

Daniel J. Finnegan, EngD; BSc.

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Summary

I am an academic with research interests in Human Centred AI, Virtual and Mixed Reality (VR & XR), Serious Games; Accessibility, and Spatial Audio Interaction. My work reaches across disciplinary boundaries. I publish in rigorously peer reviewed conferences and journals. I have a strong grant income commensurate to my career.

Please note that my website may contain an up-to-date CV

Employment

Senior Lecturer (Assoc ~ Asst Professor)

Cardiff University

May 2019 - Present

I lead the VR sub group in the Human Centred Computing research section; I am the deputy Director of Learning and Teaching in the school; I am the PGR training officer.

Co-Director

Echo Games

October 2018 - Present

Echo Games CIC develops 'seriously fun' games and interactive experiences for universities, museums, cultural institutions, and not-for-profit organisations. We nurture emerging talent through workshops, game jams and internships, and provide support to cultural institutions that are looking to enhance their digital offer. <https://echogames.co.uk>.

Board Member

ProMo Cymru

February 2023 - January 2025

Large national charity; Board of Trustees member; working with young people and communities; I engaged ProMo in knowledge transfer activities, demonstrating the positive real world impact of my research. <https://www.promo.cymru/>.

Research Associate

University of Bath

October 2016 - April 2019

Postdoc in the CAMERA research centre at the University of Bath; Spatial perception in virtual reality.

Academic Duties

Teaching

CM1301 Principles, Tools, and Techniques for Secure Software Engineering since 2019, 250+ students; CMT206 Human Centric Computing since 2019, 80+ students; CM2101 Human Computer Interaction 2019 - 2024, 250+ students. My teaching is lauded by students, and I deliver an excellent student experience. For example, in the end of module enhancement survey at Cardiff, the module I lead, CM1301, has received the following scores with respect to responses to the question I am satisfied with the overall quality of the module: 2024/25 85% neutral-positive; 2023/24 81% neutral-positive; 2022/23 74% neutral-positive. I was shortlisted for '**Most Innovative Staff Member of the Year**' in 2023 at the ESLA, Cardiff's student body awards program formed, promoted, and delivered by the student union.

Supervision I supervise 5 PhD students in collaboration with colleagues within my home school and across the university on cross-disciplinary projects. My supervision approach is a critical friend; I challenge my students to think holistically in the first instance, painting the big picture clearly and communicating effectively before diving in to the gritty details. My students come from a diverse background, based in computer science, history, and architecture, all working on human centred computing projects focused on culture, creativity, and innovative problem solving.

I supervise ~ 12 PGT students every year. Projects vary across all research groups in the school; e.g., machine learning, serious games, web technologies. My students have previously won best dissertation awards from the school.

Administration

I am the deputy Director of Learning and Teaching, supporting the DLT in driving teaching strategy within the School. I am Chair of the Programme Operations series of meetings, where staff can report on conversations ‘on the ground’ with students so we can preempt NSS related feedback and action promptly and effectively. I am the PGR training officer, directing students towards training and skills development opportunities, and organising events throughout the year to promote a positive research environment for research students.

I have examined the following PhD theses: Dr Richard Grafton, School of Computer Science, Faculty of Science and Engineering, University of Bristol, 2025; Dr Miaomiao Ding, School of Education College of Social Sciences, University of Glasgow, 2023;

Education

EngD in Digital Entertainment, September 2017, University of Bath;
BSc. in Computer Science, June 2012, University College Dublin, Ireland;

Recent Grants

Total Grant Capture: **£1,771,982.00**.
See <https://ps2fino.github.io/pages/grants.html> for a complete list.

UKRI Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC), 2025; Co-Investigator
£1,499,688

Competitive funding awarded for the Transforming Cultures of Language Learning project. Lead for Work Package 2 developing Digital Avatars for language learning. Working with several colleagues across UK (Stirling, Queens Belfast) and Ireland (Dublin City University).

Future Fashion Factory Game Development Grant, 2024; Principal Investigator
£30,000

Awarded to produce a prototype game for engaging audiences in sustainable fashion. We built Off the Rack:

<https://www.echogames.co.uk/stories/empowering-sustainable-fashion-through-games>

AHRC Impact Acceleration Account, 2023; Co-Investigator
£15,000

Competitive funding awarded from Cardiff University’s IAA scheme to create digital avatars driven by generative AI for museums.

ESRC Impact Acceleration Account, 2022; Co-Investigator
£45,000

Competitive funding awarded from Cardiff University’s IAA scheme for Mark IV and subsequent Mark V prototype development of ViewfindR. ViewfindR is now a **commercial project** licensed to 5+ institutions across the UK and Europe by UC3, Cardiff University’s IP holding company.

ESRC X AHRC Impact Acceleration Account, 2022; Principal Investigator
£10,000

Competitive funding awarded from Cardiff University’s IAA scheme to create an innovative community driven video games console to explore local heritage and culture.

Trailblazer Award, Bristol/Bath R& D, 2022; Principal Investigator
£10,000

Competitive funding awarded from the Bristol and Bath research and development scheme to create Unlock Bath: A digital Escape Room exploring the interconnected

history of the city of Bath in cooperation with several local museums. Read more about the project here and play the game here: <https://echogames.co.uk/unlock-bath>

UKRI / US National Academy of Medicine, 2021; Principal Investigator
£62,500

Competitive funding awarded from the UKRI's Economics & Social Science Research Council (ESRC) to explore mixed reality in the context of community building interventions for tackling loneliness and reducing feelings of isolation.

HEFCW, 2021; Co-Investigator
£23,750

Competitive funding awarded from the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) to build ViewfindR prototype version 2.0, a virtual learning environment for teaching students in video journalism to develop their creative skills and plan for filming.

Academic Service Leadership

I was General Chair for BCS HCI 2025. My duties included overall responsibility for the conference planning and execution. I led a committee of 21 internationally recognised peers. The conference had a **300%** increase in attendance over the previous year. Cardiff made a press release: <https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/news/view/2988529-cardiff-hosts-bcs-hci-conference-2025>

I was an associate chair for the ACM 2026 CHI conference. CHI is my field's top venue; 2026 had **6,730** submissions.

Conference Peer Reviewer

Experimental Brain Research 2025; Interacting with Computers 2025; ACM CHI PLAY 2023; IFIP TC_{13} INTERACT 2021; ACM Foundations in Digital Games 2021; ACM VRCAI 2019; ACM IMWUT 2018;

Journal Peer Review

ACM Transactions on Perception; Springer Nature: Scientific Reports; Springer Virtual Reality; Frontiers in Rehabilitation Sciences; International Journal of Human Computer Studies; International Journal of Human Computer Interaction; International Journal of Gerontology and Social Sciences; IEEE Transactions on Human Machine Systems; PLOS ONE; Electronics and Telecommunications Research Institute (ETRI); IGI International Journal of Game-Based Learning;

Awards

Enriching Student Life Awards, May 2022;
Most Innovative Staff Member of the Year (shortlisted);

Recognising Excellence Scheme, November 2018;
Merit Payment for Exceptional Performance;
Awarded by the Faculty of Science at the University of Bath;

Publications

My scopus profile is here: <https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=56890829700#>

I include a selection of papers; please review my website for a complete list: <https://ps2fino.github.io/pages/publications.html>

Journal Articles

Playful Heritage: Video Game Creation as Interdisciplinary Historical Engagement
Journal of Cinema and Media Studies; 2025
<https://ps2fino.github.io/jcms-2025.html>

A systematic review and narrative synthesis of the use and effectiveness of extended reality technology in the assessment, treatment and study of obsessive compulsive disorder

Journal of Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders; 2024

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jocrd.2024.100893>

(Expected Submission to REF 2029) Potential factors contributing to observed sex differences in Virtual Reality induced sickness

Experimental Brain Research; 2024

<https://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s00221-023-06760-0>

Tackling Loneliness and Isolation in older adults with Virtual Reality: How do we move forward?

Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine; 2023

<https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/23337214231186204>

(Expected Submission to REF 2029) Unsettling Play: Perceptions of Agonistic Games

ACM Journal on Computing and Cultural Heritage; 2022

<https://dx.doi.org/10.1145/3431925>

Immersive Virtual Environments and Embodied Agents for E-learning Applications

PeerJ Computer Science; 2020

<https://dx.doi.org/10.7717/peerj-cs.315>

**Conference Publications
(Peer reviewed)**

A note on publication venues for non-HCI interested parties: in my primary area of research, Human Computer Interaction, the ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI) is considered one of the best forums for dissemination of research results and covers the broad spectrum of research in Human Computer Interaction. Papers in CHI are refereed as full papers, and have an acceptance rate of around 15-25% each year.

(Best Poster) An Integrative Process for the Design of Seriously Fun Games

Proceedings of Games and Learning Alliance 2025

https://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-032-11043-5_53

‘Chattable’ Avatars: Using LLMs to Power Visitor Engagement with Historical Persons

Proceedings of British Computer Society HCI 2025

<https://dx.doi.org/10.14236/ewic/BCSHCI2025.10>

HF-MAI: Touchless Mid-Air Interaction for Individuals with Dexterity Impairment

Proceedings of INTERACT 2025

http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-032-04999-5_7

(Expected Submission to REF 2029) Advantages of Friend-Modelled Social Interactive Feedforward for VR Exergaming

Proceedings of ACM CHI PLAY 2024

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/3270316.3270594>

‘Did you see that!?’ Enhancing the Experience of Sports Media Broadcast for Blind People

Proceedings of INTERACT 2021

http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-85623-6_24

(Submitted to REF 2021) Interactive Feedforward for Improving Performance and Maintaining Intrinsic Motivation in VR Exergaming

Proceedings of the 2018 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems;

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/3173574.3173982>

(Submitted to REF 2021) HandMap: Robust Hand Pose Estimation via Intermediate Dense Guidance Map Supervision
ECCV 2018: Proceedings of the 15th European Conference on Computer Vision
http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-01270-0_15

Agonistic Games: Multiperspective and Unsettling Games for Social Change
Proceedings of ACM CHI PLAY 2018 Extended Abstracts
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/3677103> An Approach to Reducing Distance Compression in Audiovisual Virtual Environments
IEEE 3rd VR Workshop on Sonic Interactions for Virtual Environments (SIVE), 2017
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1109/SIVE.2017.7901607>

Compensating for Distance Compression in Audiovisual Virtual Environments Using Incongruence
Proceedings of the 2016 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems;
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2858036.2858065>

Reindeer & Wolves: Exploring Sensory Deprivation in Multiplayer Digital Bodily Play
CHI PLAY '14 Proceedings of the First ACM SIGCHI Annual Symposium on Computer-Human Interaction in Play;
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2658537.2661309>