



# Media Sandbox

*Making space for great ideas*

SHOWCASING THE UNIQUE  
RESULTS OF A CUTTING-EDGE  
R&D SCHEME.

**FEATURING:**

Simon Games

Indie Mobile

Hazel Grian

Aardman

HMC Interactive

Steal From Work

AntiVJ

PING

Produced by iShed and South West Screen  
[www.mediasandbox.co.uk](http://www.mediasandbox.co.uk)



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*“Brilliant ideas*

rarely come

**FROM SOLITARY VISIONS,  
WHAT’S THE REAL SECRET  
of success?”**

*Bill Thompson*

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# Clare Reddington

DIRECTOR OF ISHED AND THE PERVASIVE MEDIA STUDIO [[www.ished.net](http://www.ished.net)]



Like many good partnerships, Media Sandbox started life in a bar, with a discussion on how to bring together the best of Watershed and HP Lab's SE3D and South West Screen's Alliances projects.

Now going into its third year, Media Sandbox has so far supported 12 brilliant South West companies to make time and take risks, developing products which include iPhone applications, pervasive games, software to map buildings and QR codes to sell street art.

Due to perceived risk or lack of track record, a key friction in the UK media market is the difficulty for smaller producers to secure new commissions. Media Sandbox was set up to bridge this gap, giving small, agile producers an opportunity to develop early-stage ideas that test the boundaries of content commissioning and perhaps wouldn't find support elsewhere.

From the outset we wanted to create a scheme within a sustained structure (rather than through parachuted funding).

So we built an emphasis on community into its DNA; networking content producers, clients and commissioners, sharing knowledge as widely as possible through physical events, blogs and social media.

These articles clearly demonstrate that Media Sandbox offers participants invaluable access to peer-support, industry expertise, market intelligence, technology and funding. Commissioners, technology companies and brands involved also benefit from exposure to new perspectives in both thinking and execution. This open, networked format offers a unique opportunity to collaborate on radical new products and processes – pushing forward understanding and potential usage of digital media.

This publication celebrates the success of the projects so far, acknowledges and thanks the many individuals who have contributed and will hopefully inspire others to get involved.

We hope you enjoy reading their stories. ■

# Bill Thompson

WRITER AND COMMENTATOR [[www.andfinally.com](http://www.andfinally.com)]



There is a myth of creativity that involves a lone inventor or isolated entrepreneur struggling to express an idea that has suddenly occurred to them, working to bring their solitary vision to fruition.

But as anyone who has ever had a brilliant idea knows, nothing comes from nothing, and every inspiration is firmly grounded in other people's work, lived experience and a deep understanding of the environment within which a new tool or service or technology will be seeded and in which it will grow.

And everyone who has had a good idea that worked knows that you need to have dozens that don't, that the real secret of success is not having a breakthrough moment that enables you to see through a current problem or imagine a new need, but learning which ideas have a chance of being nurtured and growing into something that could change the world.

Figuring out what will work may be harder for those working in the digital industries than those that are firmly based in the physical world of steel and concrete, because it is a lot easier

to build unsustainable castles in cyberspace than it is to make a better mousetrap. Physics has a way of ensuring that the imagination of engineers is at least tested against external reality, but online we can dream very implausible dreams.

So having support from projects like Media Sandbox is vitally important because it gives digital entrepreneurs a space in which to refine their ideas, good people to test them against and a safe place within which to develop and enhance them.

Media Sandbox is also a way of reassuring entrepreneurial companies that what they do is valuable, that their ideas and innovations matter, and that we as a nation are concerned to protect and nurture ideas and help them grow to the point where they can survive in the marketplace.

As we move further into this digital century, that sort of support is going to become more and more important, and the model offered by Media Sandbox is likely to grow in importance as a way of supporting research and development in the digital sector. ►

## *Links...*

[www.mediasandbox.co.uk](http://www.mediasandbox.co.uk)

### **+ PRODUCERS:**

[www.ished.net](http://www.ished.net)

[www.swscreen.co.uk](http://www.swscreen.co.uk)

### **+ FUNDERS & SUPPORTERS:**

[www.watershed.co.uk](http://www.watershed.co.uk)

[www.southwestrda.org.uk](http://www.southwestrda.org.uk)

[www.pmstudio.co.uk](http://www.pmstudio.co.uk)

### **+ INDUSTRY ADVISORS:**

[www.ogilvy.co.uk/ogilvy-interactive](http://www.ogilvy.co.uk/ogilvy-interactive)

[www.bebo.com](http://www.bebo.com)

[www.aardman.com/digital](http://www.aardman.com/digital)

[www.culture.gov.uk](http://www.culture.gov.uk)

[www.presentable.co.uk](http://www.presentable.co.uk)

[www.hpl.hp.com](http://www.hpl.hp.com)

[www.tltsolicitors.com/sectors/technology-and-media](http://www.tltsolicitors.com/sectors/technology-and-media)

[www.orange.co.uk](http://www.orange.co.uk)

### **+ 2009 PARTICIPANTS:**

[www.streetartdealer.com](http://www.streetartdealer.com), [www.stealfromwork.org](http://www.stealfromwork.org), [www.c6.org](http://www.c6.org)

[www.hmcinteractive.co.uk](http://www.hmcinteractive.co.uk), [www.drakemusicproject.org](http://www.drakemusicproject.org), [www.bibic.org.uk](http://www.bibic.org.uk)

[www.nomosmedia.com](http://www.nomosmedia.com), [www.radioinschools.co.uk](http://www.radioinschools.co.uk)

[www.antivj.com](http://www.antivj.com)

[www.indie-mobile.com](http://www.indie-mobile.com)

<http://u-soap.com/>

### **+ 2008 PARTICIPANTS:**

[www.aardman.com](http://www.aardman.com), [www.hmcinteractive.co.uk](http://www.hmcinteractive.co.uk)

[www.plotsite.net](http://www.plotsite.net), [www.bdh.net](http://www.bdh.net), [www.happytowns.net](http://www.happytowns.net)

[www.thoughtden.co.uk](http://www.thoughtden.co.uk), [www.mobilepie.co.uk](http://www.mobilepie.co.uk)

[www.simongames.co.uk](http://www.simongames.co.uk), <http://igfest.org>

[www.mediaplaygrounds.co.uk](http://www.mediaplaygrounds.co.uk)

<http://trulymadlydigital.blogspot.com>



# Physical Cartooning

When HMC Interactive's Mike Cobb & Aardman's Dan Efergan sat down for a gossip about the digital world, the conversation led to Media Sandbox. It was the beginnings of a great partnership.

Collaboration and skill-sharing are central to the Media Sandbox ethos and nowhere is this better illustrated than Physical Cartooning, the 2008 project developed jointly by Plymouth multimedia company HMC Interactive and Bristol animation giants Aardman.

HMC's Mike Cobb and Aardman's Dan Efergan were both former graduates from the University of Plymouth's MediaLab Arts degree, and had kept in touch. "Soon after I joined Aardman, we met for a gossip about the digital world, and how we could make fun and interesting things," Dan recalls. "The conversation led to Media Sandbox, which we both thought would be a perfect space to play with some of the ideas we'd been discussing." Or, in Mike's words: "We sat down and had a big chat about how the skills of HMC and Aardman could be combined and what unique contraptions we could conceive together."

The idea was to create a virtual 3D window into an alternate world of Aardman characters. These 'magic

&gt;&gt;

*"We wanted to give someone ambling through the city a real 'what the hell?' moment."*

*Dan Efergan*

Dan Efergan with Aardman character Feathers McGraw.

## CASE STUDY #1 – HMC INTERACTIVE/AARDMAN

mirrors' could be placed around Bristol, allowing passers-by to witness all manner of bizarre cartoon happenings. "We wanted to give someone ambling through the city a real 'what the hell?' moment," Dan explains, "an invasion of something unexpected into their nice calm world."

They whittled a wealth of ideas down to a final pair: digital hand puppets controlled via multi-touch pads, and the virtual, interactive windows. "The puppets worked so well that it seemed far too easy to develop that idea," says Dan. "So we focused on the magic mirror."

The project was built and tested at HMC's studio and warehouse in Plymouth. "We ran out of time to develop it as far as we'd hoped, so the success of the final product was mixed," Mike admits. "However, the process we went through to get there was a huge success."

"That's the main benefit of the Sandbox scheme – going through the creative process, being afforded time to research and experiment. We learnt so much about different tracking technologies, hardware, software and human interactivity." Dan's take is subtly different: "For me, the benefits of the Sandbox are all about the network – people I've met, relationships I've strengthened."

HMC re-applied for the Sandbox in 2009. "It's a fantastic scheme which affords us the time to focus on Research and Development – particularly useful during an economic downturn. Also, everything we learnt the last time gave us confidence that we could produce a very successful project this time around." ▀

### Project Synopsis

**What:** Physical Cartooning brought animated characters to life in real locations. A number of playful installations were developed and placed across Bristol, potentially allowing people to interact with Aardman characters on the street.

**Why:** Merging animation with real life video footage on screen has been done for years. Classic films like 'Mary Poppins' have spellbound adults and children alike. What if this could happen in real life? Can a cartoon reality become part of our reality, creating an augmented hyper-reality?

### Technology

"The project was tested in a number of different languages: Java, Open Frameworks, VVVV, Flash and Director. The final version was built in Processing. It was a case of running it on the most powerful machine we could find. The physical setup used a half silvered mirror with a custom designed projection film, infrared camera and IR lamps, all built into a fetching silver plinth." *Mike Cobb, HMC Interactive*

### Aardman Animations Career Highlights

**1972** David Sproxton and Peter Lord register Aardman Animations.

**1976** Aardman moved to Bristol and created **Morph** for the BBC.

**1985** Animator **Nick Park** joined the company.

**1986** Received international acclaim for Peter Gabriel's **Sledgehammer** video.

**1989** Released **A Grand Day Out**, the first Wallace and Gromit film.

**1993** Released Oscar-winning film, **The Wrong Trousers**.

**2000** First Aardman feature film, **Chicken Run**.

**2007** Creation of **Aardman Digital**, the studios' online arm.

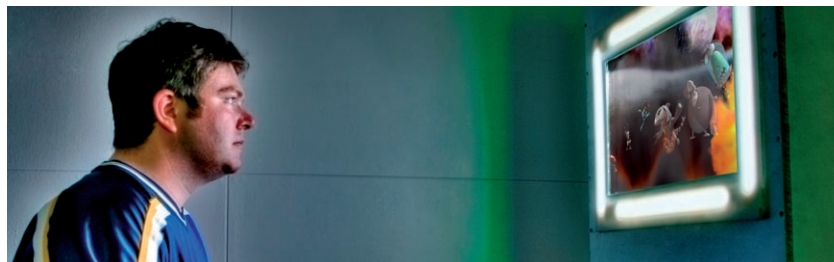
**2007** Signed a three-year distribution deal with **Sony Pictures**.

### Aardman Animations Contact Details

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**Web:** [www.aardman.com](http://www.aardman.com)

*For HMC Interactive's Career Highlights and Contact Details, please see page 26*



ABOVE: HMC Interactive's Adam Montandon testing the magic mirror.





Adam Montandon  
interacting with  
Aardman characters  
using the magic mirror.

# Swarm

Simon Games create bespoke games played in the street with other people, face to face and over the Internet – and it all began at a Media Sandbox Ideas Lab.

Simon Evans and Simon Johnson met last year as participants on the Media Sandbox project and it's been an intensely fruitful partnership. During their Sandbox year they created igfest, Bristol's first-ever street games festival; and set up Simon Games to create and stage Mobile Social Games – games played in the street where other players could be next to you or playing over the internet.

The games the duo create have a particular flavour. For one thing, they combine playful and collaborative experiences with compelling adult themes: perhaps you'll be alone in a crowd searching for friends, or maybe you'll find yourself deep in a forest, tracking a man dressed as a moose.

As Simon J explains it, local connection is paramount, "Pervasive games, for me, are exactly that: they are context-specific, so that the location you're playing in, and the people playing near you, all greatly »



Simon Evans in  
Moosehunt.



*“We see games as  
a whole new form.  
It’s an amazingly  
rich, creative  
genre.”*

*Simon Johnson*



## CASE STUDY #2 – SIMON GAMES

affect the way the experience develops.”

During their Media Sandbox commission, the two Simons became residents at the Pervasive Media Studio where they developed ‘The Comfort of Strangers’, a team game that used HP Labs’ mscape technology and was trialled at last year’s debut igfest (<http://igfest.org>). Forty players on two teams attempted to group together whilst steering clear of the opposition, using GPS technology. “It created a whole slew of social situations,” Simon J recalls. “People were having bizarre interactions in the street, or simply running each other ragged.”

So what drives the duo – is it the fascination with studying how people behave and interact, or the myriad creative possibilities offered by pervasive media and street games? “Both those things and more,” says Simon J. “We see games as a whole new form. Cinema became vastly successful by drawing on all previous creative practices – sound, vision, composition, narrative. Now, in turn, games are drawing on cinema, theatre, storytelling and more. A game can have any visual imagery or acoustic landscapes you want. It’s an amazingly rich, creative genre, mixing hi-tech and traditional forms.”

Their time at Media Sandbox and their continued residency at the Pervasive Media Studio has, both Simons agree, been the making of them. “There’s so much cross-fertilisation and exchange of ideas and knowledge, and there are strong networks that have lasted even after the scheme finished for us,” says Simon J. “It’s really positioned us where we are today. It’s a real winner.”



LEFT: Simon Johnson and Simon Evans at the Pervasive Media Studio. RIGHT: Korean Lazer Ball.



### Project Synopsis

**What:** The Swarm project culminated in the Comfort of Strangers – a street game in which players score points by identifying and keeping close to their team mates, whilst avoiding the other team.

**Why:** Influenced by Swarm Intelligence – a type of artificial intelligence based on the group behaviour of decentralised systems such as insects – Simon Johnson and Simon Evans explore street games that connect people locally to promote social effect and solve problems. Games can be informative, thought-provoking or just plain fun. Drawing on the history of storytelling, theatre and cinema, games have the power to provide rich, and often moving experiences.

### Technology

“Comfort of Strangers is an mscape running on iPaq PDAs. The project used a version of mscape that enabled use of the bluetooth and wifi functionality of the ipaq. We turned on wifi on the ipaq and used the signal strength data

provided by the wireless chipset to register which devices were near or not (each device had an SSID defined by us). Using that we had some idea of device (and therefore player) proximity that wasn’t reliant on a central game server. Detection of other devices triggered sound files in the mscape and drove the player’s score up or down.” *Simon Evans, Simon Games*

### Career Highlights

- 2008** Created **iglab**, a monthly games testing night.
- 2008** Produced the first **igfest**, Bristol’s festival of street and pervasive games.
- 2008** Formalised **Simon Games** as a company.
- 2009** Commissioned to produce **The Hat Game** for SXSW Festival, Texas.
- 2009** **igfest** returned for a second installment.

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[/johnson@simongames.co.uk](mailto:/johnson@simongames.co.uk)  
**Web:** [www.simongames.co.uk](http://www.simongames.co.uk)



Elephant: a game of paper, scissors, stone and double bluff played between two teams with giant inflatables, igfest '09. Picture by Andy Molyneux.











# Happy Packages

Inspired by an enthusiasm for communicating and sharing online, Mobile Pie & Thought Den delivered Happy Packages to the city of Bristol.

*“Sandbox gave us confidence to become a company.”*

*Tom Dowding*

Two fledgling Bristol companies used their Sandbox residency to try to advance the spread of human happiness. Mobile technology companies Mobile Pie and Thought Den got together in 2007 to brainstorm ideas. “Some of our original ideas were great fun but not necessarily that practical,” recalls Thought Den’s Ben Templeton. “Slowly, we arrived at something more achievable, based around how we could deliver happiness to mobile devices.”

The original project used three platforms: text-messaging, Bluetooth, and GPS. After the group (renamed Thought Pie for the project) received a second round of Media Sandbox funding, the project changed radically due to one crucial technological advance: Apple’s iPhone. “The fact that the iPhone got GPS during our time on the project made the GPS-based project the most promising,” explains Mobile Pie’s Richard Wilson. “The iPhone took out all the variables and put it all into one machine.”

From left,  
Tom Dowding, Dan  
Course, Richard  
Wilson, Ben Templeton.

»

## CASE STUDY #3 – THOUGHT DEN/MOBILE PIE

Essentially, the foursome have developed a format for creating GPS ‘treasure trails’ around a city, that can be commercially driven. Richard’s colleague Tom Dowding explains how it works. “People create their own trails and send their friends on a personalised voyage of discovery around their favourite places. The creator sets up ‘happy points’ around town and guides the player there via clues delivered to their mobile. When they get to each happy point, the friend gets a ‘gift’ delivered to their mobile – perhaps an image, short film, some music or money-off vouchers.”

The quartet draw on a wide range of inspirations and influences. For Tom, the single most inspiring part of his job is “Being able to reach millions of people around the world from a small office in Bristol.” For Richard, it’s all about creating engaging narratives. “Previous generations did it via film and books: nowadays we can create interactive experiences that let you choose whatever you want to do.”

Both companies took residency at the Pervasive Media Studio as part of the Sandbox scheme and are hugely aware of the benefits this brought them. It showed them, for example, that they weren’t alone in pushing boundaries. Dan Course of Thought Den explains, “Finding this community of people all trying to do something similar, made us realise that maybe there is something to this technology that we’re playing with after all.” Tom adds: “Sandbox gave us confidence to become a company. It gave us the mindset and opportunity to become a business, because we were no longer freelancing in our bedroom.”

### Project Synopsis

**What:** Happy Packages is a system where friends can leave digital content or ‘packages’ (images, audio, text) at specific locations that can be later collected from those locations, using a mobile device (via SMS, Bluetooth or GPS).

**Why:** Mobile Pie & Thought Den are inspired by the exponential enthusiasm for communicating and sharing online. With the explosion of content, the channels of distribution that provide relevance and context have become ever more important. Happy Packages offers the ability to control content in a personal way. For example a trail of ‘packages’ could form a trip to the five best shoe shops specifically for your sister.

### Technology

“The website was written in PHP with JavaScript. It allows users to create trails for friends, by picking points on a Google Map and uploading media (images, text, video) to be displayed at those points. An SMS system then sends a trail code word to the friend, (based on the SMS gateway AQL). A J2ME application for mobile allows the friend to enter a code word to download the trail over the Internet in XML format. The friend is guided around the trail by being told how far away they are from the next hotspot. We used a BlueNext GPS device to transmit GPS coordinates to the mobile

phone over Bluetooth. The designated media is played back at the hotspots.” *Tom Dowding, Mobile Pie*

### Career Highlights

#### Thought Den

**2008** Hired to help rebuild **Jack Daniels’** new JD Set site ([www.thejdset.co.uk](http://www.thejdset.co.uk)).

**2009** Co-created a Flash game to broadcast the **U.K. government’s new Fire Kills** campaign.

**2009** Co-created the **G.I. Joe** Flash quiz game for Paramount.

#### Mobile Pie

**2007** Winner of Channel 4’s **New Mobile Game Developer** award.

**2008** Winner of the **Media Innovations Awards Trophy** for their game Snap Happy.

**2008** Developed prototype for CBBC’s **Offspring of Rulers of the Galaxy**.

### Contact Details

#### Thought Den

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#### Mobile Pie

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**FAR LEFT:** Cityscape showing the location of Happy Packages.  
**LEFT:** Happy Packages iPhone interface.



# GAVIN HENDERSON

## Head of Programmes, Presentable



Gavin Henderson develops and sells network television

programmes produced by his company Presentable (part of RDF Media Group) from its base in Cardiff. After university, Gavin worked as an unpaid runner for a small production company in Winchester; he then spent two years as a researcher in Southampton, Glasgow, Birmingham and Bristol, before moving to London (to work, initially, on entertainment show 'Don't Forget Your Toothbrush'). Gavin later joined production company Endemol: highlights there included his role as Head of Programmes for Endemol West, setting up the bespoke studio complex in Bristol which continues to produce the massively successful 'Deal or No Deal'.

♦♦ *What challenges are currently facing those in the television production business?* The biggest challenge is to survive the recession. The ebb and flow of work has never been

more pronounced – and that's felt most acutely in the regions. My goal is to bring a returnable entertainment series to this region. I'm swamped by requests for work by extremely talented creatives, but we can only hold onto the best talent by providing consistent employment. Too many times the best people get drawn back to London.

♦♦ *Looking to the future, how secure is television's place at the top of the entertainment tree?* Television is no longer the prime entertainment source for young people. As a medium it has to compete, co-exist and potentially integrate with the Internet, social networking and mobile technologies. Television is a passive medium in a world that, increasingly, is demanding interactivity from its media.

♦♦ *How fast do you see the process of digital convergence – or collaboration between platforms – occurring?* While digital convergence is inevitable, thus far there has been lots of talk and not much action. Media Sandbox

has been extremely forward-thinking in creating a forum to allow creatives from different digital technologies to work together and share ideas. The

more co-operation we can encourage, the more likely we are to find the next big idea. ♦

[www.presentable.co.uk](http://www.presentable.co.uk)

*“Television is a passive medium in a world that increasingly demands interactivity.”*



# Happytowns

New technologies have contributed to our fast paced life but, ask BDH and Plot, could they actually make us happier?

“Timeless human needs and behaviour are always a good trigger for innovation.” Sound reasoning from Gill Wildman, of the 2008 Media Sandbox project Happytowns. The project, by Gill’s company Plot and Bristol TV production outfit Burrell Durrant Hifle, uses technology to enhance that most timeless of human needs: happiness.

Plot and BDH are developing simple, responsive wearable objects that react to the proximity of others. “BDH are big guys in TV animation, graphics and production. Nick and I are a small innovation consultancy,” Gill explains. “We were brainstorming ways to collaborate, when the Sandbox opportunity showed up.”

BDH were researching a potential TV series about... happiness - a topic in which Plot, who create new methods of getting people to work together, also had a strong interest. “Quite simply, some countries are a lot happier than others –and it doesn’t map to money,” Gill explains. “We were both interested in linking happiness to developments in technology, and especially in the etiquette and appropriateness »

Gill Wildman,  
John Durrant and  
Nick Durrant.





A photograph of two men smiling. The man on the left has dark hair and is wearing a dark suit jacket over a light blue shirt. The man on the right has grey hair and a beard, wearing a light blue floral shirt. Both are wearing red wristbands with glowing yellow symbols. The background is a collage of colorful, stylized portraits.

*“Timeless  
human needs  
and behaviour  
are always a  
good trigger for  
innovation.”*

*Gill Wildman*

## CASE STUDY #4 – BURRELL DURRANT HIFLE/PLOT

of pervasive media. Or, as technology gets more intimate and surrounds us everywhere, how do we want it to behave? Media Sandbox gave us the opportunity to research and develop our ideas.”

Those ideas were twofold: to work out where the overlap between happiness and pervasive media might be; and to prototype it as a potentially commercial proposition.

The team interviewed a cross-section of Bristolians, discovering where technology turns up in their lives – and, importantly, where it definitely shouldn’t. “The fascinating insights came when we asked not just about the different technologies people used, but also what people do to be happy. A ‘happytown’ became our shorthand for a positive relationship between people and places.”

So what have they ended up with? Currently, the ‘product’ is a set of prototype bracelets that talk to each other, using radio technology to map spatial distances and respond to different kinds of ‘closeness’. “We’ve had a lot of interest from people eager to find out what Happytowns ‘does’,” BDH’s John Durrant confirms. “At the moment we’re not sure if it’s a suite of products or a network service, or both. The technology is not quite there yet, but our strategy is.”

“In the current economic climate people are reassessing their attitudes, consuming less and reflecting more. The culture seems ready for simple ambient messaging solutions – less intrusive than say, Twitter, but just as intimate and pervasive.”



LEFT: Blush. RIGHT: Ping.

### Project Synopsis

**What:** Happytowns is a range of prototype wearable accessories that celebrate the relationships between people and remind us of the things we do together that make us happy.

**Why:** New technologies have contributed to our fast-paced life. Labour saving devices speed up workflows and save time, but have they actually made us busier - over-stressed, over-scheduled, rushing work, food, even recreation? Do they give us less time to spend with each other? Through a set of simple responsive wearable accessories, Happytowns reconnects people by reminding them to slow down and enjoy time together.

### Technology

“The bracelets use the ranging capabilities of a custom German RF chip with a built-in ATmega microcontroller and a transceiver working in 2.4GHz radiospace. The ranging capabilities enable the distance between bracelets to be turned into a numeric value for use in location-based applications.

Hardware interactions were prototyped and tested using Arduino, Bluetooth, and RFID.

Software interactions were prototyped using the Processing language and development environment.” *Nick Durrant, Plot*



### Career Highlights

#### Plot

**2004** Mentored **Virgin Atlantic’s** new service design team.

**2006** Made a documentary exploring future scenarios within **Ambient Intelligence**.

**2007** Mentored new-media teams with the **BBC Innovation Labs** across the UK.

**2008** Played with **BDH** on **Happytowns**.

#### BDH / Burrell Durrant Hifle

BAFTA and Royal Television Society award winners, Grammy and Emmy nominees.

**2003** Directed visuals for **Robbie Williams**.

**2003-04** Directed **Coldplay Live** tour film ‘Give Me Real. Don’t Give Me Fake’.

**2006** Written, directed and produced **Celebrity Life Skills** series for Channel 4.

**2006** Created branding and graphics for BBC series **British Style Genius**.

### Contact Details

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From left: Nick  
Durrant, Gill Wildman  
and John Durrant.



# DAN'L HEWITT

Director of Digital Content, Bebo



As Director of Digital Content at Bebo, Dan'l sources content such as short films and drama for the social-networking site.

This year saw the creation of the new programming banner Bebo Originals: drawing on the successes of the site's previous soaps



***“Bebo are pitched a lot of ideas: those that get off the ground understand digital platforms.”***

such as ‘KateModern’ and ‘Sofia’s Diary’, Originals broadens out from dramas to encompass entertainment, reality and comedy. Bebo’s digital content also includes an Applications platform, where casual games and other social entertainment companies are seeing tremendous success. Dan’l is also a non-executive director at South West Screen, a Bristol-based agency that champions the creative industries across the South-West.

↔ ***How do you see social networking changing in the near future – in particular as regards creative content like soaps and games?***

There’s still a lot of technical work to be done before consumers can enjoy a good video experience online. We will look back in a few years’ time at how we were consuming video online now and laugh! HD is just beginning to come through, but the bandwidth lottery for consumers needs addressing.

↔ ***How will young creative companies be best placed to profit from the coming changes?*** Understanding digital platforms and audiences (YouTube/MySpace/Facebook/Bebo) is essential. It’s about participating in these digital spaces. There is no longer any barrier to entry: if you have an idea, you can start to seed that idea in any number of ways. Digitally, video and story can be tied to applications, photos, a website or social networking page or group, and importantly you can get immediate audience participation and feedback.

↔ ***How can creatives go about getting their work seen on Bebo?*** We get pitched a lot of ideas: those that get off the ground understand those digital platforms, tell stories in a way that allows audiences to take part, and offer ways for brands and sponsors to play a part. ▶

[www.bebo.com](http://www.bebo.com)





# Visual Voice Pro

With new sensory software, HMC Interactive hope to improve the lives of children worldwide.

One of the projects supported by Media Sandbox 2009 looks well beyond the world of entertainment: it hopes, ultimately, to improve the lives of children worldwide. Developed by Plymouth's HMC Interactive, Visual Voice Pro is a new software that seeks to benefit children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), through stimulation via sensors, light, sound and other digital media.

VVP was developed during HMC's 2009 Media Sandbox placement, with partners Drake Music, who help disabled musicians find career paths into the cultural sector, and bibic, a charity offering help to carers of children with conditions such as autism and Down's syndrome.

The project, like others developed by HMC, is an example of cyber-therapy – the use of digital media technology for therapeutic applications. VVP reacts to sound, creating an extraordinary visual environment where action and reaction are clearly and vibrantly displayed. Its adaptation for use in the world of child healthcare seemed obvious, as HMC's Creative Director Mike Cobb explains. "We have worked with museums and

Jools Holland demonstrates Visual Voice Pro. Picture by Victor Frankowski.

## CASE STUDY #5 – HMC INTERACTIVE/DRAKE MUSIC/BIBIC

learning institutions, and that work has occasionally involved the area of ALN. We saw an opportunity for using digital software to enhance the lives of a lot of people.”

Mike’s ultimate hopes for the software extend far and wide. “VVP is brilliant for ALN work, but also for music in mainstream early-years and primary education. We’re already generating interest in America, Canada – even Israel. My ultimate hope would be to see it used in schools and facilities worldwide.”

Inspiration for the scheme came, however, far closer to home. “A few years ago, we were working on a website for a local charity, Plymouth Music Zone. Seeing the fantastic work they did with people of all ages and abilities inspired us to develop VVP. However, we knew that to go from idea to boxed software product would need time and investment.” Step forward the Media Sandbox scheme. “It allowed us to invest time into developing the product for a mass market. As the economic downturn hit, this became even more essential.”

HMC’s work is driven, says Mike, by “the challenges and rewards of using digital technology to improve people’s experiences.” “Technology has the power to make any experience – even something as insignificant as filling out a questionnaire – unique and enjoyable. It could be something many of us take for granted – communicating, having control over your surroundings. That’s when technology becomes an enabler – and that’s really exciting.”

### Project Synopsis

**What:** Visual Voice Pro (VVP) is a type of cyber-therapy - a therapeutic tool that uses digital technology to benefit and engage children with learning and physical disabilities through stimulation via light and sound.

**Why:** Multi-sensory environments provide therapeutic stimulation via touch, sight, hearing, smell and taste, but the technology is expensive and only available within specialist centres. VVP uses existing technologies in new ways to provide accessible, meaningful experiences. It was launched by Jools Holland and is now on sale at an affordable price.

### Technology

“Visual Voice Pro was built using Flash, Director and C++. The current recommended hardware specification is a 1 Ghz CPU, 512MB RAM, 10GB free hard disk space and 2 free USB ports. The software runs on Windows XP and Vista. We are currently testing with Windows 7 and hope to produce a Mac version at the end of the 2009.”

*Mike Cobb, HMC Interactive*

### Career Highlights

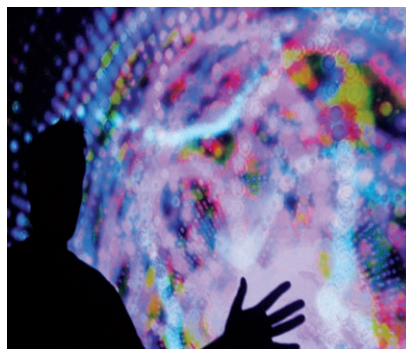
- 2004** Created **The Butterfly Garden**, an interactive installation that creates virtual butterflies.
- 2004** Won first prize at Europrix for the **Eye-Borg** a device that ‘cures’ colour blindness.
- 2005** Designed interactive educational games for the **Royal Museum of Scotland**.
- 2007** **The Queen** opens interactive installations for the **Planetarium** in London.
- 2007** Won three **Media Innovation Awards**, including overall winners.
- 2008** HMC Interactive become part of **TwoFour Media Group**.
- 2008** Create **live autopsy** effect for BBC Three.
- 2008** The company picked up two more **Media Innovation Awards**.
- 2009** Design virtual wind tunnel for **Audi’s** 100 years celebrations.

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ABOVE: Visual Voice Pro kit.

LEFT: An installation of Visual Voice Pro.



A photograph of three men in business suits standing in a warehouse, stacking large cardboard boxes. The man on the left is reaching up to place a box on top of a stack. The man on the right is also reaching up to place a box. The man in the center is smiling and looking towards the camera. The boxes are stacked in a tall, precarious-looking tower. The background is a plain white wall and floor.

Mike Cobb & Adam  
Montandon of HMC,  
Korash Sanjideh of  
Chew.tv (former MD  
of HMC).

*“We saw an  
opportunity for  
using digital  
software to  
enhance the lives  
of a lot of people.”*

*Mike Cobb*

# AudioEnable

Nomos Media are passionate about making information accessible, so along with Radio in Schools, they set-up a unique podcasting platform.

“Finding innovative ways to make information accessible to people is one of my key passions.” So says Lee Carrotte, Creative Director of Bristol-based Web technologies company Nomos Media. It’s a passion that has helped create a remarkable new podcasting platform, allowing schoolchildren across the country to record and upload broadcast content to the Web. And, thanks to Media Sandbox, the technology’s applications are continuing to grow.

AudioEnable began in 2007, when Nomos were approached by Radio in Schools (RiS), a not-for-profit organisation who produce learning resources to encourage speaking and listening skills in young people. RiS and Nomos developed a website with a Virtual Studio, that allowed students and teachers to record, edit and distribute podcasts using simple, software-free tools. The platform was a huge success and soon rolled out in schools across the country.

Before launching Nomos in 2007, Lee »

From left: Mark Devereux, Melissa Thom and Lee Carrotte at Global Radio, Bristol.



*“AudioEnable offers the ability to record, edit and share audio from any computer with an internet connection.”*

Lee Carrotte





## CASE STUDY #6 – NOMOS MEDIA/RADIO IN SCHOOLS

worked as Creative Producer for the BBC, producing projects such as the BAFTA-nominated Life of Mammals website and interactive TV. Nomos now specialise in developing content-managed websites, Internet applications and bespoke Web 2.0 products for businesses and public sector clients.

Spurred by AudioEnable's initial success, Nomos applied to Media Sandbox 2009. Sandbox gave Nomos the time and contacts to develop a Windows Mobile version of the software, usable on devices such as Smartphones and Pocket PCs. Lee explains why they were keen to develop the product further: "AudioEnable offers the ability to record, edit and share audio from any computer with an internet connection, but for it to be really useful we needed to go mobile. In the case of RiS this has allowed pupils to become roving reporters and has given teachers a tool to make field trips more engaging."

After further refinement and testing, AudioEnable will be made available to businesses and the wider public. "The Sandbox scheme allowed us to invest in an idea that would otherwise have germinated more slowly – if at all," Lee enthuses.

"Sandbox offers just the right balance of standing back and letting you get on with it, while also providing resources, tools and mentoring," he concludes. "The X-factor is the enthusiasm and drive of the people behind the scheme, and the access to contacts and resources you would never have been able to leverage otherwise." ■



LEFT: AudioEnable on a mobile device.  
RIGHT: AudioEnable user interface.



### Project Synopsis

**What:** AudioEnable is a unique service developed by Nomos Media. It allows users to capture audio directly to their website from either an embedded media player or mobile device.

**Why:** Media Sandbox supported development of AudioEnable for the mobile platform. Users can podcast from any location, without the need for specific technical knowledge or expensive equipment. Radio in Schools tested the new service, giving pupils and teachers the freedom to podcast from the classroom, staff room and off-site trips. The service will now extend to new and wider audiences.

### Technology

"The development environment was Visual Studio 2008, with the windows mobile emulation package for first line testing and a physical phone for live/final testing. We used the Windows Mobile 6 SDK and the .Net compact framework. Audio files are captured on the local phone memory (allowing local preview) then uploaded to the

main server when the user is happy. We use raw data across the phone networks to upload files to the server (i.e. Gprs, 3G or HSDPA)." *Mark Devereux, Nomos Media*

### Career Highlights

**2007** Nomos formed by **Lee Carrotte**, a former BBC Creative Director.  
**2007** Lee is approached by **Radio in Schools** to develop what is now **AudioEnable**.  
**2007** Nomos produces a dynamic website for the charity **Read a Million Words**.  
**2008** **Mark Devereux** joins the company as Director.

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**Web:** www.radioinschools.com

**“MEDIA SANDBOX**  
encapsulates the  
*passion, innovation*  
*& enthusiasm*  
**OF SECTORS AT THEIR**  
very best.”

*Tim Scott*

» Page 35



*“Media Sandbox  
allowed us to  
really explore a  
project and gave  
us the space to  
take risks.”*

*Seth Jackson*

Mr. Scr  
ninja turn



# The Generator

With the explosion of online and social media it can be difficult to make yourself heard - digital marketers Indie Mobile create connections in the music world.

“Music. Always music. That is what we do – we just happen to be digital marketers.” Ask Seth Jackson what inspires him and the answer could not be simpler. Seth’s firm Indie Mobile are the UK’s only specialist mobile music marketing company, allowing independent record labels to sell content (ringtones, video, wallpapers) to mobile handsets worldwide. Indie Mobile have marketed content for the likes of Dizzee Rascal, Fatboy Slim and Thom Yorke, and have won a trio of awards for Best Use of Mobile at the BT Digital Music Awards. Music is, in short, their lifeblood.

The software that IM developed during their 2009 Media Sandbox residency allows music fans to interact with their heroes and each other across all sorts of platforms and experiences. And they’ve already pitched several campaigns using the technology – called The Generator – with enthusiastic response.

As an example, they took the software to a major stadium band wanting to >>

Seth Jackson and the Indie Mobile team.

## CASE STUDY #7 – INDIE MOBILE

interact with their fans during a world tour. Indie Mobile showed them how, via The Generator, fans across the globe could send in images of themselves at the band's gigs via MMS, IM, Skype, email and a dozen other platforms. Seth takes up the story: "When a fan sends in an image they receive another fan's image back, from somewhere around the world. The images are then collated into a mosaic – a huge image of the band's album cover, made up from the thousands of tiny images. This living artwork would be live on big screens at the shows, building in real time as fans upload their images."

Media Sandbox gave Seth and co. the freedom to explore the technology. "It made us bold enough to pursue our own Research & Development, and to look beyond simply delivering a product to someone else's brief," Seth explains. "The funding allowed us to really explore a project without the usual commercial imperative, and gave us the space to take risks."

The Generator prototype is now ready – and Indie Mobile were able to give it an instant test drive with the news of Noel Gallagher's departure from Oasis. "When we heard the news, we launched a version of the application among our friends to find out what they thought Noel would do next. It produced a lot of friendly banter, some great ideas and a shared but chaotic experience. That is what The Generator is all about." ▶



### Project Synopsis

**What:** The Generator is a cross-media promotion tool for musicians and record labels. It utilises social interest around short-form anonymous communications (such as sms, msn, twitter), to create compelling and humorous campaigns.

**Why:** The music industry has been greatly affected by the explosion of online and social media. In a time when people are overwhelmed with content, making yourself heard is becoming ever more important. The Generator is a new distribution model evolved from this climate. With bespoke brand friendly messaging and affiliation with specific artists, it will be a powerful campaign tool.

### Technology

"The Generator runs on Linux, which enables us to compartmentalise the individual components, consisting of Apache, MySQL, Perl/Ajax and the admin front-end is written in Python and Erlang. These all work together to interact with the various methods of

submission, talking with e-mail clients, instant messengers and SMS platforms. In the next build (in progress) we are adding RSS, Audio and MMS." *James Ward, Indie Mobile*

### Career Highlights

**1999** Seth Jackson begins working with club promoters and brands to explore the early uses of **SMS marketing** to youth audiences – and the potential of the growing **ringtone phenomenon**.

**2003** Seth becomes marketing director of mobile music agency **YR Media**.

**2005** Takes over the company, re-branding it as **Indie Mobile**.

**2008-9** Indie Mobile run the official mobile store for rock band **Oasis**.

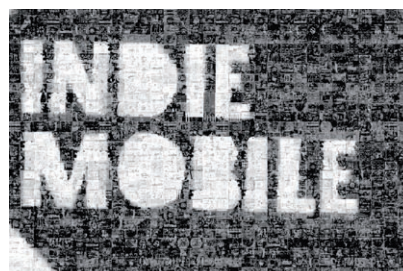
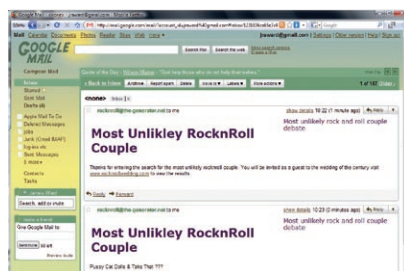
**2009** Nominated for the **Mobile Content Awards** for the Oasis mobile marketing campaign.

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LEFT & ABOVE LEFT: Messages submitted and received from The Generator.  
RIGHT: Mosaic of fans images, created using The Generator.



# TIM SCOTT

Education and Skills Manager, Department for Culture, Media and Sport



Tim and his DCMS colleagues recently implemented the

Creative Britain Strategy, which aims to build on Britain's increasingly successful creative economy. Born in Stockport, Tim studied Philosophy and later Politics at Leeds University. After stints working as a researcher for the Shadow Cabinet and travelling through south-east Asia and Australia, he returned to London, joining the DCMS in 2007 to work on the Creative Britain Report. Its implementation has, says Tim, "brought me in touch with some amazing people and projects. Media Sandbox, for example, encapsulates the passion, innovation and enthusiasm of the sectors at their very best."

❖ *What are the chief challenges ahead for the creative industries?* Talent alone is not enough. The recession has seen the end of many small, fragile creative businesses: the challenge is to

combine raw creative talent with sound business acumen.

❖ *How do you see the media landscape changing over the*

*next few years?* Convergence between media platforms is happening, as it always has been. In particular, the distinction between

telecommunication and broadcasting is increasingly blurring. That represents an enormous opportunity for Britain to kick on. But before investing in infrastructure, businesses need a thorough understanding of the market – and strong evidence that investment will generate profit. Ease of access is important, but content is key: what is the point of installing the pipes if the poetry that will flow through them is not supported and developed accordingly?

❖ *What is the key to survival in the creative and media industries?* Taking risks, delivering marketable end products, making rich experiences... all of these and more. The industry must throw open its doors to the overwhelming amount of talent out there. It also needs to be more articulate about the skills and experience it needs, so that future talents study the right subjects and get the right types of experience. ■

[www.culture.gov.uk](http://www.culture.gov.uk)

***"Take risks and deliver rich experiences, that's the key to survival."***



# Mapping Software 1.0

Producing monumental projections in public spaces, AntiVJ's new simplified mapping software has already been used all over the world.

The software that visual artists AntiVJ developed during their time on the Media Sandbox scheme has the twin virtues of being simple and, potentially, revolutionary. Like so much exciting technology, AntiVJ's programme breaks with an existing norm, that affordable display technology is limited to the rectangular screens of televisions, mobile phones and cinema. AntiVJ's mapping technology, in contrast, is able to use the contours of any 3D object to create stunning canvases on buildings, cars and even a 25-metre cathedral organ.

AntiVJ are a small label comprised of five European artists. Brought together by their interest in using similar visual technologies, they have already created vast light projections in public spaces across the world (including South Korea, Paris, China Montreal and, Brussels), and produced a stunning live audiovisual »

Beam, a sculpture  
by Haywood Slucutt  
and Joseph Watts.  
Mapping and visuals  
by Joanie Lemerrier.





WWW.MEDIASANDBOX.CO.UK

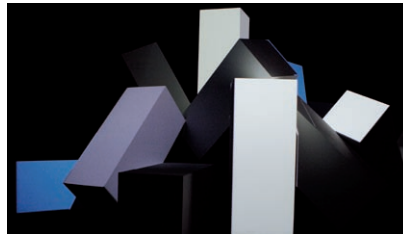
JUST FIVE

## CASE STUDY #8 – ANTI VJ

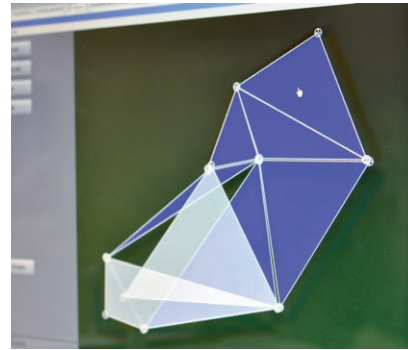
performance with festive projections onto Bristol's Council House (see Light Up Bristol at <http://vimeo.com/859097>).

To date, though, the mapping process has been time consuming and unwieldy, with six different pieces of software used to create one projection. Seeking to simplify things, AntiVJ spent their Sandbox time developing a single piece of software that allows anyone to project content onto any surface, object or volume. Users are able to quickly produce a 2D 'skeleton' image by highlighting outlines, which can be used to produce content that will perfectly match its real-life source. "It's a technique we use for most of our projects," AntiVJ's Nicolas Boritch explains. "It has huge potential benefits in the advertising industry, but it could also be used in education, medicine and tourism to visualise content on new surfaces." Nicolas and colleague Joanie Lemerrier have now tested the software on a number of projects, and it's already proving itself as an invaluable useful time-saver. The next big steps will be a 3D version and more work with architects, designers and builders to develop projections for specific buildings.

Their time with Media Sandbox was hugely useful to the project's development. "The Sandbox team is amazing," Nicolas enthuses. "We met some really interesting, useful industry advisors during the process, and it gave us the opportunity to take time to develop something that we probably wouldn't have been able to for at least another year." ▶



LEFT: Light Sculpture v2, Paysages Electroniques festival. RIGHT: Mapping toolkit.



### Project Synopsis

**What:** Mapping software 1.0 is a simple piece of Flash-based software, that allows users to create projections so precise that details such as windows, panels or bricks can be highlighted or even moved.

**Why:** AntiVJ create monumental projections in public spaces combining powerful video projectors with digital mapping techniques. But the mapping process was unwieldy, as six different pieces of software were used to create one projection. Mapping software 1.0 offers a simple solution to projecting precise content onto any surface, object or volume. This accessible toolkit has implications for the future of gaming, fashion, architecture and advertising.

### Technology

"The software engine was developed using Adobe Flash and Adobe AIR technologies. We used Actionscript 3.0, so it is available on Mac, PC and Linux computers, and potentially any other device supporting Flash Player 9+. Functionalities include: **Vectors:** enabling precise selection of individual objects, lines

or points; **XML format:** enabling export of data as XML files for easy integration into other softwares such as VVVV and Cinema 4D; **Client / server:** The engine uses a local or remote connection system, enabling the user to stream content or visuals from any computer; **Live mode:** Enables live generation of mapping content (from rss feeds, perspective distortion etc.)." Joanie Lemerrier, AntiVJ

### Career Highlights

**2006** Joanie Lemerrier began experimenting with the video **mapping technique**.

**2007** Produced live audiovisual performance as part of **Light Up Bristol**.

**2008** Audiovisual performance for **Nuit Blanche Bruxelles** festival.

**2009** Audiovisual performance in **New Songdo City**, South Korea.

**2009** Development of the new, simplified **Mapping Software 1.0**.

### Contact Details

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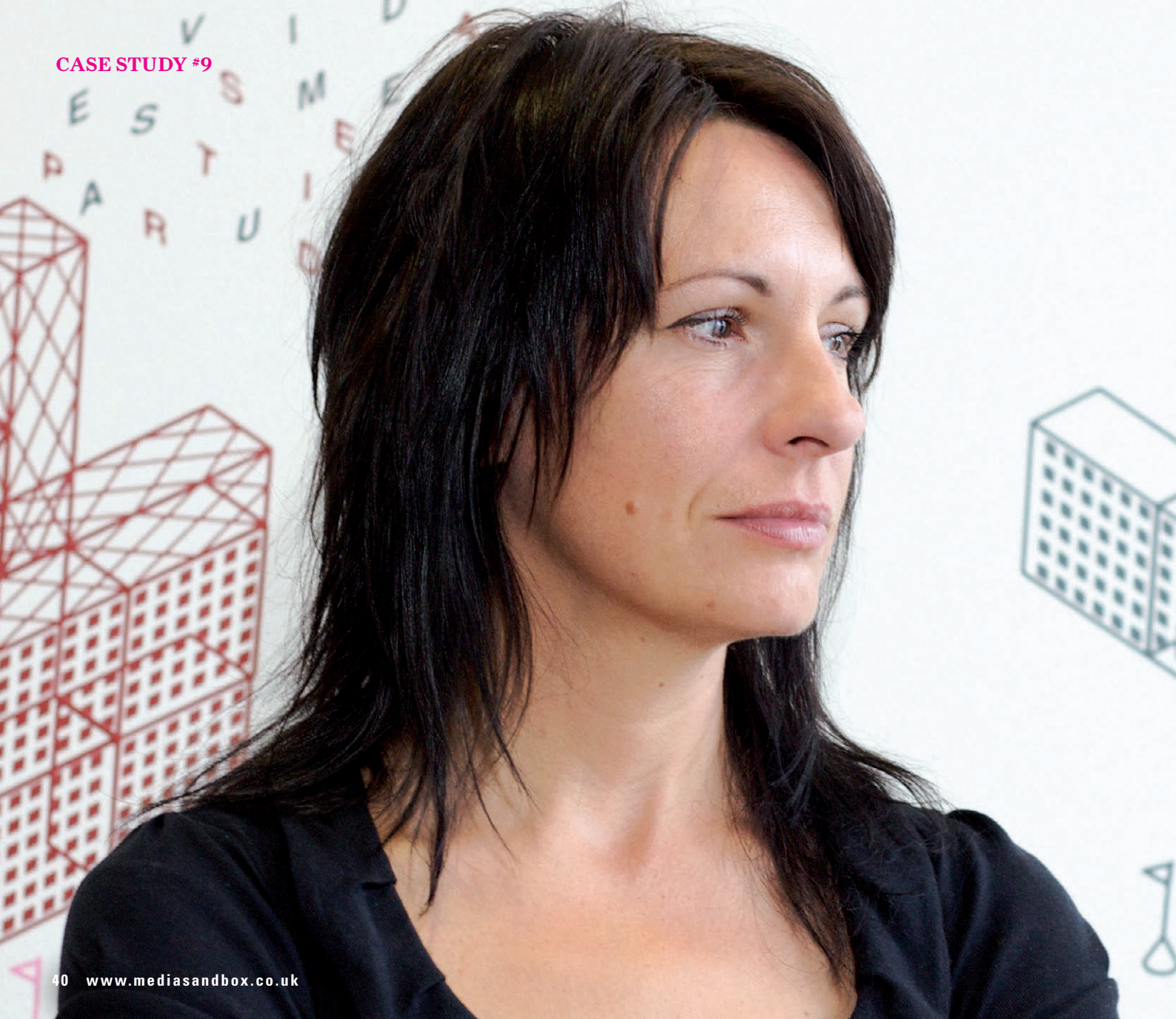
*“The mapping  
technique has  
potential benefits  
in advertising,  
medicine and  
tourism to  
visualise content  
on new surfaces.”*

*Nicolas Boritch*

From left: Nicolas  
Boritch and Joanie  
Lemerrier.



CASE STUDY #9






# Harmonize

Can two teams harmonise their virtual and physical actions to overcome the challenges of their environment? Hazel Grian created a game to find out.

When she arrived on the pioneering Sandbox scheme early in 2008, Hazel – a former street performer with Bath's world-famous comic theatre troupe, Natural Theatre Company – was running her own company, Licorice Films, and had been artist-in-residence at HP Labs, supported by Arts Council England. “HP gave me a really open brief – to play with the software and technology they'd been developing, and do something creative with it,” she explains.

Hazel set about creating her first Alternate Reality Game (ARG): the result was Meigeist, a code-breaking game that soon drew some 30,000 online participants worldwide. Later in 2008, HP commissioned Hazel to create another game, ‘The Sky Remains’. Built around a fictional detective agency, this one combined interactive ARG elements with GPS, geocaching and treasure hunting. “Players would have information delivered to their handset – audio and visuals – triggered depending on where they were moving,” »



*“HP gave me a really open brief – to play with the software and technology they'd been developing, and do something creative with it.”*

*Hazel Grian*

Hazel Grian at the  
Pervasive Media Studio.

## CASE STUDY #9 – LICORICE FILM

Hazel explains. “It was like an outdoor board game, with visuals on your handset and audio on your headphones.”

For Media Sandbox (together with Jon Williams, a technology graduate from the University of the West of England), Hazel developed Harmonize, an ARG that saw players in the physical world scouting for virtual objects. “We wanted it to be a project that could work commercially in the future. In the end, the technology wasn’t quite there for us to test it thoroughly. So that was a lesson we learned – that you need a really long test period before you can produce these products.”

As part of Hazel’s Media Sandbox participation, she became resident at the Pervasive Media Studio and has since continued her work there. It’s clear this brought huge benefits. “It’s such a fantastically supportive environment to work in. I set up my company three years ago, and I’m now closing it down because the company I had hoped to create back then is actually this studio. There is everything here I would have wanted for my company – but I’m now much freer, as a freelancer, to get things done.”

Hazel is driven by the vast creative possibilities open to her – but also, just as significantly, by the desire to make networks for others to play and interact in. “What really drives me is telling stories and delivering experiences to people, and watching their enjoyment. I’m a traditional producer of entertainment in that way: I’ve just ended up exploring that using new technology.” ▀

### Project Synopsis

**What:** Harmonize was an alternate reality game - a site-specific collaborative team game that explored behavioural dynamics of play across physical and virtual worlds.

**Why:** An alternate reality game is an interactive narrative that uses the real world as a platform and involves media and game elements to tell a story that is affected by participants’ ideas or actions. Inspired by cult 80’s kids TV show ‘Nightmare’ and the online/Real-life cross-over of Blast Theory’s ‘Can you see me now,’ Harmonize explored how teams could be encouraged to work together, harmonising their virtual and physical actions to overcome the challenges of their environment.

### Career Highlights

**1994-2006** Performer with Bath’s **Natural Theatre Company**.

**2007** Created **Megeist**, an online, problem-solving ARG which drew in some 30,000 participants and followers.

**2008** With Bristol digital agency Enable, created **Traces of Hope**, an award-winning online educational game for the British Red Cross.

**2008** Scriptwriter for the interactive, online soap opera **KateModern**, in which audiences interacted with protagonists via blogs, Bebo and Facebook.

**2009** Worked on an ARG to accompany a Hollywood movie.

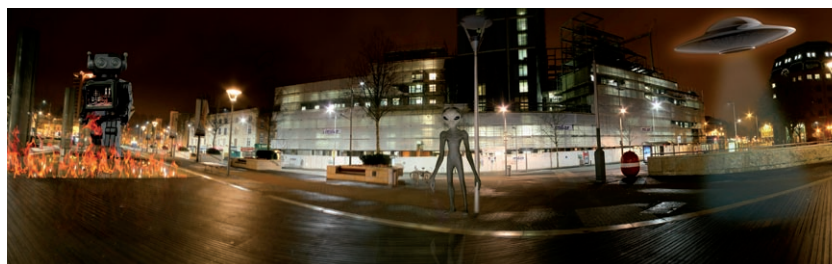
### Contact Details

Hazel’s now closing the company down and continuing work in a freelance capacity:

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ABOVE: Image from the Harmonize project.



“It is nice to be first,  
but often **nobody**  
*really* knows what

**THE HELL I’M  
TALKING ABOUT.”**

*Rik Lander*

» Page 45

# NICOLE YERSHON

Director, Innovative Solutions, Ogilvy Group UK



Since joining Ogilvy in 2000, Nicole has built up the agency's relationships with technological innovators everywhere, introducing gaming, mobile and social networking sites to some of their major advertising clients. Recent projects include the award-winning Fanta Stealth Sound System, an application – downloadable from a Fanta-branded site – that allowed teenagers to communicate without adults listening in. This summer Ogilvy and IBM developed the Seer Android for the Wimbledon tennis championships, allowing users to navigate around Wimbledon while being fed live information from around the venue. Nicole also runs Lab show'n'tells for new technologies, bringing together advertisers and content creators.

❖ *How might creative advertising projects develop over the next few years?*

Convergence between media will be central. There is no

way that future advertisers will spend £1m on a television commercial and only use that footage on TV. They will also want agencies to come up with a gaming idea, a mobile idea, perhaps something experiential like projection. Media needs to engage across all platforms.

❖ *What advice do you have for creative companies pitching for advertising projects?*

Think about how as many people as possible could profit from the technology you are developing. Don't be too technology-focused; focus also on the marketplace and users, and on making a product that's easy for brands to connect with.

❖ *What have been the biggest recent developments in advertising technology?*

Mobile has taken off, largely because of the ease and affordability of the iPhone. Carriers like O2 have amazing deals for kids to surf the net and do whatever they want. And the recession has, in fact, helped new media to increase their presence in advertising. New media campaigns can be

more affordable, and also add value – because technology allows consumers to interact with brands in different ways. It's more of a 'pull' mentality

rather than the traditional advertising 'push'. ■

[www.ogilvy.co.uk/ogilvy-interactive/](http://www.ogilvy.co.uk/ogilvy-interactive/)



*“Convergence between media will be central to future advertisers.”*



# Viral Spiral

U-Soap Media explore the gap in the active way we use laptops and mobile devices and our passive television consumption.

Rik Lander of Bristol's U-Soap Media couldn't be clearer about the benefits that Media Sandbox has brought his company. "We applied to Sandbox because we saw an opportunity to explore ideas in a playful way – in a way that the normal pressures of project development don't allow. We wanted to take the name literally – to build something, then knock it over and build something else."

With their project Viral Spiral, U-Soap set out to explore the gap between the active way we use laptops and mobile devices – sending messages, buying, exploring – and our passive television consumption. "We're interested in the idea of a TV audience that can participate in and alter the outcome of a show. At the same time we recognise that the large majority of the audience will be passively consuming – so the show must work for them as well."

U-Soap came up with three strong TV format concepts: "We experimented with a game with actors receiving direction from a live audience; a quiz where contestants buy answers from the audience; and a game where audiences provide information for >>

*"We applied to Sandbox because we saw an opportunity to explore ideas in a playful way."*

*Rik Lander*

Rik Lander hosting a test session of Viral Spiral.

## CASE STUDY #10 – U-SOAP MEDIA

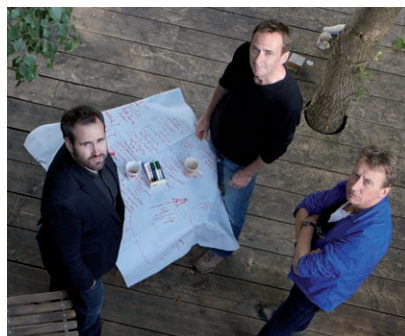
performers' monologues." One format has been taken up by Leopard Films, who are currently touting it around broadcasters.

Rik began his media career in the 1980s as a video artist: one half of scratch video pioneers The Duvet Brothers, his creations included the promo video for M|A|R|R|S's house classic 'Pump Up The Volume'.

"Back then, 'scratch video' was a subversive artform," he reflects. "Now it's an everyday activity for people taking footage, cutting it up and uploading it to YouTube." He then spent years in TV directing, from Nineties entertainment show 'Eurotrash' to high-brow arts documentaries.

Unlike the web, he says, television has been slow to respond to the possibilities of interactivity. "We can vote by text in 'Big Brother' or 'X-Factor'. Is that it? U-Soap have long experience in telling stories online – dramas, documentaries, educational journeys – and we see no barriers to taking these participatory ideas to television." He has no doubt that using internet-enabled devices to participate in TV programmes will become ever more common – and wants U-Soap to explore how this is best done. "Our aim is to create the economically sustainable dramatic and entertainment forms of the digital age."

Rik echoes the general enthusiasm towards Media Sandbox. "Being part of the scheme has introduced us to an amazing array of creative people. Bristol's media industry is made up of many small companies, bringing people together creates connections and benefits that you'd normally only get working in a large organisation." ▶



**LEFT:** Clockwise from left, Greg Browning, Rik Lander, Jon Dovey.  
**ABOVE:** A scene from *Rookies* (a game format).

### Project Synopsis

**What:** R&D of live cross-media game show formats, in which studio contestants compete with members of the TV audience to solve clues that have been hidden around the Internet.

**Why:** There is a gap in the active way we use laptops and mobile devices – sending messages, buying, exploring – and our passive television consumption. In gaps lie opportunities and the demand is apparent. U-Soap developed three new TV formats - one of which has been taken up by Leopard Films.

### Technology

"Viral Spiral is a series of game concepts that utilise social networking sites such as Facebook, Flickr, Twitter or search engines such as Google, Yahoo, Bing. Studio contestants or members of the home audience can participate by using existing services to

find clues that are hidden around the Internet, or to send messages directly to game players in the studio. The games draw on people's existing knowledge and utilise existing technologies. There are no bespoke systems in development at present." *Rik Lander, U-Soap Media*

### Career Highlights

**1987** Directed the promo video for house music classic '**Pump up the Volume**'.

**2001** Created **magic-tree**, an interactive online narrative.

**2006** Produced & directed **Wannabes**, the BBC's first interactive, web-soap.

**2008** Formed **U-Soap Media** with co-directors Jon Dovey and Greg Browning.

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Actors Daisy Dugmore,  
Luci Gorell Barnes and  
Director Daf Palfrey  
taking part in a test  
session of Viral Spiral.



# Street Art Dealer

Street Art Dealer offers an entirely new way for artists and art-lovers to interact directly using their mobile phones.

For their Sandbox project, urban art programmers Steal From Work (Bristol) and C6 (London) demonstrated an entirely new way to interact with street art, an exciting and fast-growing area of modern culture.

SFW and C6's project Street Art Dealer, is a web service enabling users to easily discover street art and even buy work through scanning Quick Response (QR) codes at the sites. The website was launched with an exhibition of urban art around Bristol in July 2009. The show demonstrated the power of QR technology and the impact it could have on how we interact with the art on our streets.

A QR code is a two-dimensional bar code that can be embedded into anything from street lamps to Pepsi cans: it contains information (like text or links to websites) that can be scanned and triggered by mobile phones.

The exhibition centered around an empty shop where people were shown how to use QR readers on their mobiles. Visitors were then set loose on a street-art treasure hunt, with pieces by artists including »

**Jono Boyle and Lucie Akerman from SFW, at their Bridewell Studio.**







Mon - Sat  
8 am - 6 pm

*“It’s early days for  
QR technology in  
the UK, but it will  
definitely become  
prevalent.”*

*Calum Lasham*





## CASE STUDY #11 – C6/STEAL FROM WORK

Turner Prize nominee Tomoko Takahashi and graffiti artist/technologist James Powderly. Codes adjacent to the pieces launched the Street Art Dealer website, which gave information about the work and a clue to where the next piece was located.

400 visitors participated in the project during its month-long run. “The response was excellent,” says C6 collaborator Calum Lasham. “People will try very hard to use challenging technology if you give them something free. We hit 10,000 views of web pages over the first fortnight – 61% using their phones. It’s early days for this technology in the UK, but it will definitely become far more prevalent.” A similar London exhibition is planned for winter 2009, while future development includes the creation of a generic system for QR-integrated applications with potential uses in polling, payments, trails and urban games.

Knowledge-sharing – a Sandbox speciality – is a key inspiration for C6. As Calum puts it: “The new wave of community-driven software is fundamental in my eyes. The open-source movement has developed outside the grasp of corporate capitalism, and has managed to forge such a strong path that everyone in the computing world uses it. That, to me, is the first real global social democracy. Innovators who share, who are not precious about their inventions but who rely on the respect of their community to make a living – these people fascinate and inspire me.” ▶

[www.streetartdealer.com](http://www.streetartdealer.com)

### Project Synopsis

**What:** Street Art Dealer is a system where works of art can be bought from specific street locations via a mobile phone using a QR code.

**Why:** For decades, street art has been developed in the street for a street audience, but things are changing.

A growing public interest has encouraged a re-sale industry facilitated by galleries and auction houses. Street Art Dealer puts control back in the hands of the artists by minimising the layers of commerce between artist and buyer. The project also promotes engagement with the meaning of art in the context of the environment.

### Technology

“The stack uses Linux, Postfix, MySQL, PHP, Apache Web Server, Memcache, Sphinx, Hadoop, JQuery, JDK, iPhone Dev Kit, various open source libraries for generating and scanning barcodes, google maps, google mail, google charts, google analytics, piwik, twitter, pixelpipe, clickatel, SIMILE Widgets, GD, wordpress, Propel ORM, TCPDF, google checkout, paypal, sagepay and a custom MVC application framework to tie it all together.

*Calum Lasham, C6.*



**FAR LEFT:** Beam, a sculpture by Haywood Slucutt and Joseph Watts. **LEFT:** Safe, an installation by Zeus at the Bearpit, Bristol.

### Career Highlights

#### C6

**2004** C6 initiate the **Dotmasters** street art project across Europe.

**2004-2008** Dotmasters co-create/curate the **Nuart** festival, Norway.

**2007** **Street Art Dealer** is feasibility tested at the Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich.

**2008** Dotmasters appear at the **Cans Festival**, London, organised by Banksy.

**2009** Co-curators of the **Street Art Dealer** exhibition, Stokes Croft, Bristol.

### Steal From Work

**2007** **Steal From Work** created as a not-for profit co-operative to facilitate pop-up exhibitions throughout Bristol.

**2007** Curate the **12 Days of Xmas** exhibition at Bridewell Island, Bristol.

**2009** Co-curate the **Crimes of Passion** exhibition at Bristol's Royal West of England Academy.

**2009** Co-curators of **Street Art Dealer** exhibition.

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# DAN EFERGAN

Creative Director, Aardman Digital



Dan is Creative Director at Aardman Digital, the online arm of Bristol's world-famous animations company. Prior to joining Aardman, Dan studied MediaLab Arts at the University of Plymouth, where he co-founded Submerge, a festival that showcased work by digital graduates from across the South-West. The festival ran successfully for eight years. Alongside this he helped set up OKSO Ltd, a digital media company providing services for the likes of Sony and Channel 4. After a period as a freelancer, Dan set up the recruitment agency/production company SubSub. In 2007, he joined Aardman. Highlights include WebbliWorld, the company's first excursion into virtual worlds, and a host of casual games which over the last six months have seen over 15 million game plays.

♦♦ *What are the challenges, both now and in the future, for creatives working within your field?* As viewing habits

adjust around a plethora of new platforms, storytellers and entertainers need to adapt to the experiences these platforms can deliver. One of the hardest

challenges is the lack of emotion that most of these new platforms currently deliver. 'Traditional' platforms come with a lot of emotive references: the instinctive

emotional tones within talking, 50 years of symbolism in cinema. We need to construct similar emotive cues within developing digital platforms.

***“Get out there, share what you’re doing and be as involved as you can.”***



♦♦ *How do you see things developing over the next few years?* I think the fabled 'convergence' is actually starting to happen. Nintendo really hit a nerve with their Wii, a console that sits better in the living room with the whole family playing, than stuck up in the kids' bedrooms. With Microsoft and Sony following suit, I see the living room becoming a key space for interactivity.

♦♦ *What tips can you give on how to survive – even prosper – in your sector?* Most people talk about the 'right place at the right time': I suggest being in as many places as much of the time as possible. Get out there, share what you're doing and be as involved as you can be. That's bound to pay dividends in the end. Other than that, it's plain old simple passion.

[www.aardman.com/digital](http://www.aardman.com/digital)

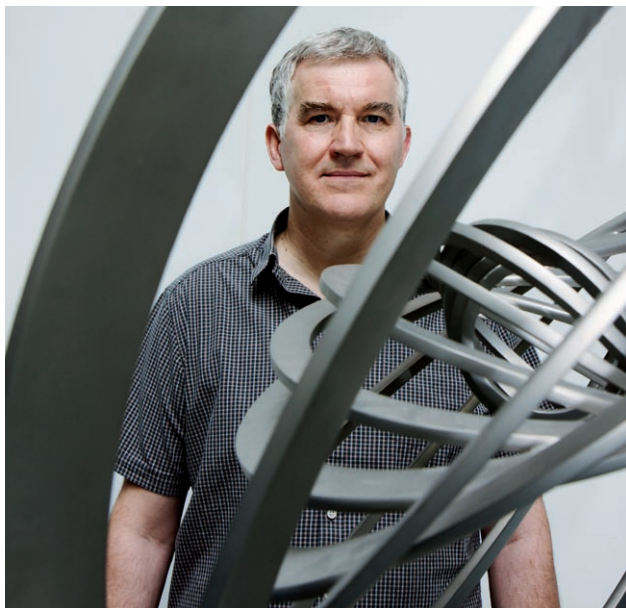
# RICHARD HULL

Researcher, HP Labs



Richard has been with Hewlett-Packard since 1985, and since 2001 has combined two central interests: exploring

ways to link digital content to the physical world, and enabling non-technologists to create and experience mobile applications. These



***“You could be the person who creates the application that simply everybody uses.”***

interests were developed in the collaborative Mobile Bristol project (2002-2005), a programme that investigated how mobile devices and pervasive media could be used to enhance residents’ and visitors’ interactions with their environment and each other. Since then, Richard has been central to the development of HP Labs’ mscape toolkit, an immersive media package that weaves games, guides and stories into the physical landscape, for users to discover via their mobile devices.

✦ ***What are the current and future challenges within pervasive media?*** Pervasive media is about linking digital content to the physical world to deliver rich experiences that match perfectly the user’s current situation and desires. That will be quite tough to pull off. At the moment, we have a few early explorations. Many of these are great: but the emergence of truly compelling, mass-market applications will depend on creative users

actively exploring the new medium, just as blogging and social networking bubbled up on the Web. That’s why mscape, the Pervasive Media Studio, Media Sandbox and others who bring together technology and creative pioneers are vital.

✦ ***How might pervasive media develop over the next few years?***

Mobile phone applications are beginning to use location sensors to tell users what is around them. The next stage will be to develop applications that actively mediate the physical world to the user – via games, smart tourist guides, and later sports, wellbeing and productivity tools. Our mission is to enable others to create those applications.

✦ ***Top tips for those entering the sector?*** Be inventive and try things out. These are the early days of pervasive media, and everything is open. You could be the person that creates that application that simply everybody uses. ▶

[www.mobilebristol.com](http://www.mobilebristol.com)  
[www.mscaapers.com](http://www.mscaapers.com)



*“Bristol* IS ONE OF  
THE BEST PLACES IN THE UK  
to develop  
a digital media  
business.”

*James Touzel*

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# Power to the People

Altern8 believe that any outdoor space can become a space for play, step forward Power to the People.

Imagine an application that allowed us to alter our physical environment in playful and colourful ways. To change the behaviour of a set of fountains in the city centre, for instance, or create ever-evolving light shows and multi-player games on the sides of buildings. How much more entertaining and involving could this make our familiar city centres?

This is the vision of Tarim founder of Altern8, one of Media Sandbox's 2008 participants. Tarim creates Media Playgrounds – installations that people can both play with and use to build their own new places to play in. The playgrounds are designed around a system called PTTP (Power To The People) that allows users to play using mobile phones, laptops or other. It's this PTTP system that Tarim spent a successful Sandbox year modifying and testing.

"PTTP is basically a queuing system that allows people to play with an

»

Tarim at the  
Pervasive  
Media Studio.





*The mix of ideas  
and people  
has inspired  
me hugely."*

*Tarim*



## CASE STUDY #12 – ALTERN8

installation,” he explains. “It could allow you to control fountains in a city centre, put light shows on the sides of buildings...” People log onto the PTPP server via their mobiles, the server then shows your progress in the queue and alerts you when it's your turn to play.”

Tarim's inspirations included a set of giant flexible streetlights in Rotterdam, with a control panel allowing visitors to move them and games such as Tetris played on the sides of buildings using video projections. He's successfully tested the system with his own Instant Graffiti application (at Glastonbury Festival), where using a coloured Etch-a-Sketch-style projection people could draw using a mobile connection.

Like many of the Sandbox projects, PTPP is very much a work-in-progress. Future plans include developing other forms of control besides the web, and producing more installations that can be controlled in this way.

And what, for him, have been the strengths of the scheme? “The contacts and interaction are wonderful. Creative thinking is shared: everyone comes into it with their ideas on the table.” Diversity is also key. “I help others with technical issues, and so I've got to work with people who look at problems from a more artistic approach than I do. It's been fascinating learning that different language and those ways of thinking. The mix of ideas and people has inspired me hugely.”



LEFT & ABOVE: Instant Graffiti.

### Project Synopsis

**What:** Power To The People (PTPP) is a series of playful interventions for public spaces; Instant Graffiti was the first. Like a giant Etch-A-Sketch, a 'live drawing' is projected onto the facade of a building and controlled by the public using a mobile device.

**Why:** PTPP evolved from Altern8's belief that any outdoor space can become a space for play. In today's urban environments - where public spaces are often owned by corporations and consumers are bombarded by media based advertising - Altern8 use playful interventions (sound, image and even fountains) to reclaim public space, foster human connection and remind people that sometimes the greatest things are free.

### Technology

"PTPP is a queuing and control protocol. At the queuing level, the system allocates a session identifier and puts the session on a queue. When the resource becomes available the session becomes runnable. The protocol then translates and passes control information from a runnable

session to the resource. The initial version of PTPP runs over HTTP. Session authentication is using HTTP cookies and control information is sent via HTTP posts. The session handling is implemented in PHP with the queue state in MySQL. The control information is sent as HTTP variable data, translated to XML and implemented in PHP. The first test installation for PTPP (Instant Graffiti) is implemented in Flash hanging on an XML socket." *Tarim, Altern8*

### Career Highlights

**1985-1988** Worked for games company Lap of the Gods on early multi-user game, **Gods**.

**1992** Co-created a physical version of the popular TV game show **The Crystal Maze**, Blackpool.

**1998** Founded **Altern8**, his own games and software company.

**2009** **Instant Graffiti** installed at Glastonbury Festival.

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# JAMES TOUZEL

Partner, Technology & Media, TLT LLP



James has been with Bristol legal firm TLT (and its predecessor firm) for 15 years. Starting in the company's Commercial, IT and Intellectual Property team, James became head of Technology & Media in 2003. He now advises multinationals, small/medium enterprises (SMEs) and start-up businesses across the technology and media sectors. "Bristol's digital media activity has grown notably over the last five years, largely because it is one of the best places in the UK to develop a digital media business," says James. "It has a significant community of artists and technology companies and the strong professional infrastructure to support it."

❖ *What challenges does the new media sector face, from a legal perspective, in the near future?* Across the media industries, traditional business models are being challenged. Bringing content to an audience used to mean approaching very large content

aggregators (broadcasters, record labels...). Thanks to new technologies, creators can now get content directly to a massive audience, but new business models addressing this shift have yet to be developed. In my view, the main legal issues facing web and mobile businesses are intellectual property protection, data privacy and the protection of children.

❖ *What sorts of advice have you found yourself giving to Sandbox participants?*

My advice is often about the protection and sharing of ideas in the early stages of development. Many participants collaborate, which requires clarity on ownership issues and copyright. Others develop concepts using open-source technologies, where copyright affords limited protection and the focus is more on confidentiality and getting to market first.

❖ *How should digital media companies prosper in the future?* Like any business,

digital media businesses need to get protection, get investment, get to market and get noticed.

"Free" or "open" is seen by many as the way forward – but

in order to run a business, revenue has to be generated. ▶

[www.tltsolicitors.com/sectors/technology-and-media](http://www.tltsolicitors.com/sectors/technology-and-media)

***"The main legal issues facing web and mobile businesses are protection and privacy."***



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