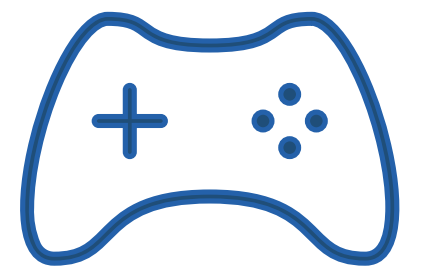# Consumer protection by design

This PhD intends to consider potential methods to regulate problematic and predatory game design.

The aim of many designers is to make their games as fun as possible and make the in-game monetisation as effective as possible. Regardless of their intent, game designers make design choices that can have a significant detrimental effect on vulnerable consumers.

It is well known that games companies collect and study player data to refine their games and improve user experience. However, there is a legitimate concern that some companies are optimising their design to exploit the vulnerabilities and cognitive biases of gamers, in particular, vulnerable consumers. It's currently entirely up to video game companies whether they want to implement harmful design which puts an enormous responsibility on designers to make ethical choices.

If the design of video games has the potential to cause significant detriment to consumers, then regulation must be considered to limit the potential harm caused by problematic design. The current lack of regulation leaves all gamers at risk of exploitation.

I am really interested in:
- Potential ways to identify problematic design and evaluate its impact
- How gaming communities interact with problematic design and influence gamers
- Methods to incorporate consumer protection into video games
- How the law can intervene to prevent companies from utilising harmful design
- How I can advocate for ethical game design and influence regulatory policy

Photo by Luis Villasmil on Unsplash

My name is Hannah and I have a background in games journalism and law. My PhD is being supervised by Professor Richard Hyde. I am partnered with the Nottingham Institute for Policy and Engagement who ensure that research from the University of Nottingham helps to shape public policy and debate.

I hope to contribute to the conversation surrounding video game regulation, explore how research into Human-Computer Interaction could form the basis for effective regulation of problematic design and advocate for appropriate regulation of video games.

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