

Nick Ballou

Postdoc 🎮 Video Game Psychologist 📊 Media Data Scientist

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Academic Positions

2023– **Postdoctoral Researcher**

- Group: Digital Wellbeing Lab led by [Professor Andrew Przybylski](#)
- Topic: Video games' effects on mental health, using digital trace data
- Industry-partnered (e.g., Nintendo & Xbox) and open source data collection

Oxford Internet Institute
University of Oxford

Education

2023 **PhD in Intelligent Games & Game Intelligence, *no corrections***

- **Thesis:** The Basic Needs in Games (BANG) Model of Video Games and Mental Health
- Supervisors: Prof Sebastian Deterding, Dr Laurissa Tokarchuk, and Dr David Zendle

Queen Mary
University of London

2018 **MPhil in Applied Linguistics, *with distinction***

University of Cambridge

2016 **BS in Linguistics, *magna cum laude***

Tulane University

Skills



Statistical Programming	R, Quarto, GL(M)Ms, Monte Carlo simulation, data visualization
Video game effects	Digital trace data, player experience, self-determination theory, disordered gaming
Research Methods	Causal inference, qualitative, quantitative, secondary data use
Open Science	Open data/materials/code, preregistration, questionable research practices, open access
Game Data Science	User analytics, telemetry, predictive modelling, longitudinal data

Selected Publications




For a complete list, please see my [Google Scholar](#). All my articles are available open access via the [OA](#) icons.

Journal Articles



- 2024 **Ballou N**, Denisova A, Ryan R, Rigby CS & Deterding S.
The Basic Needs in Games Scale (BANGS): A New Tool for Investigating Positive and Negative Video Game Experiences.
International Journal of Human-Computer Studies, [10.1016/j.ijhcs.2024.103289](#). [OA](#)
- 2024 **Ballou N**, Sewall CJR, Ratcliffe J, Zendle D, Tokarchuk L & Deterding S.
Registered Report Evidence Suggests No Relationship Between Objectively-Tracked Video Game Playtime and Wellbeing Over 3 Months.
Technology, Mind, and Behavior, [10.1037/tmb0000124](#). [OA](#)
- 2023 **Ballou N**.
A Manifesto for More Productive Psychological Games Research.
Games: Research and Practice, [10.1145/3582929](#). [OA](#)
- 2023 Zendle D, Flick C, Gordon-Petrovskaya E, **Ballou N**, Xiao LY & Drachen A.
No Evidence That Chinese Playtime Mandates Reduced Heavy Gaming in One Segment of the Video Games Industry.
Nature Human Behaviour, [10.1038/s41562-023-01669-8](#). [OA](#)
- 2022 **Ballou N** & Zendle D.
“Clinically Significant Distress” in Internet Gaming Disorder: An Individual Participant Meta-Analysis.
Computers in Human Behavior, [10.1016/j.chb.2021.107140](#). [OA](#)

- 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, [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, [10.1037/tmb0000048](https://doi.org/10.1037/tmb0000048). 

Conference Papers







- 2024 Kao D, **Ballou N**, Gerling K, Breitsohl H & Deterding S.
How Does Juicy Game Feedback Motivate? Testing Curiosity, Competence, and Effectance
Proceedings of the CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, [10.1145/3613904.3642656](https://doi.org/10.1145/3613904.3642656). 
- 2023 **Ballou N**, Zendle D, Cutting J & Gordon-Petrovskaya E.
Four Grand Challenges for Video Game Effects Scholars: How Digital Trace Data Can Improve the Way We Study Games
ICA '23: International Communication Association, [10.31234/osf.io/ua6nr](https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/ua6nr). 
- 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, [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 Ballou N**.
A Community-Sourced Glossary of Open Scholarship Terms.
Nature Human Behaviour, [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 Ballou N**.
Reforms to Improve Reproducibility and Quality Must Be Coordinated across the Research Ecosystem: The View from the UKRN Local Network Leads.
BMC Research Notes, [10.1186/s13104-022-05949-w](https://doi.org/10.1186/s13104-022-05949-w). 

Grants

Principal Investigator

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|------|-------------|--|--|
| 2024 | £25k | Effects of gaming reduction using actigraphy
<i>Status: Ongoing</i> |  Huo Family Foundation |
| 2023 | £10k | Media use and mental health in identity construction
<i>Status: Ongoing</i> |  Uni of Oxford |
| 2023 | £1k | For hosting the QMUL festival of open research in AI
<i>Status: Hosted 5 speakers with 30 attendees</i> |  QMUL |
| 2022 | £3k | For research on data donation and loot boxes
<i>Status: Pokemon Go data donation platform created; manuscript in prep</i> |  AFSG |
| 2022 | £4k | For research on logging Xbox play
<i>Status: Published in Technology, Mind & Behavior</i> |  IGGI CDT |
| 2021 | £2k | For research on logging Xbox play
<i>Status: Published in Technology, Mind & Behavior</i> |  Centre for Future Health |

Co-Investigator

- | | | | |
|------|--------------|---|--|
| 2023 | £366k | Capturing the Digital Footprints of Video Game Play [ES/Y010736/1]
<i>Status: Ongoing, platform available at https://gameplay.science/</i> |  ESRC |
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Other Academic Work

2024 – Research Development Instructor

- Proposed, designed, and led workshops on publication bias and questionable research practices
- Developed open research skills with PhD students and postdocs across disciplines

QMUL Researcher
Development
Programme

2024 – Local Network Lead

- Responsible for coordinating grassroots open science activities at QMUL
- Coordinated and analyzed survey on awareness and use of open sciences practices at QMUL
- Sat on academic misconduct committee

UK Reproducibility
Network

2024 – 2020 Organiser and Founder

- Established local chapter of global [ReproducibiliTea](#) journal club about science reform
- Grew to attendance of 15+ across disciplines and career stages
- Initiated collaborations with faculty, librarians, external speakers, and other institutions

ReproducibiliTea, QMUL
Chapter

Media Features

My proudest media appearance is a [BBC Ideas](#) short video about my work and gaming history.

Other works of mine have been featured in outlets such as [The Guardian](#), [The South China Morning Post](#) [1, 2], [New Scientist](#), [GameStar](#), [Play Aid](#), [CS4FN](#), [BGR](#), [PC Gamer](#), [PC Games Insider](#), the [Vol Breakfast Show](#), [Children and Screens](#), [MSN TRT World](#) and [PsyPost](#) [1,2].