

Minetest Study: Research Overview

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. 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). 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).

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.

Consent:

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide not to participate before starting, 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.