

# Researchers pay football fans to watch games

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Researchers at the University of Glasgow are looking for 15 football fans to take part in a study which will see them being paid to watch matches in the comfort of their own home.

In return, academics will film the spectators and analyse how they interact as part of the project to develop new mobile technologies that will help fans communicate with each other.

The £400,000 project, funded by the Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council, is being carried out by Stuart Reeves, Marek Bell and Matthew Chalmers, of the University's Department of Computing Science, Barry Brown of the University of California, San Diego, and collaborators at Microsoft.

The researchers hope the results of the study will enable them to develop software and technologies that will make it easier for fans to share their experiences and opinions of sports events through photographs and videos on their mobile phones.

Stuart, research assistant, said: "We want to find out what fans talk about and their reactions to events at a game.

"We will then use this information to design data-sharing applications which enable photo-sharing and blogging, for example, in real-time, using wi-fi, GPS and 3G technology.

"The idea is to give some power back to sports fans so they can share

information and make their own record and analysis of matches and get more out of the experience.

“The aim is to design applications that can help them record events during the match, communicate in the gaps between play – before a game, during breaks in the game, at half time, after it has finished – and create a memory of the day.

“Many people like to keep a log of sports events they have been to but this will also be useful for those who cannot attend events, enabling them to interact with friends who are there.

“We’ve found that sports fans are very insightful and are skilled at knowing what is going on in a game. They are often highly critical too, but that is part of supporting a team so we want to design a system that will support their debate and their commitment.”

The study will see fans receive £5 each for being filmed in groups as they watch a game, and £10 for an hour-long interview on the role football plays in their lives. Some will also be given an Apple iPhone on loan as part of a month-long field trial of new software systems.

Provided by University of Glasgow

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