



Case Study: 2007 Placement
Artist: Hazel Grian | Host: HP Labs, Bristol

In 2006, Hazel Grian spent six months in HP Labs in Bristol in the Mobile and Media Systems Lab. With an open brief to collaborate with Labs researchers around video on mobile devices, Hazel focussed on Alternative Reality Games, which use interactive narrative across many different platforms to tell a story.

"I really wanted a chance to work side by side with technologists. The outcome was great, I was inspired by their application of forward-looking ideas into actual technology. They seemed to welcome my input of creative ideas from an outsider's viewpoint." Hazel Grian, Licorice Films

With extra support from HP Labs, Watershed and other funders, in January 2007 Hazel moved into Watershed and launched MeiGeist, an eight-week Alternative Reality Game created from the research undertaken as part of the residency.

Blending fiction with reality by telling its story across different media including websites, text message, live events and email, 30,000 people around the world took part in the game, referring to it as 'the funniest game of all time!' and "the ARG event of the year!"

Lasting Impact

The placement resulted in the development of a ground-breaking online experience that reached huge audiences and produced high quality research that has been disseminated widely. It also had a significant effect on the knowledge, research and practise of those involved:

"Bringing together the arts, technology and social sciences has given us an opportunity to explore how emerging and online and mobile communication technologies can be used to create engaging new experiences outside their original purpose. The work has been inspirational and thought provoking for us and its influence will extend further than the current project."

Kenton O'Hara, HP Labs, Artist Placement Host, 2007

Since completing her placement with HP Labs, Hazel has signed a contract with a major international ARG producer to supply content and storylines for a new game and has received a substantial commission from HP Labs to further develop her research into gaming. She is also undertaking research for Watershed within its online development programme, deploying and furthering the skills learnt during the placement.

The full report on Hazel's placement is available at <http://www.ished.org.uk/resources> and overview of the game can be found at <http://licorice-media.com/Meigeist.html>

MeiGeist was funded by Arts Council England, HP Labs, University of West of England, Watershed, Arts and Humanities Research Council and South West Screen.