Field Development Plan

The interdisciplinary work on games studies at the University of Tampere is the perfect home for my research, as detailed in my research plan. Given the institution’s established record for innovation, being one of the first departments to study hypermediality, offering a forward thinking multidisciplinary masters programme in game studies and the internet, developing the field at Tampere is not an easy task. However, I believe my future plans for research have the potential to maintain Tampere’s standing as a leading research institution within this field.

Most immediately, I would hope to innovate through the introduction of an elective course into the MSC programme. This course, tentatively titled, ‘Ontics and Ethics through Games Design’ would expose students to contemporary theory and philosophy that challenges established modes of thought. The primary method of examination would be based on the method of ‘exploratory coding’ wherein students would design a small game or computer programme with a focus on a particular element of game design to discuss their ideas. For instance, when discussing the mediation of ecological systems, the student could, inspired by the work of Matthew Fuller or Jussi Parikka, respond by making a rudimentary REST api for a java program to manipulate an SQL database, mimicking the patterns observable within online games for storing statistics and inventory items. The student could then explore some of the ramifications of their particular method of engaging with the internet – the inherent issues of needing to rely on a vast ecosystem of languages and protocols, for instance. This programme would cross the barriers between computer science and humanities education creating critical thinkers that are comfortable with contemporary technology and invested in exploring the ways it shapes society.

My second thrust for developing the field is my research into quantum computing and games design. While still in its exploratory stages, I would hope to introduce a course that covers some of the basic concepts of quantum theory, exploring the work of Karen Barad and Ian Hacking, building towards an understanding of Microsoft’s Q# language. Still in its most rudimentary form, the projects students could create using Q# would be simple but ultimately would reflect one of the world’s first certifications on learning quantum design. I am currently developing publications in this field that will form the basis of my future research.

Finally, I endeavour to extend outwards from an academic institution to provide support for and generate discourse with artists and practitioners. My hope would be to host interdisciplinary talks between students and independent game designers to encourage new paradigms of best practice in games design. This would occur through cross-talk as student would be inspired by the artists, just as the artists could take inspiration from students and faculty. Presently I am working on a proposal to the European Research Association to create an event with independent game designers from America with European academics, discussing the creation of affect and loss in gaming.

I hope you will consider the rest of my application and that we will have an opportunity to discuss it in person in the future.