Sophie Kenny

Staff Scientist | Research Scientist (Product and R&D;)

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Professional Summary

Research Scientist with a background in experimental psychology and applied perception research, currently working at the intersection of cognitive science and research technology. My role focuses on shaping research software and hardware used in behavioral, neuroimaging, and immersive research settings, with an emphasis on data quality, reproducibility, and usability. I work closely with engineers and product teams to translate research requirements into practical design decisions, and I regularly support researchers through training, consultation, and technical documentation.

Core Expertise

- Applied cognitive psychology and human perception research
- Human factors and user experience in scientific and research tools
- Experimental design, psychophysics, and behavioral measurement
- Immersive and sensing technologies (VR, eye tracking, neuroimaging)
- Quantitative analysis using R, MATLAB, Unity, and SPSS
- Cross-functional collaboration in product and engineering teams

Professional Experience

VPixx Technologies Inc – Staff Scientist (2018 to Present)

- Set scientific direction for research software used in behavioral, neuroimaging, and VR laboratories.
- Define functional requirements and workflows in collaboration with software engineers using Agile processes.
- Evaluate and improve user workflows to reduce experimental error and increase data reliability.
- Develop and deliver training materials, workshops, and methods seminars for academic and industry users.
- Provide consultation on laboratory configuration and experimental design for complex research environments.
- Contribute to internal research, methods papers, and conference presentations that inform product development.

Royal Military College of Canada and Laurentian University – University Lecturer (2016 to 2024)

- Designed and taught undergraduate psychology courses across in-person and online formats.

- Developed course material and assessments aligned with learning objectives and institutional requirements.
- Taught bilingual classes for officers-in-training, focusing on applied psychology in leadership contexts.
- Supervised and mentored students on research projects and applied coursework.

Independent Research Consulting and Postdoctoral Research (2017 to 2018)

- Advised academic and institutional research groups on experimental design, measurement strategy, and statistical analysis.
- Designed and implemented behavioral and perception studies using virtual reality and interactive experimental paradigms.
- Supported data collection and analysis for grant-funded and internally supported research projects.
- Prepared technical reports, publications, and conference materials communicating results to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

Education

PhD, Brain, Behaviour and Cognitive Sciences (Psychology) – Queen's University (2012 to 2017)

MSc, Experimental Psychology – Memorial University of Newfoundland (2010 to 2012)

BA Honours, Psychology – Universite de Moncton (2006 to 2010)

Awards

- Queen Elizabeth II Scholarship (Science and Technology)
- NSERC Canada Alexander Graham Bell Graduate Scholarship
- NSERC Julie Payette Graduate Scholarship
- Governor General's Academic Medal
- NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Award

Methods, Tools, and Languages

Methods: Experimental design, psychophysics, eye tracking, behavioral analysis, neuroimaging support
Tools: R, MATLAB, Unity, SPSS, motion capture systems, VR frameworks
Languages: French (native or bilingual), English (native or bilingual)

Selected Publications

- Weech, S., Kenny, S., Lenizky, M., and Barnett-Cowan, M. (2020). Narrative and gaming experience interact to affect presence and cybersickness in virtual reality. International Journal of Human-Computer Studies, 138, 102398.

- Weech, S., Varghese, J. P., and Kenny, S. (2020). Limits of subjective and objective vection for ultra-high frame rate visual displays. Displays, 64, 101961.

- Kenny, S., Mahmood, N., Honda, C., Black, M. J., and Troje, N. F. (2019). Perceptual effects of inconsistency in human animations. ACM Transactions on Applied Perception, 16(1), 1-18.

- Weech, S., Kenny, S., and Barnett-Cowan, M. (2019). Presence and cybersickness in virtual reality are negatively related: A review. Frontiers in Psychology, 10, 158.

- Courage, M. L., Bakhtiar, A., Fitzpatrick, C., and Kenny, S. (2015). Growing up multitasking: The costs and benefits for cognitive development. Developmental Review, 35, 5-41.

- Weech, S., McAdam, M., Kenny, S., and Troje, N. F. (2014). What causes the facing-the-viewer bias in biological motion? Journal of Vision, 14(12), 10-10.

- Newman, A. J., Kenny, S., Saint-Aubin, J., and Klein, R. M. (2013). Can skilled readers perform a second task in parallel? A functional connectivity MRI study. Brain and Language, 124(1), 84-95.

- Kenny, S., Mahmood, N., Honda, C., Black, M. J., and Troje, N. F. (2017). Effects of animation retargeting on perceived action outcomes. Proceedings of the ACM Symposium on Applied Perception, 1-7.

- Saint-Aubin, J., Kenny, S., and Roy-Charland, A. (2010). The role of eye movements in the missing-letter effect revisited with the rapid serial visual presentation procedure. Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology.