhil with distinction in Theoretical and Applied Linguistics

2017–2018

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

- Research areas: phonetics, second language acquisition, computer-assisted language learning
- Supervisor: Dr Calbert Graham

BS magna cum laude in Linguistics and Environmental Studies

2012–2016

TULANE UNIVERSITY

Skills



Open Research	Open data/materials/code, preregistration, questionable research practices, open access
Research Methods	Digital trace data, surveys, longitudinal studies, qualitative methods (e.g., grounded theory)
Programming	R(Markdown), LaTeX, Python (Intermediate), SQL (Basic)
Statistics	Multilevel models, structural equation modeling, GL(M)Ms, power analysis
Data Science	Monte Carlo simulation, data visualization, reproducibility, big data

Selected Publications

For a complete list of publications, please see my [🔗 Google Scholar page](#). Open access versions are available by clicking the [📄](#) icons.

JOURNAL ARTICLES



- 2023 **Ballou, N.** A Manifesto for More Productive Psychological Games Research.
Games: Research and Practice, DOI: [10.31234/osf.io/fp89z](https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/fp89z). [📄](#)
- 2023 Zendle, D, Flick, C, Halgarth, D, **Ballou, N**, Demediuk, S & Drachen, A. Cross-Cultural Patterns in Mobile Play-time: An Analysis of 118 Billion Hours of Human Data.
Scientific Reports, DOI: [10.1038/s41598-022-26730-w](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-26730-w). [📄](#)
- 2022 **Ballou, N** & Zendle, D. “Clinically Significant Distress” in Internet Gaming Disorder: An Individual Participant Meta-Analysis.
Computers in Human Behavior, DOI: [10.1016/j.chb.2021.107140](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2021.107140). [📄](#)
- 2021 **Ballou, N** & Van Rooij, AJ. The Relationship between Mental Well-Being and Dysregulated Gaming: A Specification Curve Analysis of Core and Peripheral Criteria in Five Gaming Disorder Scales.
Royal Society Open Science, DOI: [10.1098/rsos.201385](https://doi.org/10.1098/rsos.201385). [📄](#)
- 2021 Vuorre, M, Zendle, D, Petrovskaya, E, **Ballou, N** & Przybylski, AK. A Large-Scale Study of Changes to the Quantity, Quality, and Distribution of Video Game Play during a Global Health Pandemic.
Technology, Mind, and Behavior, DOI: [10.1037/tmb0000048](https://doi.org/10.1037/tmb0000048). [📄](#)

- 2020 Zendle, D, Meyer, R & **Ballou, N**. “The Changing Face of Desktop Video Game Monetisation: An Exploration of Trends in Loot Boxes, Pay to Win, and Cosmetic Microtransactions in the Most-Played Steam Games of 2010-2019”.
PLOS ONE, DOI: [10.1371/journal.pone.0232780](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0232780). 
- 2020 Zendle, D, Meyer, R, Cairns, P, Waters, S & **Ballou, N**. “The Prevalence of Loot Boxes in Mobile and Desktop Games”.
Addiction, DOI: [10.1111/add.14973](https://doi.org/10.1111/add.14973). 




CONFERENCE PAPERS

- 2023 **Ballou, N**, Zendle, D, Cutting, J & Gordon-Petrovskaya, E. Four Dilemmas for Video Game Effects Scholars: How Digital Trace Data Can Improve the Way We Study Games
ICA'23: The 73rd Annual Conference of the International Communication Association, DOI: [pending](#)
- 2022 **Ballou, N**, Deterding, S, Iacovides, I & Helsby, L. Do People Use Games to Compensate for Psychological Needs During Crises? A Mixed-Methods Study of Gaming During COVID-19 Lockdowns
CHI '22 Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, DOI: [10.1145/3491102.3501858](https://doi.org/10.1145/3491102.3501858) 
- 2022 **Ballou, N**, Gbadamosi, C & Zendle, D. “The Hidden Intricacy of Loot Box Design: A Granular Description of Random Monetized Reward Features”.
In press at DiGRA, DOI: [10.31234/osf.io/xeckb](https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/xeckb). 
- 2021 **Ballou, N**, Breitsohl, H, Kao, D, Gerling, K & Deterding, S. Not Very Effective: Validity Issues of the Effectance in Games Scale
CHI PLAY '21 Extended Abstracts, DOI: [10.1145/3450337.3483492](https://doi.org/10.1145/3450337.3483492) 
- 2021 **Ballou, N**, Warriar, VR & Deterding, S. “Are You Open? A Content Analysis of Transparency and Openness Guidelines in HCI Journals”
CHI '21 Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, DOI: [10.1145/3411764.3445584](https://doi.org/10.1145/3411764.3445584) 
- 2021 Ratcliffe, J, **Ballou, N** & Tokarchuk, L. Actions, Not Gestures: Contextualising Embodied Controller Interactions in Immersive Virtual Reality
Proceedings of the 27th ACM Symposium on Virtual Reality Software and Technology, DOI: [10.1145/3489849.3489892](https://doi.org/10.1145/3489849.3489892)

TEAM SCIENCE AND CONSORTIA

- 2022 Parsons, S, Azevedo, F, Elsherif, MM & **110 others including Nick Ballou**. A Community-Sourced Glossary of Open Scholarship Terms.
Nature Human Behaviour, DOI: [10.1038/s41562-021-01269-4](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-021-01269-4). 
- 2022 Stewart, S, Pennington, CR & **8 other UKRN leads, including Nick Ballou**. Reforms to Improve Reproducibility and Quality Must Be Coordinated across the Research Ecosystem: The View from the UKRN Local Network Leads.
BMC Research Notes, DOI: [10.1186/s13104-022-05949-w](https://doi.org/10.1186/s13104-022-05949-w). 

PRE-PRINTS AND JURIED WORK

- 2023 Xiao, LY & **Ballou, N**. Pinpointing the Problem: Providing Page Numbers for Citations as a Crucial Part of Open Science.
Preprint, DOI: [10.31219/osf.io/2um67](https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/2um67). 
- 2022 **Ballou, N** et al. Self-Determination Theory in HCI : Shaping a Research Agenda
CHI '22 Extended Abstracts, DOI: [10.1145/3491101.3503702](https://doi.org/10.1145/3491101.3503702) 
- 2022 Zendle, D, Flick, C, Hargarth, D, **Ballou, N**, Cutting, J & Drachen, A. Understanding Whether Lockdowns Lead to Increases in the Heaviness of Gaming Using Massive-Scale Data Telemetry: An Analysis of 251 Billion Hours of Playtime.
Preprint, DOI: [10.31234/osf.io/fm8gk](https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/fm8gk). 

WRITTEN EVIDENCE

- 2021 Petrovskaya, E, **Ballou, N** & Zendle, D. ASA Consultation on In-Game Purchasing.
Advertising Standards Authority (UK).
- 2020 Zendle, D, **Ballou, N** & Petrovskaya, E. Loot Boxes in Video Games: Call for Evidence.
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (UK).

Grants

- 2022 **£3k**, For research on data donation and loot boxes [↗ AFSG](#)
- 2022 **£4k**, For research on objective logging of Xbox gaming [↗ IGGI CDT](#)
- 2021 **£2k**, For research on objective logging of Xbox gaming (lead grantwriter) [↗ Centre for Future Health](#)
- 2015 **\$1k**, Devlin Internship Grant [↗ Tulane University](#)

Scholarships

- 2019 **£69k**, EPSRC PhD Funding, IGGI Centre for Doctoral Training (4 years) [↗ QMUL](#)
- 2018 **€7k (declined)**, AIPHEs Pre-doctoral Training Grant [↗ Universität Heidelberg](#)
- 2012 **\$108k**, Presidential Merit Scholarship (4 years) [↗ Tulane University](#)

Other Academic Work

Research Development Instructor

2021–present

QMUL RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

- Propose, design, and lead workshops on peer review/publication bias, and questionable research practices
- Address open research issues with PhD students and postdocs across a wide range of disciplines

Organiser and Founder

2020–present

REPRODUCIBILI^{TEA}, QMUL CHAPTER

- Established local chapter of global [Reproducibili^{TEA}](#) journal club for monthly discussions of science reform
- Grew to maximum attendance of 15+ across disciplines and career stages
- Initiated collaborations with faculty members at QMUL, librarian staff, external speakers, and ReproTea organisers at other institutions

Local Network Lead

2021–present

UK REPRODUCIBILITY NETWORK

- Responsible for coordinating open science-related groups at QMUL
- Coordinated and analyzed survey on awareness and use of open sciences practices at QMUL
- Active efforts to reform which metrics are used to evaluate faculty

Non-Academic Experience

Primary English Teacher

2018–2019

RAINBOW PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hong Kong

- Designed and delivered up to 20 English lessons per week for grades 2 and 6
- Evaluated and introduced e-learning resources for grammar and phonics acquisition

Phonetics Research Assistant

Jun–Aug 2018

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge, UK

- Conducted comprehensive literature review and paper annotation for the summary article of a *Phonetica* special issue, spanning topics in phonetics, phonology, and psycholinguistics