Despite Their Recognition Among Youth (ages 6 - 14)

This dissertation endeavors to deeply perceive the features of Minecraft servers explicitly created for youth through three studies using blended methods analysis. Human-Laptop Interplay (HCI) research exhibits that sandbox-style digital world games like Minecraft operate as curiosity-pushed spaces the place youth can explore their creative interests, construct technical expertise, and kind social connections with friends and close to-peers. Regardless of https://fela.london/ amongst youth (ages 6 - 14), we know little in regards to the social and technological features of "in-the-wild" Minecraft servers that present themselves as "child-friendly" or "family-friendly." The goals of this work are three-fold:1. To research the rhetoric of child-/family-friendliness and the socio-technical mechanisms of such servers (Research I: 60 servers), 2. To understand the lived experiences of server workers who moderate on such servers (Study II: 8 youth and 22 moderators), and 3. To explore a design paradigm for technological mechanisms that leverage the strengths of a kid-/family-pleasant server neighborhood whereas also supporting moderators' practices (Research III) I draw from interdisciplinary theories and construction this dissertation around two main arguments about child-/family-friendly Minecraft server ecosystems. First, I argue that they are instantiations of play-primarily based affinity networks created by adults that promote opportunities for youth to explore their pursuits and social connections. Second, I argue that the social and technological mechanisms mirrored in the server guidelines and moderators' practices are characteristic of servers that self-describe as child-/household-pleasant. Research I contributes a taxonomy for understanding server guidelines and an empirical characterization of three server genres - child-/household-pleasant (n1 = 19); common-family-friendly (n2 = 20); and general (n3 = 20) in Minecraft. Research II reveals moderators' motivations and socio-technical practices in child-/household-friendly servers. The findings show that grownup moderators encourage youth-led creative roleplays, help the interests of young gamers (e.g., Hogwarts digital world, virtual Pleasure Day celebrations, and many others.), and supply mentorship to youth moderators on their servers. Study III theorizes the potential for automated prosocial tools in play-primarily based spaces by a Discord Bot called "UCIProsocialBot" within OhanaCraft, considered one of the child-/family-friendly server communities. Together, these findings present a set of social and technological options that may substantiate a mannequin for designing kid-/family-pleasant on-line playgrounds. This work theorizes that child-/household-friendly servers can actualize positive youth improvement when their self-narratives, social practices, and technological mechanisms are aligned with adolescent developmental wants.