“Using Digital Media Technology to Promote Prosocial Behaviors”

Monday, 7 April 2014 11:00 a.m. - Noon
Merryman Family Learning Studio
Virginia Tech Center for the Arts, Room 253

- Open to all faculty, staff, and students. Presentation will be followed by Q&A and discussion.

Can video games, virtual reality, and social media help us be more considerate of others, make healthier life choices, and become environmentally-conscious? A collection of recent research provides evidence for a resounding yes. The current talk covers a range of studies that use digital media technology, including social media, gaming devices, and immersive virtual environments, that demonstrate how brief virtual experiences may change how people think and behave in the real world, and last for up to one week after the virtual experience. A variety of virtual simulations have been tested to promote less prejudice and more helping behavior towards persons with disabilities; healthier eating choices; more pro-environmental behavior; and more exercising in children. Underlying mechanisms, novel affordances of digital media technology, persistence of virtual effects over time, and how they compare to traditional media effects are also discussed.

Dr. Sun Joo (Grace) Ahn (Ph.D., Stanford University; Director, Games and Virtual Environments Lab) is an assistant professor at the University of Georgia. Ahn's research explores how digital media transform traditional rules of persuasive communication, shaping the way that people feel, think, and behave in the physical world. Ahn's ongoing projects include the use of digital media technology such as social media, video games, and immersive virtual environments as tools of persuasion, and whether the effect of these virtual interactions will transfer into the physical world to influence the cognition, emotion, and ultimately the behavior of their users.

Contact colloquium convener James D. Ivory (jivory@vt.edu) with questions.
The VT G.A.M.E.R. Lab is sponsored by the Virginia Tech Department of Communication.

http://www.gamerlab.org