



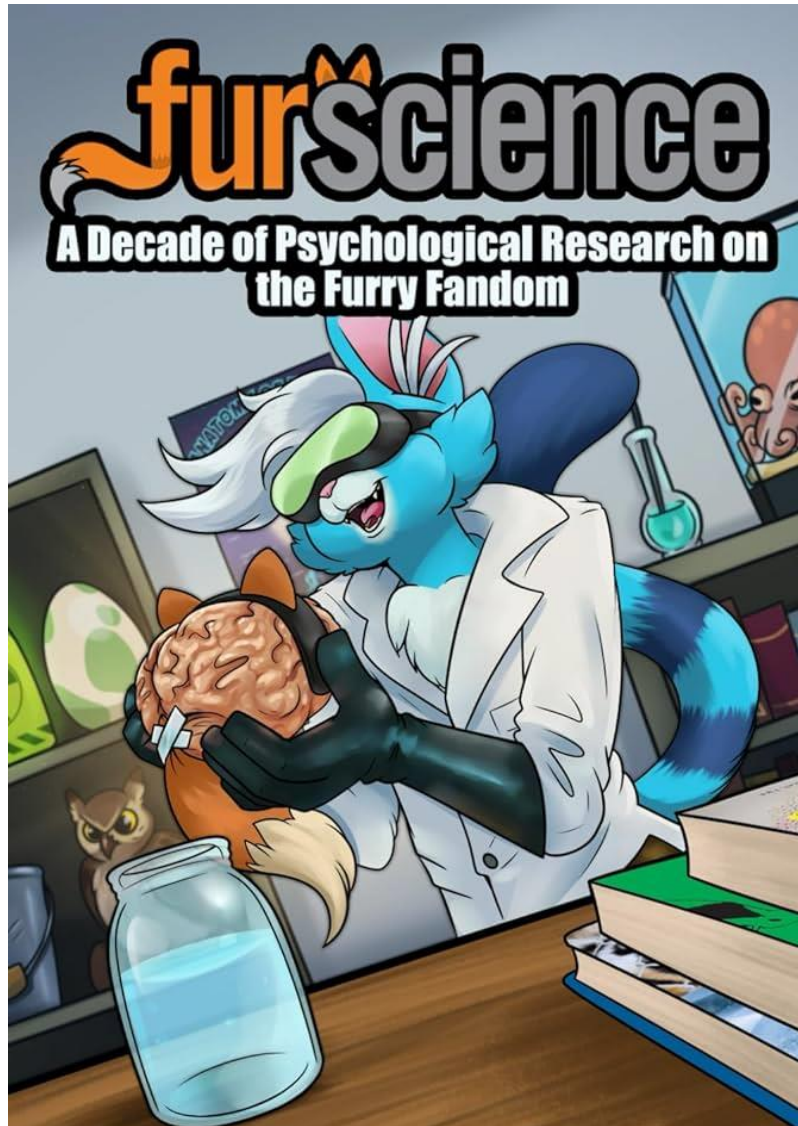
Chasing Tails: Studying the Furry Fandom (Again)

Vanguard Husky
vanguard@furrystudies.org



Why would anyone study Furrries?

- Long-standing, yet under-researched community:
 - first meeting of C/FO in 1977
 - first "furry party" in 1986
 - first study not until 2008
- Combat stigma
- Fill gaps in history
- We. Are. Awesome



Furry Studies

- Social psychology: FurScience!; Camielle Adams
- Gender and sexuality: Juniper Pig; Oliver Xu
- History and archiving: Fred Patten; Fang, Feather and Fin; Tofte Alpaca; Joe Strike; Gamepopper
- Fandom studies: Kameron Dunn, and – well - me

What is the fursona?

- Avatar?
- Identity?
- Character?
- Costume?
- Escapism?





... Yes

What is the fursona?

'Some folks just roleplay as their fursona online; others might have badges, or paws and a tail; others might fully identify as their sona. And let's not forget that many fursonas have no fur at all, but rather scales, feathers, exoskeletons, and even bio-cybernetics (looking at you, protogens)!'

- Chipper Wolf, 2024.

My Research

- Tails to Tell: The furry fandom, safe spaces, and identity
- Examination of the furry fandom, both its online and offline spaces, and whether these are safe spaces to explore personal, sexual or communal identity.
 - Fandom
 - Safe Spaces
 - Identity
- Interviews for study to be released as podcast series – coming soon, I promise!





Initial Findings

Is the furry fandom a safe space?

Yes, but ... (93.8%)
No (6.2%)

Safe(r) offline or online?

Offline (31.2%)
Online (18.8%)
It depends (43.8%)
Neither (6.2%)

Other key themes from interviews:

- Furry spaces safer than other spaces
- Furry fandom is welcoming or accepting
- Bad actors and low accountability

Other works

- Furrries at Play: A brief examination of the predominance of sexual furry video games.
- BCMCR New Thinking #1 2020/21 (2021)
- Ears, Tails, and Video Games: How do furry identity and furry video games interconnect?
- MA Media and Cultural Studies dissertation (2021)
- Lions, Tigers, Bears, oh my!: An initial interrogation of the prevalence of particular fursona species and the reinforcement of this prevalence through furry media texts.
- BCMCR edited volume on the theme of Alternativity (2024)
- Non-Human Nature: Post-Anthropocene World Design and Non-Human "Humanity" in FUGA: Melodies of Steel.
- Paper delivered to British DiGRA (2024)
- Furry Ex Machina: How does VRChat allow for modern instances of digital identity generation and immersion in the furry fandom?
- Accepted paper for DiGRA conference in Mexico (2024)
- It Takes a Monster to Beat a Monster: Beast Transformations in Video Games
- Abstract in progress (2024)

- Interrogating the idea of 'Pandering' to furry audiences.
- Historical revisionism in furry media texts.

Furry Studies 2024


- First academic conference around Furry Studies.
- Taking place October 2024 in Rotterdam, Netherlands as part of Otterdam Furry Arts Festival (<https://otterdam.art>).
- Call for Papers currently out.
- Initial details available at <https://furrystudies.org>, with more information to come shortly!



References

- Bernstein, P., Paolone, N., Higner, J., Gerbasi, K., Conway, S., Privitera, A. and Scaletta, L. (2008) Furrries from A to Z (Anthropomorphism to Zoomorphism). *Society & Animals*, 16(3), pp.197-222.
- Lewis, B.J. (2024) *Furry Comics: Oh My! A Furry Talk on Adult Comics*, with K.C. Alpinus, Willow and Brae [Soundcloud]. Available at: https://soundcloud.com/brandy-lewis-623637235/furry-comics-oh-my-a-furry-talk-on-adult-comics?si=1589fa77886c43038653e49f237faa0a&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing.
- Patten, F. (2012) Retrospective: An Illustrated Chronology of Furry Fandom, 1966-1996, *flayrah* [online]. Available at: <<https://www.flayrah.com/4117/retrospective-illustrated-chronology-furry-fandom-1966-1996>>.
- Plante, C.N., Reysen, S., Adams, C., Roberts, S.E. and Gerbasi, K.C. eds. (2023) *Furscience: A Decade of Psychological Research on the Furry Fandom*, International Anthropomorphic Research Project: Texas.
- Strike, J. (2017) *FurryNation: The True Story of America's Most Misunderstood Subculture*, Cleis Press: New Jersey.
- Stoddard, T. (2023) *Furtannia: The History of the Furry Fandom in the United Kingdom*, Uncle Bear Publishing: California.
- WikiFur (2023) *WikiFur, the furry encyclopaedia* [online]. Available at <<https://en.wikifur.com/wiki/WikiFur>>.
- Wolf, C. (2024) On the Origin of Fursonas, *Fang, Feather and Fin*. Available at: <<https://www.fangfeatherandfin.com/on-the-origin-of-fursonas/>>.
- Zaman, H (2023) Furry acts as non/human drag: A case study exploring queer of colour liveability through the fursona, *Queer Studies in Media & Popular Culture*, 8(1), pp.99-114. DOI https://doi.org/10.1386/qsmpc_00090_1. (see also: <https://hzaman.net>)





Q+A

Vanguard the Husky
vanguard@furrystudies.org



SCAN ME

BCMCR

Birmingham Centre
for Media and
Cultural Research