February 25, 2015
School of Visual Arts & Design
University of Central Florida
P.O. Box 163241
Orlando, FL 32816

Dear Members of the Search Committee,

I am writing to apply for the position of Assistant Professor of Digital Media generalist position at the University of Central Florida. I am currently an assistant professor in the Division of Science, Information Arts and Technologies at the University of Baltimore, where I teach in an undergraduate game design program and direct a set of graduate programs ranging from certificates to a doctorate in interaction design, information architecture, and new media production. As graduate program director, I work on program assessment, student advising and recruitment, and planning the curriculum to reflect changing technologies. I received my Doctorate in Communications Design with a dissertation on games storytelling and participatory culture in 2010 and an MFA in Children’s Literature from Hollins University in 2011. My research centers on the theory and practice of digital narratives in new media communities, with a particular focus on emerging platforms and their role in games, electronic literature, and learning. My teaching reflects the same integration of theory and practice across digital media.

My monograph, *What is Your Quest? From Adventure Games to Interactive Books*, is forthcoming from the University of Iowa Press this year. I examine the rebirth of the adventure game on convergent devices—primarily the iPad—and the role adventure game mechanics and communities have played in spawning a new generation of interactive books not unlike the Primer Nell receives in Neil Stephenson’s *Diamond Age*. The book draws upon the media studies and fan studies tradition to examine a genre that has gone relatively unnoticed by scholars despite producing classics so well-loved as to be preserved and remade by fan communities. Those same fans have a feeling of ownership over the genre and its works that reflects a new way of thinking about copyright and culture, with a relative permissiveness even on the part of copyright holders that allowed a group of fans to create the massive King’s Quest sequel *Silver Lining*. Given this ongoing work on digital narratives, I am particularly excited by the research underway at the UCF PROSE lab.

*Flash: Building the Interactive Web*, a co-authored book with John Murray also forthcoming from MIT Press in the Platform Studies series this year, combines my creative and technical background in Flash with my research on the roots of networked culture. We examine Flash’s rise and fall as a near-ubiquitous platform that allowed developers to escape the confines of foundational web structures. Unraveling Flash’s history and the role of competing interests of performance, security, developers and users also offers insight into the fate of the next universal languages that hope to supersede its
relevance. Our study will illuminate the critical role of Flash's duality of aesthetic and procedural affordances in shaping the participatory web and online multimedia.

My research into new platforms and play informs my teaching. I redesign my courses every semester to reflect the latest technologies: I updated our Flash course to JavaScript and rebuilt our hypermedia course around HTML5, CSS, and jQuery to center on the needs of responsive and mobile design. My game design courses typically use Unity, although I also introduce other open platforms such as Inform 7, Twine, and others as appropriate. I've taught several courses that would correlate well with your curriculum, including your courses in digital cultures and narratives, interactive design, the computer as a medium and game design.

But my passion for games doesn’t just mean teaching my students to make games: games themselves offer me the tools to structure my classroom and experiences. I am chair of the North American Simulation and Gaming Association, an organization dedicated to using games and simulations to improve learning and training. At last year’s conference, I ran an alternate reality style simulation using space mining as a metaphor for collaboration that I developed with several other members of the organization. I work with professors outside my discipline on ways they can incorporate games and play in their own classes, and recently collaborated on building a game layer for a Harry Potter online course at the University of New Hampshire. I also co-organized the first THATCamp Games, a digital humanities unconference centered on games and learning, and cooperated on the design of several alternate reality games run as part of unconference events. I’ll be presenting a games in the classroom keynote and workshop at the American International Consortium of Academic Libraries this spring. I am also a staff writer for ProfHacker, a group blog on technology and pedagogy hosted by the Chronicle of Higher Education, where I regularly share strategies for bringing games in the classroom and ideas for online and hybrid modes of teaching. I am currently teaching my first fully online course, but all of my courses use web-based components to facilitate out-of-class interaction and conversations.

I am very interested in being a part of a large and diverse program with a commitment both to game design and the broader world of interactive media. I have already engaged in a great deal of collaborative work outside my institution, including organizing and teaching grant-funded workshops for high school teachers in interactive media throughout the state, arranging class projects with mentors from the National Security Agency and local game companies, and working with a start-up in augmented reality headwear. The collaborative learning network and outreach represented by UCF’s Center for Emerging Media sounds like an incredible venue for continuing this type of projects.

Please find with this letter of application a copy of my C.V., teaching philosophy, research statement, sample work, and contact information for my references. I appreciate your consideration.

Thank you,

Anastasia Salter