

# Information Consent Letter

## **Study:** Mass Audience Interaction

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## *Study Facilitators:*

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## **What is this study about?**

This experiment examines different game mechanics and forms of gameplay in a livestreamed video game.

## **Who may participate in the study?**

Anyone 13 years of age or older who has a Discord account may participate.

## **What does participation involve?**

The study takes place over multiple sessions over the span of one week, each less than 90 minutes. You may choose to join as few or as many sessions as you like. An optional closing interview should take less than 30 minutes.

You will be asked to play a livestreamed interactive video game along with approximately 100 other participants, by entering chat commands to control characters' actions on the screen. The tasks are designed to be similar to gameplay from other common video games. Gameplay content will not exceed the equivalent of an ESRB E10+ rating, meaning it may contain cartoon/fantasy/mild violence. Your interactions with the video game will be logged to a file and a researcher may observe the game session and take notes. You may also be asked for basic demographics, such as age and gender, your previous experience with video games, and your opinions and perceptions of the different conditions you experience during the session. We may also take recorded video of the game video stream to ensure accurate analysis.

After completion of the gameplay task, you may volunteer for the opportunity to participate in an interview about your experience with the gameplay.

*With your permission below*, we may also capture the following **additional data sources** during the closing interview session:

- Recorded audio of the interview to ensure accurate transcription and analysis

## **Your participation is voluntary.**

This study will not provide any direct personal benefit to you.

You may decide to withdraw during the session by informing the facilitator or principal investigator and/or exiting the session software.

You may decline to respond to questions if you wish by not answering or leaving the question blank. If a question is required for the study to continue, such as demographic information for us to classify and use your data, then declining the question may require you to withdraw from the study.

If you wish to withdraw your data after completing a session, please contact the facilitator or principal investigator. Note it may not be possible to withdraw your data if your data has been anonymized or already included in analysis.

**You will not be remunerated for participating in the gameplay session.**

Participation is entirely voluntary, there is no remuneration.

If you volunteer and are selected to participate in the closing interview, you will receive a gift card valued at CAD\$10.

If you choose to withdraw during the closing interview, please contact an experiment facilitator to be remunerated for the proportion of the closing interview you completed.

**The risks are no greater than experienced in daily life.**

There is potential for minor discomfort or fatigue from performing repeated tasks, but the physical requirements of the task are like normal computer usage and/or common real-world tasks. We will reduce this risk by requiring and/or encouraging rest breaks.

**Your identity is confidential.**

Only the research team will know which data is from your participation, your name and any identifying information will not appear in any public dataset or publication resulting from this study.

Participants in your session will be aware of your participation and contributions. We ask all participants to maintain confidentiality as to the usernames of other participants but cannot guarantee that they will do so. No other personal information is transmitted between participants.

When information is transmitted or stored on the internet privacy cannot be guaranteed. There is always a risk your responses may be intercepted by a third party (e.g., government agencies, hackers). The website application you use may temporarily collect a unique ID (e.g. computer IP address, amazon worker ID) to avoid duplicate responses and track application state. We do not collect this information in the final dataset.

The interview will be conducted over an online platform, Zoom. Zoom has implemented technical, administrative, and physical safeguards to protect the information provided via the Services from loss, misuse, and unauthorized access, disclosure, alteration, or destruction. However, no Internet transmission is ever fully secure or error free.

**Your data will be anonymized or de-identified.**

All data will be anonymized or de-identified for analysis, reporting, and public data sharing. Generic labels will be used to refer to specific participants (P1, P2, ...) in logs, responses, and notes.

If audio is recorded, it will be obscured (e.g. changing audio tone and pitch).

**Your anonymized or de-identified data will be part of a public dataset.**

De-identified and anonymized data other than confidential demographic data (e.g., game interaction logs) will be added to a repository for public data sharing, and validating and replicating research results. This repository may one or more of: the author's website, a website specifically created for the project (e.g. GitLab/GitHub), the publication organization (e.g. ACM), or an organization (e.g. the open science foundation). You cannot withdraw it as the data is de-identified and anonymized.

**Your confidential data will be stored securely.**

Any data with identifying information will be stored on a password-protected encrypted hard drive or server until it is de-identified. Confidential data (e.g. demographic information) will be stored on a password-protected encrypted hard drive or server for 7 years.

**This study has received ethics clearance.**

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Board (REB# 45965). If you have questions for the Board, contact the Office of Research Ethics, toll-free at 1-833-643-2379 (Canada and USA), 1-519-888-4440, or [reb@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:reb@uwaterloo.ca).

**What if I have questions?**

Your facilitator or the principal investigator can answer any questions, their contact information is above.

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## Consent Form

*By providing your consent, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator(s) or involved institution(s) from their legal and professional responsibilities.*

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(REB #45965)

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By issuing the “!play” command at the beginning of the game session, you agree to the following:

- I read the information above and had the opportunity to ask questions and receive satisfactory answers.
- I was informed that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw this consent by informing the facilitator or primary investigator.
- I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis, dataset, or publication that comes from this research.
- I agree to the sharing of anonymized or de-identified data collected in this research in a public repository.
- If applicable, I agree to allow any **additional data sources** listed in the “What does participation involve” section, with the understanding that I will not be identified by name and my identity will be obscured. I grant permission to use these in teaching, scientific presentations, publication and/or datasets.
- I understand any remuneration I receive may be taxable: it is my responsibility to report this amount for income tax purposes.
- I agree of my own free will to participate in the study.

If you do not agree, do not issue the “!play” command, or inform the study facilitator or primary investigator.