

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR LI PING THONG

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SUMMARY

Associate Professor and senior academic leader in Digital Design with extensive experience spanning curriculum leadership, research, industry, community engagement and staff management. Currently Associate Dean of Digital Design at RMIT University, leading the largest discipline in the School of Design across undergraduate and postgraduate programs of Animation, Games and Digital Media.

Recognised for shaping future-focused digital design education and for translating research into publicly visible impact through externally funded projects, national media commentary and keynote-level thought leadership. Brings over 20 years of academic experience across Australia, Vietnam and Malaysia, with a strong track record in work-integrated learning, interdisciplinary collaboration and mentoring academic staff and doctoral candidates.

EDUCATION

PhD in Computing (Serious Games)

2017 / *Serious Games Institute (SGI) - Coventry University / Coventry, United Kingdom*

Graduate Certificate of Tertiary Teaching and Learning

2009 / *RMIT University / Melbourne, Australia*

Master of Multimedia (E-Learning Technologies)

2007 / *Multimedia University / Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

Bachelor of Multimedia (HONS) (Film and Animation)

2005 / *Multimedia University / Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), Serious Games, User Experience (UX) Design, User Interface (UI) Design, Interactive Design, Digital Storytelling, Digital Environments, Culture and Heritage.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

English / Mandarin / Cantonese / Malay

ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP AND APPOINTMENTS

Acting Dean / School of Design, RMIT University

Aug 2025 - Nov 2025 / Melbourne

- Provided executive leadership as Acting Dean, maintaining continuity across academic operations, staffing and strategic priorities.
 - Represented the School of Design in college-level leadership and key internal and external engagements.
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Associate Dean (Digital Design) / School of Design, RMIT University

Feb 2024 - Present / Melbourne

- Provide strategic leadership for the largest discipline in the School of Design, encompassing Animation, Digital Media, Games and the Master of Animation, Games and Interactivity.
 - Led discipline-wide curriculum architecture and renewal, establishing a clear, shared strategic direction across programs.
 - Work closely with the Dean, Associate Deans and Senior Manager to align discipline performance with School, College and University priorities.
 - Oversee academic staffing, performance management, teaching quality and student and staff matters across the discipline.
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Program Manager (Digital Media) / School of Design, RMIT University

Jan 2018 - Dec 2020 / Melbourne

- Line-managed the full academic team, providing leadership in staff development, performance management, and conflict resolution.
 - Led curriculum renewal and studio curation, introducing Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, UX design, creative coding, projection mapping and physical computing.
 - Ensured teaching quality and program relevance through close engagement with industry and institutional stakeholders.
 - Led the rapid transition of the program to fully online delivery during the first year of COVID-19 (2020).
 - Worked closely with RMIT Vietnam to ensure curriculum consistency and quality across campuses.
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Associate Professor (Digital Design) / School of Design, RMIT University

Feb 2015 - Present / Melbourne

(Associate Lecturer 2015-2017; Lecturer 2018-2020; Senior Lecturer 2021-2024; Associate Professor 2025-Present)

- Course coordination and teaching across core and advanced Digital Media areas including interactive media, motion design, Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, and User Experience design.
 - Selection Officer (since 2015) for local and international admissions and RMIT Vietnam transfers, with expertise in AQF, articulation pathways, and credit equivalence.
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Senior Lecturer (Multimedia Systems) / School of Communication and Design, RMIT University Vietnam

Feb 2008 - Feb 2015 / Ho Chi Minh city

(Lecturer 2008-2013; Senior Lecturer 2014-2015)

- Held a formal leadership and management role, supporting the Program Manager in academic coordination, staff leadership and administrative decision-making.
 - Course coordination and teaching in the Bachelor of Design (Multimedia Systems), including design fundamentals, digital illustration, advanced 3D imaging and animation, motion graphics and web design.
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Earlier Academic and Professional Appointments (Selected)

- Lecturer, School of Communication - Taylor's University, Malaysia (2006-2008)
 - AV Application Specialist, School of Communication - Taylor's University, Malaysia (2005-2006)
 - Designer / Animator - Industry practice across digital design, animation and interactive media (2004-2008)
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EXTERNAL RESEARCH FUNDING

Total external research funding to RMIT since 2017: **\$935,516**

Deadly Safe Driving: The First of Its Kind - A Virtual Reality Rural Driving Hazard Perception Training Program for Young First Nations Drivers (2025-2027)

Funding: Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications in collaboration with Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation and Australia Catholic University (ACU)

CAT 1, CI

The Road to Safer Walking: Improving Hazard Perception in Older Adult Pedestrians (2023-2025)

Funding: Australia Automobile Association (AAA) in collaboration with Australia Catholic University (ACU)

CAT 2, CI

Quick Service Restaurants (QSR) Sector Action Plan Chapter (2023-2024)

Funding: End Food Waste CRC, NSW EPA, QDEWLP

CAT 4, Lead CI

Creative Digital Services in SEA – The Art/s of Exchange GLAM Sector Report (2022)

Funding: Victorian Higher Education State Investment Fund

CAT 2, CI

Community Banashi – Digital Storytelling Film Project with Garrthalala Indigenous Community and Kochi University (2021-2023)

Funding: Australia Japan Foundation Grant, DFAT

CAT 1, CI

Golden Plains Stories – Web Museum and Community History Project (2021-2023)

Funding: Public Records Office of Victoria, in partnership with Golden Plains Shire Council

CAT 2, Lead CI

Angels of War: Remembering Australian Army Nurses – AR/VR Digital Media Exhibition (2021-2022)

Funding: Victoria Remembers Grant, in partnership with Federation Square

CAT 2, Lead CI

Playable Campus – Augmented Reality Contemporary App Development (2021)

Funding: Melbourne Girls Grammar School

CAT 3, Lead CI

Foodbank and YWaste – User Experience Research for YWaste App (2021)

Funding: CRC Fight Food Waste, in partnership with Foodbank Australia and YWaste

CAT 4, Lead CI

The Space We Live, The Air We Breathe – Augmented Reality Contemporary Art Trail (2021)

Funding: Moreland City Council

CAT 3, Lead CI

Foodbank and YWaste – User Experience Research for YWaste App (2019-2021)

Funding: CRC Fight Food Waste, in partnership with Foodbank Australia and YWaste

CAT 4, CI

Technologist-in-Residence – Collaborative Mentorship with Staff and Students to Develop Digital Media Projects Using Emerging Technologies (2019)

Funding: Melbourne Girls Grammar School

CAT 3, Lead CI

XperienceVR Studio – Industry-partnered Studio in Collaboration with Porter Davis and RMIT Master of Architecture Students (2017)

Funding: Porter Davis

CAT 3, Lead CI

INTERNAL (RMIT) AND EXTERNAL MOBILITY FUNDING

Total internal (RMIT) and external mobility funding since 2017: **\$179,370**

Little Food Film Festival: Bringing Citizen Science to Food Waste (2024)

Cross-disciplinary project with staff from School of Education and Media and Communication/STEM

Funding: RMIT Strategic Impact Fund (SIF)

/ Project Team Member

Respectful Methods: Understanding Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities (2024)

Cross-disciplinary project with staff from School of Media and Communication and GUSS

Funding: RMIT Strategic Impact Fund (SIF)

Project Team Member

Digital Media Creative Collaboration (2019) - Study Tour - Taylor's University, Malaysia

Funding: DFAT New Colombo Plan (NCP) Mobility Grant

Sole Funding Applicant, Study Tour Lead

Digital Media Creative Collaboration (2018) - Study Tour - Multimedia University, Malaysia

Funding: DFAT New Colombo Plan (NCP) Mobility Grant

Sole Funding Applicant, Study Tour Lead

Voice Story Language Learning App (2017-2018) - \$50,000

Funding: RMIT Research Translation Seed Fund

Co-Funding Recipient

RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

Carrigan, A.J., McGuckian, T.B., Wilson, P., Greene, D., Duckworth, J., Thong, L.P., Eldridge, R., Psarakis, M., McKinnon, A.C., Fearnley, P. and Bennett, J.M. (2026). **Predicting safe street-crossing for older adults using a multifactorial model: The role of visual perceptual, cognitive and physical factors.** In: Transportation Research Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behaviour, 116, ISSN 1369-8478, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trf.2025.103425>

Carrigan, A.J., McGuckian, T.B., Wilson, P., Greene, D., Duckworth, J., Thong, L.P., Eldridge, R., Psarakis, M., McKinnon, A.C., Fearnley, P. and Bennett, J.M. (2025). **The Feasibility of a Virtual Reality Hazard Perception and Gap Acceptance Task for Older Adults to Improve Pedestrian Safety.** In: Human Factors and Ergonomics in Manufacturing & Service Industries, 35: e70026. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hfm.70026>

Gomes C., Qi J., Thong L. P., Chen L, Wang, W. (2024). **Respectful Methods: Understanding Multicultural Migrant Communities in Australia.** Commissioned Report

Cooper, G., Thong, L. P., & Tang, K. S. (2024). **Transforming Science Education with Virtual Reality: an immersive representations model.** In: Educational Media International, 61(3), 229–251. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09523987.2024.2389348>

Moloney, C.,Trevena, B.,Huggins, A.,Thong, L.,Button, J. (2023). **Strengthening Victoria’s Connections with Southeast Asia: The art/s of exchange,** In: State Government of Victoria Melbourne

Thong, L., Anich, J. (2022). **Foodbank Meals on Y Waste App - Phase 2,** In: Fight Food Waste Cooperative Research Centre Adelaide, Australia

Anich, J.,Thong, L. (2022). **Foodbank Meals Via Y Waste App,** In: Fight Food Waste Cooperative Research Centre Adelaide, Australia

Park, H., Cooper, G., Thong, L. (2022). **Designing an Immersive Virtual Reality Classroom Exploring Behaviour Support Strategies,** In: Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy, 35, 1 – 17

Cooper, G.,Park, H.,Nasr, Z.,Thong, L.,Johnson, R. (2019). **Using virtual reality in the classroom: preservice teachers' perceptions of its use as a teaching and learning tool,** In: Educational Media International, 56, 1 – 13

Wilks-Smith, N.,Thong, L. (2019). **Transformative language use in and beyond the classroom with the Voice Story app,** In: Studies in Self-Access Learning Journal, 10, 282 – 295

McCauley, B., Nguyen, N., Nkhoma, M., Thong, L. (2018). **Green Turtle Hero**, In: Green Turtle Hero App HCMC, Vietnam

Cooper, G., Thong, L. (2018). **Implementing Virtual Reality in the Classroom: Envisaging Possibilities in STEM Education**, In: STEM Education: An Emerging Field of Inquiry, Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, Netherlands

McCauley, B., Thong, L., Nkhoma, M., Nguyen, N. (2017). **Vietnam run: an alternative approach to mobile learning**, In: Proceedings of the 20th Informing Science and Information Technology Education Conference (InSITE 2017), Ho Chi Minh (Saigon), Vietnam, 31 July-5 August 2017

McCauley, B., Thong, L., Nkhoma, M. (2017). **Developing a mobile game with social impact**, In: Proceedings of the 2017 Australia and New Zealand Marketing Academy Conference (ANZMAC 2017), Melbourne, Australia, 4-6 December 2017

Thong, L., Stewart, C., Lameris, P., Arnab, S. (2016). **Virtual designer: digital role-playing game for knowledge transferal in design education**, In: Proceedings of the 10th European Conference on Games Based Learning (ECGBL 2016), Paisley, Scotland, 6-7 October 2016

Thong, L. (2014). **Situated learning with role-playing games to improve transfer of learning in tertiary education classrooms**, In: Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Games and Virtual Worlds for Serious Applications (VS-GAMES 2014), Msida, Malta, 9-12 September 2014

Thong, L. (2013). **Implementing A Cognitive Apprenticeship to Create A Situated Learning Environment For Advanced 3D Animation Students: Implications For Student Learning And Interaction**, In: TARC International Conference on Learning and Teaching - Innovation And Transformation In Learning And Teaching, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 21 - 22 October, 2013

COMPLETED PHD SUPERVISIONS

Hayden Park (2023). **Designing an Immersive Virtual Reality Classroom to Assist Pre-service Teachers with Supporting Low-level Challenging Behaviours**. Associate Supervisor

Mona Ali (2023). **Towards Developing an Effective Virtual Reality Instructional Tool for Secondary Students Learning English as a Foreign Language in Saudi Arabia**. Primary Supervisor

Brendan Harwood (2022). **Volumetric Light Sculptures: Occupying the Space Between the Apparatus and the Image**. Primary Supervisor

Jonathan Marquez (2021). **Mind You!: A Card Game Design for Learning the Pragmatics of a Second Language**. Primary Supervisor

OTHER RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Journal Co-Editor

Re-imagining learning spaces with immersive digital environments (2024). *Front. Educ.* 8:1239797. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2023.1239797

External PhD Examination

Seengal, Divvy (2023). **Transforming Storytelling: from Print to Augmented Reality**, Newcastle University

SELECTED EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT AND IMPACT

Keynote Speaker

Designing Cultures: Whose Culture Are We Designing Through Digital Design? World Design Cities Conference (WDCC), Shanghai (2025)

National Media Commentary (Design and UX)

- ABC News live interview - UI design expert commentary on Bureau of Meteorology website redesign (2025)
- ABC News and ABC Pilbara interview – Regional developers and the global games industry (2025)
- Radio Interview – UI/UX design expert commentary on Instagram UI/UX changes, Byte Into IT, 3RRR (2025)
- RMIT Expert Alert - Analysis of Instagram's redesign and platform shift toward video and messaging (2025)
- Podcast Guest - Designing the Future of Design, Real InSight (2025)

Consulting and Advisory Engagement

Expert Interview - Digital Media Design, Crowd DNA / News Corp Australia (2025)

Public and Community Engagement

- Film Screening and Q&A - Sharing Stories through Community, Culture and Film Making, ACMI (2023)
 - Sexual Harassment on Public Transport - App design workshop series, RMIT University (2017-2018)
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TEACHING AND PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP

Subject Areas Taught

Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), User Experience (UX) Design, User Interface (UI) Design, 3d Animation, App/Web Design, Motion Design, Digital Illustration

Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) Studio Courses (Selected List)

Golden Plains Stories (2022) - Externally funded WIL project in partnership with Golden Plains Shire council

Remembering Australian Army Nurses (2021) - Externally funded WIL project in partnership with Federation Square

Design for All studio with Foodbank and YWaste app (2020) - CRC funded WIL project in partnership with Foodbank Australia/YWaste and in collaboration with Industrial Design

Digital Media Creative Collaboration (2018, 2019) - International study tours, funded by DFAT, in collaboration with Multimedia University and Taylor's University Malaysia

Xperience VR (2017) - Industry funded WIL project, in collaboration with RMIT School of Architecture and funded/in partnership with Porter Davis

Core courses taught (Selected List)

Digital Media Studio (Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), UX/UI design, web design)

Interactive Media

Advanced 3d Imaging and Animation

Advanced Web Authoring

Advanced Electronic Imaging (Digital Illustration)

Content Design Project (Motion Design)