

York science continues apace

By [Samuel Chadwick](#), News Editor (2017/18)

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Image credit: Airman Aaron Jenne

This month proved to be a particularly productive one for York's contribution to cutting-edge scientific research. The University news webpage has recently published six press releases reporting the work of professors and postgraduate students at York. Highlights include "new insights into why sleep is good for our memory", in addition to the discovery that hyper-realistic facemasks used for Hollywood special effects can be convincing enough to pass as 'real', and the newfound link between video game performance and high IQ.

The important link between sleep quality and memory capacity was proven by a team of researchers led by Dr Scott Cairney of the Department of Psychology. Earlier this month, he commented: "Previous studies have shown sleep's importance for memory. Our research takes this a step further by demonstrating that sleep strengthens both old and new versions of an experience, helping us to use our memories adaptively."

Another psychology professor, Dr Rob Jenkins, led research discovering the difficulty of differentiating an accurately constructed face mask with a real face. When showing research volunteers photographs of the masks, only one in a hundred mentioned the possibility of a mask. With criminal incidents having been reported across the world, disguise via masks is no longer confined to the imaginary realms of Hollywood blockbusters, such as 'Mission: Impossible III'.

Collaboration between the Computer Science and Psychology faculties under Athanasios Kokkinakis, a PhD student, led to proof of "a link between young people's ability to perform well at two popular video games and high levels of intelligence." While they stressed their research had "no bearing on questions such as whether playing computer games makes young people smarter or otherwise", they did establish an interesting correlation between IQ and performance on online games involving strategy.

Finally, Lloyd's Register Foundation, a science research organisation, announced a partnership with the University worth £12m to fund research into the safety of robotics and autonomous systems (RAS), a

notable example of which includes driverless cars. Kevin Daffey, director of Engineering and Technology at Marine at Rolls Royce, praised the University as “recognised as an international leader in the field of safety critical systems research”.



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