PhD studentship - Understanding UK digital comics information and publishing practices: From creation to consumption

Location:	Central London
Application deadline:	31st May 2019
Indicative funding amount:	£17,550 tax-free stipend per year, fees paid
Start date:	1st October 2019
Duration of study:	3 years (Full Time), 6 years (Part Time, 0.5 FTE)

The British Library (British Library) and City, University of London (City) are delighted to offer a fully-funded PhD studentship (including fees and living allowance) on the research theme of *understanding UK digital comics information and publishing practices: From creation to consumption*.

Another collaborative studentship on UK Digital Comics (between the British Library and University of the Arts London) is also currently being advertised, which involves research on the technical, cultural and social factors that influence collection policy for digital comics.

About the studentship

This studentship is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships Programme. Your university fees will be paid for 36 months and you will receive a tax-free stipend towards living costs. The annual stipend for UK-resident students is likely to be around £17,550, including London Weighting and a contribution towards working across two institutions. The British Library will also provide financial support for research-related costs of up to £1,000 a year for 3.5 years. In addition, an additional 6 months of funding is available through the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Student Development Fund to allow you to take up longer-term skills development opportunities that you agree with the supervisory team.

During the studentship, you will have staff-level access to the British Library's collections, expertise and facilities, and the opportunity to take up a wide range of training and skills development opportunities.

About the research theme

Your PhD will enrich understanding of UK digital comics information and publishing practices, as supported by existing technology, from a User Experience (UX) perspective. This is with the aim of informing requirements for comics collection management, digital preservation and content strategy development. You will engage with comics creators, as well as readers and collectors, to gain new insight into the motivation, methods and behaviour in creating, distributing, collecting and reading digital comics.

Your research will provide:

1) A detailed understanding of UK digital comics information and publishing practices from creation to consumption.

2) Empirically-grounded theory that describes UK digital comics information and publishing practices and explains comic creators' motivations and rationale driving those practices.

3) Guidelines to inform UK digital comics collection management, digital preservation policy and content strategy development.

Your research will primarily be qualitative in approach, involving detailed observations of technology use. It very likely will also include complementary quantitative elements. It is possible for your PhD to follow a combined interview and observation approach to understand peoples' digital information practices, including information needs and behaviour and the driving motivations and rationale. You will, however, strongly contribute to the refinement and development of the research project and approach.

About you

We are looking for a student with:

Essential

- A Masters degree in a relevant discipline (including, but not limited to Human-Computer Interaction, Digital Humanities, Library/Information Science), **or** 5+ years experience working in a relevant field in the Libraries or Publishing sector (e.g. content policy development in libraries, or comics production or comics collection management);
- Students currently enrolled on a Masters programme who expect to have finished their degree by 1st October 2019 are also eligible to apply;
- A passion for technology, reading and research;
- Excellent academic writing skills;
- Excellent oral communication skills.

Desirable

- Previous experience in observing technology use and/or conducting research in a library setting;
- Previous experience in writing academic papers;
- An active interest in reading and/or creating digital comics;
- Previous industry experience in collection management, digital preservation or content strategy development.

City University of London and the British Library are both committed to encouraging applications from the widest range of potential students. Our research and

collections reflect the diversity of life and culture in the UK, and we welcome applications from candidates that help to broaden our collective knowledge and experience.

Residency Criteria

- British nationals who have lived in the UK and Islands all their lives are eligible.
- Also eligible are non-British nationals who have settled status AND have been resident in the UK for 3 years immediately prior to the date of the start of the course.
- EU nationals who have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands for three years immediately prior to the date of start of the course are eligible.
- EEA and Swiss nationals (EEA migrant workers) should refer to the full RCUK guidelines to check eligibility and may be eligible for a fees only award.
- Please refer to pages 17-18 of the RCUK Training Grant Guide

About the supervision team

You will be supervised by an experienced team from City and the British Library:

- Dr. Ernesto Priego and Dr. Stephann Makri (Centre for Human-Computer Interaction Design, City)
- Ian Cooke (Head of Contemporary British Publications, British Library);
- Stella Wisdom (Digital Curator at the British Library).

About the British Library

The British Library is the national library of the United Kingdom and one of the world's leading research libraries. It has a global reputation for providing trusted and reliable information. Its commitment to advancing the world's knowledge means it makes a valuable contribution to society, both today and for future generations. The Library aims to inspire people around the world through its content and expertise, to nurture leading-edge innovations and to encourage and empower its staff and research collaborators to seize new opportunities. The Library offers a stimulating work environment, and a dedicated programme of professional development events. Its staff and collaborative PhD students conduct research as varied and unique as its world-class collections.

Comics form an important part of the Library's collection, which includes examples from around the world. The Library held a major exhibition, *Comics Unmasked: Art and Anarchy in the UK*, in 2014.

The Library has chosen this research theme to complement its vision for future development to 2023 and beyond.

About City, University London

City, University of London is a global university committed to academic excellence with a focus on business and the professions and an enviable central London location.

City attracts around 19,500 students (35% postgraduate), is top in London for student satisfaction (*Complete University Guide*), well above the sector average for graduate employability in most subjects and eleventh in the UK for starting salaries. City joined the University of London in 2016.

In the last REF, City doubled the proportion of its total academic staff producing world-leading or internationally excellent research.

Led by President, Professor Sir Paul Curran, City has made significant investments in its academic staff, its estate and its infrastructure and continues to work towards realising its vision of being a leading global university: it has recently agreed a new *Vision & Strategy 2026*.

How to apply

To apply for this studentship, please apply here for the Full Time option, or apply here for the Part Time option. Name **Ernesto Priego** as the member of academic staff you have discussed your application with. Submit:

- A **personal statement** of no more than 2 pages explaining your background, interest in this research theme and ideas on how you might carry out this PhD research (this replaces the need for you to include a 'research proposal');
- A sample of your **academic writing** (if available) - e.g. a previous dissertation or published paper);
- Proof of your **academic qualifications** (if relevant) - e.g. your degree transcript(s);
- Proof of your **English language proficiency** (only if English is not your first language - a minimum IELTS overall score of 7.5 with a minimum of 7.0 in each of the four components);
- 2 confidential **references** (at least 1 of them should be academic where possible). This could be your university personal/dissertation tutor, line manager etc.

To arrange an informal discussion about the studentship, contact Dr. Ernesto Priego (Ernesto.Priego.1@city.ac.uk).

City, University of London and The British Library are committed to equality and diversity.