PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Max Willis
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Linkedin: www.linkedin.com/in/max-willis-7603ba40
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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY:

I am Max Willis, an artist, Interaction Designer, and sustainable futures researcher. My forte is creative inquiry, the application of art and design to investigate socio-cultural, socio-technical and social-ecological matters of concern. I practice Research through Design, a method of design experimentation and intervention, prototyping hard and soft artefacts, and deploying them in everyday experiences to reflect on life and culture, and engage people in discussion about our individual and collective roles in contributing to preferable futures. My design research is grounded in a broad international experience; decades of engagement with people, communities and cultures in Europe, Asia and the Americas have embedded in my creative and investigative practices a multicultural, polylingual perspective on humanity's shared values, ways of thinking, doing and being. I hold two terminal degrees, a Masters of Fine Arts (MFA) in Creative Media, and a Doctorate (PhD) in Information and Communication Technology, and I innovate in fields such as Speculative Design, Design for Social Innovation, and Design Ethnography. My life-long passion for nature's extremes, above the treeline and in the depths of the oceans has been tempered by a sense of urgency, as I increasingly encounter plastics in the sea, beaches closed due to bio-contaminants, receding glaciers, environments changed and strained under pressures of human civilisation. Hence I dedicate my work to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and an activist design that speculates on, agitates for, and enacts sustainable futures.

KEY SKILLS:

Interaction Design	Futures Studies	Co-creation
Human-Computer Interaction	Design Futures	Game and Play
Human-centered Design	Critical and Speculative Design	Gender Studies
Research through Design	Design Ethnography	Social-ecological Systems

EDUCATION:

2015-2019 **PhD Information and Communication Technology**
Dept. of Information Sciences and Engineering, University of Trento, Italy
TIM Semantics & Knowledge Innovation Lab, Italy
Supervisors: Dr. Antonella De Angeli, Dr. Chiara Bassetti, Dr. Massimo Zancanaro
Thesis title: On agonism and design: dialogues between theory and practice

2006-2009 **MFA Masters of Fine Arts in Creative Media**, *__Graduated with Distinction__*
City University of Hong Kong, School of Creative Media, Hong Kong, PRC

PUBLICATIONS:

Adamo, G., Willis, M., Mosca, A. & Sperotto, A. (2025) ░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░ ░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░ [under review]

Willis, M. & Adamo, G. & Guizzardi, G. (2025). ░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░ ░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░░ [under review]

Willis, M. & Adamo, G., Sperotto, A. (2025). *Risk Response: an adversarial discourse game and group modelling tool.* In proceedings 2025 International Conference on Research Challenges in Information Science (pp. 156-172). Springer, Cham.

Willis, M. & Adamo, G. (2025). *Type Token: a competitive, collaborative modelling game for ontology education and development*. 9th International Workshop on Games and Software Engineering (GAS 2025) at International Conference on Software Engineering ICSE 2025

Willis, M. & Adamo, G. (2024). *Ontology-based interaction design for social-ecological systems research.* In 2024 International Conference on Research Challenges in Information Science, Springer

Willis, M. & Adamo, G. (2024). *PwM 1st Playing with Meanings Workshop* in JOWO 2024-Proceedings of the Joint Ontology Workshops-Episode X: The Tukker Zomer of Ontology, and Satellite Events, CEUR WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS (Vol. 3882, pp. 1-6). CEUR-WS.

Adamo, G., & Willis, M. (2023). *The Omnipresent Role of Technology in Social-Ecological Systems: Ontological Discussion and Updated Integrated Framework*. In Research Challenges in Information Science: Information Science and the Connected World. Springer Nature Switzerland.

Adamo, G., & Willis, M. (2022). *Technologically mediated practices in sustainability transitions: environmental monitoring and the ocean data buoy.* Journal of Technological Forecasting and Social Change.

Adamo, G. & Willis, M. (2022). *Conceptual Integration for Social-Ecological Systems.* In the International Conference on Research Challenges in Information Science (pp. 321-337). Springer, Cham.

Willis, M., Adamo, G., Hanna, J. & Auger, J (2021). *Towards Sustainable Island Futures: Design for Ocean Wave Energy*. Journal of Futures Studies, 4/25.

Willis, M., Hanna, J., Encinas, E. & Auger, J. (2020). *Low Power Web: Legacy Design and the Path to Sustainable Net Futures.* CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems.

Adamo, G., Mushiva, M. & Willis, M. (2017). *Persuasion and Empathy in Computer Games, An Ontological Perspective*. 11th Philosophy of Computer Games Conference, Krakow PL.

PUBLICATIONS (cont.):

Willis, M., De Angeli, A. & Zancanaro, M. (2017). *Experience Probes: Immersion and Reflection between Reality and Virtuality*. IFIP Conference on Human-Computer Interaction INTERACT2016.

Willis, M. & Christ, M.C. (2016). *Listening to the Walkable City.* 12th International Conference on the Design of Cooperative Systems

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

09/2024-	**Visiting Scholar** Valencian Research Institute for Artificial Intelligence (VRAIN) Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV), Valencia, Spain *Role*: Human-AI interaction bridging LLM's, Knowledge Graphs & Model Driven Development; sense-making for the Human Genome Data Model
01/2023-06/2023	**Researcher**, Basque Center for Climate Change BC3, Leioa, Bizkaia, Spain *Role*: coastal pathogens project development, training materials and semantic modeling game design for ARIES, Artificial Intelligence for Environment and Sustainability
2020-2023	**Integrated Researcher**, Interactive Technologies Institute / Laboratory for Robotics and Engineering Systems (ITI/LARSyS), Lisbon, Portugal. *Role*: Speculative artifacts, low-cost low-tech environmental monitoring technologies www.islandfutures.net/databuoy
2019-2021	**Postdoctoral Researcher**, Interactive Technologies Institute Madeira, Portugal. *Project:* Redesigning Madeira: Using Speculative Design to Rethink Energy Policy and Consumer Behaviour. *Role:* AGILE Small Project Management, Speculative Design Research *Supervisors*: James Auger, Julian Hanna, Nuno Nunes
2014-2015	**Senior Research Associate**, Co-Creation Initiative Hong Kong Polytechnic University, School of Design, Hong Kong, PRC *Role*: Participation and collaborative innovation workshops and interaction design
2010-2013	**Art Technology Consultant**, Penghao Theatre Beijing, China *Role*: Events management, performances, lectures, projections, lighting, stage technology, sound design
2010	**Researcher,** Institute of Creative and Cultural Industries Beijing Normal University, Beijing, PRC *Role*: Research and project background development with Prof. Leon Xiao
2009-2010	**Senior Research Associate,** City University of Hong Kong Hong Kong, PRC *Role*: GE Curriculum Development, Drawing and Modern Painting

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (cont.):

2009   **Consultant,** World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Hong Kong
              Hong Kong, PRC
              Role: Development of Mai Po Wetlands and RAMSAR bird sanctuary virtual tour

2009   **Senior Research Assistant,** City University of Hong Kong, School of Creative Media
              Hong Kong, PRC
              Role: Background research on gendered perspectives in Hong Kong Independent
              Documentary Filmmaking

INVITED PRESENTATIONS / CONTRIBUTIONS / ATTENDANCE:

05/2025   **Seminar facilitation,** Gameful Risk Communication
              EURAC Research, Bolzano/Bozen, Südtirol, Italy
              https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7327937368861069312/

09/2025   **Workshop chair (upcoming)**, *2nd Playing with Meanings (PwM) workshop*,
              Joint Ontology workshops (JOWO) at the conference on Formal Ontology in Information
              Systems, FOIS2025 Catania, Italy

07/2024   **Workshop chair**, *1st Playing with Meanings (PwM) workshop,*
              Joint Ontology workshops (JOWO) at the conference on Formal Ontology in Information
              Systems, FOIS2024 Enschede, Netherlands 15-19 July 2024

06/11/2024   **Invited talk and workshop,** *Making sense of social-ecological systems with ontologies,*
              conceptual modeling, game & play, Department of Computer Systems and Computation,
              Universitat Politècnica de València, España

05/2024   **Workshop chair,** *Exploring ontology-based design interactions for*
              sustainability research. 18th International Conference on Research Challenges in
              Information Sciences, RCIS2024 Guimarães, Portugal, 14-17 May, 2024

05/2023   **Seminar and Workshop facilitation**, *The role of ontologies & semantics in integrated*
              modeling for social and environmental sustainability at Semantics, Cybersecurity &
              Services (SCS) group, University of Twente, The Netherlands

06/2023   **Panel chair and presenter,** MARE People and the Sea Conference XII, *Technological*
              mediation of existential threats from the deep: a postphenomenological account of marine
              and coastal knowledge production and its potential impacts on ocean policy. At Center
              for Maritime Research, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

04/2023-   **Pool of experts member,** EU Mediterranean Marine Spatial Planning Community of
              Practice (MED-MSP-CoP)

INVITED PRESENTATIONS / CONTRIBUTIONS / ATTENDANCE (cont.):

2021	**Guest Reviewer,** International Association of Societies of Design Research Conference IASDR 2021
2021	**Program Committee,** 14th Italian SIGCHI Chapter CHItaly2021
02/2018	**Program Committee,** 2018 Digital Games Research Association Conference DIGRA18
05/2017	**Seminar attendance,** Researching the Transgressive Aspects of Gaming and Play, Media Mutations Conference, University of Bologna, Italy
04/2017	**PhD Consortium,** International City-Gaming Conference Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, The Netherlands
10/2016	**Presenter,** Charting the Digital: Play, Discourse, Disruption, Design. Venice, Italy, *Urban Location Based Games Education in Hong Kong, PRC*
10/2016	**Participant,** Games For Cities COST Training School, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands, Lectorate of Play & Civic Media
08/2016	**Participant,** Theatre in Design: Improvisational Theatre for Social Design, NORDES PhD Summer School, University of Southern Denmark
2013-2014	**Intern,** OpenCog Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) Research Hong Kong Polytechnic University, School of Design
04/2010	**Panel Member,** Creative Asia 2010 Asian City Culture Creative and Design Alliance Jinning, PRC

TEACHING ACTIVITIES:

2024-	**Educational game design,** on Basic Formal Ontology (BFO), for Department of Philosophy, University of New York at Buffalo, USA
2023-	**Educational game design,** on Unified Formal Ontology (UFO), for Semantics, Cybersecurity & Services (SCS) group University of Twente, NL
2022-23	**E-learning development,** Artificial Intelligence for Environment & Sustainability (ARIES), for Plan Complementario España, Basque Center for Climate Change Leoia, ES
2014	**Guest Instructor,** City University Hong Kong, School of Creative Media Hong Kong, PRC General Education

TEACHING ACTIVITIES (cont.):

04/2014   **Guest Instructor,** Chinese University of Hong Kong
                  Hong Kong, PRC
                  Postgraduate Program in Visual Cultures

2013-2015   **Visiting Lecturer,** Hong Kong Polytechnic University, School of Design
                  Hong Kong, PRC
                  BA Interactive Media
                  Digital Aesthetics, Multiplatform Publishing, Design for Interactive Entertainment
                  MSc Multimedia Entertainment and Technology
                  Sound Design, Interactive Multimedia Environments

2009   **Lecturer,** Hong Kong Polytechnic University, School of Design
                  Hong Kong, PRC
                  Multimedia Fundamentals, Computing Technology, Design in the Post Digital Age

GRANTS AND AWARDS:

2015   **Industrial grant award,** Telecom Italia (TIM) Semantics & Knowledge
                  Innovation Lab, Povo, Italy
                  Full PhD scholarship and stipend 2015-2019

2009   **Graduation with Distinction,** Masters of Fine Arts Degree
                  City University of Hong Kong, School of Creative Media

LANGUAGES:

                  English (fluent)
                  German (advanced)
                  Mandarin Chinese (conversational)
                  Spanish (conversational)
                  Italian (basic)

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) SKILLS:

Qualitative data analysis, multimodal discourse analysis, Excel, AtlasTi, Python Natural Language Processing (NLP), Knowledge Graphs, computational ontologies, conceptual modelling, basic UML

HTML5, CSS, JavaScript, wordpress, responsive web design, User Interface (UI) and User Experience (UX) design

Arduino coding and mechatronics prototyping, remote sensor networks, wireless communications, data collection and database organization, tangible interfaces, installations, brain-computer interface, ROS robot operating system

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) SKILLS (cont.):

Video documentary and editing, field audio recording, studio voice and music mastering, MaxMsp, video and sensor-based motion tracking, DMX theatre lighting, ambisonics surround sound, open source audiovisual and graphics tools

OpenStreetMaps, Garmin, GPS tracking, mapping and geo-located data collection, drone survey, photogrammetry, cartography and meteorology for coastal navigation, Marine Spatial Planning

ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:

Scientific Diver, Center for Marine Sciences (CCMAR, Faro, PT)
International Certificate of Competence (ICC) coastal power and sail boat operator
Restricted Radio Operator (USCG), Marine radio operator (RYA)
Global Maritime Distress and Safety Systems (GMDSS)
First Aid / CPR / Oxygen Provider, Diver Stress and Rescue, Scuba Schools International (SSI)
DIR Dive Fundamentals, Global Underwater Explorers (GUE)
Enriched Oxygen, Advanced Open Water Diver, Professional Association of Dive Instructors (PADI)
Day Skipper, Royal Yachting Association (RYA)

REFERENCES:

Prof. Dr. Ilpo Koskinen
Director of Design Next, University of New South Wales, Sydney, AU
Long-time mentor and director of Design Institute for Social Innovation during my lectureships at Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, PRC
ilpo.koskinen@unsw.edu.au

Prof. Dr. María José Sanz
Nobel Laureate (IPCC), Scientific Director, Basque Center for Climate Change (BC3), Leoia, ES
Program leader during my research at BC3
mj.sanz@bc3research.org

Prof. Dr. Julian Hanna
Associate Professor Tilburg University, School of Humanities and Digital Sciences, Tilburg, NL
Supervisor of my postdoctoral research, Madeira Interactive Technologies Institute, Madeira, PT
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