

Dr Seth Giddings

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Research Interests

Technology, media and play, focussing on theories of technoculture and materiality; digital media in everyday life; computer and videogames as new media forms; the development of methods for studying intimate and playful engagements with media technology; media, technology, and imagination; the ethnographic and theoretical study of design for playful media and technology. Current research includes toys and toy play as technoculture, AI design for media and everyday life, and digital media for the heritage and cultural sectors.

I am the author of *Gameworlds: virtual media & children's everyday play* (Bloomsbury 2014), editor of *The New Media & Technocultures Reader* (Routledge 2011), and co-author of Lister et al *New Media: a critical introduction* (2nd ed. Routledge 2009). I am currently working on a monograph: *Toy Theory: materiality and imagination in postdigital play*.

Current Responsibilities

Founder and co-director of the Transforming Creativity Research Group
Coordinator of MA Communication Design (40 students) and MA Global Media Management (120 students), including budget-holding and line management of 12 colleagues
Winchester School of Art REF impact champion
Chair of Postgraduate Pathway Leaders' meetings
PhD supervision and examination, training in research methods and publication
Ethics Committee
Arts Strategy Group

My teaching on MA Global Media Management, MA Contemporary Curating, and BA Games Design and Art focuses on:

- media practice as research (ethnography, social media for reflexive communication of research on social media)
- games and play within the social and networked media ecology
- cultural economies of digital and postdigital media and transmedia
- ethnographic methods

Education

1999 – 2006	PhD, University of the West of England, Media and Cultural Studies (p/t). <i>Walkthrough – videogames as technocultural form</i> . Supervised by Prof Martin Lister
1993 – 1995	MA Visual Culture, University of Middlesex (p/t). Distinction
1987 – 1990	BA(Hons) Fine Art, University of London, Goldsmiths College. 2:1
1985 – 1986	Foundation Studies in Art & Design, Bradford & Ilkley Community College, West Yorkshire. Distinction

Employment

2015 – present	Associate Professor of Digital Culture and Design, University of Southampton
2012 – 2015	Associate Head of Department, Arts & Cultural Industries, UWE Bristol
2008 – 2012	Programme Leader, BA Media Culture & Practice, UWE Bristol
2001 – 2008	Senior Lecturer in Digital Media & Critical Theory, UWE Bristol
1997 – 2001	Senior Lecturer in Animation / Contemporary Art Theory, University of Wales College Newport (now University of South Wales)
1995 – 1997	Visiting lecturer Contextual studies in art & Design, Bath Spa University College (now Bath Spa University)

Funding Awarded

Connecting Culture (Co-I), Arts Council England, 2019-2021, £75,000
AHRC UK-China Collaborations in Creative Industries Workshop, Shanghai, November 2018
Bill Douglas Cinema Museum stipend. Archive research on optical toys and cinema toy merchandising, October 2018
Southampton City Museums and Galleries / Arts Council digital pilot project *SmARt Murals*, with Southampton Solent University, £5,000 2017-18
AHRC REACT Knowledge Exchange Hub for the Creative Economy:
Play Sandbox project: £50,000, 2013
REACT Prototype Fund: £30,000, 2014
Nesta Digital R&D project, overall grant: £125,000, 2013-2014
ESRC doctoral award, 1999
Graduate School of Education, Bristol University, PhD scholarship, 1999

Publications (<http://www.microethology.net/publications/>)

Books

Toy Theory: materiality and imagination in postdigital play (proposal under review by a university press)

Gameworlds: virtual media & children's everyday play, New York: Bloomsbury, 2014
(Chinese translation: Shanghai: Shanghai Art and Literature Publishing House, 2019)

(edited), *The New Media & Technocultures Reader*, London: Routledge, 2011

Lister, Martin, Dovey, Jon, Giddings, Seth, Grant, Iain & Kelly, Kieran, *New Media: a critical introduction* (2nd ed.), London: Routledge, 2009

Book chapters

'An imaginary system', preface to Nicholas Taylor and Chris Ingraham *LEGOified: building blocks as media*, New York: Bloomsbury (in press: 2020)

'Toying with the singularity: artificial intelligence and artificial life from Tamagotchi to the Internet of Toys', in Mascheroni, Giovanna & Holloway, Donell (eds) *The Internet of Toys: practices, affordances and the political economy of children's play*, Palgrave Macmillan 2019

'We both know your yearnings: desiring machines and distributed emotion', in Danny Aldred and Andy Lapham (eds) *Structures of Experience: un-coding and coding emotions*, Winchester: Book-lab.org. 2018.

'The state of play: the work of the Opies for the postdigital age', in Julia Bishop & June Factor (eds) *The Lifework and Legacy of Iona and Peter Opie: research into children's play*. London: Routledge 2018

'SimKnowledge: what museums can learn from videogames', in Michelle Henning (ed.) *Museum Media*, vol. 3 of *The International Handbooks of Museum Studies*. London: Wiley-Blackwell 2015

'Bright bricks, dark play: on the impossibility of studying LEGO', in Mark J.P. Wolf (ed.) *LEGO Studies: examining the building blocks of a transmedial phenomenon*, New York: Routledge 2014

'Simulation games', in Bernard Perron and Mark J.P. Wolf (eds) *The Routledge Companion to Video Game Studies*, New York: Routledge, 2014

'Drawing without light: virtual photography in gameworlds', in Martin Lister (ed.) *The Photographic Image in Digital Culture* (2nd edition), London: Routledge, 2013

(with Helen W. Kennedy) 'Little Jesuses and fuck-off robots: on cybernetics, aesthetics and not being very good at *Lego Star Wars*', in Melanie Swalwell and Jason Wilson (eds) *The Pleasures of Computer Gaming: essays on cultural history, theory and aesthetics*, McFarland & Co., 2008

'Playing with nonhumans: digital games as technocultural form', in de Castell & Jenson (eds) *Worlds in Play: international perspectives on digital games research*, Peter Lang, 2008

'I'm the one who makes the Lego Racers go': studying virtual and actual play', in Dixon & Weber (eds) *Growing Up Online: young people and digital technologies*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007

(with Helen W. Kennedy) 'Digital games as new media', in Jason Rutter & Jo Bryce (eds) *Understanding Digital Games*, London: Sage, 2006

Articles in journals

'The history of games could be the history of technology', *ROMchip: a journal of game histories* 1(1) July 2019.

'Configuring the 15-second dancers: distributed creativity in design for postdigital media', *International Journal of Creative Media Research* 1(1) March 2019

Co-editor with Alison Harvey, special issue of *Games and Culture* 'Ludic economies' 17(3) November 2018, including:

(with Alison Harvey) 'Ludic economics 101'

'Accursed play: the economic imaginary of early game studies'

(with Daniel Ashton) 'At work in the toybox: bedrooms, playgrounds and ideas of play in creative cultural work', *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation* 19(2) 2018

'The phenomenology of *Angry Birds*: virtual gravity and distributed proprioception in videogame worlds', *Journal of Gaming and Virtual Worlds* 9(3) September 2017

'*Pokémon Go* as distributed imagination', special section on *Pokémon Go*, *Mobile Media & Communication*: 5(1) January 2017

'What is the state of play? (the work of the Opies in the age of postdigital play)', *International Journal of Play* 3(3) 2014

'Mini-games, monsters and Mr Happy: a video essay on virtual and actual play', *Journal of Audio-Visual Thinking*, no.3: 2011

(with Helen W. Kennedy) 'Incremental speed increases excitement: bodies, space, movement and televisual change', *Television & New Media* [special issue on the Nintendo Wii and gestural play] 11(3) 2010

'Events and collusions: a glossary for the microethnography of video game play', *Games & Culture*, 4(2) April 2009

'Dionysiac machines: videogames & the triumph of the simulacra', *Convergence* 13(3), Nov 2007

'A 'pataphysics engine: technology, play, and realities', *Games and Culture*, (special issue on Baudrillard and game culture) 2(4), October 2007

'The circle of life: nature & representation in Disney's *The Lion King*', *ThirdText* 49, 1999/2000

Keynotes and invited conference / seminar presentations

Keynote, 4th International Conference on Finance and Economic Policy “Economics, Finance and Management in Digital Era”, Poznań University of Economics and Business, Poland, May 2020

Keynote, University of Cologne Summer School of Interdisciplinary Anthropology: ‘Beyond Humanism: Cyborgs – Animals – Data Swarms’, September 2019

‘Cities as Playgrounds’ workshop RMIT Barcelona June 2019

‘LEGO and the engineering of imagination’, Cologne Games Lab, Cologne University of Applied Sciences, December 2018

Play research methods bootcamp: ‘toys and materiality’, Interacting Minds Center, Aarhus University / LEGO Foundation, October 2018

‘The playful future: design for postdigital play’, TFTV research seminar, University of York, October 2017.

Keynote for Internet of Toys strand of DigilitEY workshops for COST Action ECREA pre-conference ‘Children and Media’, Prague November 2016

Workshop on haptic play, RMIT, Melbourne 4th May 2016

Masterclass on methods for researching videogame play, University of New South Wales, Sydney 9th May 2016

‘Children’s imaginative play in the postdigital era’, *Realms of Digital Games* symposium on children and digital games, Swedish National Museum of Science and Technology, Stockholm 12th April 2016

‘What museums can learn from videogames’ *Game Studies at the Museum* Cologne Museum of Applied Arts / University of Cologne 27th-28th November 2015

‘Distributed imagination: media, minds, and materiality in contemporary children’s play’ Media Futures Research Centre, Bath Spa University, 25th February 2015

‘Ecologies and ethologies of virtual and actual play’ Play Session II: play worlds, Play Research Group, Brighton University, 5th February 2015

Invited speaker at ‘Identity and Interdisciplinarity’ PhD Summer School in Games and Play, University of Utrecht, August 2014

‘Configuring the 15-second dancer: designing for embodied play’, at *Space and Embodiment in virtual worlds and games*, Institute of Education, London, July 2014

‘The playground is its own best model: videogame automata and robotic research’, at *Autonomy & Automation: robotics, AI and the digital cultural future*, Pervasive Media Studio, March 2014

‘Sim You Later: at play across virtual and actual space’ at *Connecting the Dots: movement, space and the digital image*, Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Cambridge, 12th April 2013

Invited speaker ‘Media work us over’ at *McLuhan’s Message* event at Watershed Media Centre, Bristol, Oct 2011

‘The microethology of humans and nonhumans at play’, invited speaker at *Media in Action* conference, University of Siegen, Germany, June 2010

Invited respondent at the Interim Conference of the *Children’s Playground Games and Songs in the New Media Age* (AHRC Beyond Text project), Institute of Education, Jan 2010

‘Transduction in playful technoculture,’ invited speaker at *Ludic aspects of everyday life*, Computer Games Research seminar, IT University Copenhagen, Feb 2009

‘Gameworlds: objects in play,’ invited speaker at *Hello Toy: affective machines and object-relations* symposium, *Supertoys* exhibition, Arnolfini, Bristol, May 2008

‘Immersion and play in virtual and actual places,’ invited speaker at *Children and Immersive Worlds*, University of Westminster / BBC / AHRC, Nov 2006

External-facing Research events

Co-organiser, *Posthuman Creativity*, Winchester School of Art, September 2019

Organiser, *After VR: the archaeology and potential of immersive media*, Winchester School of Art, 1st November 2017

Organiser, *Ludic Economies: value and exchange in contemporary game culture*, Winchester School of Art, June 30th 2015.

Co-organiser with Laura Kriefman (*Guerrilla Dance*) *Augmented Dance* network-building workshop, Pervasive Media Studio, March 2014

Co-organiser of Play Research Group international conferences and symposia including: *Power Up: ideology & computer games* (2003); *Playful Subjects I, II, & III* (2005-9); *Bad Games* (2009); *Gesture, Technology & Play* (2010).

Editorial and Advisory Roles

Editorial board of *Convergence: a journal of interactive media*

Editorial board of *International Journal of Creative Media Research*

Editorial board of *Animation: an interdisciplinary journal*

Board of reviewers, *Game Studies*.

Board of reviewers, *G|A|M|E: the Italian journal of game studies*

Regular reviewer for *Theory Culture & Society*, *Convergence*, *Games & Culture*, *Game Studies*, *New Media & Society*, *European Journal of Cultural Studies*.

Invited as external adviser on REF UoA 34, University of Leicester 2019

External adviser on practice-based submissions to REF, Bath Spa University 2017-19

Research methodology and data management consultant for Hastings Root 1066 project (Arts Council England / University of Brighton / Brighton Council). Participant experience assessment and evaluation for cultural events Feb 2016.

Member of advisory panel for AHRC Digital Transformations project: *Playing Beowulf: gaming the library*. Institute of Education / British Library, 2015

Academic advisor for REACT Knowledge Exchange Hub scheme on Play, 2014

Member of advisory panel for AHRC Beyond Text project: *Children's Playground Games and Songs in the New Media Age*, Institute of Education, 2011

PhD Supervision

'*The Sims 2: constructing woman computer game player identities through the practice of skinning.*' 2007 – completion 2011

Director of Studies, 'The MOBA model: player and developer value co-creation in massively multiplayer online battle arena games,' 2011 – completion 2016

'Playing with reality: a cultural framework for understanding pervasive games,' 2010 – completion 2015

'The delight of Technology Enhanced Learning,' 2015 – (University of Southampton)

'Reality capture: 3D technology and photorealism' 2016 – (University of West London)

'Computer games and transmedia storytelling,' 2016 – (University of Southampton)

'Objects, technology, everyday life' 2019 – (University of Southampton)

PhD examination

University of York: 'The effect of mobile serious games on learning intangible cultural heritage', January 2020

Kings College London: 'Gaming politics: gender and sexuality on Earth and beyond', September 2018

RMIT Melbourne: 'Playing with *Steam*: an ethnographic enquiry into Melbourne household gaming', July 2018

Swinburne University: 'The augmented bushwalk: contemplative play across digital systems and natural worlds' (practice-based), July 2018

London School of Economics, 'Intersomatic awareness in game design', November 2015

Institute of Education, University College London, 'Gaming and masculinity', July 2015

University of Melbourne: 'Location-based games', July 2015

University of Melbourne: 'Gaming, performance and experience', March 2014

Internal examiner: 'Dimensions of design: a framework for defining design practice', University of Southampton, November 2019

Internal examiner: 'Visual culture and media ecologies of the mask', University of Southampton.

Internal examiner for a number of PhD upgrade exams, Winchester School of Art, 2015 -

Internal examiner for PhD (practice-based), University of the West of England: Interactive Art & Play, March 2014

External examining & validation

External examiner:

MA Game Studies and Digital Culture, University of Glasgow (2019 -)

BA Creative Media Production, Bath Spa University (2019 -)

MA Digital Media & Education, UCL Institute of Education (2014 – 19)

BA Games Design, Brunel University (2012 – 16)

MA Design for Digital Media, University of Portsmouth (2008 – 12)

MA New Media Publishing, DeMonfort University (2007 – 9)

BSc Media and Society, London South Bank University (2004 – 7)

MA Media production route, London South Bank University (2006 – 8)

MA Computer Game Design, Liverpool John Moores University (2004 – 8)

External validation / periodic review:

BA Games Design, University of South Wales (2018)

BA Games Art, University of Falmouth (2016)

BA Media programmes, University of Brighton (2013)

BA Creative Media Practice / Film Studies / Media & Communications, Bath Spa University (2012)

MA Digital Games Theory & Design, Brunel University (2006)

MA programme in Media, Southampton Institute (April 2005)

BA Film Studies, University of Essex (2005)

MA Multimedia, University of East London (May 2005)