



INFORMATION AND CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Study Title: Ethnographic Study on the Culture of Minecraft Modding

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You are being invited to participate in the research study mentioned above. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the research is to investigate the culture and practices of Minecraft modders, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the role that modding plays in the Minecraft fan community.

This research project is part of the researcher's Doctoral dissertation, and findings will be published as part of said dissertation.

B. PROCEDURES

If you participate, you will be asked to...

- Let the researcher conduct two interviews of 60-90 minutes, spaced several months apart
 - In these interviews you will be asked about your modding practices and your perceptions of the modder and player communities
 - These interviews will be conducted in real-time (i.e. text chat, telephone, VoIP, or in-person -- but not email).
- Allow the researcher to observe your interactions with others in online spaces such as forums and chatrooms
 - This is limited to *publicly visible* interactions, as well as any non-public groups to which you may invite the researcher if you so choose.
 - In other words, you will get to choose exactly what the researcher is able to see, and when.
 - The researcher observes as a participant, like any other person online. For example, if you conversing in a chat room, the researcher can only observe your activities while he, too, is logged into that same chat room. No passive “snooping” or surveillance software is used. The researcher will have no more ability to observe your actions than any other person who is present in the same virtual space.
- Provide source code, design documents, concept art and other similar materials from your own modding projects, *if you are comfortable doing so*.
- Allow the researcher to contact you by email with occasional additional questions, which you may answer at your convenience.

In total, participating in this study will take between 2 and 6 hours of your time, spread over the course of approximately one year. This does not include time you spend performing your normal activities while being observed by the researcher.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

You might face certain risks by participating in this research. These risks include:

- Discomfort while discussing certain topics during the interviews -- for example, when discussing interpersonal conflicts among members of your community.
- As with any online activity, it is possible (though highly unlikely) that your privacy could be compromised by a determined individual or organization carrying out a sophisticated attack on the internet technology by which you communicate with the researcher.

You might or might not personally benefit from participating in this research. Potential benefits include:

- Gaining a greater insight into the role of modding as part of Minecraft play practices
- Gaining a deeper understanding of how your own practices fit into the larger patterns of Minecraft modding
- An opportunity for your own values and opinions to be represented in published academic work within the discipline of Game Studies
- The possibility of your own creative works being discussed as illustrative examples in published academic work within the discipline of Game Studies

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

We will gather the following information as part of this research:

- Age
- Gender identification
- Occupation
- Educational background
- Technological proficiency
- What types of computer and internet technology you own and use
- Your player history (past experience with Minecraft and other digital games)
- Details about your working processes for developing mod ideas, creating, distributing, and supporting mods
- General insights and opinions on the state of Minecraft modding
- Details about your stylistic choices in designing and coding mods

The following information is also collected, but will never be disclosed or made publicly available:

- An email address, which the researcher will use to contact you
- Your online handle(s), which the researcher will use to identify your mods, and your online postings and conversations
 - Exception: this is disclosed *only if* your mods are specifically being discussed in the dissertation, *and* you wish to receive credit for being the author of the mods under discussion. A *separate form* is required to provide permission to disclose your online handle(s) in the dissertation. Please ask the researcher directly for more information.

Your real name will *not* be recorded for any reason, unless you are using your real name as your online handle.

We will not allow anyone to access the information, except people directly involved in conducting the research, and except as described in this form. We will only use the information for the purposes of the research described in this form.

The information gathered will be linked to your online handle(s) within the researcher's secure files.

We will protect the information in the following ways:

- All digital files containing your information will be stored on secure media, encrypted using protocols¹ that meet or exceed industry standards.
- When files containing your information are transferred over a network, they will be protected by industry-standard encryption technologies such as Secure Socket Layer (SSL), the same security protocol used for credit card transactions online.
- Physical copies of hand-written notes containing your information may be kept by the researcher. These will be kept either on the researcher's person or in the researcher's private residence.
- Please be aware that although we take steps to protect your information once it is in our hands, we cannot guarantee the security of the methods you choose to communicate with us or others online. For instance,

¹ Specifically, we use AES encryption with 256-bit keys.

anything you write in a web forum, IRC chat, or unencrypted e-mail could be intercepted by a third party, since these technologies are inherently insecure.

We intend to publish the results of the research. However, it will not be possible to identify you in the published results. The researcher will choose a false name in order to disguise your identity.

We recognize that, as a modder, you have a stake in your creative work. As such, if your creative works are discussed in the published results of this research, you may be interested in being credited by name. **This is optional.**

- If you would like us to identify you by your online handle or real name, so that we can provide an author credit when your creative works are discussed, please speak directly to the researcher. You will be provided with a separate request form.
- If you do not wish to be identified by your online handle or real name, you don't have to do anything else.
- Please note that we cannot guarantee that your mods or other creative works will be discussed in the published results of this research.

We will destroy the information five years after the end of the study.

In certain situations we might be legally required to disclose the information that you provide. This includes situations where the researcher's files are subject to a court order; or if the researcher becomes aware of a "reportable situation" under Canadian law, such as evidence of child abuse or neglect. If this kind of situation arises, we will disclose the information as required by law, despite what is written in this form.

E. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

You do not have to participate in this research. It is purely your decision. If you do participate, you can stop at any time. You can also ask that the information you provided not be used, and your choice will be respected. If you decide that you don't want us to use your information, you must tell the researcher before 31 December, 2016.

Partial results of this research might be published before this time as part of presentations at academic conferences or in scholarly journals. In this case, you must tell us at least one week before our submission deadline if you do not want your information used. You will be given notice at least three weeks before work is to be submitted for publication (giving you at least two weeks to respond). Once work has been submitted, it will be impossible to remove your information.

We will tell you if we learn of anything that could affect your decision to stay in the research.

There are no negative consequences for not participating, stopping in the middle, or asking us not to use your information.

We will not be able to offer you compensation if you are injured in this research. However, you are not waiving any legal right to compensation by signing this form.

F. PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described.

I am at least 18 years old.

SIGNATURE (type your online handle):

DATE _____

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the researcher. Their contact information is on page 1. You may also contact their faculty supervisor.

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or oor.ethics@concordia.ca.