

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 mental health, and when not?
- Themes: 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

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

- 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

 AFSG

- 2022 **£4k**, For research on objective logging of Xbox gaming

 IGGI CDT

- 2021 **£2k**, For research on objective logging of Xbox gaming (lead grantwriter)

 Centre for Future Health

- 2015 **\$1k**, Devlin Internship Grant

 Tulane University

Scholarships

- 2019 **£69k**, EPSRC PhD Funding, IGGI Centre for Doctoral Training (4 years)

QMUL

- 2018 **€7k (declined)**, AIPHES Pre-doctoral Training Grant

Universität Heidelberg

- 2012 **\$108k**, Presidential Merit Scholarship (4 years)

Tulane University

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 Reproducibili^{TEA} 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

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