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)
1. Did you notice any ways in which the game justifies or minimalizes colonialism, either through themes or mechanics? 2. Given Minecraft's popularity, what impacts do you think these elements have on society? 3. What did you notice about the gameplay that was different from your previous experience playing Minecraft/Minetest? a. After they answer this question, explain anything they missed about the mods we used if they played the modded version. 4. How did these mods affect how you interacted with other villagers?	1. Did you notice any ways in which the game justifies or minimalizes colonialism, either through themes or mechanics? 2. Given Minecraft's popularity, what impacts do you think these elements have on society? 3. What changes would you suggest to reduce justification/minimization of colonialism within the game? 4. Are there mechanics that should not be changed? 5. Are there mechanics that can't be changed?

5. How did these mods affect how you interacted with enemies? 6. How did these mods affect how you interacted with the world around you? 7. Are there any mechanics of the game that seem to conflict with our mods and their message? 8. What further changes would you suggest to reduce justification/minimization of colonialism within the game? 9. Are there mechanics that should not be changed? 10. Are there mechanics that can't be changed?	

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.