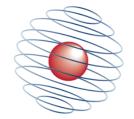**Department of Computer Science**
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UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

<Self-governing Communities in Online Game Cheating>

Participant Information Sheet

Ethics Approval Reference: CS_CIA_20_017

1. *Background and aims of the study*

This project explores the social dynamics within game cheating communities that enable them to thrive. We want to understand the factors that help the community share resources, create bonds, and collaborate outside the official gaming platform. The findings in this study will contribute to laying a groundwork for better understanding how cheat communities are structured and governed with respect to the growing cheat capabilities and sub-cultures in gaming.

2. *Why have I been invited to take part?*

We are interested in interviewing individuals with experience in using cheat platforms to share their experiences in them.

3. *Do I have to take part?*

You can ask questions about the study before deciding whether or not to participate. If you do agree to participate, you can also withdraw yourself [and all your captured data] from the study during or before the interview, without giving a reason and without penalty, by simply advising the interviewer of this decision. Once the interview has taken place, you can ask to withdraw your data within three months after the interview. If you agree to take part in this study you will be asked to provide your consent either via text or voice before the interview.

4. *What will happen in the study?*

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be interviewed by the researcher, and it would last approximately 40 minutes. The semi-structured interview consists of questions regarding the level of experience in your website of interest, social interactions occurred in the community, and knowledge on rules and key staff of the community.

Prior to the interview, we will provide you with a consent form for this interview, and you will be asked to confirm either via text of voice that you are 18 years of age or older.

The online interview will be carried out either over Skype, Discord, Twitch, or *nohistory.chat* according to the preference of the participant, and you can glance over the consent form in advance which is uploaded at https://digiwell.web.ox.ac.uk/exploring-self-governance-online-

communities-0. The consent will be given over the interactive texts in the chat room with the interviewer and subsequently saved.

We will take great care to ensure that your participation is anonymous. You can use a burner account to speak to us, and we will save the record of your interview under an ID number (not your username). We will never ask for your name nor ask you about sensitive topics or personal information. However, if you do share these with us, we will make sure that it is excluded from the interview record.

We may send audio files to a professional and confidential transcription service but we will not include any of your personally identifiable information from the recording. The original audio recordings will be deleted once we have the transcripts. Only the researcher and her academic supervisors will have access to the transcripts.

5. *Are there any potential risks in taking part?*

There are some risks connected to this study, regarding the identity, confidentiality, and the use of the collected data. In order to mitigate these risks, the researchers will pseudonymise any identifiable data and store them securely. No third parties will have access to the original version of the collected data apart from the interviewer. Once the data has been cleansed and fully pseudonymised, only the researcher and her supervisors (Ivan Flechais and Jonathan Lusthaus) will have access to it.

Participants will also be told at the beginning of the interview to not reveal any sensitive or private information with the interviewer. Should the participant share such information by accident, it will be removed during transcription editing.

6. *Are there any benefits in taking part?*

There will be no monetary benefits gained from taking part in the study. Upon completion of the interview, you will receive a digital Badge of Research Participant from the researcher.

7. *What happens to the data provided?*

The research data will be stored confidentially on encrypted drives. Your responses will be pseudonymised if they by accident contain any personal data.

No other parties will have access to the original recordings and transcripts, apart from the researcher and her supervisors. Depending on the need for an external support on transcriptions, we may send audio files to a professional and confidential transcription service where we will ensure to omit any personally identifiable information and delete the original recording upon receiving the transcripts. The transcription service we will use is compliant with GDPR, PCI DSS, ISO 27001, and verified by the UK Crown Commercial Service (CCS) and Cyber Essentials.

We ask participants to use direct pseudonymised quotations of their recordings. All research data and records will be stored for a minimum retention period of ten years after publication or public release of the work of the research, in accordance with the *University of Oxford's Policy on the Management of Research Data & Records.*

8. *Will the research be published?*

The research will be published in reports, as well as in academic conferences and journals.

9. *Who has reviewed this study?*

This study was approved by the Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) under reference number CS_C1A_20_017.

10. ***Who do I contact if I have a concern about the study or I wish to complain?***

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, please speak to the Researcher [Selina Cho / Email: selina.cho@cs.ox.ac.uk], who will do her best to answer your query. The researcher should acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how they intend to deal with it. If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the relevant chair of the Computer Science Departmental Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford at ethics@cs.ox.ac.uk who will seek to resolve the matter in a reasonably expeditious manner.

11. ***Contact Details***

If you would like to discuss the research beforehand or if you have questions afterwards, please contact:

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