

# Despite Their Reputation Among Youth (ages 6 - 14)

This dissertation endeavors to deeply perceive the features of Minecraft servers explicitly created for youth by means of three research utilizing mixed strategies analysis. Human-Laptop Interplay (HCI) research reveals that sandbox-model virtual world video games like Minecraft operate as interest-driven spaces where youth can explore their creative pursuits, construct technical expertise, and kind social connections with peers and near-peers. Despite their recognition amongst youth (ages 6 - 14), we all know little in regards to the social and technological features of "in-the-wild" Minecraft servers that current themselves as "kid-pleasant" or "household-pleasant." The goals of this work are three-fold: 1. To analyze the rhetoric of child-/household-friendliness and the socio-technical mechanisms of such servers (Study I: 60 servers), 2. To know the lived experiences of server employees who moderate on such servers (Study II: Eight youth and 22 moderators), and 3. To discover a design paradigm for technological mechanisms that leverage the strengths of a child-/household-friendly server community whereas also supporting moderators' practices (Examine III) I draw from interdisciplinary theories and structure this dissertation round two foremost arguments about kid-/family-pleasant Minecraft server ecosystems. First, I argue that they're instantiations of play-based affinity networks created by adults that promote opportunities for youth to discover their pursuits and social connections. Second, I argue that the social and technological mechanisms reflected within the server guidelines and moderators' practices are characteristic of servers that self-describe as child-/family-friendly. [Minecraft-servers.biz](http://Minecraft-servers.biz) Study I contributes a taxonomy for understanding server guidelines and an empirical characterization of three server genres - child-/household-friendly (n1 = 19); basic-household-friendly (n2 = 20); and normal (n3 = 20) in Minecraft. Research II reveals moderators' motivations and socio-technical practices in kid-/family-friendly servers. The findings present that grownup moderators encourage youth-led artistic roleplays, help the pursuits of younger gamers (e.g., Hogwarts virtual world, virtual Delight Day celebrations, and so on.), and offer mentorship to youth moderators on their servers. Research III theorizes the potential for automated prosocial instruments in play-primarily based spaces by a Discord Bot called "UCIProsocialBot" inside OhanaCraft, one in every of the kid-/household-friendly server communities. Collectively, these findings present a set of social and technological options which will substantiate a mannequin for designing kid-/family-pleasant on-line playgrounds. This work theorizes that child-/family-pleasant servers can actualize optimistic youth growth when their self-narratives, social practices, and technological mechanisms are aligned with adolescent developmental needs.