



DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE,
FILM, TELEVISION AND
INTERACTIVE MEDIA

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Story Seeds – Growing Storied Experiences from Outdoor Cultural Heritage Sites through Tangible Interactive Artefacts (MSc by Research)

About the Project

Story Seeds draws on the human need to share stories. It builds on ‘word of mouth’ forms of story sharing and the mutation of stories over time and people, resonating with traditional oral transmission of information and folk tales, and contemporary urban myths and memes.

Story Seeds is centred on the gathering and retelling of experiences of visitors at outdoor cultural heritage sites in the UK and will work with participants to design sensor-based, tactile interactive artefacts to capture their experience of a physical site as narrative – a personal memento of their visit to take home. These Story Seeds are designed to be shared and passed on (e.g. friends/family), with new owners adding to the narrative (e.g. recording audio) as parts of the original story intentionally fade over time and are replaced, before it is passed on again.

The project asks questions about the ways we can generate storied experiences of visits, offering novel ways to capture and share them as interactive artefacts that draw on the outside world (e.g. weather conditions, location, news feeds) as well as visitors’ interpretations and emotions. It reflects on the impermanence of human memory, the challenges of maintaining digital technology in heritage contexts, and will support future research on longitudinal evaluation of cultural heritage experiences.

This Masters by Research project will work with visitors and stakeholders at an identified outdoor cultural heritage site in Yorkshire and use a research through design approach to prototype Story Seed design concepts and trial them ‘in the wild’.

The methodological approach is to some extent dependent on the successfully recruited applicant and their skillset, however the intention is for a design-centred approach, working with visitors, end users and stakeholders to understand the heritage site and their needs before generating design concepts and evaluating interactive prototypes. The media used will depend on this research process, but it is anticipated that standard user experience design tools will be employed alongside rapid physical computing platforms (e.g. Arduino, Raspberry Pi), off-the-shelf sensors and materials (e.g. plywood, 3D-printing, fabric).

This project is a collaboration between the University of York Department of Theatre, Film, Television and Interactive Media (<https://www.york.ac.uk/tfti/>) and Ay-Pe (<https://ay-pe.com>), through the XR Stories AHRC Creative Cluster R&D Partnership (<https://xrstories.co.uk/>). The successful candidate will study in the Department of TFTI at the University of York, and work with support from Ay-Pe deliver the project.

The successful applicant should have a strong interest in interaction design, user experience design or related fields, excellent critical thinking skills, and good prototyping or programming skills. Experience or interest in cultural heritage and/or physical computing would also be beneficial.

Candidates must have (or expect to obtain) a minimum of a UK upper second-class honours degree (2.1) or equivalent in Interactive Media, Interaction Design, Computer Science, or a related subject.

This MSc by Research is due to start 1st October 2020.

How to apply:

Applicants must apply via the University's online application system at <https://www.york.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-research/apply/>. Please read the application guidance first so that you understand the various steps in the application process. To apply, please select the MSc by Research in Interactive Media for October 2020 entry. Please specify in your application that you would like to be considered for this studentship.

Timeline

Application closing date: **5pm BST Wednesday 9th September 2020**

Likely (online) interview date: **Wednesday 16th September 2020**

Funding Notes

The studentship will cover the tuition fee at the home/EU rate (£4,407 in 2020/21) and a stipend at the standard research council rate for one year (£15,285 in 2020/21). International (non-EU) candidates are also welcome to apply but will be required to pay the difference between the UK/EU and international tuition fee rates (approximately £17,000).

More information

The university offers the following advice for incoming students who are due to start a postgraduate research degree in October 2020, including deferred entry to January 2021 or an initial period of Temporary Remote Research: <https://www.york.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/new-students/autumn-term-2020-options>

For more information on the project please contact Debbie Maxwell (Lecturer in Interactive Media) by email debbie.maxwell@york.ac.uk