



Cardiff University
School of Psychology

Studentship Title:	Cardiff University School of Psychology PhD Studentship
Research Area/ Project Title:	Cyber-interruptions: Developing methods to mitigate susceptibility to malevolent online communications
Location:	Cardiff
Expected Start Date:	September 2018
Duration:	36-months
Deadline for Application:	23 rd February 2018

Description of Research Opportunity:

The rise in internet connectivity has contributed to an increase in fraudulent communications by hackers and scammers intent on infiltrating computer systems. These include pop-up messages, computer updates, and emails designed to persuade individuals to engage with them. Often, such communications occur as interruptions when computer users are engaged in at least one other task. Whilst it is well known that task interruptions have an almost universal deleterious effect on subsequent primary task performance (e.g., Morgan, Patrick, Waldron, King, & Patrick, 2009; Morgan & Patrick, 2013), few have considered the effects of malevolent online communications masquerading as genuine, important, and sometimes urgent interruption tasks. A recent study revealed that when such pop-ups occur as interruptions during a serial recall memory task, little time is spent viewing content. Participants accepted a high number of pop-ups containing cues that otherwise invoke suspicion when viewed under no pressure to return to a primary task (Williams, Morgan, & Joinson, 2017). Such interruptions also impaired serial recall memory performance.

Morgan (<http://psych.cf.ac.uk/contactsandpeople/morganphil.php>) and colleagues at the Universities of Bristol and Bath are further investigating the boundary conditions associated with the susceptibility to and effects of malevolent online interruption communications and have started to develop interventions. The current PhD position offers an exciting opportunity to develop this research area further with (ideally) a specific focus on developing methods to mitigate susceptibility to malevolent online interruption communications. This work must be underpinned by theory (e.g., in the areas of cyber security and task interruption) and crucially have at least some applied focus such that findings can be translated into research impact. This could mean focussing on samples working within settings prone to computer-based interruptions who might be severely compromised in the event of a cyber-attack, with the research resulting in guidelines and/or

policies for better and safer workplace human-computer interaction behaviours and practices.

The PhD student will join our cognitive science and human factors research groups with long-standing expertise in research on distraction and interruptions. The PhD student will also have the opportunity to liaise with collaborators at other universities and industrial organisations who are also working within the area of cyber security. The successful applicant will develop a unique set of skills that will equip them for a career in cognitive science and/or human factors. This will include programming of laboratory and workplace experimental tasks and scenarios and utilising eye tracking technology. The student will also become adept in human factors methods and tools.

Award:

The studentships will commence in October 2018 and will cover your tuition fees (at UK/EU level) as well as a maintenance grant. In 2017-18 the maintenance grant for full-time students was £14,553 per annum. As well as tuition fees and a maintenance grant, all School of Psychology students receive conference and participant money (approx. £2250 for the duration of the studentship). They also receive a computer and office space, additional funding for their research, and access to courses offered by the University's Doctoral Academy and become members of the University Doctoral Academy.

Eligibility:

Full awards (fees plus maintenance stipend) are open to UK Nationals, and EU students who can satisfy UK residency requirements. To be eligible for the full award, EU Nationals must have been in the UK for at least 3 years prior to the start of the course for which they are seeking funding, including for the purposes of full-time education.

As only one studentship is available and a very high standard of applications is typically received, the successful applicant is likely to have a very good first degree (a First or Upper Second class BSc Honours or equivalent) and/or be distinguished by having relevant research experience.

How to apply:

You can apply online - consideration is automatic on applying for a PhD in Psychology, with an October 2018 start date (programme code RFPDPSYA).

Please use our online application service at www.cf.ac.uk/regis/general/applyonline/index.html

and specify in the funding section that you wish to be considered for School funding.

Please specify that you are applying for this particular project.

Application deadline: 23rd February 2018 with interviews (either in person or by Skype) being held in March 2018 and decisions being made by end of March or beginning of April.

General Information:

The School of Psychology is one of the largest and most successful in the UK (<http://www.cf.ac.uk/psych/>). The School's excellent standard of research and teaching has been recognised in every Research Assessment Exercise. It has its own brain-imaging centre (<http://www.cf.ac.uk/psych/cubric/>), enhancing the international-leading research in behavioural neuroscience, cognitive ergonomics, forensic, social and developmental psychology.

Cardiff is the youngest capital city in Europe and the fastest growing in the UK. It plays host to many national and international sporting events at the Millennium Stadium (<http://www.millenniumstadium.com/>). Culturally, the city is thriving, with the Wales Millennium Centre (<http://www.wmc.org.uk/>) in Cardiff Bay. Cardiff is in very close proximity to the beautiful Welsh countryside (<http://www.breconbeacons.org/>), has a two hour rail link to London and a (cheap) one hour air link to Paris and Amsterdam (<http://www.cardiffairportonline.com/>)

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