**Graduate Internship Programme – Job Description**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Job title** | Psychology of Gaming Research Assistant (SHSS3) |
| **School / Department** | School of Human & Social Sciences: Psychology |
| **Line manager who the intern will report to** | Mark Coulson |
| **Is this role hybrid working or permanently onsite at UWL?** | Hybrid |

|  |
| --- |
| **Please provide a one sentence description for advertising the role on the GI website** |
| Research project on why gamers choose to have romantic relationships with non-player characters. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Main purpose of the job** |
| As part of an ongoing programme of research we are interested in exploring why gamers choose to engage in romantic relationships with non-player characters (NPCs) in games. An increasing feature of role-playing games involves the option to engage in such relationships, which range from superficial ‘mini games’ to key elements of plot and storyline. As single player games provide risk-free and asocial environments, the forging of romantic relationships with NPCs offers players the opportunity to experiment with their own understanding of gender roles and romantic preferences. This project follows on from earlier work where we have examined the degree to which players like NPCs (Coulson et al., 2012), how people feel about relationships in physical and virtual worlds (Coulson et al., 2018), and how we feel about moving to and from the virtual world (Coulson et al., 2019). Our aim is to carry out an extensive online questionnaire-based survey which assesses the key variables we are interested in and see how these relate to and predict the kinds of relationships in which gamers engage. |

|  |
| --- |
| **What you will gain from this internship** |
| * Skills in online survey development, coding and analysis. * Understanding of the sensitivity and complexity of gender roles, and how these interact with romantic preferences. * Experience of online recruitment, gaining permission from moderators, and fielding queries from participants * A feel for how exciting research in this area can be. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Key areas of responsibility** |
| * To assist development of an online survey. * To disseminate the survey, and recruit a sizeable sample of participants. * To engage in preliminary data coding and description. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Skills/knowledge required** |
| * Good functional knowledge of Qualtrics. * Good attention to detail. * Gaming enthusiasm essential! |

|  |
| --- |
| **Recruitment criteria** |
| Graduate must have completed an undergraduate degree, BA/BMus/BSc/BEng/LLB etc. and be from the summer graduating class of June/July 2023. |

**References**

Coulson, M., Barnett, J., Ferguson, C. J., & Gould, R. L. (2012). Real feelings for virtual people: Emotional attachments and interpersonal attraction in video games. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, *1*(3), 176–184. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0028192

Coulson, M. C., Oskis, A., Meredith, J., & Gould, R. L. (2018). Attachment, attraction and communication in real and virtual worlds: A study of massively multiplayer online gamers. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *87*, 49–57. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.05.017

Coulson, M., Oskis, A., Spencer, R., & Gould, R. L. (2019). Tourism, Migration, and the Exodus to Virtual Worlds: Place Attachment in Massively Multiplayer Online Gamers. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, *9*(4), 525–532.

Updated: Jan 2024