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| Department | School of Computing |
| Supervisors | Michael Smyth & Ingi Helgason |
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| Project Title | Tangible interfaces in creative practice. |

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This research will investigate the benefits of tactile feedback during the manipulation of objects in the early design phase by creative practitioners. A series of haptic interfaces will be designed and developed in order to evaluate their performance. The prototypes will be developed using for example, microprocessor kits or VR/AR headsets as appropriate to explore strategies for communicating tactile information.

The ability to experience the tactile quality of materials is a key attribute when creatives make design choices about the form and performance of a material. For example, the tactile quality of certain finishes associated with a particular material could determine its use in a product. Or the weight of a product depending on the choice of materials. Access to a library of materials is not always an option, especially for small practices, and waiting for samples has the potential to disrupt the creative flow.

The research will investigate whether the addition of a haptic interface to support the manipulation of materials from a dataset would be of benefit creative practice. This will be achieved by creating a series of prototype interfaces that focus on the early phase of the design process and aim to bridge the gap between digital representations of materials and their physical attributes. These interfaces will form the basis of an investigation into how to represent for example, the physical attributes of materials such that designers can narrow choices about what form a product might have as part of a wider search. In this example, several samples of the same material of different ages and exposed to different weather conditions could provide tactile information about the effect of weathering in different environments.

Perspective applicants are encouraged to contact the Supervisor before submitting their applications. Applications should make it clear the project you are applying for and the name of the supervisors.

Academic qualifications

A first degree (at least a 2.1) ideally in Computing or Design with a good fundamental knowledge of Interaction Design.

English language requirement

IELTS score must be at least 6.5 (with not less than 6.0 in each of the four components). Other, equivalent qualifications will be accepted. [Full details of the University's policy](#) are available online.

Essential attributes:

- Experience of fundamental Human Computer Interaction and User Experience
- Competent in Prototyping and Concept Development
- Knowledge of Creative Practice
- Good written and oral communication skills
- Strong motivation, with evidence of independent research skills relevant to the project
- Good time management

Desirable attributes:

An interesting Tinkering and Making across a variety of platforms.

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| Indicative Bibliography | <p>The Case for Haptic Props: Shape, Weight and Vibro-tactile Feedback Proceedings of the 12th ACM SIGGRAPH Conference on Motion, Interaction and Games</p> <p>StringTouch Extended Abstracts of the 2019 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (acm.org)</p> <p>Tangible Interfaces and Interactions in Sci-Fi Movies Proceedings of the Fourteenth International Conference on Tangible, Embedded, and Embodied Interaction (acm.org)</p> <p>TangibleTouch: A toolkit for designing surface-based gestures for tangible interfaces (acm.org)</p> |
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| Enquiries | For informal enquiries about this PhD project, please contact m.smyth@napier.ac.uk |
| Web page | https://www.napier.ac.uk/research-and-innovation/research-degrees/application-process |