

# Protocol Preliminary Questions

## Exempt Categories

Does all of your research fall under one or more exempt category?

Yes  No

Which exempt category?

- One
- Two
- Three
- Four
- Five
- Six

Click here for a reminder of the [Exempt Review Categories](#).

Does your research involve analysis of secondary data or biospecimens only?

Yes  No

Is this an initial or de novo submission?

Initial  de novo

**A principal investigator is the faculty member or staff scientist with primary responsibility for the conduct of a research project.**

**A supervised researcher initiates the research under the supervision of the principal investigator.**

Based on these definitions, is this research being initiated by a:

- Principal Investigator
- Supervised Researcher

Should anyone other than the principal investigator and supervised researcher receive notifications regarding this protocol?

Yes  No

Notification Email 1

rs112@wellesley.edu

Notification Email 2

Notification Email 3

Notification Email 4



# Brandeis

## UNIVERSITY

### Human Research Protection Program

#### Initial Protocol

IRB Protocol #  
25051R-E

Date Updated  
9/13/2024 1:56 PM

Review Status  
Approved/Determined  
Exempt

#### Project Detail

**Project Title**

Colonialism in Minetest Study

**PI Name**

Peter

Mawhorter

**PI Phone**

(909) 255-6164

**PI Email**

pmawhorter@wellesley.edu

**Institutional Affiliation**

Wellesley College

**Department**

Computer Science

**Estimated Level of Risk**

Minimal

**Anticipated Start Date**

9/18/2024

**Anticipated End Analysis Date**

8/30/2025

**NIH Clinical Trial**

This study is not funded by NIH

**Funding Status**

Internally Funded

**Sponsor**

Wellesley College

**Sponsor ID**

**Grant PI**

Peter Mawhorter

**Grant Title**

## 1. Purpose of Research

Class Assignment  Thesis/Dissertation  Presentation  Evaluation/Assessment  Publication  Other

**Briefly describe the overarching goal of what you seek to discover from the research, as well as its expected benefits.**

We hope to learn more about how mods we made for Minetest help (or don't help) people playing the game understand its colonialist themes.

## 2. Personnel

List all personnel who will be taking part in the research, their institutional affiliation, role in the research, and CITI training in Human Subjects Research.

### Principal Investigator

Name

Peter Mawhorter

Role in Research

PI

CITI Training

Completed

CITI Social & Behavioral Research Training

Expiration Date

7/18/2026

CITI RCR Training Expiration Date

7/18/2027

Attach CITI Training Certificate(s)

citiCompletionCertificate\_2448653\_57126392.pdf

citiCompletionCertificate\_2448653\_57126453.pdf

Will this investigator have access to identifiable data?

Yes  No

Add additional personnel?

Yes  No

### Additional Personnel

#### Person 1

Name

Rae

First

Suarez

Last

Institutional Affiliation

Role in Research

CITI Training

Wellesley College	Data collection & analysis e.g., Data Analysis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Completed
<b>CITI Social &amp; Behavioral Research Training Expiration Date</b>		<b>CITI RCR Training Expiration Date</b>
9/10/2027	5/25/2028	
<b>Attach CITI Training Certificate(s)</b> Rae_Suarez_citiCompletionCertificate_13345843_62875970.pdf citiCompletionCertificate_13345843_62875969.pdf		
<b>Email Address</b> rs112@wellesley.edu	<b>Will this investigator have access to identifiable data?</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	

## Person 2

<b>Name</b>		
Ruth	Perjuste	
First	Last	
<b>Institutional Affiliation</b> Wellesley College	<b>Role in Research</b> Data collection & analysis e.g., Data Analysis	<b>CITI Training</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Completed

<b>CITI Social &amp; Behavioral Research Training Expiration Date</b>		<b>CITI RCR Training Expiration Date</b>
9/9/2027	9/10/2028	

<b>Attach CITI Training Certificate(s)</b> citiCompletionCertificate_13673495_65013271.pdf citiCompletionCertificate_13673495_65056889.pdf		
<b>Email Address</b> rp104@wellesley.edu	<b>Will this investigator have access to identifiable data?</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	

## 3. Collaborations and Subcontracts

Describe any additional collaboration or subcontract with an outside institution or vendor (e.g. Boston Children's Hospital, ABC transcription services).

Not applicable

## 4. Conflicts of Interest

List any actual, potential, or apparent conflicts of interest - financial or otherwise - any research

personnel or collaborator may have regarding this research. (This includes any actual, potential, or apparent financial conflicts of interest that do not rise to the level of significant financial interest.)

No Conflicts of Interest Exist

## 5. Study Location

For detailed information regarding international research see the HRPP webpage [International Research](#).

**Will this research take place (or will your subjects reside) outside of the United States?**

Yes  No

**Will this research be conducted in one or more non-English language?**

Yes  No

**Outline where the proposed research will be conducted.**

Online via surveys and also in a computer lab on the Wellesley College campus. Participants will be recruited via email lists at Wellesley and we expect most/all to be Wellesley students (all will need access to campus for the on-campus portion).

**Are all of the locations where you are conducting research public?**

Yes  No

**Do you need permission to conduct your research in any of the research locations?**

Yes  No

**Will some or all of this research take place in-person?**

No  Yes

## 6. Secondary Data and Protected Information

\* For detailed information regarding the use of PHI see the HRPP webpage [HIPAA and PHI](#) and for detailed information regarding FERPA see the HRPP webpage [Research with Children and Students](#).

**Does the proposed research involve the use of secondary data, documents, records, or pathological or diagnostic specimens?**

Yes  No

## 7. Study Design

**What data recording methods will you employ?**

Handwritten Notes  Computer/Tablet/Cell phone  Video Recording  Audio Recording  Photograph  Other

**What Data Collection Tools/Study Instruments will you use?**

Online Survey  Paper Survey  Interview Guide  Standardized Test  Behavioral Measure(s)  Field Notes  Other

**Attach all study instruments.**

Email Templates.pdf

Minetest Study\_ Research Overview.pdf

Survey Questions.pdf

Minetest Study\_ Playtest Guide.pdf

Colonialism in Minetest Study\_ Consent Form.pdf

#### **How will you interact with your subjects/conduct your research?**

In person (1 on 1)  In person (group)  Email  Telephone/Skype/Zoom  Online  Standard Mail  Participant Observation  Non-participant Observation  Other

## **8. Subject Details**

\*For detailed information regarding the use of vulnerable populations see the HRPP webpage [Vulnerable Subjects](#)

#### **Subject Details - Please check only the populations you are targeting.**

Adults (≥18)  Minors (<18)  Impaired Decision-making Capacity  Minorities  Students  Economically Disadvantaged  Prisoners  Elderly/Aged  Educationally Disadvantaged  Other:

#### **Approximately how many subjects do you plan to enroll?**

8-24

#### **Describe your subjects – explain any inclusion and exclusion criteria you plan to employ (e.g., over 18 years of age).**

Inclusion criteria are that they're at least 18 years old and that have played Minecraft or a similar game before. Recruiting will happen via Wellesley College email lists and the study is being conducted on Wellesley College, so although this is not a strict criterion, we expect all participants to be Wellesley College students.

#### **Justify the use of any special/vulnerable populations for this research.**

We're focusing on students for convenience & comfort rather than for any research-related reason. Posting the recruiting email more broadly would pose two problems: First, we'd have to figure out where to post it and how to avoid it being seen as spam, and second, there might be logistical hurdles or safety concerns with inviting random members of the public onto campus to participate in a group setting, while by recruiting Wellesley students we can minimize these.

## **9. Recruitment Methods**

Not Applicable - conducting secondary data analysis only

### **Recruitment Methods**

#### **Describe the recruitment methods you plan to employ.**

We'll email the CS, MAS, and/or DS major-specific email lists at Wellesley, plus perhaps some club-oriented lists like the game design club. I've included a document here with the template for that recruiting email, plus another email template to be used once people have confirmed their availability and we are ready to include them in the study. The second email will include our consent form and the pre-play survey, and we're hoping it's okay to have them sign the consent form electronically and send it to us.

**Attach final versions (as they will appear to your subjects - e.g., with graphics, on letterhead, etc.) of fliers, letters, texts of e-mails, scripts for phone calls, etc., as well as site-specific permissions to**

recruit if working with an outside organization (i.e., letters of permission from each organization that details their understanding of your project, their support and involvement in your project, and the duration of their involvement in your project).

Email Templates.pdf

## 10. Data to be Collected

*\*For detailed information regarding the collection of subject identifiers see the HRPP webpage [De-identifying non-PHI Data](#)*

**Describe the specific type of data you will be collecting (e.g., survey data about or medical record data...) and what you plan to do with it (e.g., determine the link between...).**

We're going to collect observational notes plus chat logs of a group gameplay session. We'll also collect audio recordings (to be transcribed and then destroyed) of a post-game group interview. We'll also be collecting survey responses electronically from surveys both before and after the gameplay. We will redact any personally identifiable information from the chat logs, interview transcripts, and survey responses and will store all of those things in a secure Google Drive hosted through Wellesley's plan. Only researchers listed on this form (or added via later modifications) will have access to the Google drive.

We hope to use this data to understand whether mods that we made for Minetest can help enrich discussions of colonialism in Minecraft.

**Will you be collecting data that will not be linked to research data?**

Yes  No

**Check identifiers you will be collecting as data for research purposes only (do not include those you listed above if you will be collecting them for other reasons only - e.g., name, phone number, email for compensation purposes).**

<input type="checkbox"/> Names	<input type="checkbox"/> Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> License/Certificate #s
<input type="checkbox"/> Addresses	<input type="checkbox"/> Major
<input type="checkbox"/> Race	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical Record #s
<input type="checkbox"/> Phone/Fax #s	<input type="checkbox"/> Income
<input type="checkbox"/> Ethnicity	<input type="checkbox"/> Health Plan #s
<input type="checkbox"/> Email Addresses	<input type="checkbox"/> Job Title
<input type="checkbox"/> Religion	<input type="checkbox"/> Dates of Service
<input type="checkbox"/> Social Media Usernames or Handles	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Account #s
<input type="checkbox"/> URL/IP Addresses	<input type="checkbox"/> Place of Work
<input type="checkbox"/> Marital Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle/Serial/Device #s
<input type="checkbox"/> Social Security #s	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical Condition
<input type="checkbox"/> Household Composition	<input type="checkbox"/> Facial Photographs or Images
<input type="checkbox"/> Dates of Birth	<input type="checkbox"/> Dates (of graduation, arrest, marriage)

<input type="checkbox"/> # of Children	<input type="checkbox"/> Biometric Identifiers, including Voice and Fingerprints
<input type="checkbox"/> Dates of Death	<input type="checkbox"/> Uncommon Characteristics
<input type="checkbox"/> Place of Birth	<input type="checkbox"/> Direct Identifiers of Family/Household Members
<input type="checkbox"/> Student #s	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

**Justify the collection of all identifiers checked above.**

We need to report some basic demographics when we write up our research. We expect a very biased cohort in terms of age (college students) so we need to quantify that. We are collecting only indirect info about gender, race, & ethnicity: nothing that should be identifiable.

## 11. Deception/Incomplete Disclosure

*\*For detailed information regarding the use of deception or incomplete disclosure see the HRPP webpage [Deception in Research](#)*

**Does this research include deception or incomplete disclosure?**

Yes  No

### Deception/Incomplete Disclosure

**Justify the need for its use in this research and describe how/when you will debrief your subjects.**

Participants will not be informed about whether they are in an experimental or control branch of the research. Some will play a modified game and other will play an unmodified game. We don't expect the difference to matter to the participants in terms of how much fun they have, and we don't plan to inform them of the difference afterwards. We are not directly deceiving them, just not informing them of all possible details of the game they'll play.

Attach debriefing form.

## 12. Risk and Benefits

*\*For detailed information regarding minimizing risks and balancing risks and benefits see the HRPP webpage [Criteria for Review](#)*

**What risks - other than loss of privacy or confidentiality (always a risk when private data is involved) - do you foresee for subjects in this research?**

Social  Psychological/Emotional  Physical  Legal  Economic  Other:

**Describe in more detail the risks you foresee for subjects and your provisions for managing these risks.**

Given we're recruiting players who have played Minecraft before, and that the game has a "teen" rating, we don't expect any significant psychological/emotional risk from just the game itself. However, the topic of colonialism could be a heavy one for some participants, and depending on where the group discussion goes there may be some emotions involved. We are not going to discuss any specific traumatizing events in detail, but we can't guarantee the group conversation won't include these since the history of colonialism is full of them. Our interviewer will follow up with anyone who seems to be experiencing distress and try to guide the conversation elsewhere if it seems that participants are uncomfortable.

**Describe the anticipated benefits to subjects, society, and/or other specific groups from this research. Note that compensation is not a benefit.**

We hope subjects will have fun and learn a bit about how colonialism denial/justification manifests in these games. We hope to confirm that our mods are helpful in that discussion and improve the mods based on feedback from participants, to potentially help educate the general public about colonialism in Minecraft. We also hope by publishing our results to inspire others to make their own mods addressing these or other issues.

## 13. Costs and Compensation/Incentives/Reimbursements

**Describe any costs to subjects for their involvement in this research (e.g., time – specify the amount , transportation, economic – loss of work, need for child care).**

It should take ~2 hours to do both surveys plus the 1.5-hour gameplay session w/ interview. We don't anticipate significant other costs since most of our participants will likely be living on campus where they have easy walking access to the building where we'll be conducting the play sessions.

**Will subject receive compensation, incentives, or reimbursements?**

Yes  No

**Describe any form of compensation/incentive subjects will receive (e.g., cash, gift card, course credit, medical care) and the terms and conditions of receiving the compensation/incentive (e.g., partial or full compensation for partial participation), as well as any reimbursements for which the subjects may be eligible (e.g., cost of travel or child care).**

We'll send subjects \$30 gift card codes as compensation. We will compensate them as long as they sign the consent form and begin the study, even if they decide to withdraw at some point, and even if they want us to delete their data.

## 14. Informed Consent

The *Belmont Report* identifies informed consent as the primary way that the principle of Respect for Persons is applied in the conduct of ethical human subjects research. Consent can be obtained in multiple ways, depending on the methods of your study, the subjects involved, and the data being collected:

- **Standard informed consent** requires a legal signature (to document subjects' consent).
- **Waivers of documented informed consent** are available if your subjects are unable to legally sign, provided certain conditions are met.
- **Alterations to informed consent** are available, as well, if you do not plan to use all [elements of informed consent](#); however, stringent conditions must be met.
- **Complete waivers of informed consent** are available if the subjects will not be consented at all; however, once again, stringent conditions must be met.

We have developed a set of questions below that walk you through your options. Remember, obtaining informed consent is a continuous process throughout your interactions with your subjects, not just a moment in time through obtaining a signature on a form. When using consent procedures, a copy of all consent/assent/study information documents must be made available to participants to keep.

## **Answer the following questions for each cohort of adult subjects (e.g., interview vs focus group vs survey)**

### **Cohort 1**

#### **Describe this cohort of adult subjects (e.g., they will participate in interviews):**

Will participate in both online surveys + gameplay session and interview.

#### **Will this cohort of adult subjects undergo informed consent procedures?**

Yes  No

#### **How will consent be documented for this cohort of adult subjects?**

- Sign their names using pen on paper
- Sign their names using a computer mouse
- Sign their names using a digital signature (e.g., DocuSign)
- Type their names
- Check a box (e.g., to enter a survey)
- Orally
- Passively (will sign form only if they do not want to participate)

#### **You are requesting a waiver of documented informed consent. To qualify, one of the three following conditions must be met (please check the condition that best fits your situation):**

The consent document would provide the only link to the adult subject and the principal risk of the research would be a breach of confidentiality. Note that the adult subject must be asked whether they want documentation linking the adult subject with the research - the subject's wishes will govern.

The risk to the adult subjects is minimal and consent would not be required outside the research context.

The adult subjects are members of a distinct cultural group or community in which signing forms is not the norm, the research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to adult subjects, and there is an appropriate alternative mechanism for documenting that informed consent was obtained.

#### **Will your informed consent form/script/information sheet include all required elements of informed consent?**

Yes  No

#### **Describe your consent procedures for this cohort of adult subjects (note that all subjects must be offered a copy of the consent form/information sheet):**

We need subjects to fill out an individual survey about their attitudes before they participate in the play session. Logistically, it's easier for us to send this as an online form that we ask them to complete on their own before the play session, since it cuts down on the time required in-person and makes keeping records automatic. We will email them a link to the survey and attach a PDF of our consent form to that email (see the confirmation email template in the included materials). We explain in that email that they should electronically sign the PDF and return it to us before doing the survey.

An alternate workflow would be to wait until the playtest session to administer the pre-play survey. If we did that, we could gather paper consent forms and we'd be able to talk the participants through the form

to better make sure they understand it. However, this would require waiting until all participants had completed the pre-play survey to begin play, and since they'd work at different speeds on that survey, the ones who worked slower would feel rushed to complete it quickly, which we'd like to avoid. In particular, one of the outcomes we're looking for is how detailed participants responses are in terms of understanding colonialist mechanics in the games before vs. after interacting with our mods. If they're rushed during the pre-survey but not during the post-survey, that introduces a big bias factor there which will make it very difficult to draw any conclusions from things like the number of mechanisms they list or the amount of detail they include.

If the deviation from full informed consent & paper signature represented by having them sign the consent form electronically (we don't have any special DocuSign secure setup) isn't justified by our desire not to rush them on the pre-survey, let us know and we'll revise the protocol to include on-paper signed consent forms with the pre-survey administered as the first step of the gameplay session.

**Attach final versions (as they appear to your adult subjects - e.g., with graphics/letterhead and without extraneous text) of informed consent/assent forms, information sheets, computer consent screens, consent/assent scripts, etc.**

Email Templates.pdf

Colonialism in Minetest Study\_ Consent Form.pdf

*Please make a copy of the Informed Consent Form available to participants to keep.*

## 15. Study Description

**Describe your research plan, including the procedures, steps, and actions you will be performing, in chronological order. Include in more detail any procedures/steps/actions not previously discussed. Note that if helpful, you may use bullet points.**

For each group of participants, we'll recruit them over a specific time period (i.e., send the email w/ a specific sign-up deadline, check responses and pick participants, then inform them and confirm consent). They'll fill out the pre-survey on their own time, then show up to a scheduled session where we'll have ~4 playing together (fewer if some end up as no-shows). The attached playtest guide outlines how the interviewer will conduct the play session, but briefly: they'll get set up on our computers, play the game together (they'll be familiar with the game already since that's a participation condition), and then do a post-game interview. Finally we'll let them leave but send them the post-game survey, and when they get that back to us, we'll send them a gift card code for compensation (although if they end up withdrawing at any point, we'll still compensate them as long as they were scheduled for a time slot and completed the consent form).

Primary data will include survey responses to pre- and post-play surveys, plus recorded chat transcripts from the game itself, observational notes taken during gameplay (NOT audio during gameplay), and recorded audio from the interview. As our schedules allow, but ideally within ~ 1 week, we'll transcribe the interview audio and then destroy that recording, and we'll also redact the survey responses, the transcript of the interview and the chat logs and observational notes to remove personally-identifiable references. Once that transcription/redaction process is complete, the final data that we will retain long-term \*and make public\* will be the survey responses, notes + chat logs, and interview transcripts. In all cases, each participant will be referred to by an anonymous pseudonym when it's necessary to refer to them. As detailed in our consent form, if any participant from a group wishes for us to discard their data, we'll do that

for their surveys plus the whole groups notes, chat logs, and transcript. Of course, since those things will have been posted publicly, we won't be able to necessarily erase copies made by third parties.

Once the data is cleaned and processed, we'll actually do our first-pass analysis, which involves looking for how they answered questions on minimization/justification of colonialism in the pre-and post surveys, as well as what was discussed in the group interview. We will run multiple groups, with at least one group playing our modified version of the game and at least one group playing an unmodified version. We hope to be able to qualitatively identify that discussions of colonialism are richer and include more details among participants in the intervention groups vs. the control groups. We'll also be looking over certain responses to see if the participants have any direct suggestions for improving our mods.

By making the data public, we also hope to let other researchers derive their own insights from this data. That will also enable us to be fully transparent in our publications and link interested readers to the full dataset so they can double-check our analysis.

**Optional: attach flow charts, graphs, timelines, etc.**

Minetest Study\_ Playtest Guide.pdf

## 16. Data Security

*\*For detailed information regarding data security see the HRPP [Guide to Data Management and Protection](#)*

**Will you be coding the data (i.e., linking a code/pseudonyms to the subjects' names/personal information)?**

Yes  No

**Will you have a master list to keep track of the linked codes/pseudonyms and names/personal information? Note that any master lists must be kept separate from the research data collected.**

Yes  No

**A. Describe how you will keep the research data secure during storage (e.g., in a locked file cabinet, on Box.com) and data analysis (e.g., on Box.com).**

We will collect all data electronically and will store it in a Google drive available via Wellesley College's educational G-suite plan. This drive will have permissions set so that only the listed researchers can access it. Initial data like unredacted raw audio recordings will be stored there temporarily as we process it, eventually as described previously we'll have fully redacted processed data which no longer contains identifiable information on our participants. In that data set each participant will be referred to by a unique pseudonym, and it will have info on that subject's age range (since that's a survey question) but we do not ask directly for their ethnicity or even gender, and in the cleaned data we will not include their name or email address (and anything that seems personally identifiable from their survey responses or other material will be redacted).

This processed anonymous data will be copied over to a second Google drive that will be shared publicly.

We will retain a master list linking email addresses and/or names to the pseudonyms, so that we can honor data deletion requests. This will be stored in the first, secure Google drive, and not shared outside of the researchers listed on this protocol.

There is a risk that participants might identify each other, but as part of our consent form we ask them to agree not to do that.

**B. Describe how and at what point the research data will be de-identified (e.g., when the master list is destroyed). If research data will not be de-identified, explain why. Note that data are not de-identified if linked in any way to the subjects - coded data are not de-identified data.**

In our consent form we promise that we will honor data deletion requests without specifying any time limit for that, although practically speaking, once we have published the reacted anonymized dataset, we can only delete our own copy and cannot control others' copies. Because of that, we need to retain the private participant list indefinitely so that if someone asks us to remove their data, we know which data to remove.

If this is a problem let us know: We could instead give them some time horizon within which data deletion requests will be honored, and destroy the participant list that links pseudonyms to emails at the point where we no longer promise to honor deletion requests.

**C. Describe when and how the research data will be destroyed (e.g., scrubbing computer files). If the research data will be stored indefinitely, describe how you will continue to keep them secure (e.g., data repository). Note that data must be retained for a minimum of three years.**

As explained above, we intend to retain at least the private participant list indefinitely, and the anonymized data made public will be kept online indefinitely as well. For the raw unredacted audio recordings, chat transcripts, and survey results, we'll delete those from the private Google drive as soon as we're done transcribing/redacting them, ideally within about a week or two of when we actually gather the data.

**D. Describe who will have access to the research data throughout their life (must always include PI).**

All listed members of this protocol (Peter Mawhoter, Rae Suarez, and Ruth Perjuste) will have full access to the private Google drive and thus any not-yet-destroyed raw data plus the participants list. They will retain access as long as they are listed on the protocol. New researchers added to the protocol in the future will also gain access to the participants list, although we'll make sure not to add any new people while we're still processing raw data from previously-recruited participants, meaning that newly-added researchers won't gain access to unredacted data, although via access to the participants list, they'll be able to identify subjects within the anonymized public data. Anyone who accesses our web page will be able to access the anonymized public dataset, but if we've done our job, they won't be able to identify any of the participants from that data.

## 17. Additional Committee Approvals

**This research involves human blood, fluids, tissues, or cell lines; infectious agents; select agents; or rDNA.**

Yes  No

**This research involves animals.**

Yes  No

## 18. Additional Comments

**Attach any other supporting documents not already attached.**



# Brandeis

## UNIVERSITY

### Human Research Protection Program

#### Statement of Assurance

**Project Title**

Colonialism in Minetest Study

**Principal Investigator Name**

Peter Mawhorter

My signature below indicates that the information provided in this protocol is correct and that I agree to comply with all federal, state, and institutional policies and procedures designed to protect human subjects in research. My signature also acknowledges my understanding of my responsibilities as a research investigator, as outlined below and in Brandeis University's Federalwide Assurance.

- I acknowledge and accept the responsibility for protecting the rights and welfare of human research subjects and for complying with all applicable provisions of the Brandeis University Federalwide Assurance.
- I will provide a copy of the IRB-approved informed consent document to each subject at the time of consent, unless the IRB has specifically waived this requirement. All signed consent documents are to be retained in a manner approved by the IRB.
- I will request review by the IRB for any proposed changes in previously approved human subject research. The proposed changes will not be initiated without IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects.
- I will report progress of approved research as often as and in the manner prescribed by the IRB.
- I will promptly report to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.
- No research investigator who is obligated by the provisions of this Assurance, any associated Inter-Institutional Amendment, or Noninstitutional Investigator Agreement will seek to obtain research credit for, or use data from, patient interventions that constitute the provision of emergency medical care without prior IRB approval. A physician may provide emergency medical care to a patient without prior IRB review and approval, to the extent permitted by law, however such activities may not be counted as research nor the data used in support of research.
- I will advise the IRB, Office of Research Administration, and the appropriate officials of other institutions of the intent to admit human subjects who are involved in research protocols for which

this Assurance or any related Inter-Institutional Amendment or Noninstitutional Investigator Agreement applies. When such admission is planned or a frequent occurrence, those institutions must possess an applicable OHRP-approved Assurance prior to involvement of such persons as human subjects in those research protocols.

**Principal Investigator Signature**

**Date**

9/11/2024

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized name, is written over the signature line.

# Colonialism in Minetest Study: Consent Form

## Research Overview:

This study is conducted by Rae Suarez and Ruth Perjuste, students at Wellesley College. Dr. Peter Mawhorter, an Instructor of Science Laboratory, is in charge. It will help us understand how players view colonialism in games like Minecraft. You will:

1. Complete a survey.
2. Play Minetest with up to 3 other participants for 1 hour.
3. Participate in a 30-minute group interview.
4. Complete another survey.

It should take about 2 hours in total. If you participate, we will compensate you with a \$30 gift card after step 4. You must be 18 years old or older to participate. You must have played Minecraft or a similar game before. There are no other qualifications.

## Study Procedures:

- **Surveys:** Before and after you play you will fill out short surveys. These should take no more than 30 minutes to complete.
- **Activity:** During a play session, you will play Minetest. You will play together with up to 3 other players on a private server.
- **Breaks:** You may take a break at any time during the study: simply inform your interviewer.
- **Withdrawal:** If you need to stop participating partway through, we are happy to let you leave the study. Just ask to stop. A decision to stop will not affect compensation. If you request that we delete your data, we will discard your surveys and data from your session.
- **Assistance:** The interviewer may provide you with help with the game.
- **Interaction:** During play, you should talk to each other. We will record the game chat. Try not to mention personally identifying information. We will redact such information if we find it.
- **Debrief:** At the end of the play session, there will be a 30-minute group interview. We will ask the group questions about your play.

## Foreseeable risks:

- **Risks:** We expect negligible risks. The activity we are asking you to do is not strenuous. The game we have selected **does not** involve bright flashing lights. Still, please let us know if you are susceptible to seizures, or to motion sickness from 3D games.
- **Content:** Minetest includes depictions of violence and blood. It is listed with a Teen rating on the Google Play store. We will discuss themes of colonialism.
- **Concerns:** If you are concerned about the content of the game, you may ask us before consenting for more details. You may also stop participating at any point.
- **COVID-19:** To mitigate COVID-19 risks, you are encouraged to bring a mask and wear it during play. Our interviewer will wear a mask. If you or the interviewer are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms on the day you are scheduled or either of the two days beforehand, we will reschedule. If either of you have a confirmed case of COVID-19 with symptoms that have not cleared at least 10 days before your time slot, we will reschedule at least 10 days after the end of symptoms of any confirmed COVID-19 infection, or cancel if that doesn't work.

## Expected Benefits:

- **Fun:** Besides the compensation and hopefully some entertainment, we do not expect any benefits.
- **Design Insights:** Indirectly, we hope to learn something about how game design can impact player understanding of colonialist themes.

## Data & Privacy:

- **Recording:** We will record audio from the group interview and chat logs. The chat will use anonymous usernames. We will not record video. We will transcribe the audio and destroy the recording when done. We will redact any personally-identifiable information that we find in the chat logs or transcripts.
- **Anonymous Data:** The transcripts and logs we retain will be fully anonymized. The survey results, chat logs, and anonymized transcripts will be made public as part of our research. We do not expect your participation will be identifiable from the data. Even if it were, we do not expect significant risk of reputational harm. Other participants might be able to identify you during and after the study. **As a condition of participation, you agree not to intentionally identify other participants, either now or in the future.**
- **Consent Forms:** We will store a digital copy of this consent form in a secure Google Drive. It will not be shared with anyone except the research oversight committee.
- **Discarding Data:** You may withdraw consent at any point during the study, in which case your data and your group's data will be discarded. If you participate in the study but later decide that you are not comfortable with the use of the data we have gathered, you may contact the principal investigator. We will make our best effort to immediately delete your data, including surveys, transcripts, and chat logs. We will definitely delete it within 1 week of receiving your request. We will not use it for further research before we delete it. However, we may not be able to completely remove references to it from existing publications, or remove copies that others have made. Publications based on your data may include text from your transcript or chat log. Unless you withdraw consent, your data may be used for future research.

## Contact:

The principal investigator is Peter Mawhorter (909-255-6164 or [pmawhort@wellesley.edu](mailto:pmawhort@wellesley.edu)). If you have questions about this study, your rights as a participant, or harms related to the study, you can contact him. If you have a question you do not feel comfortable asking Peter, contact the Wellesley College Ombudsperson Kathryn Bender ([ombuds@wellesley.edu](mailto:ombuds@wellesley.edu)).

This research was approved by a committee that oversees the ethics of human subjects research at Wellesley College. If you have any questions about your rights or concerns about the study you may contact them at 781-736-8133 or [hrpp@brandeis.edu](mailto:hrpp@brandeis.edu).

## Consent:

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide not to participate at this point, you will not be compensated, but there are no other consequences. If you agree to participate and begin the study, even if you later stop, you will be compensated. Please sign below to indicate consent to begin the study.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Check here to confirm that you are at least 18 years old.

Consent to begin study (sign here): \_\_\_\_\_

## Recruiting Email

**Subject:** Invitation to Participate in Study on Minetest

**Body:**

Hello everyone!

How would you like to get paid to play videogames?

We want to introduce you to our Minetest study, a part of our research project with Professor Peter Mawhorter. We are looking for participants to dedicate two hours of their time to play a video game in a group setting and respond to our pre- and post-gameplay surveys and interview questions.

If you want to participate, read through the [Research Overview](#) for more details and [sign up for a time slot in this Google Form](#) by [DATE]. We will respond to those who have filled out the google form within the next couple of weeks with a final schedule. Depending on the level of interest and available funds, not everyone who wants to may be able to participate. Those who do participate will be compensated for their time.

Thank you for your time and help with our research. Feel free to contact Rae Suarez at [rs112@wellesley.edu](mailto:rs112@wellesley.edu) or Professor Mawhorter at [pmawhort@wellesley.edu](mailto:pmawhort@wellesley.edu) with any questions or concerns.

Best,  
Members of the Expressive Computing lab

## Confirmation Email

**Subject:** Minetest Study Prep

**Body:**

Thanks for your interest in our Minetest study. Based on your availability, we can offer you a spot on [DATE] at [TIME] in [LOCATION]. If you're still able to participate at that time, you will need to sign and return to us the attached consent form (either print it out or sign it electronically). After reading through that form, please reply to this email to confirm whether or not you want to go ahead and participate in the study. If you want to participate, you will need to fill out this pre-gameplay survey [LINK] at least 1 day before your scheduled session, and then show up to the session to play in a group. After the gameplay session you will participate in a brief group interview and then you will need to fill out a post-gameplay survey which we will send out afterwards. We expect the total time for surveys + gameplay to be about 2 hours, the gameplay session should last 1.5 hours.

If you decide not to participate, simply let us know. Feel free to contact Rae Suarez at [rs112@wellesley.edu](mailto:rs112@wellesley.edu) or Professor Mawhorter at [pmawhort@wellesley.edu](mailto:pmawhort@wellesley.edu) with any questions or concerns.

Best,  
Members of the Expressive Computing lab

## Pre-survey questions

### Demographic questions

1. What age group do you fit into (grouping by 5 years): 18-20, 21-25, 26-30, 31-35, etc.?
2. How often do you play video games in a typical week: less than one play session per week, a few sessions per week, at least one session on most days of the week, or at least one session every day?
  - a. If none of the above: "Do you typically play video games at least once per month, once per year, or even less frequently? Do you not typically play video games at all?"
3. Have you played Minecraft and/or Minetest before? (answer should be yes bc that's part of selection criteria)
  - a. If yes, "Approximately how many hours have you spent playing it?: 1-2, 3-10, 10-100, 100-1000, 1000+" and "Have you played alone or with other people? Only alone, only with other people, both alone and with others."
4. What game have you played that you'd consider most similar to Minecraft/Minetest?
5. Are there any communities (online or offline) centered around games or gaming where you consider yourself an insider?
6. Do you feel that people like you are underrepresented in gaming, or face discrimination in video game communities?
7. Race, gender, sexuality, and other aspects of people's identities are often the subject of bigoted remarks and/or bullying in videogame communities. Without getting into specifics, have you been the target of derogatory speech or other bigoted behavior in video game communities or while playing video games?
8. Whether or not you yourself have been targeted, have you seen other people subject to bigoted bullying in a way that's made you feel uncomfortable?

### Study Questions

In this study we use "colonialism" to refer to a worldview in which colonization of foreign territories, exploitation of their resources, and genocide against their populations in order to replace them with colonizers is seen as somehow acceptable or justified. This worldview is harmful and wrong. Few people will explicitly claim a colonialist worldview today, but because of the history of colonization around the world and the many people who have benefitted from it, popular media often subtly justifies or minimizes it.

1. Can you give an example of justification or minimization of colonialism in the news or in popular media besides games? Yes, here's an example: <provide it> / I've noticed this but can't recall a specific example now / No, I haven't noticed this.

2. Can you give an example of justification or minimization of colonialism in your previous experiences with Minecraft and/or Minetest? Yes, here's a specific example: <provide it> / I've noticed this but can't recall specifics / No, but I've noticed it in other games / No, I haven't noticed this.
3. What aspect(s) of gameplay do you think contribute the most to justification or minimization of colonialism in games (select zero or more)? Game mechanics / Narrative / Art style / Other aspect(s): <what>

## Post Survey Questions

### Thematic Questions

1. What aspect(s) of gameplay do you think contribute the most to justification or minimization of colonialism in games (select zero or more)? Game mechanics / Narrative / Art style / Other aspect(s): <what>
2. While playing Minetest during this study \*before\* the post-gameplay interview, did you notice any new examples of justification or minimization of colonialism that you hadn't thought about before? Yes, I noticed: <provide example> / No.
3. Did you notice any differences between regular Minecraft/Minetest and the game you played in this study? What were they?
4. If you noticed differences, do you think that they change how/whether colonialism is justified and/or minimized in the game?
5. Do you have any suggestions for further changes that could be made to Minecraft/Minetest to reduce the minimization/justification of colonialism?

# Minetest Modding Study: Playtest Guide

## Recruiting

When someone shows interest we'll know from the sign-up form which times they can make and if they have played Minecraft/Minetest before. We will try to schedule up to 4 people who have played before. If we need to cancel a session because one of us can't make it, be sure to let the participants know, and in that case we should try to reschedule with them. If a participant needs to cancel, it's up to you whether to select a different participant or continue with less than 4 participants. When participants are confirmed for a session, send them the confirmation email based on the confirmation email template (make sure to attach a PDF of the consent form).

## Orientation

Before starting the group gameplay session, and even before the participants arrive, make sure that the game is running ready to join the server and Mineclone2 is installed. Set up usernames for each computer that participants are going to use. Check that the server is running correctly. Participants will already have completed consent forms and pre-surveys online; check those in advance before letting them participate, and remind everyone that they've agreed not to identify each other outside of the session. Keep these instructions open on your own computer so you can consult them throughout.

When a participant shows up, introduce yourself. You can say that we're studying themes in Minecraft/Minetest and that we're interested in colonialism, but do NOT mention:

1. The fact that we've modded the game.
2. Any specific ways in which the game minimizes/justifies colonialism. If they ask about these, you can tell them that we'll discuss them after the gameplay.

Confirm whether they'd like to wear a mask or not, and that they're not experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms (nor have recently).

Write the server address on the white board and help them log in. While things are loading, remind them that we'd like them to talk to each other during gameplay and that they can ask you for help with controls and if they get stuck. Then let them play until the 1 hour mark. Since we won't record audio during this portion, take notes on what they say to each other and also any observations you might have about how they're playing, especially interactions with villagers.

## Communication Reminders

During the orientation, make sure to explain that we want the participants to talk with each other during the game. During gameplay, if they fall silent for a brief period, that's fine, but if they are completely ignoring each other you should gently remind them that we'd like them to talk with each other, even if they aren't coordinating activities closely.

## Help During Gameplay

You can freely help them with controls, gameplay, etc. and can explain how things work or what they need to do to achieve their objective. Just avoid explaining the details of the mods we've made, or that we have changed the game. If they ask about the aggressive villagers directly, you can say that we'll discuss them after the gameplay. If they ask a question like "will they attack me?" or another question about specifics of their behavior, encourage them to test it and find out.

## Follow-up Group Interview Questions

Once the 1-hour mark is reached, ask the participants to stop playing. They may continue for just a few minutes if there's something they're in the middle of, but you need to leave enough time to conduct the interview before they have to go. Explain that you'll be asking a few questions about their experience and that you'd like to hear from everyone, and that you'll be recording. **Turn on your recording device** and ask each of the questions listed here. If the conversation becomes uncomfortable for anyone or seems to be dwelling on issues that are making people get emotional, moderate the discussion and try to calm things down, while acknowledging that the subject of colonialism is not a nice one and that feelings around it are valid! Follow-up afterwards with anyone who seemed to be very stressed or otherwise having an intense experience to make sure they're okay. If there's time, you can ask for more details about something interesting they said in response to one of the questions you already asked. If one person is answering everything or if another person is not saying anything, encourage them all to participate and respond.

Modded groups	Unmodded groups (control)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Did you notice any ways in which the game justifies or minimizes colonialism, either through themes or mechanics?</li><li>2. Given Minecraft's popularity, what impacts do you think these elements have on society?</li><li>3. What did you notice about the gameplay that was different from your previous experience playing Minecraft/Minetest?<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. After they answer this question, explain anything they missed about the mods we used if they played the modded version.</li></ol></li><li>4. How did these mods affect how you interacted with other villagers?</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Did you notice any ways in which the game justifies or minimizes colonialism, either through themes or mechanics?</li><li>2. Given Minecraft's popularity, what impacts do you think these elements have on society?</li><li>3. What changes would you suggest to reduce justification/minimization of colonialism within the game?</li><li>4. Are there mechanics that should not be changed?</li><li>5. Are there mechanics that can't be changed?</li></ol>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>5. How did these mods affect how you interacted with enemies?</li><li>6. How did these mods affect how you interacted with the world around you?</li><li>7. Are there any mechanics of the game that seem to conflict with our mods and their message?</li><li>8. What further changes would you suggest to reduce justification/minimization of colonialism within the game?</li><li>9. Are there mechanics that should not be changed?</li><li>10. Are there mechanics that can't be changed?</li></ul>	
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## Wrap-up

Once the time limit is reached, let the participant know that you're out of time and thank them for their participation. Let them know that you'll send an email with the post-survey for them to fill out, and that you'll share a gift card link with them once they finish the post-survey.

If they do not complete the survey within a reasonable time, email them and remind them to complete it. If they refuse to complete it, share the compensation link anyways.

Make sure to **save the chat log** from the play session.