INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Project Title: “On the effects of Involving Players during Interactive Procedural Content Generation”

Investigators:

- Dr. William Raffe (Research Officer, School of CSIT, RMIT University)
  Email: william.raffe@rmit.edu.au
  Phone: +61 3 9925 3842
- Dr. Fabio Zambetta (Project Supervisor: Senior Lecturer, School of CSIT, RMIT University)
  Email: fabio.zambetta@rmit.edu.au
  Phone: +61 3 9925 9694
- Paul Hoang (Student, School of CSIT, RMIT University)
  Email: s3383494@student.rmit.edu.au
- Charles Lee (Student, School of CSIT, RMIT University)
  Email: s3334848@student.rmit.edu.au
- Wai Chee Tang (Student, School of CSIT, RMIT University)
  Email: s3336533@student.rmit.edu.au
- Chad Rozkowicz (Student, School of CSIT, RMIT University)
  Email: s3380654@student.rmit.edu.au

Dear Research Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research project being conducted by RMIT University. Please read this sheet carefully and be confident that you understand its contents before deciding whether to participate. If you have any questions about the project, please ask one of the investigators.

Who is involved in this research project? Why is it being conducted?

This research project is being carried out by four students as part of a Capstone Project course, which counts towards the completion of the students’ respective degrees at the School of Computer Science and Information Technology, RMIT University. This project and user experiment will contribute knowledge to the field of computational intelligence in games and, more specifically, to the topic of personalized procedural content generation. The students involved are Paul Hoang, Charles Lee, Wai Chee Tang, and Chad Rozkowicz. The project is supervised by Dr. William Raffe and Dr. Fabio Zambetta. All aspects of this project have been reviewed and approved by the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee to ensure your safety and security is maintained throughout your participation.
Why have you been approached?

Advertisements for participation in this research have been distributed to research groups, game communities, or other social groups. Thus, it is expected that you have approached this research as a result of one of these advertisements or due to word of mouth and you should not have been approached directly as an individual. In short, invitations to participate in this research have been distributed randomly and the decision to participate should be of your own discretion.

Who should participate?

- A participant MUST be 18 years of age or older.
- A participant should have basic knowledge on how to play an action-based video game.
- A participant should have at least a small interest in video games.
- A participant should play the game with the knowledge that it is part of a research experiment and does not represent any commercial endeavour.
- A participant will be required to have a stable internet connection throughout the duration of their play.

What is the project about? What are the questions being addressed?

The aim of this project is to determine what characteristics of a game maps player’s enjoy in a specific game example. This will be done by monitoring which maps are chosen, which ones are rated well, and what the low-level features of these maps are.

Your participation involves choosing and then rating a series of maps in a game developed to accomplish this task. The evaluation of the data (ie. the ratings and map features) that is collected should answer our primary research question as well as discovering whether or not our proposed hypothesis is correct.

In order to do this, we expect to collect data on at least 30 players, with no upper limit on the number of participants.

If I agree to participate, what will I be required to do?

If you agree to participate, you will be required to play a set number of maps in a simple top-down action game. You should choose maps to play based on your own preference (i.e. the number of rooms, items and enemies that you prefer/want in a given selection of maps). You will then be required to navigate through your chosen map, defeat numerous types of enemies, and, if needed, collect items (i.e. ammo, health, new weapons, and other rewards). You are encouraged to complete each map at your own pace and only do the activities that you feel compelled to do (e.g. if you don’t want to fight an enemy, run away from them). At the completion of the map (or if you died), you will be asked to rate it based on how much (or how little) you enjoyed playing the map.

The game can be played at any location, provided you have a stable internet connection.
When you start the game, you will first need to setup an anonymous account that you will log into before playing. You will be first required to play through a tutorial map and complete it in preparation for the actual experiment. After this tutorial, the experiment begins and you will then be required to play through a number of procedurally generated game maps. Each map should only take a few minutes to complete. At the end of each map you are asked to provide a rating of how much you enjoyed the map, which you are encouraged to answer truthfully.

You can stop playing at any time and your progress and profile will be saved. By logging in with the account details that were provided to you when you first started playing, you will be able to continue playing at a time that suits you. You are encouraged to play a set number of maps (the exact number of which will be indicated at the start of the game). If you do not complete the specified number of maps, your data may be disregarded during analysis. If you complete the specified number of maps, you are prompted to complete a questionnaire based on your experience of the game.

What are the possible risks or disadvantages?

The risks associated with your participation in this research are very low. All experimental data (i.e. map statistics, your performance on each map, and your rating for each map) will be associated with your randomly generated login ID that will be provided to you during the account creation process. The experimental data will be stored on RMIT University’s secure servers for a period of five years.

The game has no excessive mature content and should not offend anyone above the age of 18 years. There are no disadvantages associated with participating in this experiment other than the loss of time that is spent playing the game.

What are the benefits associated with participation?

You will not receive any personal benefit for participating in this research other than the enjoyment of playing a game. However, your participation will benefit the research project as a whole by providing valuable data on player experiences, aiding in the research towards personalized procedural content generation in games.

What will happen to the information I provide?

All information you provide is kept anonymous, automatically stored securely in an RMIT network location belonging to one of the investigators listed above and, in its unprocessed state, would only ever be viewed by the investigators. Summaries and analysis of the data are to be published in academic publications. Should you wish to know the results of the experiment, please contact one of the investigators by email.

Because of the nature of data collection, we are not obtaining written informed consent from you. Instead, we assume that you have given consent by creating an account to play the game.
What are my rights as a participant?

- The right to withdraw from participation at any time.
- The right to have any unprocessed data withdrawn and destroyed, provided it can be reliably identified, and provided that so doing does not increase the risk for the participant.
- The right to have any questions answered at any time.
- You have the right to direct any complaints related to this experiment to the Executive Officer of RMIT's Human Research Ethics Committee (e-mail human.ethics@rmit.edu.au).

Withdraw Policy/Recourse Statement

Once your gameplay data and questionnaire data is recorded on RMIT servers, it will not be possible to individually withdraw it. This is because in order to do so the investigators would need to identify your user ID, thus removing your anonymity in the experiment.

However, please note that in order for us to use your data during analysis we require both gameplay data and questionnaire data. Therefore, if you do change your mind and wish to withhold your gameplay data from the experimental results, you should exit the questionnaire instead of submitting it.

Whom should I contact if I have any questions?

For any further questions about this research project or to request to withdraw from the experiment please contact William Raffe (william.raffe@rmit.edu.au).

Sincerely,

William Raffe (Research Officer)  Dr. Fabio Zambetta (Primary Supervisor)

Chad Rozkowicz (CSIT Student)  Paul Hoang (CSIT Student)

Charles Lee (CSIT Student)  Wai Chee Tang (CSIT Student)
If you have any complaints about your participation in this project please see the complaints procedure on the [Complaints with respect to participation in research at RMIT](mailto:xiaodong.li@rmit.edu.au) page.