

# Nick Ballou

## PHD RESEARCHER - PSYCHOLOGY OF VIDEO GAMES AND META-SCIENCE

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*‘Games are an identity management tool [...] 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*

## Academic Positions

### Postdoctoral Researcher

2023–present

OXFORD INTERNET INSTITUTE

- Work with [Andy Przybylski](#) to understand how video games affect mental health using large-scale telemetry data
- Collaboration with game industry partners including Nintendo, Xbox, and FuturLab

## 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?
- *Theme*: self-determination theory, digital trace data, meta-science
- *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


<b>Open Research</b>	Open data/materials/code, preregistration, questionable research practices, open access
<b>Video game effects</b>	Digital trace data, player experience measures, self-determination theory, dysregulated gaming
<b>Research Methods</b>	Surveys, longitudinal studies, qualitative methods (e.g., grounded theory)
<b>Programming</b>	R(Markdown), LaTeX, Python (Intermediate), SQL (Basic)
<b>Statistics</b>	Multilevel models, structural equation modeling, GL(M)Ms, power analysis
<b>Data Science</b>	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). 

- 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](https://doi.org/10.1111/add.14973).
- 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**, 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). 





## 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). 




## 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 
- 2022 **£4k**, For research on objective logging of Xbox gaming 
- 2021 **£2k**, For research on objective logging of Xbox gaming (lead grantwriter) 
- 2015 **\$1k**, Devlin Internship Grant 

## Scholarships

- 2019 **£69k**, EPSRC PhD Funding, IGGI Centre for Doctoral Training (4 years) 
- 2018 **€7k (declined)**, ALPHES Pre-doctoral Training Grant 
- 2012 **\$108k**, Presidential Merit Scholarship (4 years) 

## 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 **ReproducibiliTea** 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 grassroots open science-related activities 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

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### 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